



THE TSAR OF
TORCHWOOD:
FAMILY AFFAIRS

BETH MCCOMBS

ALSO BY BETH MCCOMBS

THE COLLECTIVE DREAMING SERIES

Perchance to Dream
Deflections of Loneliness
Away With the Fairy
Home for the Holidays
Primal Instincts
The Course of Love

HOUSE OF TORCHWOOD

Bloodlines
A Kind of Magic
Where the Road Diverges
Arcanum 101

THE TSAR OF TORCHWOOD

Separate Ends
Family Affairs

COMING SOON

Ventures of the Heart
Nightmares and Dreamscapes

Family Affairs

Beth McCombs

Family Affairs

Beth M^cCombs

This ebook is a work of fiction. While references might be made to actual historical events or existing locations, the names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

Torchwood is ©2006-2009 British Broadcasting Service Wales (BBC Wales). Created by Russell T. Davies. Produced by Russell T. Davies and Julia Gardner.

Published by M. E. M^cCombs/Scriptoria Mea
Copyright ©2011 M. E. M^cCombs
Cover Art ©2011 M. E. M^cCombs

CHAPTER ONE

Silence had long ago fallen in the Mercedes. Ianto glanced over at Jack just to be certain the other man was still awake. As he watched, Jack twitched in his seat, his hand flexing against his thigh before he relaxed again. It wasn't the first time Ianto caught sight of such a movement from Jack on this trip. If he didn't know any better, he'd say the Captain was nervous. "Why are you twitching, Jack?" he asked while navigating the traffic circle to get off the A5 and onto the A483 for the final leg of the trip to his parents home. "I'm the one taking a man home to meet my father. If anyone should be nervous, it's me!"

"Ianto, you're not bringing a man home. You're bringing me home." A sigh escaped Jack. "I've known your mother since she was in pigtails running about the palace grounds with the Princess Royal. I shudder to think what they'll say!"

"Mama will be happy that I'm happy," Ianto said. He reached across the front seat, briefly clasping Jack's hand in his before returning his hand to the wheel. "Tad will likely lecture you a bit but will settle quickly. They both know who you are after all."

"That's what I'm afraid of," Jack retorted. The soft creak of leather told of his restless shifting in the passenger seat. "I've never been exactly discreet, you know."

Family Affairs

“Jack,” Ianto drawled softly. “Mama didn't say a word about you to me. If she was upset with my decision, she would have.”

“All right, all right,” Jack said. “It's just that...” he trailed off for a moment before continuing in a much quieter voice, “for the first time in my life, I'm nervous.”

“I can tell, *dushka*¹,” Ianto said. “You're making me nervous.” He smiled. “Imagine how I feel, I never even brought Lisa up here to meet them and I'd already gone so far as to ask her to marry me!”

“We're a hell of a pair, aren't we?”

“Yep.” Ianto chuckled tiredly and lazily reached over to restart the cd player. He needed the noise and the conversation to keep himself awake now that it was nearing midnight. “Which has you more worried, the fact that you've known Mama since she was a child or meeting Tad?”

“Either. Both.” Jack paused and shook his head. “Then there are the political ramifications.”

“Politics?” Ianto couldn't keep his disbelief from his voice. Why was Jack bringing up politics in connection to their relationship? It confused him. “What does politics have to do with us?”

There was silence in the car, long enough to cause Ianto to mentally squirm before Jack finally spoke again. “Ianto, you are the Tsar of All the Russias,” he said. “It could get political as all hell.”

Ianto caught the heavy emphasis on 'are' in Jack's statement. Once again, Jack was throwing him off mentally. On one hand, Jack wanted him to set aside his heritage and follow his heart, while on the other hand, he was constantly reminding him of the duty he had to his bloodline and the same heritage. A sigh slipped from Ianto. “So I'm technically ruler of a country which hasn't existed since the spring of nineteen eighteen.” He thought for a moment and shook his head. “No, earlier than that if we go from when my father broke the still active laws of Russia and abdicated for me, so March of nineteen seventeen.”

¹ Russian endearment meaning "dear one" or "my dear one"; sometimes translated as "my soul"

Family Affairs

He glanced across the car. “No one will care, Jack. Politically, I have no real power.”

“I’m borrowing trouble, aren’t I?”

“Yes, you are.” Ianto chuckled ruefully. “I’m worried enough about introducing you to Tad without you making me even more nervous by being nervous.”

“I’ll try to...” Jack trailed off for a moment. “Keep it under control.”

“I’d appreciate it. Jack, I...” Ianto lapsed into silence and sighed softly. “This is one of the reasons I sometimes hate who and what I am.”

“I’m sorry,” Jack said. He reached over to squeeze Ianto’s wrist. “I should have realized that. It’s just that... this means so much. You mean so much.”

“Not your fault.” Ianto concentrated on his driving for a moment. “It’s the reminders of the politics. Sooner or later, likely sooner since I joined Torchwood, certain people are going to get on me about marrying and having a child. All those dynastic requirements...” he trailed off into silence again. “And I want you. I want us. I don’t really give a damn about the throne.”

“Then you tell them exactly that.”

“You try telling my cousin that,” Ianto retorted. “You know how she is about putting the needs of the country ahead of personal desires.”

“She won’t ask that of you.”

“She would,” Ianto insisted. “We both know it. And I am so close to...” he broke off abruptly. He wasn’t quite ready to admit exactly how he felt about Jack. Not yet. Soon, but not just yet.

“No,” Jack snapped back. “She won’t. She married for love herself, remember?”

“She loves Phillip, yes, but she also knew...” Ianto paused for a moment. Here was yet another moment where all the things drilled into him, his cousins, and other more distant yet still dynastically related relatives separated them from the rest of the population. He knew he’d

Family Affairs

never really be able to explain the distinctions to Jack. You really had to grow up with them, taught them from the cradle. “Oh, never mind.”

“You’re the one borrowing trouble now.” There was a hint of laughter in Jack’s voice. Ianto was willing to tolerate the teasing statement if Jack was finally starting to relax.

“You started it by reminding me of the politics!” Ianto glared across the front seat before focusing on guiding the Mercedes off the A483 and onto South Chester Road for the final bits of the journey. “I could have managed quite well without the reminder.”

“I know. I’m sorry.” Jack’s hand came over to rest on Ianto’s. He released the steering wheel to clasp that hand in his own. “We’ll get through this, Ianto. I am not giving you up.”

“I’m not letting you.” Ianto tugged Jack’s hand closer to press a kiss over the other man’s pulse before letting their still joined hands drop down to rest on his thigh. “Sometimes I wish...” he paused and shook his head again. “Well, it’s not important.”

“What?”

“What I wish?” Ianto asked. The affirmative noise from Jack’s side of the car caused him to smile briefly. He should have known that holding Jack’s hand would definitely cause his lover to relax. “There are times when I wish I wasn’t His Imperial Majesty, Alexei Nikolaevich, Emperor and Autocrat of All Russia; Tsar of Moscow, Kiev, Vladimir, Novgorod, Kazan, Astrakhan, Poland, Siberia, the Tauric Chernonese and Georgia; Lord of Pskov; Grand Prince of Smolensk, Lithuania, Volhynia, Podolia and Finland; Prince of Estonia, Livonia, Courland and Semigallia, Samogitia, Belostok, Karelia, Tver, Yugra, Perm, Vyatka, Bulgaria and other lands; Lord and Grand Prince of Nizhny-Novgorod and Chernigov; Ruler of Ryazan, Polotsk, Rostov, Yaroslav, Belo-Ozero, Udoria, Obdoria, Kondia, Vitebsk, Mstislavl and all the Northern Lands; Lord of the Iberian, Katalinian, and Kabardinian lands and of the Armenian Provinces; Hereditary Lord and Suzerain of the Circassian and Highland Princes and others; Lord of

Family Affairs

Turkestan; Heir to the Throne of Norway; Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, Stormarn, the Dithmarschen and Oldenberg².”

Ianto paused for breath when he finished the recitation of his official title to look over at Jack who seemed to be staring at him in shock. Only force of will seemed to be keeping Jack's mouth closed. “Yes, Jack, that's my full legal and official title as Tsar,” he said with a small smile. “I had to memorize it once for some reason that I forget now. Regardless, Ianto Jones can do what he wants when he wants and with whoever he wants. Alexei Nikolaevich can't. He has to think of all the dynastic and political consequences.”

There was an echoing silence in the car for several minutes before Jack seemed to recover from Ianto's casual recitation. “Then just be Ianto Jones,” he said quietly.

“I'm trying,” Ianto replied. “Ianto's taking the man he's falling in love with home to meet his parents and spend some time with his family. I'm endeavoring to ignore the part of me that's screaming this is not proper and I shouldn't even be thinking some of the things that I do about you.”

“Don't worry,” Jack said. “I can make you forget it if you let me.”

“Believe me, I'll let you.” Ianto laughed then smiled shyly. Again he lifted Jack's hand for another kiss before returning it to rest against his leg. “Tell me it's not wrong, Jack. Tell me that my mother was wrong when she talked about my cousins, what she would think of me if she knew about us.”

“Ianto, your biological mother was an unhinged religious fanatic,” Jack retorted. His voice was sharp, hard and implacable, the tones of a man firm in his convictions. “I'm sorry, but she was. Your real mother, Victoria, what would she say?”

“Mama...” Ianto trailed off for a moment, swallowed hard, and then resumed speaking, “Mama would just be happy I'm happy.” He drew in a breath and let it out slowly. “It's just hard to forget the things I

² Ferro, Marc, and Brian Pearce. *Nicholas II: The Last of the Tsars*. 1st ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1990. 36-37. Print.

Family Affairs

learned as a child, before I was thirteen, though. Especially now with Marie,” he broke off for a moment. “Mairwen, dammit, having returned. I'm certain you heard her talking to Mama in the Hub about how she was supposed to be good and quiet. Mother's rants on proper behavior for us children, especially the girls, were legendary.”

“I know it's difficult, but you and Mairwen have perfect examples of normal right at home.”

“Do you have any idea at all just how hard it was to trust her?” Ianto found himself unable to stop talking now that he'd started. He let the words flow out of himself, knowing Jack would listen without judging him too much. “I expected her to be like Mother, to keep me bedridden, yet when I told her I wanted to learn something, all she said was 'be careful' while arranging for lessons. I almost passed out from the shock!”

“That's what I mean,” Jack said. “You know there's a better way, a sane way, to look at the world. Hang onto that.”

“I'm clinging to that with all I am,” Ianto said. “Though I do have to admit to a private bet with myself over whether you or Mairwen will be the one to freak out later on in the morning.”

“Oh?”

The single word was heavy with question. Ianto chuckled softly in response and nodded. “Oh, you say,” Ianto said. He thought for the best way to explain himself but settled on just stating the facts. “Whenever I can get home, I go riding on the grounds and sometimes in the nearby park.”

“So saddle up another one and I'll go with you...” Jack trailed off into silence. “Hold it. Did Owen sign off on this?”

“Um...” Ianto prevaricated for a moment. “Owen doesn't know.”

“Ianto!” Jack's hand clenched. His nails dug into Ianto's palm. “You're still barely recovered from major trauma, I don't think...”

“That's the reaction I expected.” Ianto smirked and nodded, more to himself than Jack. “I'm fine, Jack!”

“All right, I'll trust you to be an adult about this.”

Family Affairs

"If anything starts to bother me, I'll stop." He pulled the car over just within the driveway to the Lodge and twisted a bit to face Jack. "To quote Mama, I can't let the disease dictate my life. Then I'm not living at all." Ianto sighed. "Jack, there was a time when I was told that if I even lived long enough to marry, I likely couldn't have sex because it was too dangerous and too energetic!"

"Good Lord."

"Finally shocked you, did I?"

"Shocked me stupid," Jack said. He tilted his head to the side, his eyes thoughtful. "How did they think you were going to produce an heir?"

"I suspect it would have been the same way my many times great-grandmother managed to have two children with her somewhat infantile husband," Ianto said. "Her second son was known to be fathered by one of her many lovers. Whoever I married would have taken a suitable lover or two and I would have been expected to claim the resulting children as mine."

"Wait a second," Jack said. He brought his free hand up to keep Ianto from continuing. "You're not a Romanov by blood, then?"

"Officially, legally, I'm a Romanov, but the original Romanov bloodline more than likely died out in seventeen sixty-two with the death of Peter the Third. There's just enough question, even within the family, about the parentage of his heir that I don't believe the real, biological Romanov line survived beyond that." Ianto chuckled softly. He thought everyone knew that not-so-little family secret since the publication of the more recent books on his most famous female ancestor. He never anticipated that Jack didn't know, or suspect, and thus was staring at him with his jaw hanging open in shock. "Jack..." Ianto drawled. He shook his head when nothing but wordless sounds of denial answered him. "And he wonders why I don't talk about my family!"

"So your royal lineage is actually European, then?" Jack finally pulled himself together enough to ask. Through your mother and your

Family Affairs

grandmother? Or was your grandmother..." Jack trailed off and firmly shook his head in denial. "No, not going there. Let's talk about that hayloft you promised me."

Ianto laughed and again shook his head. He shifted about to face front again. Slowly, he began to ease the car up the darkened driveway toward the Lodge. "Yes, Mother and Grandmama..." he paused and thought hard for a moment. "Hell, all of the family from then on was European. Actually, I think we were more German than anything else." He laughed again as he thought about his hayloft fantasy. "Which one? There's two in the stables."

"The most private one," Jack said. His flirtatious grin was audible in his voice. "And we're not talking about your biological family again! I thought I was unshockable!"

"Oh... um... right..." Ianto broke off with what he was certain was a scarlet blush. "Well, that's better than me turning red every time I think of the stable lofts. Though at least we're planning on using the loft!"

"Oh yeah, Mr. Jones," Jack purred. "We're planning on that!"

"It's more private. I caught Mama and Tad in the stable! And that was so embarrassing!" Raucous laughter drifted across the car. Ianto frowned and glared as he pulled to a halt alongside the Lodge. "Don't laugh! You do not get to laugh at me for that!"

"I was laughing because..." Jack broke off as he struggled to contain himself again. "I caught mine too. Well, it was a field, not a hayloft, but..."

"Okay," Ianto interrupted. "I'll give you that; however, I'm certain you had some idea of what they were doing!"

"Yes, of course," Jack confirmed. Ianto twisted about in the front seat and saw the exact moment realization dawned on the other man. "Oh. You didn't, did you?"

Ianto blushed; he could feel the heat in his face and ducked his head to avoid looking at Jack. He nodded once. "You know what Mother was like. I knew a tiny bit about it. Emphasis on tiny as I learned everything from spying through rose bushes and keyholes when I could

Family Affairs

as a child.” He looked up at Jack through his lashes. “I had no idea why Mama was squealing like that!”

“Oh, my poor Ianto!” Jack exclaimed through his laughter.

More than a bit perturbed at being laughed at, Ianto reached over and smacked the side of Jack's head. “Kindly stop laughing at me.”

“Not at you, love,” Jack said. He smiled and caught Ianto's hand before he could retract it. “Never at you. It's just that you're so adorable when you're embarrassed.”

“I blush too easily, I know.” Ianto let out a small laugh of his own. “After the mortal embarrassment of interrupting my parents, I then get a lecture - complete with pictures! - from Tad. I about died that day!”

“With pictures?”

If it were possible for him to do so in the close confines of the Mercedes coupe, Jack would have been rolling with his laughter. As it was, he was merely winding Ianto up. “Jack!”

“Sorry...” Jack gasped out around his laughter. “Sorry, *cariad*³, but I think I'm going to like your tad.”

“See if I show you the stable loft now.” Ianto pouted. “Tad is Tad.”

Sudden silence fell; Jack's laughter stopped abruptly. He leaned forward until his breath teased at Ianto's lips. “But you will do it,” he whispered, “because you want to. You want me.”

Ianto shivered, nodded, and tilted his head just a bit. He wanted a kiss, a reassurance, and licked his lips. “And you're taking full advantage of that right now.”

“I don't play fair, Ianto,” Jack murmured. His hand came up, fingers brushing over Ianto's cheek, and a smile teased at his lips. “Not when it's something I really want.”

“I'll remember that, *dushka*,” Ianto replied. “And I'm definitely showing you where the access to the more private of the lofts is.” He parted his lips, tilting his head a bit more in silent demand, yet Jack

³ Welsh endearment meaning “beloved”

Family Affairs

merely started to shift away from him. Without thinking of how he sounded, Ianto half-whined, half-ordered, "Kiss me, Jack."

Warm breath caressed his lips again. Jack's eyes darkened as they dropped from his own to focus on his mouth before lifting again. Then, he got what he wanted. Jack's lips closed over his - firm, hard, demanding - and Ianto surrendered with a little muted moan. He brought his hands up, wrapped his arms around Jack, and tangled his fingers in Jack's hair to hold him in the kiss. Ianto needed this the physical affirmation of Jack's words. The kiss finally broke when they both needed to breathe again.

"I needed that," Ianto panted. He pulled away slowly, released his seatbelt, and reached for the door handle. A deep groan escaped from Ianto as he slid from the car. He leaned against the side and rested his forehead against the roof for a moment. A deeper groan of appreciation slipped from him when Jack's hand, heavy and very warm, rested against his back. He opened the rear door, reached in the backseat, and pulled out a heavy gift bag that he presented to Jack. "You take that and head for the door. I'll get the luggage."

"Let's get you inside," Jack murmured. "The luggage can wait for me to come back for it."

Ianto silently shook his head. "I can get it," he protested. It was an automatic protest more than a heartfelt one. He really wanted to surprise Mama; however, sitting for three hours for the drive up from Cardiff had made all his joints start aching again. Slowly, he twisted about to look at Jack. He knew from the way the other man paled he wasn't hiding his pain as well as he thought. "Jack... I... well, I was hoping you'd go to the door first. I wanted to surprise Mama."

"I don't understand."

After closing the car door, Ianto leaned back against the rear quarter panel of the car. He traced the edge of the panel and sighed. "It's hard to explain, Jack, but there's this Scottish tradition..." He trailed off and looked toward the house.

"You mean the dark man..."

Family Affairs

Ianto nodded. "Yeah... and... I'm sorry. I'm rubbish at this."

"I'm your present to your mother for the new year," Jack said. He smiled at Ianto, his eyes laughing once again.

Ianto blushed again. He half-nodded, half-shrugged. "Sort of. I'm kind of hoping that she'll be all distracted by finally having a lucky visitor that I'll only get half an interrogation tonight." He looked again at the house. "I hurt, Jack. The drive made the lingering aches worse and if Mama finds out, she'll worry. I hate making her worry."

"Make you a deal," Jack said. He thought for a moment and nodded. "I'll make one of my grand entrances. You sit down, relax and go to bed early."

Ianto considered for a moment and then nodded himself. "All right. I'm sorry. I probably should have let you drive."

"Yes, well, we're going to have to work on that inner control freak of yours."

"Oh, now that's unfair." Ianto slowly straightened away from the car. "Come on then before she sends Tad out to look for us. I saw her look out the sitting room window just a bit ago."

Jack took a deep breath. "Let's go," he ordered.

Ianto reached out and caught Jack's hand. He held it tightly. "Relax, Jack, it's just my family." He smiled at the way Jack was holding himself, all stiff and formal. All his work to relax the other man had just flown out the window.

"That's why I can't relax," Jack explained. "For the first time in a very long time, it's very important to me that I pass muster."

Ianto pulled Jack to a halt just before the front door. "When Mama cornered you in your office, did she say anything? I doubt it. You'd know if Mama had a problem with you being with me. So would I. Everything will be fine. The only question I'm curious about right now is if you'll be in the guest room or my room."

"Guest room," Jack replied. "But very, very close to yours."

Family Affairs

Ianto laughed and reached for the doorbell. “You don't want to share my room?” he asked. He wondered why the other man wouldn't want them together. Had he done something wrong the other day?

“Oh I do, but...” Jack paused and smiled. He darted in for a quick kiss. “Your mother is a wise woman. She knows how much fun you can have out of sneaking around. She'll want you to have the experience.”

Ianto threw his head back with a laugh. Then he reached over and shoved Jack in front of the door. “Maybe I want to wake up with you again.” He was still laughing at Jack's stunned expression - a delightful combination of 'what the hell' and 'you did not just do that' - when Victoria opened the door just in time to hear his flat statement.

CHAPTER TWO

“Happy New Year, Mrs. Jones.” Jack sounded a bit strangled to Ianto's experienced ear. He held out the gift bag. “Thank you for inviting me to visit.”

Barely managing to refrain from rolling his eyes, Ianto shoved Jack in the back again. “Go in the door first,” he hissed. He followed Jack inside and smiled over his shoulder at his mother. “Hello again, Mama.”

“Welcome to Eridgg Park Lodge, Captain Harkness,” Victoria replied. There was laughter in her voice. A teasing smile settled on her face. She looked from Jack to Ianto and back before accepting the bag from Jack. A glance inside deepened her smile. “Thank you.” Genuine warmth now colored her tone. An eyebrow arched. “Well?”

Ianto shook his head and gave Jack another shove to get him in the foyer. He followed his lover inside, wrapped his arms around Jack's waist and rested his cheek on his shoulder. “I think you're scaring him, Mama,” he said softly.

“Don't be silly, Ianto.” Her eyes laughed as she cast a smile in his direction before turning a much more demanding look on Jack. A wicked grin curled her lips as she watched the other man. “What could

Family Affairs

there be to scare someone like Jack?" she teased. "Just because he's a famous flirt and seducer while you're our only son?"

"Mama!" Ianto shook his head with a soft groan. He should have expected such antics from her now that they were in her home. He straightened away from Jack, reached over, and closed the front door. He stepped around the stunned silent Jack to hug his mother. He hoped, likely in vain, she didn't notice his slight limp as he moved toward her. "He was more nervous than me on the drive here."

"Good," she said. Her arms came around him, hugged tight, and she pressed a kiss to his cheek. "It means this is important to him," she whispered.

"Me too," Ianto murmured. He released her and smiled. In a deliberate attempt to get the attention off Jack, he asked, "How's Mairwen? And Tad? Did he make it back safely?" He looked over at Jack, chuckled and waved a hand in front of him. "Jack, are you in there?"

A shudder raced over Jack. He seemed to refocus on the room around them again. A smile, soft and amazingly warm, turned on Ianto. "Yes, Ianto," he said. "I am." He nodded again to Victoria. "Victoria, thank you for inviting me."

"You said that all ready," Ianto murmured. He shook his head a bit at Jack. After a moment of thought, he shifted a bit to lean against Jack's side. A soft sigh escaped him when Jack's arm came up to wrap around his waist. If he thought he could get away with it, he'd just head up to bed and leave all the questions until sometime tomorrow. He ached all over again. He really should have left the driving to Jack. However, he wasn't certain he was willing to trust his Mercedes to Jack's notorious driving yet. Leaning on Jack was so comfortable; it took him a moment to focus his attention back on his mother.

"Your father and Mairwen spent all day poring over the old pattern books," she said. She chuckled and shook her head. "They surfaced from his study just long enough to eat dinner before going right back to it. I think you found him a kindred spirit in her, sweetie." She led the

Family Affairs

way from the foyer into the hall where she set the gift bag on a side table. "I think they must have fallen asleep there."

"Probably," Ianto conceded. If they really were asleep maybe he could escape the potential inquisition for the night. "You're the only one who manages to stay up all night."

"You were always able to do a reasonable job keeping me company," Victoria said. "I'm going to go wake them enough to make a brief visit with you before everyone goes to bed. You are still in pain and need your rest." She shook her head at him when he attempted to protest. "Don't deny it, Ianto, I know when you're ill."

"I drove," he said. He inclined his head a bit in acknowledgement of her words. "I shouldn't have, but I did and now..." He trailed off and half-shrugged. "I'm almost afraid to move now that I've stood still for a bit. I think Jack's holding me up at the moment."

"Then Jack can help you upstairs while I get the others up," Victoria replied. "No indulging, Ianto. You don't want your father to get the wrong impression." She laughed softly as she grabbed up her present and started toward the back of the house.

Ianto stared after his mother for a long moment before shifting a bit to look up at Jack. "Um..." he began. "That was my Mama, right?"

"Yeah." One of Jack's wide grins answered him. Somehow in just that brief conversation his mother had managed to relax the other man enough to get him to return to his normal overly flirty self. His arm tightened around Ianto's waist and he nodded toward the nearby stairs. "Come on, let's get you into bed, and wait decorously for your family to descend." Jack leaned close, brushed his lips over Ianto's temple, and whispered, "We'll indulge later."

"You're thinking they're all going to march through my room before bed, aren't you?" Ianto chuckled. It's what he would have done if he were in his sister or father's position: a late night visit to welcome the guests and be certain his child was fine after a recent illness. Especially when the illness was as severe as Ianto's own. He sighed tiredly. "You'll need to get the bags from the car too." He turned his sternest

glare on to the unresisting stairs as if the glare would miraculously change them into something else so he wouldn't have to work to climb them. He gave himself a mental shake, sighed again, and nodded once. "Okay, I can do this," he muttered.

"We can do this, *velikolepnyi*⁴, Jack replied. "I'll get the bags after I get you settled in bed."

Ianto blinked over at Jack, surprised at the unexpected endearment. He nodded once and reached out to grab the stair rail. He half walked, half pulled himself up the stairs. "You aren't the one who feels as old as the dynasty he's supposed to lead," he snarled.

"Lean on me then." Jack took a step closer to him; his arms tightening around Ianto's waist as they paused at the top of the stairs. "And the only dynasty you're going to lead is our own."

"We have one?" Ianto laughed softly and pointed to the right. "My room," he explained. "Conveniently located close to the top of the stairs and right next to the bath." He twisted a bit, grimaced, and turned back the other way. "I would wrestle a weevil right now for a nice long hot bath!"

"We can..." Jack trailed off for a moment; his hold tightened again before he moved about Ianto to provide better support. "We can talk about dynasties later. And you can have a nice hot shower in the morning. Tonight, you'll make do with a massage."

Ianto looked over at Jack again. He forced down the shiver that raced through him at the word massage. Even if he was in pain, he would be with Jack, with Jack's hands on his skin, and the mere thought was arousing. "Kay," he murmured. He crossed the hall and clung to the doorframe for a moment before crossing his old bedroom to all but collapse onto his bed. With a slightly trembling hand, he pointed toward one wall. "Next door to me is the bath," he explained. He waved a hand toward the door they'd just come in through. "And the next door over, across from the stairs, is the guest room."

⁴ Russian, "gorgeous"

Family Affairs

“Relax, *velikolepnyĭ*, I’m sure your mother will point me to my room.” Jack knelt and gently began removing Ianto’s shoes and socks. He glanced toward the bedroom door as three distinct sets of footsteps began climbing the stairs. “Here they come,” he said. He rose to his feet and kissed Ianto’s temple. “I’ll go get the luggage.”

Ianto was torn between laughing and pouting; he settled for a nod. He looked over toward the door. “Yup,” he said. “I’d know that particular run anywhere.” He looked up at Jack with a slightly reminiscing smile. “If you want to escape my sister, you better leave now.”

“Aloysha!” Mairwen’s scream of his name announced her presence even as she raced into the room to fling herself at him. They both tumbled back onto the bed. He groaned softly in pain as she fell on top of him. “Oh! I’m sorry. I...”

Automatically, Ianto hugged his sister tightly for a moment before gently pushing her away. She just as quickly scrambled up a rambling stream of apologies in that childish mix of Russian and German all his sisters spoke when they were upset tumbled from her lips. He forced himself to sit up again and covered her mouth with his hand. “Hush, *samyĭ dorogoiĭ*,⁵” Ianto quietly scolded. “I’m fine... well, mostly fine... you didn’t hurt me.”

She stared at him for a long silent moment before grabbing him in another far gentler hug. “You came!” she exclaimed. “You really did.”

“I said we would,” Ianto said. He hugged her again and kissed her cheek. “Relax, Mairwen, the team gave us a week so I could finish recovering from the attack I had in the Hub.” He brushed his fingers over her cheek, absently tucking her hair back from her face, and smiled. “So, missed me already?”

“Of course,” she replied. He could see her gathering herself again. Calming slowly from her exuberant greeting even as she gently fussed over him. A glare from her set Jack scurrying out the door with a soft,

⁵ Russian, “dearest”

'I'll just go get the luggage then' while she tugged on his jumper to help him remove it. "Victoria and I talked on the train ride here," Mairwen went on to explain. "She's very nice. I could..." she broke off abruptly and shook her head at him. "Anyway, we arrived and there was Ifan waiting to pick us up." She turned away, folding his jumper and setting it on the bedside table. When she turned back, she dropped to her knees in front of him, her voice dropping to a low whisper. "I like them, Aloysha," she murmured. "I really do. But... I... I'm frightened, *solnyechno*⁶. I want to trust them, want to believe what you say about them, but..."

"Shh." Ignoring the pain in his back, Ianto bent over and hugged her. "I know you're afraid, Mashka," he murmured into her ear. "I was too. I was terrified for a very long time that I was dreaming all this and would wake up any time back in that awful house." He slowly released her, tucked a finger beneath her chin and tilted her head up so she'd look at him. "Trust your instincts," he said. "You were always the best judge of people, even more so than Papa, and I know you'll figure out what's best for you after you've had a chance to recover from Yekaterinburg."

A soft sound from the doorway prevented his sister from answering him though he could see from the look in her eyes she was thinking hard about what he'd said. He released her chin and caught her hands in his to tug her up off the floor. "Go to bed, Mairwen," he ordered. "We'll talk more tomorrow, okay?"

"*Khorosho spat*⁷," she murmured and kissed his cheek before starting for the door. She paused, looked back at Ianto, and then nodded, seemingly more to herself than anyone else. Very quickly, she kissed both Victoria and Ifan's cheeks before slipping out the door and, from the sounds drifting back through it, running down the hall to her room.

⁶ Russian, "sunny"; The Imperial family, especially Alexandra, had nicknamed Alexei "Sunny" and "Sunbeam" as a toddler.

⁷ Russian, "Sleep well"

Family Affairs

Smothering the urge to laugh, Ianto shifted about to face his parents. "I take it she has my original room?" he asked.

"Did you really expect otherwise?" Victoria retorted. She crossed the room to sit beside him on the bed and brushed her hand over his shoulder. "I remember all too well the nightmares you had when you first joined our family. I've watched her with your father and..."

"And I know all too well what causes that particular kind of wariness in young women," Ifan interrupted. "So, we put her in the room you had for that first year so that when the nightmares do come, your mother will hear her and be able to quickly comfort her."

Ianto sighed. He nodded and dropped his gaze to the floor for a moment. That was another one of his more painful memories. He forced it away again before looking up at his Tad. "Sir, I..."

"Hush, Ianto," Ifan gently scolded. He too crossed the room to settle on the bed. He took the opposite side from Victoria and draped a careful arm across Ianto's shoulders. "You look exhausted. You overdid it again, didn't you?"

"I drove straight up," he admitted quietly. Anything was better than remember that awful night on the steamship *Rus* on the way up to Yekaterinburg. That memory was as terrifying, if not more so, than the assassination because he truly didn't know exactly what happened to his sisters that night. "Jack and I had a long day today," he explained. "Plus there was the attack before that..."

"You really should know better by now, *mab*⁸," Ifan scolded. He hugged Ianto to his side for a moment. "Though I am truly not surprised at all. You never were one for limits of any kind."

Ianto blushed and shook his head in wordless denial. Still, he took silent comfort from their presence. He leaned briefly against Ifan's side. "I'm sorry you had to cut your trip short because..."

A finger pressed to his lips. Ianto fell silent and merely looked at his Tad. "That's also something you should know by now. Family first.

⁸ Welsh, "son"

Family Affairs

You are far more important to me than yet another conference on free trade and organic fabrics.” He smiled and kissed Ianto's temple. “Now, your mother told me everything she knew; however, I'm certain there are things you neglected to tell her.”

Silent, Ianto nodded. “Torchwood things, I can't...” he trailed off helplessly and ducked his head.

“We thought so,” Victoria interjected. “I heard from the Palace. Heads are going to roll in interesting places over the next several days.” She shook her head at him. “However, you are not to worry about that at all. Your only concern is getting better.” Before he could retort, she looked toward the door to the room. “I'm hoping you're going to keep him from overdoing it again, Jack.”

A quick blush stained Jack's cheeks even as the older man nodded. “Do my best,” he said. He stepped into the room and set Ianto's suitcase down on the dresser top. “Though I've known for a while getting Ianto to do anything he doesn't want to do is next to impossible.”

“Jack!” Ianto protested. He glared at all three of the other occupants of the room as they all chuckled at him.

“Sounds like you know our son well,” Ifan said. With one final hug, he rose to his feet. Ianto watched as the two men, his father and his lover, seemed to size each other up. “I've heard interesting things about you, Captain Harkness,” his father finally said. He gave a nod, looked back at his mother and smiled. “I'll go check on Mairwen on my way to bed.” Ifan pressed a quick kiss to Victoria's lips and started out of the room. He paused just outside the door to look back inside. “I'll see you both at breakfast tomorrow. *Nos da*⁹, Ianto, Captain.”

Jack stared out the door for a long moment before giving a dramatic shudder. “I'm in for an interrogation tomorrow, aren't I?” he asked. He shook his head before either Ianto or Victoria could answer him. “You look a bit better, Ianto.”

⁹Welsh, "good night"

Family Affairs

“Still hurt though,” Ianto replied. “I think I'm going to need your help getting ready for bed. Mairwen got my jumper off, but...” he trailed off with a soft sigh. He shifted his attention to his mother, reached over and hugged Victoria tightly. “Good night, Mama.”

“Good night, sweetie,” she murmured. She kissed his cheek, rose and smiled at him. “Try to get some rest. You know it's a late day tomorrow, so no rush to get up.” Victoria ruffled his hair and then crossed the room to rest a hand on Jack's arm. “Your room is the second door on the right as you leave Ianto's,” she said. She stretched up to kiss Jack's cheek. “Take care of my son, Jack. There's a bottle of liniment on the second shelf of the bathroom cabinet.”

Ianto could do nothing but stare after his mother as she left his bedroom. He couldn't believe what he'd just seen. That couldn't have been his Mama. He blinked once, twice, and then closed his mouth with a snap. He repeated his question from when they'd first arrived at the house. “That was my Mama, wasn't it?”

A low chuckle escaped from Jack. He set his own travel bag down beside Ianto's and began to unpack some things for both of them. “Yes, that was your mother,” Jack replied. He looked over his shoulder at Ianto. “I told you she was a wise woman.”

“So you did,” Ianto agreed. He forced himself to his feet, swayed, and decided that staying seated was likely the better course of action. “Jack... I...”

Another chuckle escaped from Jack. He set down the clothes he was holding, crossed over and tugged Ianto up from the bed. “Bathroom right?” he asked.

Blushing, Ianto nodded. “Yeah, long drive,” he said. He let Jack lead him the few steps down to the bath. Stepping inside, he smiled at the other man. “Sort out whatever you need to, I shouldn't be long.”

“You'll call if you need me?”

“Of course.” Ianto leaned on the sink for the few minutes it took Jack to leave. He gently closed the bathroom door and smiled as he realized the robe he used when home hung neatly from the back in

Family Affairs

anticipation of his visit. He slowly and painstakingly stripped off his clothes. Tossing them in the hamper, Ianto looked longingly at the bathtub, but settled on taking care of necessary business before washing his hands and face at the sink. He couldn't help but notice the slowly fading purple and yellow bruises from the Brecon Beacons had been joined by newer deep blue and black ones on his shoulder and thigh from the other day's events. Swallowing hard, he shrugged on the robe, opened the door and slowly made his way back to his bedroom.

Ianto braced a hand on the jamb as he pushed his door open again. He blinked a bit stupidly at the sight of his room. The room was dark. The thick draperies now covered the windows. The only illumination provided by the flickering candle lamp on the bedside table. The duvet and sheets folded back. The bed itself covered with thick towels while a familiar aroma scented the air. Ianto tilted his head to one side and drew in a deep breath. The scent reminded him of those rare times when he truly enjoyed his earliest childhood, like a dream he barely remembered, and he could feel himself beginning to relax as it enveloped his senses. All he could do was stare at Jack in surprised shock.

“You like?” Jack asked. “I had it made for you.”

A hand stroked down his arm, clasped his hand, and Ianto opened eyes he didn't remember closing to smile. He hummed wordlessly before taking another deep breath. He let it out slowly and just as slowly released the doorframe to wrap that arm around Jack's neck. “Very much,” he murmured. “Very, very much.” He tilted his head to one side, considered, and gave Jack a brief chaste kiss. “Thank you.”

“Let's get you settled then.” Jack took a step back and clasped his hands. “Can you manage the walk?”

“Think so.” Ianto chuckled and shook his head a bit. He started across the room toward his bed only to pause as he heard the soft clunk of the door closing followed by the equally quiet snick of the lock. He raised an eyebrow in silent question before focusing his attention on the belt of his robe. Now closer to the lamp, he could more readily identify

Family Affairs

the combination of scents. His hands stilled just holding the fabric in his hands. He tilted his head again, took another breath and absently began cataloging the aromas. Sage, cinnamon, cloves, a hint of saffron, but it was the deeper, subtler scent beneath it all that brought tears to his eyes. It was a distinctive blend, created just for his family and imported through Siberia from China, and just as he remembered from shore side evenings when they'd cruised on the *Standart*. He twisted a bit to stare at Jack. "How did you know...?"

Warm arms encircled his waist. Unconsciously, he leaned back against Jack in response. "Your grandmother made me some of that tea while we were trying to get rid of the Carrionite," Jack said softly. A soft kiss pressed to his neck. "I remembered the scent. I also remembered how your voice warmed when you spoke of the common people who worked with you and your sisters. There was no way they didn't sneak you some good peasant cooking when your parents weren't looking." Another kiss pressed to his pulse while Jack's arms briefly tightened around him. "So while you were unconscious from the nanogenes, I asked Tosh to research it for me. Then, before we left, I took the list to a perfumer I know and explained what I wanted. She made it up for me."

"I think I'm going to cry, Jack," Ianto whispered. "No one's done..."

"Don't." Jack quickly interrupted him. His arms tightened again before his hands dropped to untie Ianto's robe. "I don't know how to handle it when you do. So, let's get you laid down and work on some of those bruises." In a reverse of their normal roles, Ianto shrugged off the robe letting it fall into Jack's hands. "My friend, Bettina, also made me a massage version of the oil. She said some of those spices are very therapeutic."

"They are... were... Sophie used to... I'm not going to think about it, Jack. If I do, I will start crying." Ianto trailed off and shook his head. He didn't want to think of the two members of the Household who he'd been more emotionally attached to than his own parents. He forced those thoughts away and buried them as deeply as he could in his head.

Family Affairs

Instead, he eased his way onto the bed and settled as comfortably as possible on the towels. He pillowed his head on his arms and watched Jack putter about the room. He waited, impatient but still, as Jack gathered his supplies together. He managed, somehow, to hide his surprise as Jack quickly stripped off his clothes, folded them, and set them on the dresser. The thought of being that close to Jack, nothing between them but slick oils, heated his blood. The nudity added yet another layer to his yearning for Jack and Jack's hands on his body. He shook his head to dispel the images of them writhing together on his bed. However, they wouldn't go away. He rested his cheek on his arms, hoped the blush was hidden by the lack of light, and sighed softly. Sooner or later, he'd have to find it within himself to seduce Jack.

CHAPTER THREE

“Comfortable?” Jack's voice was soft, low and soothing, and Ianto lifted his head a bit to smile at his lover. Ianto was surprised to discover Jack had donned a pair of loose fitting pajama bottoms while he'd been settling on the bed. As he watched, Jack settled on the bed beside his hip, poured a bit of oil out of a dark glass bottle into his palm and set the bottle aside again. He briskly rubbed his hands together before setting them on Ianto's shoulder. “I bet your Sophie burned sage next to your bed when you had a fever and fed you hot tea with a clove or two seeped in it.” He gently tugged Ianto's arm out from beneath him to work on the knots in the upper arm. “You had people who loved you, Alexei,” he said. The sound of his real name brought a startled sound from Ianto. “They just weren't who you expected them to be.”

“Not really.” Ianto answered the original question first. He hummed softly in agreement with Jack's assessment of his past. “I ache all over. And she would.” He cast a smile at Jack before half closing his eyes in memory. “Sophie made up something. I never was quite certain what it was and insisted that Nagorny use it instead of the things Dr. Derevenko prescribed.”

“She probably saved your life more than once.” Jack shifted; the bed creaked a bit beneath them. A soft startled sound escaped Ianto as

he realized Jack was now straddling his hips. More oil, a bit warmer than room temperature due to proximity to the lamp, was drizzled onto his back. "This is going to hurt at first," Jack murmured. "I'm sorry, *cariad*."

"Doesn't matter," Ianto muttered. He cracked one eye open to look up at Jack. "It always hurt. I'm used to it." He focused on his breathing, determined not to tense his back any more than it already was, and hummed softly. "I know Sophie did. Both of them did." He chuckled tiredly. "In a way, Mother's firing her likely saved her life. Sophie would never have let me go into exile without her. She, like Narogny, would have been shot long before the assassination."

"Let's not talk about that anymore," Jack murmured. "Just concentrate on your muscles loosening up here..."

His hands stroked up Ianto's back, the touch surprisingly light at first. Ianto consciously forced himself to relax beneath the caress. A soft, startled sound escaped him. He'd expected pain, to have to bite back the whimpers like he had as a child, and while there was indeed pain as Jack dug his fingers into the muscles along his spine, he didn't want to scream in response. Ianto hummed softly and let his eyes close again.

"That's nice," he whispered. Ianto focused his attention on the warmth of Jack's touch. The heat from his lover's body surrounded him. The scent of Jack - leather, spices and that indescribable something which was just Jack - blended seamlessly with the aroma of the oil heated by the lamp. Jack's voice dropped, the tone as soothing as his touch, and Ianto found himself drifting toward sleep as his body began to relax. "Talk to me, Jack? Or I'm going to go to sleep despite..." he trailed off not quite able to talk about his physical reaction to Jack's proximity.

Jack's weight shifted. His warm breath brushed his ear. Ianto shivered all over from the inadvertent caress. "Getting hard instead of soft?" Jack whispered in his ear. A soft kiss behind his ear caused him to moan softly in response.

Family Affairs

“Jack!” he hissed.

“Don’t tell me you aren’t, Mr. Jones.” Jack’s lips brushed against his skin. “The idea of the two of us rolling in these sheets covered in massage oil makes you crazy.”

Ianto swallowed hard. He muttered a few base Russian curses first learned from Nagorny as a child. “You know...” He growled the words out. “And you’re teasing me anyway.”

“I like teasing you.” Jack shifted over him again. Fabric brushed against Ianto’s hips and arse while he moved before more warm oil drizzled down his spine. Gentle hands kneaded and massaged while they sought out the knots his body had twisted itself into and released them. “When you’re better, I’ll do much more than tease.”

“You are being terribly unfair.” Ianto attempted to twist to look back at Jack; however, a firm hand pressed down on his shoulder keeping him flat on the bed. “Getting me all wound up... imagining things... and...” he broke off abruptly with a deep groan as Jack managed to get one of the tenser places in his back to relax.

“Imagine away.” Jack moved backwards on the bed. His hands stroked down over Ianto’s arse before one lifted to retrieve the oil from the table. Warm liquid drizzled on Ianto’s thigh and calf before those hands returned to knead those muscles as well. “Save the images. Make a list. We’ll work from it.”

Those large hands stroked and kneaded, fingers just nudging against his balls. Ianto shifted restlessly on the bed until he could part his legs a bit. He wanted to be touched. He desperately wanted Jack to touch him. Yet he didn’t know how to ask for just that. Another low groan slipped from him when Jack moved away to focus on his other leg. “I already have a list,” he muttered. “A very long one.”

“Good.” A soft startled sound escaped from him when Jack pressed a kiss to the back of one knee. “Keep it close.” Yet more oil poured, puddled on his skin, and Jack’s touch became firmer as Ianto continued to relax. “Did I hear you purr?”

Family Affairs

“Uh huh,” Ianto murmured. He managed to twist enough to look back at Jack. “Don’t let it out. I don’t do that for just anyone.”

“From now on, Mister Jones, you purr only for me.”

The stern words and the possessive stare that accompanied them twisted something inside Ianto. The words warmed him deep inside even as his body throbbed and his cock hardened further. He blinked and swallowed, fought down a blush that escaped anyway, and somehow managed to find his voice. “Kay,” he murmured. “I can do that.”

“Good boy,” Jack teased. One hand lightly slapped his arse before stroking gently over his skin. Another moan slipped from Ianto in response. “You like that?”

Ianto turned away to bury his face in the pillow. He could feel his blush deepening even as he answered Jack. “Yes.” He hoped the pillow muffled his words enough so Jack wouldn’t hear them. “I did.”

“Which part?” A low chuckle rolled from Jack. The sound, rich and almost decadent, was a caress in and of itself. “The smack or the caress.”

Another light slap to his arse followed by a leisurely stroke of fingers over his skin forced another moan from Ianto’s lips. Unconsciously, he arched his hips to follow those fingers as they started to lift away from his skin. “Both,” Ianto muttered. He glared back over his shoulder at Jack. “Bastard.”

“I’ll have to remember that.” Jack bent and pressed a kiss to one shoulder. “Right now, though, you need to go to sleep.” Another kiss followed. Then Jack rose to his feet, his hands reaching for the covers tossed over the end of the bed and lifting them up.

“You’re just going to leave...” Ianto all but snarled. He rolled over onto his back and grumbled a bit as the towel crunched up beneath him. “You can’t leave me like this.” He waved one hand at his more than obvious erection.

“Ianto...”

Family Affairs

“No...” Ianto sat up, tugged the towel from beneath him and tossed it onto the floor beside the bed. He reached out and caught one of Jack’s hands in his free one. “You can’t just leave,” he hissed. “I’m so hard I hurt and you...” he trailed off for a moment and shook his head just a bit. “Well, those pants don’t hide much, do they?”

“And you’re still in pain... so...”

“Oh no you don’t.” Ianto dropped Jack’s hand, rose to his knees, and grabbed the waistband of Jack’s light pants in his hands. He pulled hard, all but dragging Jack toward him, and growled, “Don’t make this about how I can’t do something because of the illness. I want you. I need you.” He looked up at Jack for a moment before looking away again. Ianto hoped Jack didn’t notice the way his hands shook as he started to untie the strong holding those pants up. “Jack... I...” he paused and swallowed hard before looking back up at Jack again. He forced himself to meet his lover’s gaze. “You know I’m not ready for everything yet, but there are things we can do...”

Jack’s hands covered his own. He froze, terrified that he’d offended Jack, yet before he could apologize Jack bent and kissed him. Just a brush of lips across his own, more a tease than a kiss, yet it relaxed Ianto again. “So you want to play?” Jack murmured before ghosting his lips along his jaw. “Maybe explore a little?”

All rational thought ceased. The provocative way Jack murmured ‘explore’ ruined all of Ianto’s higher brain functions. How did the damned man turned a simple question into the most erotic proposal Ianto ever received in his life? He blinked up at his lover and managed what he was certain was an eager nod if Jack’s soft laugh could be used as an indicator. Ianto didn’t even have a chance to get offended before Jack tugged his hands away, took a step back and pulled the tie holding his pajama pants on. The loose fitting trousers dropped away leaving Jack nude before him. The few brain cells Ianto scraped into coherence died again at the sight of the other man.

He’d seen men nude before, even Jack, since the nature of their work often required them to strip down quickly, yet nothing prepared

Family Affairs

him for the sight of aroused Jack. Ianto blinked, blinked again and slowly forced his gaze up over Jack until he could stare into Jack's eyes. One of Jack's hands rose, brushed over his cheek, and Ianto leaned into the caress with a soft sigh. "Jack..."

"Shh," Jack murmured. "Scoot back a bit and stretch out for me. Get comfortable."

Ianto tilted his head in question but when the instruction was gently repeated he moved back a bit on his bed until he could stretch his legs out and rest his weight back on his hands. A soft gasp escaped him when Jack straddled his hips. The older man leaned forward to rest his hands on the mattress on either side of Ianto. Ianto arched his neck to meet him as Jack bent his head for a kiss. Jack teased him with darting flicks of his tongue until Ianto lifted one hand, tangled his fingers in Jack's hair and took control of the kiss. He deepened it, sent his tongue out to stroke and tease Jack's until a moan escaped his lover. Ianto used the slight advantage he had to explore Jack's mouth, finding the spots that made Jack moan, and twisted his body as best he could to flip them over so he was lying on top of the older man.

"Jack..." Ianto panted for breath in the aftermath of their kiss. "I want..." He trailed off and trailed his free hand down Jack's side to stroke across his hip. He swallowed, bit his lip and curled his fingers around Jack's cock. The low groan that slipped from the other man emboldened him. Ianto watched Jack intently while he slowly stroked his hand up Jack's cock. He couldn't think. Not coherently anyway. All he could do was feel. And the feel of Jack's cock in his hand made his mouth dry even as it made his own cock harder, if that was even possible. He repeated the caress even as he struggled to figure out what he wanted. It was more than a mere want; it was a need that surged through his veins. He knew the theories, but the experiences eluded him. "I need..."

"I know." Jack lifted a hand to brush along Ianto's face before it settled on one shoulder. "Lay down for me," he ordered. That hand pushed gently. Jack's other arm came up to curl around Ianto's back.

Family Affairs

He let Jack lay him down on the bed and smiled as the other man propped himself up on one elbow beside him. "I know you want this," Jack murmured. His free hand swept along Ianto's and over his hip. "I also know you aren't ready for..." There was a significant pause before Jack continued, "everything. Will you let me lead? Trust me to know when to stop?"

Ianto hummed softly in response. He knew Jack wanted a response; however, his mind's sole focus was on the heat of Jack's hand and the seemingly lazy way his thumb rubbed circles in the hollow of Ianto's hip. He fought back a shudder and a moan while staring intently up at Jack.

"You didn't hear a word I said," Jack teased. He lifted his hand away to stroke the backs of his fingers down Ianto's cheek before lifting his chin to get Ianto's attention back. "Ianto..."

"Not exactly." Ianto dropped his gaze from Jack's for a moment before lifting it again with a faint smile. "I get distracted when you touch me, Jack." He slid his hands back along the bedding until he was completely horizontal again then reached up to wrap a hand around Jack's nape. He idly played with the small hairs there, twinning them around his fingers before releasing them again, and tilted his head just a bit in silent question. "What'd I miss?"

"I wanted to know if you'd trust me to know where and when to stop."

"Yep." Ianto tightened his hold on Jack's neck and pulled him down for a slow lazy kiss. He nipped Jack's lower lip tugging on it just a bit until his lover gasped softly. He took advantage of the sound to slide his tongue into the other man's mouth to tangle with Jack's. He kept kiss going until he felt faint from lack of air. Only then did Ianto pull away enough to whisper the rest of his answer. "I trust you, my Jack."

Jack's eyes widened. A hoarse whisper escaped him. "Oh God, Ianto." Then he stole Ianto's breath with a demanding kiss of his own. Ianto moaned and wrapped his arms around Jack's neck. He clung for

Family Affairs

all he was worth even as he submitted completely to Jack's lead. The kiss broke; Ianto whimpered. Jack dropped his head to nuzzle into Ianto's neck. His teeth grazed over Ianto's pulse. "You're mine, Ianto," he growled. "All mine."

A shiver raced through Ianto. He tightened his hold on Jack, nails digging into his skin, and arched his neck. "God, Jack, do that again," he begged. Only one thing lingered semi-clearly in his mind: Jack's comment about how sex was play and learned from experimenting. He licked his lips, another flash of memory slipping across his mind, to tease another moan from him. "Please, Jack, do it again."

"Like that?" Jack's lips teased across his skin. His tongue flicked while teeth gently bit. Ianto bit his lip hard to muffle his responsive cry. "Remember what I wanted to do in the shower..." His voice low and dark, pure seduction, and Ianto shivered again in response to it. "Shall I do it now..." Jack's teeth again scraped over pulse. "Mark you as mine?"

It wasn't really a question, yet Ianto somehow managed to find his voice to respond anyway. "Yes, yes..." Ianto half-panted, half-begged. He wanted to belong to Jack. He wanted to look in the mirror and see Jack's brand on him. "Mark me, Jack."

"Mine." The word repeated in a deeply possessive growl against his throat. Jack pressed a kiss to his skin before sucking hard against his throat. Ianto moaned and again arched his head back. One hand shifted to tangle in Jack's hair and held him against him. Knowing what Jack was doing, the soft noises muffled against his skin combined to ratchet up Ianto's arousal. He squirmed on the bed and whined in frustration.

A flick of tongue along his pulse followed up with a gentle kiss as Jack slowly lifted his head from his neck. Ianto stared up at him and panted for breath. "Jack... I..."

"I know." Jack smiled down at him. He shifted his weight on the bed. "You want and don't rightly know what it is you want." He stroked a hand over Ianto's shoulder, down his chest and circled a nipple with one finger. "So innocent," he murmured. He bent down for

Family Affairs

a quick kiss even as Ianto tried to pull himself together enough to protest. “Intoxicating... gorgeous... and I’m going to love finding out exactly what you like...” Jack paused for a moment. He held Ianto’s gaze as he bent down to briefly suck on the nipple he’d been teasing. Ianto cried out in surprised pleasure. “And I’m going to teach you exactly what I like.” His breath caressed, chilled his nipple, and Ianto again whimpered softly.

“Please, Jack, please...” Ianto grabbed Jack’s hand in his and all but shoved it toward his cock. “Touch me.”

Long fingers curled around his cock. Jack’s thumb swiped over the head before he dragged his hand up and off Ianto’s heated flesh. A whine of protest escaped Ianto followed almost immediately by a startled gasp. The now cool massage oil ran down the length of Ianto’s cock as Jack drizzled a bit onto him. “Wha...?” Ianto started to ask only to break off abruptly as Jack again wrapped his hand around his cock and slowly stroked it.

“Lubricant,” Jack said. He stroked slowly but firmly. His fist was just tight enough to pleasure while not allowing Ianto to come yet. “Don’t want to hurt you.”

Ianto keened, his back arched as he thrust his hips, and his hand scrabbled amongst the covers until he found the discarded, nearly empty bottle of oil. He tilted it over his hand and shook it until he got the last of the oil out. Then, holding Jack’s gaze with his own, he reached for Jack’s cock. He curled his fingers around the thick length and merely held it for a moment. “Tell me how to get you off, Jack,” he demanded.

“Just like the other day in the shower.” Jack gasped the words out. He never stopped his almost lazy stroking of Ianto’s cock even as he spoke. Ianto took him at his word and stroked his hand up the length of Jack’s cock before twisting his wrist just a bit as he reached the head. A hoarse groan escaped his lover in response. “Oh, yeah, like that.”

Ianto curled his free hand around Jack’s neck. He pulled Jack down for a kiss and shut off the last bits of his logical mind. He stroked Jack.

Family Affairs

Sometimes he copied things Jack did to him, other times he did what his instincts said would likely please the older man. Soon they were both gasping for breath, bodies pressed together as they sought to both orgasm and at the same time drag their partner's pleasure out. Finally, Ianto couldn't take anymore and came with a scream. Jack followed soon after with a cry of his own.

They lay together, hands still on each other's cocks, until a groan escaped from Jack. He shifted onto his back. Ianto protested sleepily. "Don't..."

"Shh," Jack murmured. "Not going anywhere." A kiss pressed to Ianto's temple then to his lips. "I want to blow out the lamp and get the covers."

"Kay," Ianto murmured. He watched through half-closed eyes as Jack slid from the bed. He blinked, somewhat surprised, when his lover retrieved the discarded towel from the floor and used to clean both of them off before folding it and setting it aside. The covers were grabbed from the end of the bed, tossed up to mostly cover Ianto, and then Jack bent to blow out the candle lamp. Ianto held up the duvet with one hand while holding the other out to Jack. "Stay."

"Only for a bit." Jack climbed into the bed. He lay back, plumped a pillow beneath his head, and chuckled softly when Ianto scooted over to curl up against his side. "Goodnight, *cariad*," he murmured.

Ianto hummed softly in response, leaned up to press a brief kiss to Jack's lips, and whispered, "*Nos da*, Jack."

CHAPTER FOUR

Ianto woke slowly. He was warm, comfortable, and really didn't want to move. A hand stroked down his back. He hummed in response as he blinked sleepily. His bedroom was heavily shadowed due to the still closed drapes yet enough light bled into the room to illuminate the man still sleeping beside him. He smiled at the sight of Jack, deeply asleep on his back beside him, and slowly shifted his arm back across his lover's chest until he could grasp the edge of the covers. He eased the sheets and duvet away until the other man lay exposed before him. Pure lust made his mind blank and he could feel his morning erection twitch. God, Jack was gorgeous! Before now, Ianto never believed the word could apply to a man, but it certainly applied to Jack. And the smell of him. He leaned close and dragged in a deep breath. Jack once joked with him about fifty-first century pheromones, maybe that's what it was, but the smell of Jack could drive him crazy.

Ianto licked his lips and swallowed hard. He wanted to touch and taste. He wanted to discover everything that made Jack crazy. Yet he could never seem to tell Jack these things when the man was awake. His mind drifted back to the last time he'd woken up beside Jack. Once again, he heard Jack's voice drift across his mind: *You can do anything you want with me. I give you free use of my body.*

Family Affairs

A shiver raced through Ianto at the memory. His gaze lingered on Jack. In a daze, he watched his hand reach toward his lover as if it belonged to someone other than him. He snatched it back. Suddenly, for no logical reason, he wanted to run, to get as far away from Jack as he could. Panic and fear swamped him and he whimpered softly in reaction to it.

He swallowed back another whimper as anger drowned the panic, anger at himself as he had no reason to fear Jack. Why was he acting like this? What happened to cause all his self-confidence to go flying out the window? It made no sense. He didn't understand it. Ianto clenched one hand amongst the tangled bedding and hissed a soft curse in Russian. He wanted Jack. He needed Jack. There were times he wanted him so much he ached with arousal. He knew he was falling for the other man. And yet here he sat terrified at finding himself nude in bed with his own lover.

He bowed his head, closed his eyes and forced himself to think past the sudden fear. He knew that despite years of Torchwood sanctioned therapy, he still carried a ton of emotional baggage from his previous life. Alexei, poor child, had learned all the wrong lessons about sex long before he was of an age to experiment. By the time he was old enough, he was here in the twentieth century struggling to adjust to a new time and a new life. He didn't have time to experiment much at all. Plus, Alexei had all the smothering and sheltering of four dominant older sisters, a semi-invalid mother, a domineering grandmother, and a weak-willed father. The closest he came to a normal family were the attentions of a nursery maid and a bodyguard.

A shuddering sigh escaped Ianto. He'd set all those things aside. Dealt with them during the lengthy days of his suspension as he came to terms with the idea he wanted Jack far more than he'd ever wanted any woman, even Lisa who he'd asked to marry him. Yet it never would be that easy for him. The things learned in childhood never really left you. They had a way of sticking to you whether you wanted them to or not.

Family Affairs

Ianto leaned his head back, clenched his eyes shut, and forced himself to concentrate on what triggered this strangely twisted panic attack in the first place. It wasn't the previous night's conversation with Jack. He'd spoken about his childhood and Sophie with the other man before without any problems. However, something from the previous night set this off. Ianto was certain of it. He dropped his head down again to stare at Jack only to find his lover staring right back at him.

"What's wrong, *velikolepnyř*?"

"I don't know." Ianto looked away for a moment before meeting Jack's gaze. "I'm trying to figure that out, Jack. Something's left me absolutely terrified of lying here with you. I just can't figure out what."

A soft hum slipped from Jack. Ianto watched as he shifted up the bed, plumped the pillows and leaned back against the pile of pillows. He patted the spot next to him but only sighed softly when Ianto shook his head. "I wondered when it would happen." Jack gently tugged his hand from Ianto's loose hold as he spoke.

"When what would happen?" Ianto glared at his lover. He shifted on the bed until he was comfortable. He again reached for Jack's hand and frowned when Jack moved out of reach. "Jack?"

"Ever since I brought Marie back, you've been struggling between Ianto and Alexei." Jack waved his hand toward the bedroom door as if the motion would summon his sister to them. "When you're around her, you try to be the younger brother she remembers and loves."

"I don't..." Ianto trailed off into silence. He ran the previous night's conversation through his mind again. "Oh hell, she called me Sunny last night."

"That was your family nickname, wasn't it?"

"Yep." Ianto frowned a bit and shook his head. He thought back to his earliest memories for a moment before nodding to Jack. "Everyone used it, or Sunbeam, for me. Mother also called me 'Baby'. I think the family only used my name on state occasions."

"Well, Ianto isn't Sunny or Sunbeam, and if I called Ianto Baby he'd probably split my lip." Jack gave Ianto a rueful smile. "But Alexei is

Family Affairs

trying very hard to be what Marie needs, or maybe just slipping back into a comfortable relationship.”

Ianto chuckled softly. “I wouldn't hit you for it. I'd give you decaf coffee instead.” He sighed tiredly and shoved a hand through his hair. “Did I use that strange hybrid of Russian and German talking to her last night?”

“Yes, you did.” Jack shifted on the bed. There was something in the way he spoke which disturbed Ianto. “I wondered if you even noticed you were doing it.”

“I didn't,” Ianto snapped. He shook his head and gave Jack a quick smile by way of apology. He crossed his legs tailor fashion and leaned forward over them to rest his elbows on the bed so he was a bit closer to his lover. “I know Marie started using it when she apologized to me for the way she tackled me when she came in, but I didn't notice I used it answering her.”

“You both slipped into it totally unconsciously. Ianto...” Jack trailed off and stared into the distance for a moment. “Maybe you should talk to your mother about this. Besides being very wise, she's damn ruthless about protecting her own, and I think both you and Marie need that ruthlessness right now.”

“How could Mama possibly help this?” He waved a hand between the two of them. “I wanted to...” he trailed off, blushed and then growled at himself. “Fuck,” he muttered.

A smirk appeared on Jack's face. His hand came up and stroked along Ianto's cheek. “You wanted to fuck?” The words were teasing while his expression was anything but.

“Jaaack!” Ianto drawled. “We'll get to that. I wanted to take advantage of that permission you gave me the other day, explore a few other bits of Jack territory, and...” He broke off, frowned and muttered to himself in Welsh. “All right, this is getting ridiculous!”

“It certainly is,” Jack conceded. “Ianto Jones, do you want me as I want you? Physically and intellectually?”

Family Affairs

“Of course I do.” Ianto stared up at Jack in disbelief. He couldn’t believe the man asked the question. He’d wanted Jack for months. If not from the moment he met him, then certainly from the moment they’d captured Myfanwy together. “I may only know some abstract theory, but I was certain if you didn’t like anything I was doing when I woke you up you would have corrected me. I wanted to know if the rest of you tasted as good as the bit I’d had that first time we woke up together!”

Jack tangled his hand in Ianto’s hair. He tugged gently. Ianto willingly crawled up the bed in response. “Then...” Jack murmured as he pulled Ianto closer. He kissed him - deeply but gently - and pulled away after a sharp nip to Ianto’s lower lip. “I grant you free access to my body. Anything you want. I doubt you could do anything that could turn me off.”

“Anything?” Ianto whispered. He pressed closer to Jack and claimed a kiss of his own. “Anything at all?”

“Well...” Jack drawled the word between their kisses. “These days I don’t like bondage games, but otherwise, anything you want.”

“Don’t let me panic again?” Ianto shifted a bit on the bed, shoved the covers completely away again, and stroked one palm down Jack’s chest. “Please?”

“Ianto, the only one who can stop your panic is you,” Jack said. He ran his fingers through Ianto’s hair and scratched his nails over his nape. Ianto purred softly in response. “But I can tell you, absolutely, that nothing we do is immoral, indecent or evil.”

Ianto took a deep breath, nodded and just barely smiled. “How did you put it...” he paused and kissed Jack lightly. “Loving and playful...” he trailed off again while he shifted again. Now he straddled his lover’s hips and rested his hands on his shoulders to steady himself. “God, Jack, I want you.”

Jack’s hands came to rest on Ianto’s hips. He smiled up at him. “I know you do, *velikolepnyĭ*,” he murmured. “You’re not quite ready

Family Affairs

though.” He ran a hand up Ianto’s back and urged him down for another kiss. “So, how were you going to wake me up this morning?”

Ianto rested his hands on the bed and tilted his head a bit to consider Jack for a moment. “Well, promise you’ll tell me if I do anything you don’t like? Or if I should do something different?” he asked. “And I’ll show you what I was thinking when I woke up.”

“Of course,” Jack murmured. “Though I doubt you could do anything I wouldn’t like.”

Ianto smiled, nodded, and shifted his weight a bit to get more comfortable. He bent down and nuzzled his face into Jack’s neck. He breathed deep of his lover’s scent before pressing open mouthed kisses along Jack’s throat and down over his chest. He flicked his tongue across one nipple, blew on it and then caught it between his teeth to tease and tug on before sucking gently. A deep groan accompanied his actions. Ianto flicked his gaze up to consider Jack for a moment before shifting his attention to the other nipple. He played with the first, rolling it between his fingers, while he tormented the other one with gentle nibbles and sucking.

Ianto settled his weight on his legs. He shifted about until he didn’t hurt himself pressing on any of his bruises. Once comfortable, he trailed his now free hand down Jack’s side to stroke over his hip and thigh before reversing the trek up his body to play with his nipples. Ianto lifted his head and stole a kiss before smiling down at Jack.

If the moans and gasps coming from his lover were any indication, he was certainly on the right track. Ianto again let one hand drift down Jack’s body until he could curl it around Jack’s cock. He stroked slowly drawing a deep hoarse groan from the older man before again lowering his head to Jack’s chest. He licked his way down the warm skin while moving backwards down the bed. He shifted his weight and pressed one leg against Jack’s until his lover moved enough to allow him to kneel between his legs. Ianto hummed his approval before nuzzling his face into the hollow of Jack’s hip.

Family Affairs

Jack's scent, always so intoxicating, was heavier here. It blurred Ianto's mind and fuzzed his thoughts until all he could think of was Jack. He took a deep breath, his eyes drifting shut for a moment, and then nipped at the soft skin. He licked the tiny pain away. Jack's deep groan encouraged him. Ianto glanced up through his lashes for a moment and rubbed his cheek against his lover's cock. Still watching Jack, he ran his tongue up the throbbing length before lapping at the tip. He did it again and barely managed to contain the smirk at the shudder that wracked Jack's body. Slowly, very slowly, knowing that Jack was watching, he opened his mouth and took in as much as he could while wrapping his hand around the remaining length. He sucked gently and absently hummed deep in his throat as the rich taste of Jack filled his senses.

"Oh fuck, Ianto." Jack's voice cracked as he spoke. A hand stroked through his hair then curled around his neck. "You have no idea..."

Ianto slowly pulled off Jack's cock with a soft popping sound. "No idea what?" he asked. He stroked Jack's cock with his hand while he spoke. Another deep groan answered him and Ianto laughed softly before once again taking Jack's cock in his mouth. He licked and sucked, just experimenting to see what different sounds he could get from Jack, and all the while watched him from beneath half lowered lashes.

Jack tugged at Ianto's hair again, a little harder. "You like to tease, Mr. Jones," he murmured as their eyes met. "I wonder how you would like being teased?"

Letting his eyes close for a moment, Ianto hummed his agreement. Just the thought of Jack teasing him ramped his arousal up another notch. A hoarse groan accompanied the tightening of Jack's hands in his hair. Ianto eased off Jack's cock until only the tip was in his mouth. He teased the slit with the tip of his tongue before taking as much of Jack's cock into his mouth as he could. He swallowed hard. A muffled scream echoed through the room as his lover's climax struck. Despite the slightly bitter taste, Ianto swallowed every drop before licking

Family Affairs

Jack's cock clean. He pulled away and looked up at the other man. Before he could say a word, Jack tugged on Ianto's hair.

"Come're." As Ianto crawled up the bed, Jack tugged at his arms until he was close enough to kiss. Ianto groaned into the kiss and ground his hips into Jack's desperate for relief. A hand stroked down his back. He arched into the caress before breaking the kiss with a startled cry as Jack's fingers teased along the crack of his arse. A chuckle escaped Jack as his fingers crept down. "You like that," Jack murmured.

"Uh huh..." Ianto claimed another kiss. Only Jack's hand tangled in his hair kept him from breaking it when Jack's fingers brushed his entrance, teasing little circles of a caress, and threw him over the edge into his own orgasm. Breaking the kiss, Ianto collapsed against Jack's chest. "Wow," he panted.

"I could say the same." Jack brushed his fingers along his forehead. "You are just full of surprises, Ianto Jones."

CHAPTER FIVE

With a quick chaste kiss, Ianto left Jack to shower and headed downstairs. He owed his lover a thank you. Between the previous night's massage and the long hot shower this morning, he was moving much better than he should have been for this stage of his recovery. He paused in the central hall then crossed it to head through the kitchen and into the Victorian conservatory beyond. As expected, he found his Tad sitting at the glass and wrought iron table that dominated the glass walled space. Ifan Jones sat at the table, folded paper in one hand and a coffee mug in the other, just lingering over his brunch. A plate of scones sat nearby. Both a teapot and coffee pot within easy reach. Ianto leaned against the doorframe for a moment, just savoring the image of the man who was essentially the only father he'd truly had, before crossing the room to settle in one of the other chairs. "*Bore da*¹⁰, Tad," he murmured.

"*Bore da*, Ianto."

Ianto smiled as his mother's cat, a fluff ball of a Persian, hopped up onto the table and rubbed her head against his hand. He lifted the cat down into his lap before pouring himself a coffee and grabbing a

¹⁰ Welsh; "Good Morning"

Family Affairs

couple of scones. He petted the cat with one hand while tearing apart one of the scones with the other in order to eat one handed.

“A package arrived for you this morning.” His Tad laid aside the paper. “Tiffany’s?”

“It’s for Jack.” He blushed and stared intently into his coffee. “I told him one of the Imperial Family’s traditions. He dared me to do it. So I did. I hoped it would arrive before we left or else I’d have had you or Mama forward it to me in Cardiff.”

“Does he make you happy?” Ifan stared hard across the table. Ianto wanted to squirm beneath the stare just as he had when he’d been in trouble as a teenager.

“Very much,” Ianto murmured. “I... I think I love him, but...” He growled softly and shoved his plate away, the scone uneaten despite being turned into small crumbs.

“What has you angry, *mab*?”

Ianto dropped his gaze to the table and sighed. He sipped at his coffee for a moment and petted the cat while he thought things through. He knew that tone. It was the ‘you need to think before answering me... honest answers only, please’ one. Finally, he looked up at his Tad again. “Marie,” he snapped. He closed his eyes and struggled to remain calm. “Five fucking years of therapy shot by her appearance,” he said. “She’s my sister. I love her dearly, but I’m not her baby brother anymore. So why do I keep trying to be him for her?”

“I think you want to make certain she survives the shock,” Ifan replied. He grabbed another plate, put a scone on it and slid it over to Ianto. “So you’re giving her what you think she needs.”

“And in the process ruining things with Jack,” Ianto replied. “I don’t like this, Tad. I could so easily resent her for this but she...” he trailed off and growled in wordless frustration.

“No, don’t blame her. Think.” Ifan rapped his knuckles against the glass table to emphasis his point. “You see her through Alexei’s eyes. He thinks she needs to be protected and cosseted, but she’s survived a

Family Affairs

great deal just as you have. She can find her own feet. In fact, she needs to.”

“We were both cosseted and protected. I know she doesn’t need it.” He rose to his feet, accidentally dumping the cat onto the floor, and paced the space beside the table. “She adapted best to the change in our circumstances after Papa abdicated.”

“Ianto, you know it in your head but in your heart?” Ifan shook his head. “You have your most beloved sister back again. You know how hard it was for you so you’re afraid for her and you’re trying to smooth her way by giving her the brother she subconsciously expects.” He leaned forward and caught Ianto’s arm as he paced by. “That’s not going to work. You need to let her go, let her make her own mistakes and learn from them. She won’t be alone. We’ll all be here to help.”

“I know, Tad, I know. I just...” He paused and sighed softly. “I slipped back into that strange language we spoke as children with her last night. I didn’t even notice doing it. I missed her the most yet now... I don’t know.”

“You’re trying to find the answer by yourself,” Ifan responded. He refilled his coffee mug while he spoke. “Perhaps you should talk to your mother and your sister. Mairwen is a clever girl, she’ll understand.”

“I don’t want to upset her.”

“So, you’ll sacrifice your entire life instead? Is that what Mairwen would want?”

“The girl I grew up with would want me happy.”

“Then talk to her, *mab!*”

“I don’t know how! Marie was...” Ianto threw his hands up in frustration. He flung himself back into his abandoned chair. A deep groan escaped him as his bruises protested his actions. “Shouldn’t have done that,” he muttered.

“Stop thinking about Marie,” Ifan retorted. His voice calm, level, and even compared to Ianto’s almost angry tones. “Think about Mairwen instead.” A soft chuckle escaped him. “And if you keep

Family Affairs

flinging yourself about like that, you'll never hear the end of it from your mother!"

The mere thought of the lecture his mama would give him drew a dramatic wince from Ianto. "I was fine until recently. Mama would ground me." He shook his head with a bit of a laugh. Even now when he was twenty-three, living on his own and working a job he truly loved, his mama would still lecture him as if he was the thirteen year old she first adopted if she thought he was putting his health in jeopardy. "I don't know if I can think of her as Mairwen."

"You had damned well better or you'll ruin both your lives."

Ianto shifted in his chair to consider his father. The fact the older man cursed despite his even and calm tone of voice told Ianto he needed to truly think through his Tad's words. He sat for a moment before letting out a tired sigh. "I'm acting like that spoiled brat again, aren't I?"

"You're acting like the frightened little boy who came through the Rift." Ifan nodded to him. "I don't blame you considering what's happened, but you're not that frightened child anymore. You're a grown man with a painful history behind you." A smile softened the words as did the reassuring handclasp across the tabletop. "Someone who's chosen a new life, a new career, and a new lover without letting all the stupid things he learned as a child influence him."

"And now I feel thirteen again." Ianto chuckled and shook his head. "I like Ianto Alexis Jones. I really don't like the child I once was."

"You shouldn't dislike him. He coped the best he could with a bad situation, but you're not him anymore. You, Ianto Jones, have to help your sister find the Mairwen Jones that could be. She's a fighter, that one, once she gets past all the stupid things she learned."

"He was a royal brat," Ianto retorted. "But I do understand. It's going to be hard figuring out how to manage being the older of us now."

"Perhaps what you need is some distance," Ifan said. He seemed to consider things for a moment. "If the two of you were who you are now

Family Affairs

from the beginning, she would be getting ready for University and you would be working. You'd see each other for holidays and family celebrations. Try for the normal, Ianto."

"We came up to help her get settled with you and Mama because I was worried about her. I'm probably making things infinitely worse for her just by being here."

"Not really," Ifan replied. He smiled over at Ianto. "She needs to know you're around, but you do need to talk to her about the future. Let the past go for a while."

"She's not happy with my plans, Tad," Ianto said. He looked down and blinked in surprise. He hadn't even realized he'd actually eaten until he was out of things to eat. "I know that."

"No, you don't. You are assuming you know what she thinks." Ifan's voice turned stern even as it remained calm and even. "In the few days she's been here, she and your mother have spent time gathering information on art school summer programs both here and in London, Liverpool, Edinburgh and Glasgow? Did you know she talked us into letting her sign up for driving lessons after the holiday? You don't know anything yet. Talk to her." Another smile softened the lecture. "I'm not saying she's not scared. It just might be less than you think."

"She did what?" Ianto didn't bother to keep his surprise hidden. It was all he could do to keep from dropping his jaw in shock. "My sister did what?"

An arched eyebrow was turned on him. Once again, Ianto realized just how much of the man he currently was came from the influence of Ifan and Victoria. "She's trying to find her own feet." Ifan nodded to him as he relaxed in his chair again. "Yes, she sometimes panics, but she picks herself up and keeps trying. She's made me sketches for a new spring fabric line. Florals. Absolutely fabulous. The girl is going to earn her own way through university on her royalties."

"She always was the best artist of the girls."

"There's incredible talent there. She's also working on embroidery designs. You should ask her about her plans and stop worrying."

Family Affairs

“I’m being an idiot, aren’t I?”

“No, you’re being a brother.”

“I don’t know how to tell this to Mama and Mar...” Ianto broke off abruptly and all but slapped himself. “Dammit... Mairwen though.”

“Oh please.” His tad rolled his eyes at him. “You’re a Welshman and a Jones. The day words fail us is the day the sun stops shining.”

Ianto smirked and pointed at the windows. “Well, it’s raining now, does that count?” He leapt to his feet and danced out of smacking range with a hint of a grin.

“Ianto Alexis Jones, shut your mouth, get yourself upstairs and speak to your mother!” The grin that danced across Ifan’s face took any sting out of his words.

“Taaad,” Ianto whined playfully. He grinned back at his Tad as Ifan broke up laughing. He quickly joined in before sobering as he heard Jack’s familiar tread on the main stairs. “Don’t be too hard on Jack?”

“Young man, it is a father's responsibility to come down on his son's beloved like a ton of bricks,” Ifan retorted. “Now, off with you.”

Ianto pouted at him for a moment but nodded. He did understand the need for his parents to grill Jack about him, but he didn’t have to like it. “Yes, sir.” He brushed crumbs from his jumper and jeans as he rose to his feet. “And thanks for...” He waved his hand wordlessly.

“Nothing to thank me for,” Ifan said. “I’m your father. It’s what fathers do.”

Ianto smiled, bent down and hugged Ifan tightly for a moment. “And a very good one. I’ll leave you to grilling my Jack and go brave Mama.” He kissed Ifan’s cheek, straightened and started out of the conservatory. He met Jack, looking lost and confused, in the front hall. He wrapped his arms around his lover and rested his head on his shoulder. A soft sigh escaped him as Jack’s arms came around him. Ianto stood there for a moment before pulling away with another sigh. He pressed a chaste kiss to Jack’s lips before pointing back the way

Family Affairs

he'd come. "Tad's in the conservatory. Just go down the hall and through the kitchen. I've been told to go talk to my Mama."

"Oh God..." Jack murmured. "Can I run away now?"

"No." Ianto swatted him playfully and smiled. "I'm told it's a father's duty to grill you about your intentions toward me." He watched Jack head down the hall before turning his attention to the two small packages on a side table. He'd missed them when he'd come down earlier. He checked them both, quickly opening and closing the boxes, before tucking them into his pockets. He then headed back upstairs toward his mama's studio.

Getting to the door, Ianto paused and reached up to straighten his tie. He frowned and mentally cursed himself for the nervous gesture. He wasn't even wearing a suit but jeans and a jumper. Taking a deep breath, he raised a hand and knocked firmly on the door. Not getting a response, he repeated the knock a bit harder. At his mama's called 'come in', Ianto eased the door open and peered around it. "Morning, Mama."

"Ianto! Come in." Victoria turned about in her tall chair and waved a hand for him to enter the room. "Mairwen and I are looking over some of her new fabric designs. Your father wants the completed artwork at the mill by next week to start printing the strike-offs."

"All ready?" Ianto couldn't quite contain his surprise. "That was quick." He slipped into the room and crossed the small octagonal space to join the women by the drafting table. He rested a hand on the back of Victoria's chair and smiled at them both. "Very quick indeed."

"This is my spring collection, that's what..." Mairwen paused and took a deep breath before finishing, "Tad calls it. Wildflowers. I sketched the ones I remembered from ho... I mean the Park on the train and since I arrived here." She took a deep breath and turned about to look at Ianto. "Would you mind very much if I stayed here for a while?"

"He would call it that." Ianto considered her for a moment. "If it's what you want, of course not."

Family Affairs

“You see, I have been thinking,” Mairwen paused and gathered her thoughts together. “Mama showed me samples of the entrance exams to Uni. Oh, Sunny, we were kept very ignorant, weren't we? I need to concentrate on studying, getting ready, and I'm afraid that if I'm in Cardiff I'll be distracted by everything there is to see and do. Here I can study and when I'm tired I can sketch and learn about fabric and embroidery, go for walks...” She trailed off for a moment and smiled at him. “And think. I need to think a great deal.”

“Don't call me Sunny.” Ianto snapped before he reached over and brushed her hair back. “We were but we also never really paid attention to the things Gibbes and Gilliard attempted to teach us.”

“Nobody ever really cared whether we did or not either.” She giggled softly. “In any case, I need to make up for my academic failings.” She dropped her gaze down to the sketchbook in her lap. “Why does it bother you when I call you Sunny?”

“Because you call me that and I revert to acting like Alexei and we end up talking in that strange combination of German and Russian we used in the nurseries.”

“I don't mean it that way, you know. It's just...” Mairwen trailed off for a moment. “If we had truly been born Ianto and Mairwen and I nicknamed you something, would it bother you?”

“No, of course not.”

“Then the reason it bothers you when I call you Sunny is that you want to put Alexei behind you.” Mairwen shook her head. “Perhaps this wasn't a good idea of Jack's after all.”

“Mairwen...” Ianto began. He paused and tried to gather his thoughts enough to make sense. “It's not that. I grew up. Mother - Alexandra - gave me that nickname. All the family used it for me, but I'm not him anymore. I'm not Alexei.” He looked away for a moment than looked back at her. “You have no idea how much it means to me to have you here with me. It's just...” He trailed off at a loss as to how to explain himself.

Family Affairs

“It’s just you’re someone very different now. I understand that.” Mairwen laid aside her sketchbook and reached out to catch his hand in hers. “But what happened to you years ago happened to me a week ago. It’s very hard for me to accept the little brother I thought I’d lost a week ago is a man with a career and a personal life.” She sighed. “Perhaps it is better that we stay apart for a while.” She dropped his hand and turned to Victoria. Her voice cracked and shook as she spoke. “Mama?”

Ianto bit his lip hard to keep from responding. He stepped around the drafting table to stare blindly out the windows at the grounds below.

“I think that’s a very good idea, Mairwen,” Victoria said softly. “If you stay here, as you originally planned, you can use some of the time to become more familiar with Ianto Jones.” He could hear the smile he was certain his Mama wore as she continued, “I’m a very proud mama. The house is full of photos, videos and all sorts of things.”

Ianto whimpered just a bit at the thought of the videos and movies Victoria had stashed away. “Not the videos...” He half-turned to look back at the women behind him. “At least not the ones of the early riding lessons,” he paused to give Victoria a beseeching look. “Please?”

“All of it.” Victoria smiled an implacable smile at him. “After all, it is a little sister’s prerogative to snicker at her older brother.”

“Mama!” Ianto pouted at her. “She’ll never let me live it down.” He shifted his attention to Mairwen. “I fell off the horse as soon as I got on it!”

“And your point is?” Victoria winked at Mairwen. “There are skiing videos too.”

“Oh, God, not those.” Ianto shook his head. “Trees! I hate trees on ski slopes.”

Laughter, sweet and merry, burst from Mairwen. “I can see I’m going to have some fun.” She sobered and turned serious. “I need to learn about Ianto Jones but I also need to...” she paused for a moment. “Create Mairwen Jones, I think.”

Family Affairs

“That's what Tad said. You needed to figure out who you are.” He shook his head before turning around to lean back against a window frame. “I'm going to get laughed at by you and Jack.” He cast a look at Victoria. “I just know you're going to show some of them to Jack before we leave.”

“Now, sweetie, would I do that to you?”

“Hell yes,” Ianto said. “Tad will grill him. You'll embarrass me.” He gave his mama a rueful smile. “I think it's in the parents' code or something.”

“Well, then, you can prepare for it.” Victoria nodded toward the drafting table. “Now, why don't you let your sister show you her work. She's already started on a fall line, very classic designs, but fantastic colors.”

Ianto nodded and rummaged up a smile. “All right, dazzle me, Mairwen.” He reached into his pocket and pulled out the package he retrieved from the downstairs hall on the way up. “Then I can ask what you think of this.”

Both women looked curiously at him before Mairwen snatched the box from his fingers. She scooted her chair closer to Victoria's. Then she opened the box and held it between them so their mama could see the contents too. “It's beautiful, Ianto,” Mairwen murmured. “For Jack?”

“Yep.” He reached into his other pocket and pulled out a smaller box. “This is yours.” He waited until she looked up and tossed it to her. He bit his lip again as he worried over her reaction to the contents, a simple pearl necklace and earrings to replace the ones she'd lost when they'd gone into exile.

“They're perfect, Ianto. They will go perfectly with my new jumpers. Mama and I went to several shops, but I couldn't find anything I liked.” She leapt up and hugged him tightly before resuming her seat. “But this one, for Jack...” Mairwen trailed off, lifted the necklace a bit and read the inscription. “It's serious, isn't it?”

Family Affairs

Ianto felt himself blush and ducked his head a bit to hide it. He nodded silently and looked up at his sister through his lashes. He worried over her reaction to his feelings for Jack.

"I'm glad for you then." Mairwen smiled at him. "I like him a great deal."

"Ianto?" Victoria called. "Do you really know what you're getting into?"

"Thanks. I worried what you would think." He took a deep breath, released it slowly and looked over at his mama. "I hope I do. Unless you know something I don't?"

"I'm not talking about Jack's reputation, though God knows it's well deserved," Victoria clarified. "I have no doubt he can be faithful when he chooses. I'm talking about all the other things you're turning your back on if you do this."

Ianto nodded once. Then he stared hard at her and crossed his arms over his chest. He felt defensive and didn't quite know why. "What things?"

"For one, no ceremony you go through with Jack, if you do so, will be recognized by your former homeland." Victoria stared intently at him while she recited the facts. "Whether you go through one or not, the relationship will never be acknowledged by the Royalists. And even if they recognize it, you're breaking your family's marriage laws. Jack is a lot of things, but he's not royal."

"First Jack and now you." He shook his head and turned around to stare blindly out the windows. "I hate the damned politics associated with being me. Plus the only available princesses of suitable rank are fairly close cousins with all the problems associated with that!"

"But you speak as if it were a possibility," Victoria retorted. "You don't say *I don't want it anymore*. Why not, Ianto?"

"Because you and I both know Elizabeth is going to soon start pressing me to marry and have an heir. I don't care about the damned throne. They're never going to call the family back. If they were going to, they would have by now. We both know it."

Family Affairs

“No. Elizabeth is not going to do that. She's grown old and wise, Ianto, and she loves you. She would accept any decision you make. But even if she didn't, isn't it time you put away Alexei? Isn't that what you were talking to Mairwen about? You can't have it both ways. It's either Ianto Jones, Torchwood agent and Jack Harkness's lover, or the Tsar Alexei the Second.”

“Mama...” Ianto attempted a protest, but Victoria cut right over him.

“Choose, Ianto,” Victoria ordered. “I know once a choice is made you will fight hell itself if you have to in order to defend it. But first, chose.”

“Mama... I can't... you know...” He broke off and shook his head again. He just didn't know how to explain himself.

“I know that you want to be Ianto when it suits you and Alexei when it suits you. That is unworthy of you, son.”

“Why are you pushing this now?”

“Because if you don't you are going to hurt people, especially Jack. Hasn't he been hurt enough?”

“I would never intentionally hurt Jack.”

“Maybe not, but you will hurt him nevertheless because you're not going to his bed honestly.” Victoria's voice was unusually calm. “He loves Ianto Jones and you intend to give him a partial person.”

“Mama!” Ianto ducked his head and fought back the urge to scream at her. “You know I'd give almost anything to stop being Alexei Nikolaievich Romanov and just be your son, Ianto Alexis Jones. Yet no one will let me do that!”

“It seems to me the only one insisting on it is you.” Mairwen interjected into the conversation. “Mama and Tad don't want it, Jack doesn't want it, and even cousin Elizabeth would give way. But you keep insisting that's who you are.”

“Marie!” He whirled about to glare at her. Ianto's hands clenched tightly as he fought to keep his temper under control. “I made Elizabeth a promise. I have never willingly broken a promise I made to someone.”

Family Affairs

“It's not a promise she wants you to keep,” Mairwen retorted. “Or do you think Mama would make that up?”

“Well, she hasn't told me that!”

“Excuses,” Victoria snapped. “More excuses. Put that necklace back and don't give it to Jack now, because you would be making him a promise you certainly don't intend to keep.”

“I thought... Mama...” Ianto broke off again. This whole conversation coming now confused him. “That's...”

“Cruel?” Victoria's voice was cold even as she seemed to be fighting the urge to come hug and reassure him. “Yes, but it's also true. If you loved Jack enough, there wouldn't be a question. If you really didn't want to be Alexei anymore, there wouldn't be a question.” She pointed a stern finger at him. “Perhaps you should ask yourself why you won't let go.”

“Because no one lets me forget,” Ianto said quietly.

“The only one who talks about it is you,” Victoria said.

Ianto stared blindly out the windows at the wet drive below. His mind raced from place to place bringing up things from since he'd first told Jack who he had been, told him what happened to him, and the things they'd said to each other in Cardiff. He glanced down at the necklace he now held, thought of the man he so wanted to surprise with it, and sighed tiredly. He rubbed the pendant with his thumb and swallowed hard before he spoke. “I'm terrified, Mama. I hate my biological heritage. I have for years. I thought you knew that. Yet, I'm still terrified that if I tell you I'd rather do anything other than be the Tsar of All the Russias, you won't love me anymore.” He blinked and brought his other hand up to wipe at his eyes. “I know, regardless of what most people think now, that Mother loved me more for the fact she gave the Tsar an heir than myself. It hurts to think about that and all the other things from then.” He shook his head again. “I love Jack, Mama. I think I have for months. I don't...” he trailed off into silence once again unable to find words to explain himself.

Family Affairs

“Ianto Jones, I have never raised a hand to you but right now I want to smack you into next week.” Victoria’s voice echoed with anger. “What in the world makes you think I would give a hoot about any of that? I would give half my time on earth to have been yours and Mairwen’s biological mother. If I had adopted you out of the poorest orphanage in Wales I would love you. Who you were before you became my son doesn’t matter one damn bit.”

“That was a verbal smack, Mama.” He crossed the room and knelt down beside her chair to press his face against her leg. Ianto rubbed his cheek against her trousers. “I’m sorry, Mama. I just...” he trailed off, swallowed hard again and whispered, “So, I told Jack the truth back in Cardiff the first time we talked about who I once was.”

“What did you tell him?”

“That Alexei Nikolaevich was dead.” Ianto couldn’t bring himself to speak in more than a broken whisper. He was so afraid of how his beloved mama would react, of his sister’s reaction, to him throwing away the first thirteen years of his life. “That Ianto Jones is the adopted son of Ifan Jones and Victoria MacLeish.”

“He’s not dead, Ianto. He’s just in the past.” Mairwen knelt down next to him. He could just see her skirt from the corner of his eye where he rested against Victoria. “The same way I have to put the Grand Princess Marie in the past. Not forget them, or hate them, or resent them, just put them away where they belong.”

“My babies,” Victoria murmured. She bent down and hugged them both close to her. “My children. Mairwen and Ianto Jones.”

“Mama...” Ianto whimpered the word before he broke down in long needed tears. He wrapped one arm around Victoria’s waist, the other around his sister’s shoulders and clung to both women while he sobbed. “Mairwen... Mama... I...”

They cried together, all three of them, for a while before Victoria gently pushed them to sit up. She grabbed a scrap a cloth and wiped everyone’s faces. “Enough of this,” she said firmly. “Now, Ianto, go find Jack and show him the grounds. Mairwen and I are going to my

Family Affairs

dressing room to repair the damage. We must look gorgeous at lunch and that's all there is to it." Ianto rose to his feet and offered his hands to the women. He pulled them up and held them for a moment before releasing them. "Why don't you take Jack down to the pond and show him the weeping willow? There's plenty of space under the branches to spread a blanket."

Fighting down a blush, Ianto looked from his mama to the windows and back again. "Mama!" he all but wailed at her. "It's..."

"What? Your father and I still visit from time to time." Victoria all but snickered at him while Mairwen giggled. "Don't tell me you don't want to, because I won't believe it." She suddenly turned serious. "Grab every bit of happiness you can, Ianto. Torchwood is a hard master."

"I know it is, Mama." He thought briefly of Canary Wharf, Lisa and cannibals. He shoved those thoughts away again. He knew all too well how hard a master Torchwood could be to her agents. Ianto looked over at Mairwen before leaning closer to Victoria to murmur. "Actually, we had plans to check out the haylofts. Likely a better proposition since it's cold and raining." As she laughed in response, he blushed harder. "I see how this goes. Embarrassing me all ready."

"Wait," Victoria said, "until tonight. I'm going to ask Ifan to set up the old projector!"

Ianto bounced his head off the door and whimpered again. "Great..." he muttered. "First there's the fall off the horse movies, then skiing into trees, and I just know she's going to break out the 'lame attempt at dancing' ones."

"Oh, I'd forgotten those, thank you for reminding me."

"I shouldn't have said a word." Ianto flung the door open, stalked out, and then whipped back around to pout at his mother and sister. "There's no way I can talk you out of this, is there?"

"Well, I do accept bribes from time to time."

Ianto folded his hands in front of himself and gave her a pleading look. "What do I need to do to keep from dying of embarrassment any time soon?"

Family Affairs

“Oh, no, that's up to you,” Victoria said. She shared a conspiratorial smile with Mairwen. “Bribes should be like birthday gifts. Carefully chosen.”

“I'm doomed.” Ianto slumped and shook his head at them. “Jack's going to want to see them too so he won't help me any.” He looked back over his shoulder into the hallway. Jack stood at the top of the stairs staring intently at him, confusion written all over his face. “Isn't that right, sir?” he called.

CHAPTER SIX

“You’re always right, Ianto,” Jack said. He grinned cheekily at him before turning his pleading puppy-eyed look on him. “Coffee?”

“Yes, I’ll make you a coffee.” Ianto leaned back into the studio to kiss his mother’s cheek. Victoria was his mother in every way that counted. Squeezing Victoria’s hand, Ianto slipped from the room and nodded toward the stairs. “I meant you won’t be helping me bribe Mama to not show all those videos of my teen years later tonight.”

“Videos? She has videos?” Jack bounced in place, not unlike an eager puppy, and grinned at Victoria who now stood in the studio doorway. “Was he as adorable then as he is today?”

“Videos, films, dozens of photo albums.” Ianto whimpered at the mere thought of all his teenage angst being shown to his sister and lover. “She’s threatened to show Mairwen the infamous ‘get on and fall right off the horse’ film.”

“That sounds perfect to me.” Jack grinned and reached over to grab Ianto’s hand. “It’s nice to know you haven’t always been the perfect Mr. Jones.”

“I never claimed to be perfect.” He smiled over at his mother and sister while clinging tightly to Jack’s hand. His mind shifted, sorted memories and thoughts he’d not wanted to face before his mother’s

Family Affairs

ultimatum in her studio. A shudder raced down his spine as realization dawned on him. He gave her an almost shy smile. "Since I won't be able to get away from it, when's the movie?"

"Probably after dinner," Victoria said with a smile. "Now, we all have things to do so I suggest we go do them. Mairwen, darling, you and I are for a morning of beautification." She waved a hand in the general direction of Jack and Ianto. "You two go do..." she trailed off and smirked a bit at them. "Whatever it is you do. Just don't be late for dinner."

"Mama!" Ianto put as much shock into his voice as he could manage before joining in with Mairwen's laughter. Shaking his head a bit, he reached out for Jack's hand and entwined their fingers. "We need to talk, sir," he murmured. He led the way down the stairs while he tucked the necklace away in his pocket with his other hand.

As they walked through the house, Ianto played tour guide and pointed out various rooms. Periodically, they'd pause as one of the many pictures lining the walls caught Jack's attention. He chuckled softly as Jack looked from one particular photograph to him and back again. Ianto ducked his head for a moment before smiling shyly over at Jack. "The first and only time I played rugby," he explained. "I didn't really like it, but I tried."

"You're filthy."

"Couldn't be helped," Ianto said. He tugged Jack away from the pictures and the rest of the way into the kitchen. He worked on the coffee from rote memory while watching Jack roam about the room before the other man settled into leaning against the center island. "It rained."

"I wouldn't have thought you'd play sports." Jack crossed his ankles and leaned his elbows back against the countertop behind him. "What with you still being sick back then."

"I wanted to try." Ianto left the coffee to finish brewing and turned about to face Jack. "All my life I'd been sheltered or smothered." He dropped his gaze to the floor for a moment before looking up again

Family Affairs

with a faint smile. "I wasn't allowed to run or play. Hell, Jack, the one time I attempted to roller skate with my sisters, I was snatched up by the sailors of the *Standart* and forcibly set on one of the benches to watch them play instead," he snarled the words before running a hand through his hair in frustration. "It was too dangerous!"

He shook his head with a sigh. Ianto turned back to the coffee, reached out for the mugs and poured his and Jack's. He turned back, handed over Jack's mug and sipped at his own. He shoved his free hand through his hair before waving toward the door. He led the way back toward the library while he talked. "I hated it, Jack," he said. "So, when Mama told me I could try anything I wanted as long as I was careful, I almost went wild." A soft laugh escaped him. "I didn't really like rugby though. I only played the one game. Skiing, as you'll see later, didn't like me."

"Oh?"

Ianto paused with his hand on the library door. He smiled over at Jack before pushing it open and heading inside. "Mama has lovely footage of the one and only time I tried to ski. I was so busy watching out for where the camera was that a pine tree jumped out in front of me causing me to crash into it. I still think it was deliberate."

He wasn't the least bit surprised when Jack started laughing nor when his lover flopped onto the sofa he was laughing so hard. Ianto set his coffee mug down on the table in front of the sofa. He crossed the room to one of the bookcases on either side of the fireplace and scanned the albums shelved there until he found the one he was looking for and pulled it down. He took the album with him as he settled onto the sofa beside Jack. He flipped through it with one hand while holding his coffee mug with the other. A shift alongside him told him when Jack rose to his feet to look around the room.

"Nice portrait." Ianto looked up with a soft questioning sound. He smiled when Jack pointed to the large canvas over the fireplace. "How old were you?"

Family Affairs

"Almost fifteen," he said. He shifted his gaze from Jack to the portrait in question. It was a traditional formal portrait of him and Victoria. She wore a simple black evening gown with a sash of the MacLeish tartan. While the fact that he was standing mostly behind Victoria's chair hid the kilt itself, it was obvious from the very distinctive style of jacket what he was wearing for the portrait. That portrait was the first time he'd worn the outfit though definitely not the last. He still wasn't certain how the photographer knew this was the image they'd wanted but somehow the man had captured the moment when Victoria reached up to lightly clasp his fingers with her own where his hand rested on her shoulder. The background was also familiar to anyone knowledgeable of Victoria's family. That photograph became the basis for large oil painting that now dominated the library. "It was done not long after I decided Victoria was my mama."

"That's Torchwood House, isn't it?" Jack took a step closer to the fireplace and considered the portrait. "And you're wearing a kilt." He pouted playfully over at Ianto. "Why don't you wear that around me?"

"It's not very practical considering our occupation." Ianto chuckled and shook his head. Trust Jack to latch onto that little fact. He looked down at the album for a long moment before looking back up at the portrait again. "I just realized I long ago made a decision yet never consciously accepted it until Mama got pushy upstairs."

"What decision?"

"That while there would always be some part of me which would be His Imperial Highness Alexei Nikolaevich Sovereign Heir Tsarevich," he paused and stroked his fingers over the album in his lap. "I much preferred being Ianto Alexis Jones, the only son of Victoria and Ifan Jones."

"And it took you until today to face up to it?"

"Apparently." Ianto looked down at the album again and sighed.

Family Affairs

Jack crossed the room to settle on the sofa beside him. He set his coffee mug down beside Ianto's and reached out to gently clasp his hand. "What is it, Ianto?"

He smiled faintly and shook his head. "When I became a man, I put away childish things," he quoted softly. "I made the decision eight years ago. I just never put it into words." He pointed at the album. "I wore it here but took it off for that picture. A picture I asked Mama if we could have done as a surprise for Tad."

"Show me." It was more order than question. Ianto chuckled and scooted across the small space separating them so Jack could better see the album. He flipped back a couple of pages to one of him sitting in an armchair in the Lodge's drawing room.

"I was fourteen here," he explained. "It was just after we moved into the Lodge. I'd finally recovered enough to not only come home from hospital but for us to leave London and Hartman's ever so generous hospitality." He shook his head rather than explain in more detail. "See, if you look close, I'm still wearing the signet ring which shows I'm the Heir Apparent." He traced his fingers over the spot in question before nodding to the large portrait in front of them. "I don't remember exactly when I took it off and put it away, but I know it was just a few days after I called Victoria Mama for the first time." Ianto closed his eyes for a moment as the memory played out across his mind. "She cried, Jack, and all I did was call her Mama."

"I can see how much she loves you," Jack murmured. "It just shines out of her eyes. No wonder you made that choice."

"She always did." Ianto closed the album and laid it on the table before them. He retrieved his coffee and sipped it. "She had that look from the first week I met her, but it took me almost a year to accept it." He shook his head. "It's almost ironic. That portrait was me rebelling against my past yet she loves it."

"Oh, no, Ianto, that's not you rebelling." Jack drank a bit of his own coffee before setting it aside again. "That portrait is you coming home."

Family Affairs

He shifted a bit and stared at Jack. Nothing could have surprised him more in that moment. "You think so?" Ianto asked. "I remember when I almost demanded it of Mama. It was just after one of my teachers at school showed the class some of the more famous pictures of the Romanov children." He looked away again. It surprised him just how easy it was to think of his sisters and himself as strangers from history rather than family. "I realized looking at one of the Alexei and Alexandra portraits that I hated it. She never looked at me like Mama does." He looked back over at Jack. "I wanted a picture with Mama."

"There are people born out of their place and time," Jack said thoughtfully. "They never quite fit in with their families and their environment even if they live their whole lives in it. I think you're one of those people." He stroked the back of Ianto's hand with his fingers. "Wales, Victoria and Ifan, even Torchwood, that's your real home and you were very lucky to find it."

"I knew it eight years ago," Ianto agreed. He twisted his hand a bit to clasp Jack's. "But it took Mama yelling at me about you to accept it."

"About me?" Worry creased Jack's expression and colored his voice. "Shit, Ianto, what did I do to piss off Victoria?"

"You didn't." Ianto leaned forward and gave Jack a brief peck of a kiss. "I did."

"I'm confused now." Jack tilted his head in question. "I'm usually the target of the angry parent."

"She was actually defending you." Ianto chuckled softly. He shifted about again to get comfortable while he faced Jack across the sofa. "I bought something, arranged to have it sent here, and showed it to her and Mairwen. Mama lectured me about how I wasn't being fair to you if I gave it to you."

"She was trying to do me out of my present?" A pout appeared on Jack's face; however, Ianto could see the worry darkening his lover's blue eyes.

"No, she wanted me to be certain as to why I was giving it to you and who I was doing so as." Ianto dragged in a deep breath and shoved

Family Affairs

a hand through his hair. "Mama told me in no uncertain terms I had to make the choice between Alexei and Ianto."

"And that's when you realized you had made the decision subconsciously years ago?"

"Yes." Ianto nodded once. He drew in a breath and let it out slowly. He pulled the necklace out of his pocket and looked down at it. He rubbed his thumb back and forth across the face of the pendant before offering it to Jack. "And accepted it there as well considering what I did when I ordered this for you."

Jack stared at him for a long moment before taking the necklace. He studied it intently for several minutes before a sweet little smile settled on his lips. "Not the royal cipher. No ANR," he said. "Just your real initials."

"Yup. I didn't even think when I placed the order for it. I just did it." He gently curled Jack's fingers closed over the necklace. "It's yours," he murmured, "if you still want it."

"I want it." Jack clenched his hand over the necklace. The platinum chain glittered between his fingers. "I want you. For however long we have."

"I told you in Cardiff, Jack." Ianto smiled and leaned forward a bit to briefly kiss Jack. "Forever... I..." he trailed off for a moment. "I love you, Jack," he whispered. "I have for months."

"I know." Jack chuckled softly while Ianto glared at him. "You're not very good at hiding your emotions at certain times." He pulled a small box from his own pocket. "But I am."

"And I thought you didn't notice." Ianto tilted his head in question and blinked. "What's that?"

Jack opened the box before offering it to Ianto. He looked down at the contents and drew in a startled breath. Nestled in deep blue velvet was a pair of platinum cufflinks. Oval centers engraved with their entwined initials were surrounded by intricately engraved rectangular frames. "Jack?" he asked. He started to reach for them but stopped and lifted his gaze to stare at his lover.

Family Affairs

"You don't like them?"

"I'm surprised, Jack." Ianto reached down and stroked a finger over one of the cufflinks. "I definitely like them. I just wasn't expecting..." he trailed off and blushed.

"You weren't expecting me to confess so easily?"

"Not really and I definitely wasn't expecting presents."

"Neither was I." Jack chuckled and closed the box before handing it over to Ianto. "I guess we're more in synch than we knew. Though I wasn't expecting the lack of a dress shirt when I gave them to you," Jack said.

"I dress down when at the Lodge. Suits are for work." He curled his fingers around the box before twisting about to set it aside on the table. "I'm going to have to be very careful with these when I wear them at work." He turned back to Jack and cupped his cheek in his hand. He brushed his thumb over Jack's lower lip before leaning forward to claim a kiss. "My Jack..." he murmured.

"My Ianto." Jack whispered the words as he pulled out of the kiss. "Put my necklace on for me?"

Ianto took the necklace back and fumbled a bit with the clasp in order to open it. He fingered the pendant for a moment before reaching around Jack with the chain in hand in order to wrap it around his lover's throat. He finally got it clasped again. It settled into place, the oval pendant resting in the hollow of Jack's throat, and Ianto stroked his fingers back and forth across the pendant before leaning back to take a long look at Jack. Realization dawned on him and he blushed even as he chuckled softly.

"I like it when you blush." Jack stroked his fingers down Ianto's cheek. "It means you're thinking about us. Hopefully in compromising positions."

"I just realized I essentially collared you with this."

Jack threw his head back with a laugh. "I wondered if that would occur to you." He laughed more as Ianto gave into the urge to pout at him.

Family Affairs

"I didn't even think." Ianto lightly smacked Jack on the shoulder. "I just know Owen, if not Gwen as well, are going to comment on it." He licked his lips and stared at the necklace before meeting Jack's gaze. "But I want everyone to know you're all mine."

"I think they already know, Ianto. I'm not exactly subtle."

"But you flirt with everyone, Jack," Ianto protested. "I'm calling dibs on... well, everything... if I didn't know you were..." He broke off and looked away toward the fireplace.

"Ianto, the only one who didn't notice how I felt about you was you. Owen's even made a crack or two about how the wild animal was tamed."

"I must be blind."

Jack's hand cupped his cheek and gently urged him to face his lover. "Can you see now?" he murmured. Lips closed over Ianto's, a heated tongue demanded entrance. With a soft moan, Ianto surrendered to Jack's demands. He wrapped his arms around Jack's neck and entwined his fingers in Jack's hair. Ianto fell back against the arm of the sofa. He pulled Jack down with him while wrapping one leg around the older man's hips. The change of positions broke their kiss.

"Oh yes," he panted. He arched his neck up for another kiss. "I can now."

Deep kisses exchanged as they cuddled on the sofa. Ianto stroked his hands up and down Jack's back while he squirmed beneath his weight. He wanted more. He wanted to touch and taste. It was only the knowledge that anyone, including his still somewhat innocent sister, could walk in at anytime that kept him from stripping Jack so he could touch bare skin. Jack broke their most recent kiss in order to rest his forehead against Ianto's. They both panted in an attempt to contain their passion.

"Didn't you promise me a hayloft?" A brief chaste kiss followed the question. "I seem to recall something being mentioned..."

"I did indeed." Ianto swallowed hard a couple of times and forced his mind to focus on things other than the heat of Jack's body over his.

Family Affairs

"And since it's currently raining, now's a good time to visit it." He dropped his eyes for a moment before looking up at Jack through his lashes. "If you want that is."

Jack rolled off the sofa and to his feet. He grabbed Ianto's hands and pulled him up after him. Then he started dragging him from the room toward the central hallway. Ianto stumbled after him for a moment before he managed to pull his lover to a halt. He waited for the other man to look at him before he spoke. "Jack, *dushka*, you have to let me go first."

"Why?"

Ianto managed somehow to refrain from rolling his eyes at the absurd question. "Because you don't know where you're going," he explained patiently. He chuckled at the slightly perturbed look on Jack's face. He leaned toward him, kissed him and tightened his hold on the other man's hand. A rueful chuckle escaped his lover but Jack nodded and waited patiently for Ianto to lead the way through the house. "Besides the hay is scratchy so I want to get us a blanket before we head out there."

CHAPTER SEVEN

Ducking away from Jack's latest attempt at a kiss, Ianto backed into the stables. He chuckled at Jack's expression and shook his head a bit. "I'm not getting caught kissing in the rain," he explained. "It would be my luck to catch pneumonia or something like that." He led the way deeper into the building heading for the stairs at the far end that led up into the lofts. As they crossed the stables, Ianto paused by one particular stall to rub his hand over the nose of the pony inside. The gray mare nuzzled against him while he stroked her neck. "Hey, *cariad*," he murmured. He looked over at Jack and fought down a blush at the indulgent look on his lover's face. He reached into a pocket and pulled out a sugar cube for the pony. "Jack, this is Angharad."

"Welsh Cob?" Jack crossed the stable to lean against the edge of the opening. His hand reached out to scratch along the pony's neck. "Or is she a cross?"

"No, pureblood." Ianto stroked his hand down her neck again before backing away. "Angharad was my first gift from Tad. She's also the star of the infamous 'climb on, fall right off' movie."

"She's beautiful." Jack kept scratching Angharad's neck. Ianto set aside the blanket he held before returning to feed the pony a few more treats. "Any foals?"

Family Affairs

"Not yet." Ianto sighed softly. "Mama says I should but..." He trailed off and shook his head.

"They would be beautiful." Jack nodded his head while he eyed the pony. "Either purebred or with an Arabian sire."

"I know." Ianto ducked his head for a moment before looking back up at Jack. "It's kind of silly for me to worry about whether I could ride her or not considering I get up here so rarely."

"There's no reason you couldn't ride her after she foals," Jack said. He gave the pony one last scratch before stepping over to rest a hand on Ianto's back. "Besides, Tosh would love you forever."

"Tosh?" Ianto looked back over his shoulder at Jack in confusion. Why would their computer tech love him if he gave in to his parents urging and finally allowed them to arrange for a stud for Angharad?

"She used to ride when she was a little girl." Jack gave him an even look. Ianto recognized it as his 'you didn't hear this from me' expression. It was rarely used and only then when Jack really felt the need to explain something that he would normally keep private. "Even competed, but after her father died..." he trailed off and shrugged. "Well, there was no more money." He tilted his head and smiled. "She goes to competitions in her time off. I've even seen her cut photos of horses out of magazines. I got curious. Her first horse was a Welsh Cob. Gray, like your beauty here."

"You think she'd want one?" Ianto considered Jack. He'd feel a lot better agreeing to breed Angharad if he knew where at least one foal was going when it was old enough. "Honestly?"

"Are you kidding?" Jack stared at him like he was stupid or something. Ianto ducked and blushed. "Even if she can't keep it in Cardiff, just knowing there was one here that was all hers..."

"I'll talk to Tad then," Ianto interrupted. "Angharad's too good a pony not to keep her bloodlines around." He gave the pony one last pat and then reached for Jack's hand. He led Jack over to where he'd left the blanket while they visited the animal. Before he could pick it up, Jack draped it over his other arm. "Now, about that hayloft..."

Family Affairs

Jack's hand came up to cup his cheek. His thumb rubbed over his lips. "We don't have..."

"No, I want..." Ianto broke off and shook his head again. He started walking down the aisle while talking. "It still surprises me that you want me. That my interest is returned." He stopped at the base of the stairs and turned to look at Jack. "But I'm not about to look a gift horse in the mouth." He chuckled. "And no, I didn't mean to say that. It's the kind of thing you do to my brain, Jack."

A low chuckle answered his words. A large hand cupped his face and held him still while his lips were claimed in another demanding kiss. After long minutes where all he could do was cling to the other man, Ianto pulled away to drag in a desperately needed breath. He tilted his head toward the stairs but before he could speak the words, Jack was leading him up into the lofts.

"So... where to?"

"The far end." Ianto picked his way around the hay until he reached the far end of the loft. He took the blanket from Jack, shook it out and settled it onto the loose hay covering the floor. He dropped down onto the cloth and leaned back to rest on his elbows. He tilted his head back and smiled up at Jack. "It's warm and secluded back here, Jack."

"Hmm, so it is." Jack stripped off his coat and tossed it down next to the blanket. Ianto reached out and stroked his fingers over the wool for a moment. "You really do like that coat."

"I told you that months ago." Ianto reached up and tugged Jack down beside him. "It's the perfect coat for you. The best wool perfectly tailored to show you off."

"And you just love to watch, don't you?" Jack settled on his side on the blanket. He reached out and stroked his hand along Ianto's side. "Is that why you always help me with it?"

Ianto hummed softly. "I like watching you in it." He dropped back to lay flat on his back. He tucked an arm beneath his head so he could watch Jack without craning his neck. "It adds to your presence. When you're wearing it, everyone who looks at you sees a hero."

Family Affairs

"I'm not a hero," Jack protested. He snaked his fingers beneath the edge of Ianto's jumper. Ianto sucked in a sharp breath as Jack's cold fingers settled against his warm skin.

"I think you are," Ianto murmured. "Tosh, Owen, and Gwen think you are. Cousin Elizabeth thinks you are. Even Mama and Tad. You are definitely outvoted." He arched his back and reached up to tug Jack down so they met halfway for a slow leisurely kiss. "The thing is I know something about you the others don't."

"Do you now?"

"Oh yes, Jack Harkness." Ianto settled back again. He sucked in another breath and held it for a moment as Jack's fingers stroked across his stomach. "I know the hero is only one small part of you." He reached out and wrapped his own hand around Jack's wrist. He rubbed the soft skin beneath the wriststrap with the tip of one finger. "I know who you are when you take the coat off."

"I think you're the only one who does."

"Yes. I am," Ianto murmured. "I know Jack, the con man, the thief, the man who still grieves for those who betrayed him, the man who can't help loving even though he knows love hurts. And that Jack is mine. They can have the hero. I want the man."

Jack stared at him for a long silent moment. Ianto began to worry he'd gone too far when Jack suddenly pounced on him. A leg was swung over his so Jack was straddling his thighs as he claimed another kiss, this one hard and demanding as Jack staked his own claim on Ianto. Jack buried one hand in his hair while the other tugged his jumper up to bare his stomach and chest. Ianto shivered and moaned, the sound muffled in the still ongoing kiss. Jack broke the kiss only long enough to tug Ianto's jumper over his head before diving back in for another one.

"Goddess, Ianto," Jack breathed. Both of them panted for breath while Ianto clung to his lover's shoulders. "Do you have any idea...?"

"I think I do." Ianto smirked up at Jack and trailed his hands around to start flicking open the buttons on his shirt. A soft purr escaped him

Family Affairs

when he was finally able to stroke his fingers over Jack's bare skin. He blinked in surprise when Jack shivered in response to the sound. "You really like it when I purr for you, don't you?"

"Most definitely, Mr. Jones." Jack growled the words as he shrugged out of his shirt and braces. He dropped his head to nuzzle Ianto's neck. He licked over the bruise he left the previous night before sucking hard on the spot. Ianto moaned and clutched at Jack again. "I like every little noise I can get from you. Lets me know when you like something." He licked again at the bruise. Another little moan escaped Ianto. "Like that."

"God, Jack," Ianto groaned. He forced himself to focus again. He tugged Jack up so he could kiss him and dragged his nails down his lover's back. He delighted in the shudder that raced through Jack so he repeated the action.

"Tease." Jack caught Ianto's wrists and brought his hands around to his mouth. A soft wet kiss was placed in each palm. Ianto felt as if that touch reached through every cell in his body. Then Jack pressed Ianto's arms up over his head and held them in place with one of his hands. "Don't move," he ordered.

Every thought remaining in his head went flying into the ether. He stared up at Jack and panted for breath. Ianto managed a brief nod and was rewarded with a soft smile. Kisses were pressed along his neck, another lick to Jack's mark on his throat, before Jack began to nip and kiss his way down his chest. One nipple was caught in Jack's teeth, worried a bit before the slight pain was soothed away with a lick and a kiss. The actions were repeated on the other nipple. Ianto flung his head back with a hoarse groan. He arched his back and writhed beneath Jack where the other man had him caged beneath him. "Jack... please..."

"Pleasing you is exactly what this is all about." Jack's fingers stroked once over his wrists before he released him. "Keep your arms there." Ianto managed a nod before a startled sound escaped him as Jack pressed wet open kisses down his chest and stomach. His belly quivered in response then he moaned as Jack's fingers edged beneath

his waistband. One hand stroked his skin the other began to unbutton his jeans. The fabric parted and Jack nuzzled it out of the way. Ianto arched his back and groaned as his lover drew in a deep breath.

"Jack..."

"Shh..." He was quickly and efficiently stripped of his jeans and pants. Ianto clenched his jaw in order to stay the way Jack placed him as the other man gave him a long leisurely look. "*Velikolepnyĭ*," Jack murmured. Fingertips stroked up his inner thighs, gently encouraging him to spread his legs, and Ianto fought the urge to blush beneath Jack's gaze. "*Vy vyelikolyepny*"¹¹."

"I'm not beautiful, Jack..." Jack's fingers pressed against Ianto's lips. He quieted and blinked up at him.

"Didn't you ever hear that old saying beauty is in the eye of the beholder? I find you beautiful and that's all that is important." Jack lay down on top of Ianto, pressing him into the blanket. The difference in textures -- slightly rough wool against his back, best quality men's tailoring fabric all along his front -- nearly drove Ianto insane. Without even being conscious of it, he began to rub himself against Jack while whining soft and low in his throat. "And this, teaching you pleasure is so very intoxicating."

Jack shifted, slowly backing down Ianto's body. More kisses and nips to his skin followed each move. Ianto could do nothing but moan and writhe as his brain melted beneath Jack's touch. A gasp escaped him when Jack's fingers curled around his cock. He stroked once, twice and Ianto groaned in response. He shifted, spreading his legs further and arched his back. "More, Jack," he begged.

A low chuckle answered him. The sound rolled through Ianto's body. His arousal spiked in response. A startled cry escaped him when Jack suddenly bent his head and licked all the way up his cock. "Oh, God," Ianto moaned. "Jack..."

¹¹ Russian, "You are gorgeous."

Family Affairs

"Hush." The order quieted him. Ianto craned his neck to look down at Jack just as the other man lowered his head to swallow the whole length of his cock. The sight and the feel of Jack's wet mouth around him forced another cry from Ianto. He had all he could do to stay in the position Jack put him in. He clenched his hands and panted for breath before the feel of Jack sucking gently as he lifted his head broke his control. Ianto buried his hands in Jack's hair, clutching at the strands.

"More, Jack... I..."

He didn't receive a verbal answer. Instead, Jack's tongue began to stroke and tease while Jack sucked at his cock. Ianto couldn't think, not coherently at least, all he could do was rock his hips and struggle not to thrust into Jack's mouth. He wanted. His body ached for something yet he couldn't quite figure out what it was he wanted from Jack. All he could do was moan and gasp as Jack drove him completely insane. Ianto keened as Jack lifted his head and replaced his mouth with his hand.

"Let go, Ianto." Jack's voice as deep and dark, rich with something Ianto didn't even attempt to name. "I want to taste you..." Jack paused and licked his stomach. Ianto shivered and moaned again. "Come for me, *velikolepnyĭ*." Before Ianto could gather himself to respond, Jack lowered his head and swallowed his cock.

"Jaaack!" Ianto attempted to say something but the word came out on a wail. He arched his back; a scream strangled in his throat and clenched his hands in Jack's hair. He clutched the strands tightly between his fingers; some part of him knew he was pulling at them yet he couldn't seem to care. "Oh, fuck, Jack..." Ianto struggled to speak through his arousal. "More... touch me... like..." He couldn't finish his thoughts. Not with his cock deep in Jack's mouth and his body so tightly wound he felt like he could snap into pieces at any moment.

Ianto panted for breath. He wanted more; every inch of him was tense, wired, and he wanted even more. He begged; a babbled mix of English, Welsh, German and Russian tumbled from his lips as he writhed against the blanket. Jack's fingers drifted down his inner thigh

Family Affairs

before reversing their direction until one was stroking and teasing over his hole. The brief caress broke Ianto. He flung his head back and tightened his hold on Jack's hair as he thrust deep into his lover's mouth. His orgasm crashed over him. His vision whitened even as his eyes closed tightly to savor the feelings rushing through him. Struggling to catch his breath, he collapsed onto the blanket.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A gentle trail of kisses up his stomach and chest caused Ianto to open his eyes just in time to meet Jack's gaze. A smug little smile curved the other man's lips before they claimed his own. He willingly submitted to the demanding kiss. Even the taste of his own come in Jack's mouth didn't disturb him as much as he thought it might. Ianto wrapped his arms around Jack's neck, tilted his head, and deepened the kiss farther even as he shifted his weight to roll them both over. Panting, he broke the kiss to grin down at Jack. He deliberately ground his hips against Jack's still hard cock. "Now..." he mused, "what do I do with you?"

Ianto arched an eyebrow as Jack merely blinked up at him. His expression was an adorable combination of smugly pleased with himself blended into complete confusion. Ianto bent and kissed him again before sitting up and shaking his head at Jack. He ran a hand down Jack's bare chest until his fingers could tease and pinch one nipple. "You are nowhere near as confused as that expression would make me believe, are you?"

"Don't let that stop you." Jack grinned; he spread his arms wide against the blanket and coat beneath him. "I'm all yours."

Family Affairs

"Of course you are." Ianto smirked. He ran his fingers along the platinum chain encircling Jack's throat before resting a fingertip against the pendant. He tapped it once; a surge of possessiveness raced through his body. "You wear my name right here for everyone to see."

He leaned down and claimed Jack's lips in a demanding kiss. He dominated it, claimed every bit of Jack's mouth as his own; his tongue sought out all the hidden spaces within, seeking out those spots which caused Jack to clutch at his shoulders and moan deep in his throat. Only when the need to breathe outweighed his urge to claim Jack again did Ianto break the kiss to stare down at his lover. "You're mine, Jack."

"Did you just realize that?" Smug pleasure radiated from the man beneath him.

"Yep." Ianto shook his head with a small laugh.

"Why don't you just make certain then?"

The innuendo-laden statement set the majority of Ianto's blood flowing to his cock. A dozen different ideas flashed through his brain while he stared down at Jack. He licked his lips and swallowed hard in response to several of them. "You didn't come with a user's manual and instructions, Jack." Ianto lifted one shoulder in an abortive shrug. "I wouldn't exactly know how."

Jack's hand came up, stroked along his cheek, and tugged him down for a soft kiss. "I know you, Ianto," he said. "The moment you realized where things were potentially headed between us, you went looking for information. You're a researcher at heart. Always have been. So, stop thinking so much..." Another kiss teased at his lips before Jack released him. "You know what you want to do. Do it."

"I..." Ianto started then stopped and ducked his head for a moment. He took several deep breaths before he looked back at Jack. "I want to. Lord knows, I want to, but every time I think of one of the dozen or so things I'd like to do to you I start hearing the Tsarina's judgmental voice in my head screaming about how vile and disgusting this is." He forced himself to continue to meet Jack's gaze. "I love you, Jack, and I want

you so damned much. I just can't seem to stop hearing her at the worst possible moments."

"I know you do. That's why I'm letting you take your time." Jack sat up and wrapped his arms around Ianto's waist. His hands stroked along Ianto's spine easing a tension Ianto hadn't realized he felt. "Don't you know I want to just fuck you until neither of us can think or move? That wouldn't solve the problem though."

"Probably make it worse." Ianto shifted until he could rest his head on Jack's shoulder while wrapping his legs around Jack's waist. He didn't even mind the fact he was nude while Jack was still half dressed; he just wanted to cuddle for a moment. He counted this as a small victory over the Tsarina's indoctrination. "I hate this, Jack. I hate that I can't seem to get rid of her viciousness."

"You will." There was pride and will in Jack's voice. Ianto couldn't help but respond with a determination to do just that, get over this childhood indoctrination and have a proper, loving relationship with his boyfriend, lover, whatever he should call Jack. "You're strong. Just look at everything you've survived so far in your life. Plus, you have the example of your very affectionate parents." A hand tangled in Ianto's hair and tugged a bit until he was looking into Jack's eyes. "I know you were involved with Lisa. You were probably sleeping with her. It was obvious from the events of that night; however, I know I'm your first real love and your first male lover. A prince having a mistress is fine, almost expected even, but us... that would have driven the Court a bit crazy."

"More than a bit, I think." Ianto tilted his head as he thought back to the few times he'd been around the Imperial Court. He'd always been a curious and observant child. Now, older and wiser, he could follow Jack's line of thought to the logical conclusion. Even though she was a divorcee and all but a commoner, his Uncle Misha's mistress, Natalia, was easily accepted amongst the court, even had a place in the list of precedence; however, Uncle Sergei's lover's presence would throw the whole group into complete confusion. No one seemed to know how to

Family Affairs

act around the man. "You would have thrown both the Family and the Court into a tizzy."

Another thought struck him. He bit his lower lip in an attempt to stifle the insane urge to laugh but failed the struggle spectacularly. Ianto threw his head back, laughing for all he was worth, while clinging to Jack's shoulders. He shook his head, still chuckling, and smiled at the very real confusion on Jack's face. "You would look so silly wearing it though knowing you, you'd have done it anyway."

"Wearing what?"

"The diamond encrusted Tsarina's Imperial State Crown." Ianto chuckled a bit more; he could feel a grin start to form. He ran his fingers through Jack's hair while considering him for a long moment. "Though I think I know you well enough to guess you'd want the pearl and diamond tiara known as the pearl kokoshnik. It was Alexandra's favorite. You'd wear it just to rub her nose in the fact I'd chosen you and love over her and her ideals."

Jack's expression shifted. First, he was amused, then contemplative, and then intense and serious. A weighty silence fell between them. Ianto found himself falling silent and just staring at the man he knew he'd love forever. Before he could say a word, Jack broke the silence though the weight of the moment didn't change an ounce.

"Does that mean you're thinking of me as your consort not just your lover?" Something in Jack's voice froze his own; Ianto found himself thinking hard about his response. "Are you willing to give up the Romanov dynastic dreams as well?"

"Look at me." Ianto found himself unconsciously dropping into the same commanding voice he'd used once, and once only, when he'd been at Headquarters with the Tsar. "Jack, look at me." He cupped Jack's face in his hands, met those brilliant blue eyes and stared intently at his lover. "Nikolay Alexandrovich destroyed the Romanov dynasty nearly a century ago because he, to be honest, was a coward and unwilling to embrace the changes needed to bring Imperial Russia into the Twentieth Century. A single stroke of a gold fountain pen ended the

Family Affairs

rule of the Tsars. The only dream I've had in my life was to be loved. Not because I was the Tsarevich, but because of who I truly am. When I was trapped in that prison my parents created from their arrogance and stubborn religiosity, I was certain I would die without ever finding love." He drew in a deep breath and let it out slowly. "I love you, Jack. There is no choice because I will never give you up or whatever it is we have for all the dreams and fortunes of a long dead empire."

Ianto wasn't exactly certain what he was expecting in response to his declaration. It certainly wasn't being grabbed by the neck, pulled in and kissed until all the breath had been forced from his lungs. He slid his hands back around Jack's neck, tangling his fingers in the short hairs at his nape, and just let Jack kiss him. They broke apart; both panting desperately. "Um... Jack..."

"Hmm?"

"You aren't going to say anything?"

A soft laugh rumbled from Jack. A teasing light sparkled in those blue eyes Ianto so loved. A smiled curved full lips even as Ianto pouted at the laughter. "Don't you think visiting your parents and being willing to wear this all the time says everything?" A finger tapped the necklace to punctuate the question. "Isn't that declaration enough?"

Ianto pouted a bit more before giving in and nodding. "For now," he said. He shifted his weight a bit, deliberately falling back into the hay and pulling Jack down with him, and grinned up at his lover. As Jack braced himself against the floor so they could see each other, Ianto stroked his hands down until he could slip his fingers beneath the back waist of Jack's trousers. "I still need to figure out exactly what I'm going to do with you now."

"I know what you can do with me." The smile shifted into a very wicked grin. Ianto arched an eyebrow in silent question. "You can fuck me."

A shudder raced through Ianto. A soft moan escaped him as all the remaining blood in his brain rushed to his cock. He blinked up at Jack for a moment, totally shocked, before a growl escaped him. He flipped

Family Affairs

them over again so Jack lay beneath him on the blanket. "Oh, hell, Jack." Ianto reached for Jack's coat and started scrambling through the pockets. "You better..."

"Better what?"

"Stay put." Ianto rested his other hand on Jack's chest and absently shoved him down. He dug through one pocket, absently raising an eyebrow at some of the contents. "What do you need with cherry flavored lip gloss?" He moved on to the next one. Nothing much in it. "The SUV keys? Don't the team need these? Better not lose them in the hay." The keys were tucked carefully back into the coat. The coat was shifted a bit until he could reach the inner pocket. His searching fingers quickly found and pulled out several condom packets. "Do we really need these?" He muttered the words while tossing the packets onto Jack's chest and digging deeper into the pocket. "Yes!" Ianto grinned widely. "I knew there'd be a bottle of lube in one of these pockets." Triumphant holding the lube bottle aloft, Ianto turned his attention back to Jack. His lover was grinning from ear to ear while shaking for all he was worth in silent laughter. Ianto couldn't decide if he was offended or amused by Jack's reaction to his search.

Ianto dropped the lube bottle on the blanket by Jack's hip. He ran his fingers down Jack's chest nudging the condoms out the way until he could wrap his fingers around Jack's belt. He made short work of the belt, button and zip before settling back on his heels to strip off his lover's few remaining clothes. Ianto frowned to himself as he had to stop his work to strip off Jack's boots and socks; however, he soon had Jack lying nude before him. He ran his hands up Jack's legs, nudging them apart, until he could crawl up the blanket to kneel between the other man's thighs. He brushed the condoms away, save one that he waved between the two of them. "So, do we?"

"I asked you, remember?" Jack's voice held lingering traces of his earlier laughter. His hand came up, tugged the packet from Ianto's unresisting fingers and tossed it away. "And no, we don't need them. You and I are clean as new snow. Owen makes sure of that."

Family Affairs

"That he does." Ianto bent down and leisurely kissed Jack. He broke the kiss in order to stare intently into Jack's eyes. "I don't care if you flirt, *dushka*, but from now on no one shares your bed but me."

"I don't want to share anyone's bed but yours."

"Good." Ianto kissed him again before trailing his lips along Jack's jaw to nuzzle against his neck. "Move in with me." He murmured the words against Jack's skin. A gasp escaped the other man. Ianto let his hand drift down Jack's body, teasing his nipples as he worked his way down to Jack's cock. He wrapped his fingers around the heated flesh and stoked leisurely while kissing his way along the same path.

"No." The word more gasped then spoken. Ianto could feel Jack struggling to talk rather than moan. "Move in with me." A cry tore from Jack as Ianto caught one nipple in his mouth and sucked on it. "Do that again, *cariad*." Hands tangled in Ianto's hair, holding him in place, even as Jack returned to the original conversation. "You've never seen my house, have you?"

Ianto shook off Jack's restraining hands. "We'll talk houses later, *dushka*." He growled the words against Jack's soft skin. "I've got to have you now."

"Good idea." Jack writhed beneath him, his breaths coming heavy and fast. "Really like that idea."

"Thought you might," he said. He grabbed the lube, flipped the cap open, and coated his fingers. Ianto swallowed, shook his head just a bit, and then reached for Jack. He brushed his fingers over the other man in a slow caress, teasing at Jack's hole, and looked up to see his lover watching him intently. "I just hope I understood all my research."

"Don't worry." Jack's eyes closed, an expression of almost total bliss crossing his face for a moment before he opened his eyes again to refocus on Ianto. "When it comes to this, I'm the best teacher you could ever have."

Ianto arched an eyebrow, but repeated the slow stroke of his thumb over Jack's perineum while still teasing at his entrance with his lubed fingers. "I'm certain you are." He pressed harder until his fingers

slipped into the tight heat of Jack's body. A groan escaped him echoed by Jack's moan. "I just don't want to hurt you."

"If I don't like something, I'll tell you, but so far that research has been..." Jack broke off abruptly with a deep groan. "Oh, God, Ianto, yes... Just like that... on the money."

From somewhere a deep laugh bubbled out of Ianto. He watched Jack, his gaze running over his lover from the arch of his neck, down along his pale chest, until he could watch his fingers thrust in and out of Jack. Ianto swallowed, reached for the lube with his free hand and somehow managed to coat his own cock without ever removing his fingers from Jack's body. "I do like to be thorough."

"Well, then, get on with it." Jack all but glared up at him. "As thoroughly as possible."

"You've become quite demanding." Ianto teased Jack both verbally with his words and with a deep thrust of his fingers over his prostate. Jack's desperate whine reverberated along Ianto's already tightly wound nerves. He pulled his fingers from within Jack and lined his own cock up with the prepared space. He eased his way inside with several short thrusts of his hips. "*Govno*¹²... *proklyatiye*¹³...*yebatsya*¹⁴..." Ianto bit the words out before managing to bend down and kiss Jack hard. "God, Jack, you feel so damned good."

"Move!"

The word was half order, half moan as Jack's hands came to clutch at his shoulders. Ianto obeyed, pulling nearly out of Jack's body before thrusting deep, and forced down a groan at the feel of Jack's body so tight around his cock. He ran his hands over Jack, finally wrapping one around his lover's cock and roughly stroking it. "Jack... come for me... want to feel..." Ianto doubted he was making any sense anymore. His entire being focused on the feel of fucking Jack, hard and deep, yet he wanted Jack to come before him. "Please, Jack...."

¹² Russian, "Shit"

¹³ Russian, "Damn"

¹⁴ Russian, "Fuck"

Family Affairs

"Ianto!" His name was a scream. Jack's body went taut; his head flung back. His hands clutched hard; nails digging into Ianto's skin. "Yes, Ianto! Yes!"

Watching Jack fall apart for him drove Ianto over the edge. He thrust as deep into Jack's body as he could, a strangled cry caught in his throat, and just let the pleasure consume him. He collapsed against Jack, not giving a damn about the mess now smeared between their bodies, and buried his face in Jack's neck. "*Vy byt prinadlyezhashchiy mnye*¹⁵." He lifted his head for a moment and pressed a brief kiss to Jack's lips. "*Ya lyublyu tyebya*¹⁶."

¹⁵ Russian, approximately "You are mine."

¹⁶ Russian, "I love you."

CHAPTER NINE

They had spent the day in the hay, cuddling and talking, and dashed back into the house just in time to shower and dress for dinner. Ianto had been very relaxed through the meal, but now, as they followed a bouncing Mairwen from the dining room to the library, Ianto reached out for Jack's hand and entwined their fingers. He lifted that hand, pressed a kiss to the back, and sighed softly. "I am not looking forward to this," he said.

"The perfectionist rears his head?"

"Yep." Ianto managed to summon up a laugh from somewhere. "I..."

"They love you, Ianto." Jack stopped walking and pulled Ianto to him. "They're showing you off to your..." He paused, obviously feeling out the words before saying them. "Chosen consort. Is that so bad?"

"Nope." He reached up with his free hand and cupped Jack's cheek. He kissed him briefly before pulling away and starting for the library again. "I just know I'm going to get laughed at though."

"Not at. Never at." Jack smirked at him. "Besides I think you can turn the tables a little."

"You think so?"

Family Affairs

"Everyone has embarrassing stories, Ianto. As long as you're not trying to hurt anyone, telling the stories is a way of teasing those you care about."

"Ah." Ianto laughed. He smiled over at Jack and nodded. "I've been an only child for too long. I'd forgotten about the marry a soldier and have a dozen kids stories." He was surprised to be jerked to a halt by Jack who gave him a look that clearly said – you wouldn't dare. He shook his head wondering what the problem was until he recalled his sister's reaction to the news that Owen could rewrite her DNA to eliminate the hemophilia gene. "I wouldn't hurt her, Jack. She's my sister. I could always embarrass Mama by mentioning the stables."

Ianto shoved the library door open and released Jack's hand so his lover could enter first. He followed him in, struggling to keep his gaze off Jack's arse, and waited to see where Jack would decide to sit. He wasn't surprised in the least when the other man chose the leather armchair off to one side of the sofa yet still allowing him a complete view of the room. Ianto followed, absently kicked one of Jack's ankles to get him to move, and settled tailor fashion on the floor in front of the chair. Ianto hummed softly as Jack's fingers threaded through his hair. He shifted his position until he was comfortable. He ended up half-resting against one of Jack's thighs with his legs curled beside him.

A soft questioning sound from where Mairwen sat in the other armchair opposite them caused him to look up with a slight frown. He watched his sister for several silent minutes before rising again. He considered for a moment before crossing over to the bar in one corner of the room. He fixed a glass of scotch for his father and Jack, debated a bit and poured a small glass of wine for Mairwen as well as one for his Mama. He left Victoria's on the bar, but carried the others to their recipients. Handing Mairwen's over, he bent down and whispered, "Everything's fine. We'll talk later before bed."

She gave him a look, one he was more used to seeing on the Tsarina but nodded to him. Mairwen took the glass, sipped a bit, and settled into holding it loosely in her hand. Ianto smiled, kissed her temple, and

Family Affairs

stepped around her to hand a scotch glass to his father on his way back to his spot in front of Jack. He settled again, half resting against Jack's thigh, and handed the last glass he held up to Jack.

"Not drinking, *carriad?*"

"I figured I could share yours." He tilted his head to the side and smiled up at Jack. "You don't mind, do you?"

A slow lazy smirk, one Ianto had quickly realized was just for him, settled on Jack's face. Jack took a drink, hummed in appreciation, and then handed the glass down to Ianto. Their fingers lingered during the handover. The combination of that fleeting touch and Jack running his other hand across his nape pulled a lazy purr from him while his eyes closed in pleasure.

The sound of the door opening and closing brought Ianto out of the haze he'd drifted into from Jack's idle caresses to his neck. He blinked a couple of times to refocus his mind, sipped the scotch and handed the glass back up to Jack. As he watched, his Mama raised an eyebrow while Jack flushed and toasted her with the scotch glass. Not once during the by-play did Jack stop stroking his neck or playing with the small bits of hair curling against his neck. "Evening, Mama, movie time?" Ianto fought to keep his eyes open as Jack's touch relaxed him even more.

"I think we'll talk instead." Victoria crossed the room, retrieved the glass Ianto'd left for her from the bar, and joined Ifan on the sofa.

"About?" Ianto had a distinctly bad feeling. He just knew he wouldn't like the upcoming conversation. Before he could even start to tense, Jack's hand drifted along his upper back before going back into his hair. He settled down against his lover's leg again instead.

"Well." She drew the word out. Her tone all playfully serious in comparison to the weighty words she spoke. "As your parents we're really interested in what you think your lives together will be like. It won't be easy, not with your jobs, and then there's the matter of finances."

Family Affairs

"Victoria..." Jack interrupted her with an equally playful tone. "Are you asking if I can support Ianto in the style to which he is accustomed?"

"Mama!" Ianto cried the word all affronted dignity. He'd known she was up to something which would embarrass him.

"Can you, Jack?" His Tad just had to join in with the fun. He could hear Mairwen stifling giggles from her chair.

"Tad!"

"Actually, Ifan, I can." Jack handed the scotch back to Ianto then returned to petting his hair. "I've never needed much to live on, so I've been investing most of my salary since I joined Torchwood. And I've had some very good luck."

"Is that what you call it?" Ianto snarked. He was pouting and he knew it. He sipped his drink and looked over at his giggling sister. He winked at her over the rim of the glass. As soon as he did, she dissolved into full-blown laughter. "Oh, not you too," he complained playfully.

"I bet even you don't know Jack owns a sizable chunk of Grangetown and Splott." Ifan saluted Jack with his scotch glass. "With all the urban renewal going on, he's probably doing very well. Not to mention the place in Pontcanna. Let's just say Jack has no financial problems."

"I know everything, Tad." Ianto rolled his eyes and chuckled. He tilted his head back to smile up at Jack. "I was just waiting for him to tell me."

"The house in Pontcanna is what I was talking about earlier, Ianto. Most of the places in the neighborhood have been subdivided into luxury flats. I figure we can get four large flats and two attic spaces out of it. One for you and me, and one for Mairwen, and we can rent out the rest."

Ianto thought hard for a moment. He felt himself blush as he recalled when Jack had first mentioned the house to him. Ducking his head, he rummaged through his memory for what he could recall of the Pontcanna property. The beautiful terrace house had already been

Family Affairs

divided once into a ground floor flat and a maisonnette upstairs. The flat would be more than adequate for him and Jack while Mairwen could live upstairs eventually having a family without having to find another home unless she truly wished to. Before he could say anything one way or the other, his sister interrupted his thoughts.

"For me?" Shock laced her voice as she stared across the room at him. "A place for me? Really?"

"Of course, there's a place for you." He looked up at Jack again. "Someone already divided the house once. I'd just update it."

"You've been making plans, haven't you?" Jack chuckled. "One step ahead as always."

"Me?" Ianto attempted to look innocent. He knew he failed when everyone but Jack started laughing. He couldn't help but grin in response.

Jack leaned down and whispered, "I like the sneaky you. He's always on my side."

Ianto twisted a bit and kissed Jack. "Always." He kissed him again before settling back on the floor. Desperate for a topic change, he turned back to his parents. "Tad, Jack mentioned one of our colleagues likes horses. Maybe we should consider breeding Angharad."

"Finally!" His Mama all but bounced on the sofa. It was kind of cute seeing her behave like a teenager. "I've wanted a foal or two out of Angie for years."

"I know, Mama." Ianto smiled at her. He drew in a breath and let it go slowly. He'd always been possessive of his horse since she'd been the first one he'd owned and ridden properly. "I finally realized it's time. I just want to be certain that we can offer Tosh one in the future."

"Of course we can. I like Toshiko. She needs something to take her out of herself, I think."

"That she does." Ianto nodded his agreement. "So, one of Angharad's foals is reserved for Tosh."

"Done!" Victoria clapped her hands together before finishing off her glass of wine. "Now, everyone, I don't know about you, but I am

Family Affairs

tired. Mairwen and I did manage a fair bit of work, didn't we, Mairwen?"

"I'm sure all the store owners were amazed by your labor, darling." Ifan grinned, leaned over and kissed Victoria. He smiled at a blushing and stammering Mairwen. "It's okay, *merch*¹⁷, just teasing."

"It is hard work shopping, Tad." Ianto laughed softly at the mock glares from the women. He shared a look with his Tad and readied another remark to tease his Mama with; however, before he could speak both his and Jack's mobiles rang. Ianto tensed, looked down at his and pouted at it. "Torchwood," he said. He shut his off and looked up at Jack.

Jack pulled his mobile out, glowered at it, and flipped open. His polite greeting belied the upset clearly visible on his face. "Tosh?" He listened intently to their computer tech for several minutes before speaking again. "You're certain?... All right... We'll head back early... we should be there in time to meet you at the landing field before the plane arrives and follow you back to the Hub from there." After a moment, Jack laughed. "Of course, see you then."

"The Rift?" Ianto asked. He threw an apologetic glance at his parents and sister before refocusing on his lover. He could already see the edges of 'The Captain' appearing in Jack's demeanor. "What's it tossing at us this time?"

"Tosh says the latest readings match those made in the earlier fifties when a plane called the Sky Gypsy went missing. She thinks it's coming back through the Rift now."

"So we'll need to meet it." Ianto released a sigh, nodded and rose to his feet. He tossed back the last of the scotch in the glass he still held and set it aside. He brushed a kiss on his Mama's cheek, hugged his Tad, and murmured apologies for having to cut their visit short. Smiling apologetically, he crossed over to offer his hand to Mairwen.

¹⁷ Welsh, "daughter"

Family Affairs

"Let me walk you up. We haven't had a chance to talk. Now that Jack and I have to rush back to work, this is the best moment."

He waited for her to set her glass aside before leading her from the room. Silence fell between them as they climbed the stairs toward her room. Ianto followed Mairwen into her room. She settled in the chair by the small writing desk; he stood by the door just watching her. "Talk to me, dearest. Something is clearly bothering you."

"It's just..." Mairwen paused and thought for a bit. "I watch you with Jack and I worry."

"Why?"

"I'm afraid..." Mairwen trailed off again. Her eyes went a bit unfocused as they stared off into the distance beyond him. Ianto recognized the look as one he'd often worn when he'd first arrived in the late twentieth century. "Well, I remember about Uncle Sergei and how Mama talked about him. I don't want you to go through that."

"Alexandra's not here." Ianto knew he was being usually blunt with his sister; however, he had to make her understand that what their birth mother thought no longer applied to them unless they wanted them to. "Our Mama just wants me to be happy. If that's with Jack, she's fine."

"You think of her as Alexandra?"

"Now I do, yes. It's easier for me, Mairwen." Ianto leaned back against the wall. He crossed his arms over his chest. He suddenly felt rather defensive of himself and what he'd done over the time he'd grown up away from the Imperial Court. "Of course, I've also grown up without her influence and had years to see what she did to us when we were young. I..." He shoved a hand through his hair. "The Tsarina was never really a parent to me, Mairwen. Nor was she to you girls. Mama – Victoria – is my mother in every way which truly counts."

"I know." Mairwen nodded. "I thought... Well, I've been thinking all day about how much easier it is to be Victoria's daughter. How I wish I always..." She started crying. "I thought I was being disloyal to Mama."

Family Affairs

Unable to stand her tears, Ianto crossed the room and pulled her into his arms. He stroked her back and swayed in place in an attempt to comfort her. "It's not." He pressed a kiss to her temple. "Not when you consider everything. I know Alexandra often overlooked your existence. Olga and Tatiana were more her companions than daughters while Anastasia was the little attention seeker. You and me, we were quiet and often lost in the shuffle. If it wasn't for my being her only son and so often ill, I'm certain she would have forgotten me too."

"I always felt a little abandoned." She wrapped her arms around his waist and clung to him. "I tried to please her, I truly did, but she only noticed my mistakes." She clutched him tighter and sobbed. "She could be so cruel when she spoke. I was a bargaining chip on the royal marriage mart, that's all. I know that's the way it was supposed to be for us, but I noticed the other aristocratic girls were... loved."

"On the rare occasions we saw them." Ianto remembered just how little they saw family or members of the Court. If it wasn't a state occasions, they were back in the palace at Tsarskoye Selo until the next occasion where the family was trotted out to parade before the public. "She kept us isolated, alone, and dependent on her and the Tsar." He gently tilted her head up to look down at her. "I won't tell you to forget everything from then, but I will tell you this is a new time, a new place and a whole new start for you. You can be whoever you want to be now, Mairwen."

"Mama Victoria says the same. And Tad..." She smiled at him through the last of her tears. Ianto wiped them away with his fingers. "Ianto, he wants me to go into business with him! Take over the business someday. Me! A girl! He says I'm good enough."

"You are!" Ianto shook her gently to punctuate the statement. "If he thinks you are, then you are. You can do anything you want. I'd love to see you in charge of the company."

"Mairwen Jones, CEO." She hitched a breath – more sob than giggle – yet still managed a smile. "I think it's a miracle." She turned serious. "About Jack... If you're certain and it is safe, well, I'm so

Family Affairs

happy for you, Ianto." An impish smile suddenly appeared as she shifted her voice to sound like one of the empty-headed girls so prevalent at Court. "He's so handsome! And rich!"

"Brat." He shook his head and laughed. "Jack is all mine. And yes, I'm certain." He took a step back from her and gave her somewhat stern look. "Nothing, not even all the fortune we left behind could coerce me into giving him up. He loves *me*, not the Tsarevich, but me."

"I hope I can find the same thing some day." She hugged him one more time. "And, Ianto, if you ever want that fortune, at least a great big chunk of it, I know where to find it."

"I know where some of it is." He tapped her on the nose before kissing her cheek. "If we ever have a need for it, I promise I'll ask you." He thought for a moment before smiling broadly. "Do you know which cache the Tsar put the Tsarina's favorite tiara in? Because I've been teasing Jack..."

"I heard Papa and Mama talking one night." She nodded to him. "Papa told Mama Grandmother was taking care of the 'best pretties.' Mama wasn't happy but Papa told her Georgie would make sure they would be protected."

"You're certain?" He stared at her in shock and surprise. "Mairwen, you're absolutely certain that's what he said?"

"Yes." Mairwen nodded firmly. "And he said Grandmama would make sure none of the others could find them. Then he started to tell her how wonderful it would be once they could walk on the beach again."

"Your dowry." Ianto hugged her tightly again. "The jewels we saw most on Alexandra. The pieces which would, under other circumstances, have gone to my wife." He released his sister and grinned at her. "I know where they are because he gave them to Grandmama. I just..." He trailed off and shook his head.

"What, Ianto? You just..." She glared at him. "What?"

"It's nothing." He shook his head. "So, feeling better?"

Family Affairs

"Much better. You better go get some sleep. It sounds that you're going to be very busy once you get to Cardiff."

"It's always busy." Ianto sighed. Just the thought of all the work they'd be doing if Tosh was correct about the source of the readings tired him out. "We're going to leave early, so I might not see you before we go. You'll be okay?"

"Yes. I must so I shall." She straightened up to her full height. A single finger tapped against his chest. "That's one of the lessons we should retain, shouldn't we?"

"Definitely." He hugged her one last time. "Promise me you'll call if you need to talk."

"Of course. Mama Victoria just got me a cell phone. It's an amazing thing, this technology. I'm signed up for computer classes starting next week. It's all so different!"

Ianto laughed and kissed her cheek. "Trust Mama. She help you adapt. She helped me." He straightened away from the wall. "I'm going to bed... hopefully..." he paused and blushed. "Never mind."

A soft giggle escaped his sister. "Hopefully Jack will still be awake?" She hesitated for a moment before rushing her next words out. "Is it nice? Making love, being in love?"

He stroked her cheek. "More than nice...." Ianto stared off into the distance. "With the right person, amazing..."

"Then I shall wait for the right person."

"Do that..." He brushed her cheek with his fingers. "Rest, heal, and figure out who you are. There's a place for you in Cardiff when you're ready." He kissed her cheek again. "Good night, sis."

"Good night, Ianto."

It took all his self-control to keep from slamming the door behind him as he left her room. Ianto stood in the hall for several minutes, his jaw clenched in anger, and took several deep breaths as many clues came together to confirm his long held fears about some of the things that had happened to his sisters all those years ago. With one final deep breath, he stalked through the house for his own room.

CHAPTER TEN

Ianto flung his bedroom door open, stepped inside and all but slammed it behind him. He grabbed the nearest handy object, a small water glass on his chest of drawers, and flung it across the room. The shatter of the glass did nothing for his suddenly surging anger. He wished he could go back to that awful night and stop those events. He reached for the other glass that matched the first only to feel firm hands clasp his arms. He froze for a moment before he recognized Jack standing in front of him. He stared hard at his lover. "You should have taken me with you."

"What are you talking about?" Jack ran his hands down Ianto's arms until he could clasp their hands. "Ianto..."

"When you went to pick up Marie." He took several deep breaths in an attempt to calm his temper. He'd not been this angry in years. Not even the events surrounding Lisa's death angered him as much as this did. "You should have taken me with you."

"You know we couldn't have saved them all..."

"I know that!" Ianto jerked out of Jack's loose hold. "But revenge..." He smirked at Jack as he stalked past him. "That's another

thing altogether. I could have made them pay for what they did to my sisters."

A hand wrapped around his upper arm. Jack swung him around to face him. "And what would that have accomplished?" He shook his head. "No, don't give me that look. It wouldn't have changed anything."

"I wouldn't feel so..." Ianto broke off abruptly. He threw himself down onto his bed and glared up at Jack. He knew it wasn't logical for him to take his frustrations out on Jack; however, he needed to get the feelings out. "Those bastards lived nice long lives for the most part. All heroes of the revolution with nice comforts from the Soviets. They shouldn't have had the privilege."

"Ianto..." Jack crossed the room to crouch down in front of him. Ianto levered himself up in order to focus on him. "You know how long I've lived. Most bastards have nice long lives. Sometimes you can bring one down and it's given me great pleasure." He reached out and brushed Ianto's cheek. He leaned into the caress. "But the most important people, the ones we need to concentrate on, always, are the survivors. You, Mairwen, you're important." A smile lit Jack's eyes. "If you live a happy life, if you find love... you've taken revenge because you've denied them their victory."

"It's hard, Jack." Ianto closed his eyes for a moment. "She asked me something right before I left her room. What she asked, the way she said it, it just confirmed all my fears."

"You think she was raped." Jack sighed. He rose from the floor to settle beside Ianto on the edge of the bed. "I wouldn't be surprised considering the times. She doesn't need your anger, she needs your support. Especially once she starts being sexually active."

Ianto nodded. He bit his lower lip, debated and finally whispered, "It's the only thing which fits the events, the way the girls acted the next morning and what she said now. And I hate knowing it's true."

"Of course you do." A hand rested on his shoulder before Jack began to stroke his back. "But you were not much more than a child at the time. You can't blame yourself. What is important now is that you

Family Affairs

help Marie both by living a full life and by letting her cry on your shoulder when she needs to."

"I was also locked into a room with our tutors who'd come with us from Toblsk." He shuddered and tried to force the memories away again. "I'm just so angry, Jack. She..."

"No. Don't dwell on it." Jack cupped his cheek and forced him to meet his captain's gaze. "It happened. It's in the past. She will need help and we'll be there to help her."

"I'll try. That night's up there with the assassination and Canary Wharf as primary nightmare fodder." He looked away. "I'm almost afraid to go to bed because of the thoughts."

"You'll sleep fine because I'll be right here with you." One of Jack's more flirty grins punctuated the statement. Ianto found himself smiling briefly in response. "I'll have you know, I'm a great dragon slayer."

"I have more than a few which need slaying, Jack." A tiny laugh escaped him. "Why do you put up with me?"

"You're a great kisser. You have a fantastic arse. You give the best..." Jack held up his hands in surrender. "All right, don't give me the evil eye. Seriously now, you're strong, loyal, and you love me."

"Yep. I do indeed." He drew in a breath and let it out carefully. "For so very long I could ignore the past..." Ianto closed his eyes tightly. He opened them and managed to summon up a smile for Jack. "Then I met you and I wanted you to know it all. Now, now I'm terrified of the nightmares from remembering. I guess you'll have to play teddy bear for a while."

"It will be my pleasure."

Ianto laughed softly. "I've slept better the last few days with you than I have in years, Jack." He rose to his feet and started gathering up the few things they'd unpacked just the previous night. He put them away in the case, leaving out something for the drive back to Cardiff for them both. Finally, he turned back to Jack and leaned back against the front of his dresser. "Silly, isn't it?"

Family Affairs

"No." Jack shook his head. "I've never told you about my nightmares, have I? "

"Nope." Ianto smiled broadly at the mere thought of knowing one of Jack's many secrets. "But then things have been busy lately."

"Remind me to tell you about the Game Station. Now, we need to get sleep. Torchwood calls."

"Ah, yes, we have to get up way too early. Um..." Ianto really wasn't looking forward to the lengthy drive back south. "Would you be willing to drive? Because I don't know if I'll be able to manage it."

"Now I know you love me, you're trusting yourself to my driving."

"I always trust your driving. I get in the SUV, don't I?" Ianto chuckled softly and stripped off his shirt. "I was worried my car wouldn't survive your driving. It is sometimes a bit manic and I really like my car."

"Like I said, you love me." Another impish grin appeared. "Come here." Jack held his hands out to him. "Let's go to bed."

"I like the sound of that." Ianto tossed his shirt over a nearby chair. He crossed the room to grasp Jack's hands. He pulled him up off the bed and started working on his shirt buttons. He snaked his hand beneath the parting fabric to rub his thumb over one nipple. "Not particularly tired yet though."

He smirked at Jack's expression. He felt a bit lost as if someone had stolen his GPS when he wasn't looking; however, he wasn't going to allow that to stop him from at least touching Jack. He quickly finished the buttons on the other man's shirt and tugged it off. He threw it in the same general direction as his own. He took a step closer to Jack and wrapped his arms around his neck. He loved the feel of their chests pressed together and closed his eyes for a moment to savor the feeling. He opened his eyes to meet blue ones staring intently at him. "Kiss me, Jack."

"With pleasure."

Ianto sighed into the kiss. He loved the way Jack kissed. It took him completely over and made everything else seem inconsequential in

Family Affairs

comparison. All the worries, the doubt, melted away until all that remained was Jack. He broke the kiss and rested his forehead against Jack's. "Make me forget, Jack," he whispered. "Please."

"*Cariad...*" Jack paused and brushed his fingers along Ianto's throat. "I will make love to you, Ianto, but not to make you forget. I will do it to make you remember."

Ianto blinked. That was not the answer he'd expected from his flamboyant captain. He tilted his head to one side, repeating the words in his mind and finally just shook his head slightly in confusion. "I don't understand."

"Ianto, sex can't erase bad memories and in the long run can't even fight them off." Jack backed toward the bed until he could sit. He spread his legs and pulled Ianto between them. "Sex should be an affirmation of the good of what is. A celebration. Of survival, of love."

He stared at Jack. He doubted he'd ever understand him. A tiny strangled noise escaped him. He scrambled onto the bed, straddling his lover, and buried his face in Jack's neck. He didn't quite know why he was crying so hard just knew that he needed to. He wrapped his arms and legs around Jack and clung to him while he sobbed. He felt Jack's arms encircle him. They tumbled backwards on the bed, Jack pinned beneath Ianto as they settled amongst the bedding. Warm hands stroked his back while wordless murmurs poured into his ear.

Ianto slowly calmed down. He lifted himself up a bit to smirk down at his lover. "Now, this is familiar." He chuckled at Jack's mock-innocent look. "And you're trying to distract me."

"But you're so easy to distract, Ianto." Jack drew his name out into a lengthy drawl. He shook his head at his antics; however, when his lover lifted his chin in a silent demand for a kiss, he did give in and kiss him briefly.

"Am not."

"Really?" There was a tease to the question. Jack's hands slid down his back and edged beneath his waistband. Firm fingers massaged his arse. "Really?"

Family Affairs

"Yup." Ianto held himself still even as his eyes closed for a moment in response to the caresses. He opened his eyes to stare down at his lover. "I'm not going to be distracted by your hands down my pants."

"You sure?" Jack eased one hand around to open the button of Ianto's trousers. The other hand slid further down his arse until fingertips teased at his hole. "What about this?"

"Oh fuck Jack." Ianto groaned the words out. He dropped his head down to rest against Jack's chest for a moment. All he wanted to do was press back against those fingers in a silent demand for more. "Okay," he panted. "That's a distraction."

"You see?" Jack shifted his hands to shove the trousers down to the middle of Ianto's thighs. He returned his fingers to their teasing around Ianto's arsehole while his other hand cupped Ianto's balls, rolling them between his fingers. "You're easy."

"If I'm easy..." Ianto groaned deep in his throat. He somehow managed to get his trousers the rest of the way off without moving away from Jack's hands. "What's that make you?"

"The only man you'll be easy with."

"Got that right." He ground his hips against Jack's still clothed ones. He groaned as their erections brushed through the fabric. "You're mine, Jack."

"And you're mine." Jack arched his neck to claim a kiss. "For as long as we can..." Another kiss teased over his lips. "For as long as you live."

"Damned straight." Ianto alternated thrusting back against Jack's stroking fingers and forward against his erection. "Now stop teasing me!"

"I could say the same thing you know."

Ianto stared down at Jack for just one moment. From somewhere deep within him came this demanding urge to stake his claim on his lover again. He reached down, caught Jack's wrists and tugged his hands away from his body. He levered himself up and rolled off the bed. "Strip." He tossed the word over his shoulder as he stalked across

Family Affairs

the room to dig through Jack's coat again. Lube in hand, he returned to the bed and smiled at the sight of his lover sprawled nude across the mattress. "God, you're beautiful."

He watched Jack stroke his cock while watching him cross the room toward the bed. He rested a knee on the bed and reached out to run a hand up Jack's thigh. "Absolutely beautiful." Ianto crawled closer until he could suck the head of Jack's cock while the other man stroked himself. He teased for a moment, lapping at the precome with his tongue before lifting his head and smirking at a panting Jack. He tossed him the bottle of lube. "I want you to do something for me."

"And that is?"

Ianto considered Jack for a moment while debating how to say what he wanted. Finally, he decided to throw away caution and just say it. "I want you to ready yourself for me." He wrapped a hand around his own erection and stroked it slowly. "And then I want you to ride me." For a moment, his insecurity crept through, as he just had to ask, "Okay with you?"

"Oh yeah."

The words sounded almost obscene the way Jack drawled them out. Ianto smirked and shifted about on the bed until he was propped against the headboard with prime Jack view directly in front of him. He watched, intent, as Jack rearranged himself. Soon, well-lubed fingers were teasing at Jack's arse while eyes dark with arousal stared back at him. Ianto found himself panting for breath, his own hand drifting down to stroke his cock as he watched Jack's every move. He couldn't take his gaze from the other man. Finally, just when he thought he couldn't take another minute of watching, Jack crawled up the bed to straddle his hips. He had only a moment's warning before Jack was sinking down on his cock. Ianto flung his head back with a deep groan.

"Oh, hell, Jack." He forced himself to focus on Jack. He shook his head just a bit at the other man's smirk. "You feel so fucking good." Ianto reached out a hand and stroked Jack's hip. "Ride me, Jack."

Family Affairs

Their eyes met, held, even as the silence in the room deepened. Jack began to move, slow and steady, almost teasing Ianto who bit his lip hard to hold back the threatening orgasm. For all the intensity of the moment, it was slow and almost lazy until Ianto couldn't hold back another moment. He reached up, wrapped a hand around Jack's neck and pulled him down into a kiss. He flipped them over, still kissing Jack, and started thrusting hard. He wanted to come, needed to come, and wanted Jack to come with him. Breaking the kiss, he reached between them and started stroking Jack's cock. It took only a few swift, hard strokes to bring Jack off and Ianto quickly followed. He collapsed onto his lover and panted for breath. "Now I can sleep," he muttered. "Exhausted."

A deep chuckle rumbled through his Jack-shaped pillow. Ianto lifted his head and pouted before laughing softly himself. He shifted off Jack long enough to allow his lover to clean them up a bit and set the clock for the unholy hour of the morning they needed to wake up. Once the lights were off and Jack back in bed, Ianto squirmed over until he could curl up against Jack's side. "Love you." Ianto didn't hear Jack's response, if any, as he collapsed into sleep.

All too soon to Ianto's still exhausted mind, the alarm was blaring and Jack was all but bouncing out of bed. He dragged himself out from the warm mass of covers and followed Jack the few steps to the shower in the next room. One far too quick shower later, they were back in the bedroom dressing and packing at the same time. Ianto debated for a bit; despite the length of the drive they'd be 'on duty' once they arrived in Cardiff. He quickly dressed in the single suit he'd packed for the trip. Tie settled, he looked down at the one item still not packed. He flipped the small box open and one at a time settled his new cufflinks into place. Feeling someone watching him, Ianto lifted his gaze to the mirror and stared at Jack. The other man's look was strange yet warming as their eyes met in the mirror. He drew in a breath, let it out, and forced himself to finish the packing. "We should go."

"Coffee first, please?"

Family Affairs

"Of course." With Ianto leading and Jack carrying the bags, they headed down to the kitchen. Ianto quickly set to work making a pot of coffee. He handed a travel mug to Jack, filled one for himself and poured the remainder into a thermos for the drive. He turned from the counter, mug in hand, to be confronted by Victoria. "Mama?"

"I wanted to say goodbye." She stared up at him. Though nothing was in her voice, he could see her fear and worry for him in her eyes. Victoria knew all too well the dangers of Torchwood. "And to give you this." She held a DVD case out to him. "I had it made as soon as I heard about you and Jack. One day you'll want to show them to him."

"You didn't." He protested even as he took the disc and tucked it into a pocket. "Mama..."

"Of course I did, darling. Everyone should have good memories." She reached up and stroked his cheek. Victoria's fingers trembled against his skin as they brushed a bit of his hair back. "Some day they will be good memories instead of embarrassments."

Ianto leaned into her touch for a moment before bending to kiss her cheek. "I already have a lot of good ones." He hugged her tight. "I promise we'll come for a longer visit soon."

"I'll hold you to that. Jack..." Victoria shifted her attention to the other man and kissed his cheek. "Welcome to the family. You're everything I would have wanted for Ianto. And if you hurt him, I'll have your guts for garters. Understood?"

Ianto laughed gaily at Jack's stunned expression. "Tell Tad and Mairwen we said good-bye. We need to head out or we'll be late." With his Mama's arm around his waist and his own around Jack's, they headed for the door. They stopped in the foyer. Jack nodded to Victoria, took the bags out to put in the boot, and returned for the coffee things. Ianto struggled with his control before he finally murmured, "Bye, Mama, I'll miss you."

"I'll miss you too, *cariad*." She smiled up at him before stepping away. Ianto felt as if she was giving him permission he didn't know he'd needed. "Be safe, both of you."

Family Affairs

He gave her a nod and headed out the door. He held himself together until they'd settled in the car and started out of the drive. Only then did he shudder in reaction to leaving his family behind again. Ianto knew it would take him a bit to settle down emotionally. Luckily, he had three hours before they'd arrive in Cardiff.

"You okay?"

"No." Ianto summoned up a smile. He shifted a bit in his seat to consider Jack. To his surprise, there was no manic driving yet. "But I will be."

BETH McCOMBS

Previously published under a pseudonym as an erotic romance author, Beth McCombs has returned to her roots as a fan fiction writer in an attempt to recover from a severe bout of depression-induced writer's block. She still hopes to be published again someday, but isn't pushing herself in any direction instead she writes for the pure joy of writing.

Beth lives in South Alabama with her husband and young daughter. In her spare time, she studies history, anthropology, and mythology.

You can email Beth at beth@memcombs.com or visit her website at www.memcombs.com.