

The Doctor stepped back into the TARDIS and sauntered over to Octavia. “Where’s Rarity?” She asked him.

“She’s going with a friend of mine... There is a very important question I haven’t asked yet, and it surprises me that I haven’t asked it.”

“And that is...?”

“The Shadow of your Smile. Where did you learn that song?”

“Oh I... Well... I’m actually not entirely sure.”

The Doctor stopped at the controls, and turned and faced Octavia. He gave a small, almost devious smile. “I just love hearing that. So I’m guessing it came to you in a dream then? Or just randomly popped into your head?”

“The dream one. It was just playing in my dream, there was a cello, playing itself. Playing so beautifully. I just HAD to learn to play it for the concert.”

“That’s unusual. So whatever put that song in your head must have been from my universe. That or... It WAS my universe. Information from my universe seeping into your head, using you as a link to my universe. Everytime you play that song, you open the link enough for something to get through...”

“Then that shadow thing came from your universe?”

“Yes, but it’s not the Vashta Nerada... If it’s a weak enough link, then that means it could basically be anything. I’ve seen it before once or twice, a weak link with a universe while still crossing through makes these ghostish, shadow-like things.”

“Then what do you think it is?”

“Well, some sort of humanoid probably. But why you? What’s so important about you?”

“Well... I’m a pretty renowned musician. At least I WAS before this whole ordeal.”

“No, no, no, I mean what’s IMPORTANT about you. Maybe you were just there? Maybe a coincidence? No, never ignore a coincidence. Unless of course you’re busy, in which case...” The Doctor paused. “No, pretty sure I already used that line. Anyway, yes, a coincidence. Maybe, probably not. Never! Never a coincidence!”

“You certainly are a very strange pony.”

“I’m not exactly a pony. As in, not at all. I’m a Timelord. I’m from the planet Gallefrey, from a different universe. This is just a disguise... That didn’t want to come off.”

“So you’re like... An alien?”

“Yes, exactly. I’m an alien disguised to look like one of you equines. See, logically, I SHOULD be back to my normal form by now. It’s like something is holding me here. But what... What could it possibly be...”

Meanwhile in Ponyville, Tenny followed Rarity back to the Boutique. “So um... Tenny, was it? What exactly are you Doctors planning to do?”

“Well, my job’s simple enough. Wait. Hideout with you for a while. About a year actually, possibly longer, until the time comes. Can’t risk taking the TARDIS into that time area, it’ll blow my cover.”

“... So your brilliant plan is to just wait around for a while?”

“Oh yes! Until then, I’ll have to act like a normal pony. Probably best if I stay with you for a while. If anyone asks, I’m your...” Rarity’s eyes widened and she blushed ever so slightly. “... Cousin, that’ll do.” She was disappointed. “Maybe I’ll help around the shop or something. Whatever it is normal ponies do.”

“Well... This will certainly be interesting.”

The Doctor landed the TARDIS and stepped out, Octavia followed. He now donned a jacket he found in his wardrobe remarkably similar to the one he wore in his Timelord body, that happened to fit him as an equine. A remarkable coincidence. They were in a huge clearing in an unfamiliar forest. “Alright, this should do the trick. Octavia, did we pull your cello in with you back on the street corner?”

“You did, it’s back in the TARDIS.”

“Go get it.”

“Uh... Why?”

“Trust me.”

“Okay then...” She returned to the TARDIS to fetch the cello.

“Why am I still here...” The Doctor pondered out loud. “Why am I still like this? That’s NOT how Chameleon Arches work. Something’s attracting me to this world, and not letting me go. What could be that powerful? Not the Vashta Nerada, definitely not, they’re swarms, nothing else. The Daleks? No, no.... The... Time Lords?”

“Okay, I got it.” Octavia interrupted The Doctor’s brain-thinking.

“OH! Good, good. Alright then, let’s do this shall we?”

“Alright! ... What exactly are we doing?”

“Shadow of your Smile, play it, would you?”

“What? Why?”

“I like that song. Just play it.”

Octavia nodded and obliged. As she began to play, The Doctor ran into the TARDIS and dragged out some complex computer-like machinery. He laid it on the ground and began to type on it. “Alright then.” He said out loud. “What are you?”

As Octavia played, the machinery made some loud beeping sounds and static noise. The Doctor made notes of the shadows casted by the trees around the clearing. “Octavia.” He turned to the mare playing the cello in the middle of an eerie forest. “Close your eyes.” She opened her mouth to question him but he cut her off. “Just do it. Trust me, it could save your life someday.”

Octavia closed her eyes and continued playing. The Doctor started running back and forth from one side of the clearing to another, examining the shadows. “Why should I trust you?” She finally asked. “As far as I know, you’re just some madman with a box.”

A flood of memories crashed into the Doctor, stopping him in place. He was silent for a few moments before finally responding. “Madman with a box or not, I’m still the best chance you have of getting rid of whatever’s haunting you.” He continued examining the shadows. Octavia continued to play.

Finally a reaction. One shadow, a single shadow of a single tree, stretched out of the forest, towards Octavia. The Doctor scurried over to the shadow and knelt in front of it, between the shadow and Octavia. “Okay then, what are you?”

The shadow stopped. It disconnected itself from the tree, and slowly rose up and formed into a silhouette of a humanoid creature. It looked rather human. Or Time Lord. Or Kaled even.

“That’s good. Now, identify yourself, would you? And maybe you could tell me everything about yourself while you’re at it?”

The silhouette was silent. It stood there, facing The Doctor. Absolutely silent. Finally, the shadow started to morph into a more detailed figure. The slacks, the tan jacket, the bowtie, the suspenders, they all became very clear. “Oh no.” The Doctor stepped back.

Octavia opened her eyes and stopped playing. She turned to The Doctor and the figure and yelped. “What is that thing!?” She exclaimed.

“I’m not entirely sure. I mean, I know what it looks like, but that can’t be right.”

“What is it? It’s hideous.”

The Doctor shot Octavia a wicked glare. “That’s ME. That’s what I look like normally. And I never thought I was hideous. Most people say I’m gorgeous. I say that too. It’s mostly the bow tie. Bow ties are cool.” He turned back to the imposter. “And you’re wearing a bow tie, so you can’t be THAT bad. Allo, I’m The Doctor? What’s your name?”

The creature was silent for a moment, then spoke. “I am The Doctor.”

“No, no you’re not, I’ve already met one other me in this universe, you can’t be me too. Anyway, you came from my universe, I’m the only Doctor there, so do us all a favour and chose a new name.”

“I am The Doctor.” The figure insisted. His voice was The Doctor’s, though it was a dull monotone, not at all like The Doctor. “I am The Doctor, and you are an imposter.”

“No, no, see, I know The Doctor better than anyone. Because he’s me. And you’re not me, or else you’d be over here where I am. Also you would be me. And you’re not. So you’re clearly not The Doctor.”

“Well.” Octavia stepped up beside The Doctor. “I haven’t known The Doctor for very long, but I DO know him enough to know that you’re nothing like him. For one, what you say makes too much sense. Two, you...”

“Octavia...” The Doctor interrupted. “You stopped playing?”

“Yes, I did. So?”

“Then the crack should be closed... So how...”

“Transfer is completed.” The false Doctor announced. “This universe is now my home. The Doctor is in.”

“Okay, THAT sounded like something you would say.” Octavia commented.

“Am I REALLY that corny?” The Doctor asked, slightly offended.

“Sometimes, yes.”

“I am The Doctor. Exterminate. Exterminaaaate.” The Imposter pulled out a Sonic-Screwdriver-like device and aimed it at The Doctor.

“Octavia...” The Doctor whispered.

“Hm?” She replied.

“RUN!” The Doctor turned and bolted for the TARDIS, right as the Imposter fired a bolt of lazer energy from his screwdriver. The Doctor and Octavia made it safely into the TARDIS and instinctively huddled together against the door.

“What do we do?!” Octavia asked frantically.

“I don’t know, I don’t even know what we’re dealing with yet, I couldn’t possibly...” The two were silent for a moment as they realized they had wound up awkwardly close to each other. They quickly, and simultaneously scooted apart. “Right... So um. It thinks it’s me. “Exterminate” sounds awfully Dalek... But why would the Dalek’s want to imitate me?”

“What is a Dalek?”

“Oh, sort of my arch-nemesis you could say. Physical embodiment of everything I’ve ever hated pretty much.”

“I see...”

“Yes, and they hate me just as much. And they would be WAY to proud to imitate me...”

“Open the door or be deleted.” The Imposter’s voice was heard from outside. “The fake Doctor will vacate the Time Lord residence, or the Time Lord residence will be incinerated.”

“... Incineration is NOT something I want to experience Doctor!”

“Time Lord residence? That’s absurd, Time Lords don’t live in these things. Well, I do, but... Oh no..” The Doctor jumped to his feet and hurried to the control panel. “We need to go, right now... No, but we can’t, we can’t let that thing go free... But... GAH, I can’t think under pressure. Well, I can, but it’s hard to keep all the ideas seperated.”

“What are we going to do?”

“That thing, whatever it is, it created itself around me. My appearance, my memories, everything.”

“Open the door, Sweetie.” The Imposter shouted from outside. It now sounded a lot more like The Doctor.

“... No, that’s too far. Only ONE person’s allowed to call me SWEETIE. And she’s DEAD. So you’ve just crossed the line.” The Doctor pulled a lever on the TARDIS. The door opened and the Imposter was

standing outside, holding his screwdriver. His posture was almost identical to The Doctor's now. "You're nothing like me. I would never use a weapon, not a gun, not a laser-screwdriver, not anything. There is ONE weapon I have though. One more powerful than any gun you'll ever see. You wanna know what that is?" The Doctor placed his hoof on another lever. "1000 years of knowledge. 1000 years of pain, of suffering, 1000 years of loneliness. All that gets to you eventually. After 1000 years, all I am... As a madman with a box!" He pushed the lever with his hoof, and the TARDIS lunged forward, knocking the Imposter inside.

Octavia ran over and pulled the doors shut. The Doctor jumped down beside the Imposter and looked him in the eyes. "You've been me for about 10 minutes. I've been me for 1000 years." He stood up and raised his hooves. "Whoda Doctor!?" Octavia gave him an indignant look, and, oddly, so did the Imposter. "... I told myself I wouldn't say that anymore. I guess I thought it would work better here. I guess not. Well then..." The Doctor pulled his sonic out of his jacket and aimed it in the Imposter's eyes. The Imposter twitched around violently as it morphed back into a silhouette.

"So that's what was coming through?" Octavia asked, after a long pause.

"Yes. Still not entirely sure what it is though..." He looked and saw Octavia was sitting right beside him. She had an almost sympathetic look on her face. The Doctor forced a smile.

"I'm sorry." She said.

"About what?"

"About Sweetie."

"Oh... Her... Well... She's not really dead persay. She's just... Kind of... gone."

"What do you mean?"

"She gave her life to save 4023 people. I managed to save her... Sort of. I downloaded her consciousness into this computer thing, to live a quiet, peaceful life with a few of her fallen comrades."

"Oh... That's... Sad, but good, right?"

"Yes. The sad part is, I didn't even know her at the time. Time Travel, everything always happens for me in the wrong order... It was about 3 years ago, in my timeline, when she left for the last time. Left to meet a Doctor who hadn't met her yet. Again, time travel, complicated."

"I see. I'm sorry..."

"It's hard sometimes. Time Lords, we live a very long time. She was a human, they don't live as long. Melody Pond, or River Song was her name... I guess we have our fair share of puns in my universe too."

He smiled and looked back at Octavia. She smiled back. And they were silent.

“Why do they call you The Doctor?” Octavia finally broke the silence.

“Well. I guess it’s because I help people. I don’t know. I chose the title a long long time ago.”

“But, what about your real name? Do you have one?”

“Yes. I do.”

“Then why do you keep it a secret?”

“... What’s in a name anyway? I have a lot of names. The Doctor, John Smith, The Oncoming Storm, the Destroyer of Worlds... Spartacus. Ellie, that one’s pretty new. You can basically call me whatever you want.”

“I like Doctor.”

“I do too. It’s a nice name.” The Doctor looked back at the shadow lying unconscious on the TARDIS floor. “Oh right, that. My guess is some sort of Multiform. Not like one I’ve seen though. Completely different. And how did it come through the universes... And how is it holding me here?” He stood up and walked over to it. Octavia followed.

“Is travelling through universes a common thing?”

“No, not at all. It’s impossible really. Well, mostly.... Wait a minute... Luna was communicating with Riley, but Riley could communicate with her too. It went both ways, and it wasn’t just when you were playing. Unless you always played at just the right time. Unlikely, sounded like Luna’s ordeal was going on long before all of this... OH! Of course! It’s a two way link! It was opened in two directions! That means... It was opened from the void! That’s what you are!” He pointed at the shadow. “You’re a creature from the void!”

“Um... What is the void?”

“The void, it’s the area between the dimensions. A creature, a human or Time Lord, or Kaled, or anything that resembles a human, or anything really, could have fallen into the void somehow. I don’t know exactly how the Void works, but it could have completely stripped them of EVERYTHING, turned them into a lifeless shadow. And the first thing a lifeless shadow would want is, well, life. YES! That’s why the first one clung to you, it wanted to BECOME you.”

“Become me? How in Equestria would it do that? There could only be one me, people would notice.”

“Exactly. And there would have only been one you. One of you would be disposed of.” He glanced at

Octavia, who gulped as she understood what he meant. I wound up meeting the me of this world, Tenny, by total coincidence. Then I wound up in the desert by complete coincidence, then I met Rarity, then you, then we were here.” He stopped. “And you never ignore a coincidence.”

Rarity and Tenny laid snuggled together in front of her fireplace. The “cousins” act didn’t work out so well, since they looked and acted nothing alike, and were clearly of different species. Eventually they went to a new act. It had been three years, a lot longer than expected. Over the years, the act had become more than an act.

“It’s almost time Rarity...” Tenny spoke up.

“But, you CAN’T go, please don’t!”

“I’ll be back, don’t worry.” He pulled away. “I just need to move the TARDIS away. Far away. So it won’t be detected. Then I’ll have to travel back to Ponyville by train or something, like a normal pony. I’ll be gone a week, tops.” He stood up and headed for the door.”

“One week?” Rarity followed.

“Well, anywhere between a week and a few hundred years, the TARDIS can be unpredictable sometimes. But I WILL be back, I’ll aim for a week.”

“I...”

“Trust me Rarity. Have I EVER let you down?” She shook her head. “One week.” She nodded. He turned and walked off to fetch his abandoned TARDIS.

“COINCIDENCE! You never ignore one!” The Doctor repeated as he stepped out of the TARDIS into the desert. He noticed Tenny’s TARDIS de-materialize right next to his. “See, another coincidence. But what does it all mean?”

“Why are you asking me?”

“There are still a few questions. One, why are there void creatures here? Two, why are you the link? Three, why am I trapped in this state? I was thinking about that earlier. Where was I? Oh right! Time Lords! The Time Lords are supposedly all dead in both universes, but we know of two that are alive, Tenny and myself. I know one other who WAS alive in my universe, and could still be here. But why would that keep me here? ... Oh, I think I get it. I think I know EXACTLY who’s keeping me here.”

“Who? Octavia followed close behind him as he power-walked through the desert. He stopped and let her catch up, and stared at her for a moment or two, then continued walking.

“No time to worry about that now. There could easily be more void creatures that got through. Thinking....



Okay, they want to become me, that explains why I was brought here originally. The crack WAS to bring me here, but it was also for them to escape. Okay, who isn't safe right now? Anyone I've come into contact I'm not currently with.. Tenny's with Rarity, I'm with you... Then... LUNA!" The Doctor stopped and turned around, and galloped back to the TARDIS. Octavia hurried behind.

"Why did we come to the desert!" She shouted to him.

"Inspiration!" He shouted back. opened the TARDIS doors and hurried to the controls. "Octavia, where exactly were you when you had that dream, with that song?"

"Fillydelphia, I was staying at an Inn."

"Alright, we're gonna have to check out that Inn."

"Wait, what about Luna?"

"That's Tenny's job. As far as we know, Luna's chamber holds the original crack. If I go anywhere near there, they'll detect the time energy all over me. That's where Tenny comes in. He's waiting for the perfect time, letting the background energy wash off with time. How was that for a pun?"

"Leave puns to the professional universe, would you? Let's get to that Inn and find out what was getting in my head!"

The Doctor stopped and turned back to Octavia. He smiled then turned back to the controls, and headed to Fillydelphia.

Tenny arrives back at Ponyville almost a year later. Rarity is displeased, but excited he's back. He continues to help her around the shop until the time comes for him to go to Luna's. He has his run in with Ellie. He acts like he doesn't know Ellie, because he remembers that he wasn't supposed to. After departing from Luna's chamber, Tenny finally notices the horrible flaw in what had just happened.

"No, no no no, that's impossible. That already happened, it happened right before I met Ellie in the forest... That doesn't make sense at all. Why didn't it occur to me until just now?" The Doctor looked around at the TARDIS he was in. Then he noticed the next inconsistency. "I... Went to Luna's in the TARDIS... That's impossible... I left the TARDIS far away..." The Doctor pulled a lever and headed back to Luna's chamber. When he got there, he found himself going through the same process as the first two times. He didn't realize this until he once again left Luna's chamber. "Well. That's certainly interesting."

The Doctor materialized his TARDIS in an alley-way across from the Inn in Fillydelphia. This time, Octavia came out first, and he followed her. She led him into the Inn. They snuck upstairs to the room she was in, and he soniced it open. They both stepped in.

A few minutes later, they were outside, walking back to the stairs. The Doctor suddenly stopped. "Wait,

what just happened?”

Octavia stopped as well, and looked at him, confused and shocked. “I... I don’t know.”

“Wait here...” The Doctor headed back to the room. Octavia obeyed and didn’t follow. A few moments later, The Doctor ran out, screaming “Octavia, we..” He stopped... “We what? I don’t know. What happened?” He looked back into the room, but didn’t step in. “That’s not right. Why can’t I remember anything from that room?”

“What do you mean?”

“Theory: For some reason, when you leave that room, you forget everything that happened while you were in the room. Sounds absurd, but I once knew some creatures that you only remembered while you saw them.”

“Then... What do we do about them?”

“Always moving towards a solution, I like that in you.” The Doctor smiled. Now we wait for Tenny to same the same frightening realization.”

The Doctor and Octavia headed back to the TARDIS, when another TARDIS materialized right next to their’s. “I’ve had a frightening realization!” Tenny stated as he exited the TARDIS.

“I know him too well” The Doctor whispered to Octavia, who chuckled. “Let me guess, a room that you only remember while you’re in it?”

“No. Well, sort of. See, I went to Luna’s chamber, and the same thing happened, with you showing up and we close the gap and fly off. It happened everytime I went in there. I just went along with it, I never realized it was wrong until I left.”

“Hm. That’s unusual. So then what happened at Luna’s Chamber...”

“Never actually happened.” Octavia chimed in. “It was an illusion place in both your minds by whatever’s doing this to make you think everything’s alright.” Octavia examined both Doctors’ astonished faces.

“Hey, you’re not the only ones who can figure things out.”

“I like you.” The Doctor said. He turned to Tenny. “I like her.” He repeated.

“Oh yes!” Tenny agreed. “Though, yeah, she’s probably right. Since it was all an illusion, we’d never actually met the first time, that’s why I didn’t remember you. We weren’t meant to ever go back. They just assumed we would forget about it when we thought everything was fine... So now what do we do? We can’t go in there... Neither can Rarity. She’s part of the loop, it’s not just Luna’s chamber, it’s that whole little bit of time.”

“Then we need someone who’s clever but isn’t us to go in and investigate...” He turned to Octavia. “I think I know who.” He smiled.

“Perfect!” Tenny agreed. Octavia wasn’t fully sure what they meant you. “Technically, we’ve never truly been to that time area, so we can go there whenever we please. We have all the time in the world to prepare her.” And that’s when Octavia realized what was going on.

Luna sat in front of her fireplace, an almost smug grin on her face. Her assistant, Sundance, came in and offered her some tea. “I’m so sorry.” she responded, accepting a cup.

“I... Why are you sorry?”

“I missed you so much.”

“Um... I wasn’t gone...”

“... The circle must be broken.”

“... Um... Okay... I’m just gonna... Go now...” Sundance backed away and slid out the door. Luna stared into her fireplace.

Her concentration was broken by an unusual roaring sound. She turned to face the box. “Impossible...” She whispered. She stood up and walked over to the box. “HOW ARE YOU HERE!” She shouted at the box. “That man is dead! You’re dead. He is returning. It is returning.”

The door to the TARDIS slowly opened and a pony stepped out dramatically.

“... They are returning?” Luna asked.

“You’re spouting a lot of non-sense for a Princess. Tell me, what did you do to Ms. Luna.”

“I am Ms. Luna. I am The Doctor.”

“... Oh, I get it. You DID manage to scan some of The Doctor. You picked up his memories and what not... But not his appearance. You had to get that from the Princess.”

“You are clever, for an Earth Pony. I wonder, why do they call you Earth Ponies, if you are not from Earth.”

“... That’s a good question. Equestria’s a lot like Earth though. Like Earth in another dimension... Wait, how do I know what Earth is?”

“We are in your mind. You share out memories, our thoughts.”

“... You mean The Doctor’s memories?”

“We are The Doctor.”

“No, no, no you’re not. But what are you? For real? What are you?”

“We are here to help you. We are the Doctor.”

“Join us. Become the Doctor. Set yourself free.”

“Hm... Well, it seems you’re already in my head. Why not just get rid of me already? Why keep me around... Which brings up another question. Why are you keeping the Doctor here.”

“We are the Doctor.”

“No, no, the other Doctor.”

“We are not keeping him here.”

“... Thought not... But why not get rid of me?”

“You are not complete.”

“Excuse me?”

“You are not complete.”

“Hm, alright then. I’ll be going then. But before I go. I’ll be taking Luna with me.” Octavia slammed her hoof into a small button protruding from the fireplace. The fireplace spun around, revealing Princess Luna on the other side, bound by some sort of magic. Octavia slid the sonic screwdriver from her bow tie and aimed it at the magic binds. The binds separated, and Luna jumped to her feet and followed Octavia into the TARDIS.