lost

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lost

by juette

Summary

Juette gets lost in the archives. Ianto helps him out.

Notes

vaguely inspired by a similar scene with toshiko in the book slow decay

Juette slowly walked deeper into the archives as he tried to follow the path displayed on his phone. It was cold down here, the ventilation running on full power. Occasionally a droplet of water fell to the ground and resonated loudly through the empty halls. Juette had never been this deep in underground, and something about this place made him uneasy. The red brick and concrete surrounding him should've felt familiar, but instead it was all so unnatural, all so — alien.

The bowels of the Hub were composed of rooms and hallways arranged haphazardly by whichever architect — if there had been any — had worked on the construction, and the darkness didn't help make it any less confusing. Juette wished they'd at least numbered the storage rooms more clearly. Maybe he could slip Jack a word about this later, seeing how difficult it was for the team to find anything in there.

He came to a halt under one of the dim orange lights and brought the screen closer to his face to decipher the writing on the map. Had he turned the right way at the last intersection?

"Are you alright?"
Juette's head whipped up, and he almost dropped his phone reaching for his gun.

He felt somewhat guilty for this reaction when Ianto stepped out of the darkness in front of him. Juette hadn't expected to find anyone else down here, and Ianto walked so quietly that he hadn't even heard him approach.
"I'm sorry I startled you," said the man. The overhead light cast strange shadows on his face, accentuating the hollows of his face and turning his eyes into black voids.
- "No, no, it's fine," said Juette, still feeling his heart beating quickly in his chest. "I just— wasn't paying much attention."
- "Do you need any help?" Ianto asked. "You seem— lost."
- "Uh, yeah, I think I am, yeah." Juette stepped closer to show Ianto his phone, barely noticing how the other man stiffened when their shoulders touched. He'd photographed his computer screen showing the description of a file. "I'm looking for file 170-909, see? I tried to follow the map, but I think— I think I got something wrong." He slid his finger across the screen, which now showed a photo of a crude map of the archives indicating the path to the room he was looking for.
- "Ah, yes," Ianto said, pointing at the map. "I believe you took a wrong turn around here."
- "Did I? I was sure I turned left."
- "I'll show you the way, if you don't mind?"
- "Okay."

Ianto took a step to the side to put some space between them before looping his arm around Juette's to guide him. Sometimes he acted like he was straight out of an old movie, Juette thought as he followed Ianto's lead.

Every step they took sounded entirely too loud in the silence of the hallway, and despite not being alone anymore, Juette still felt somewhat uncomfortable.

Ianto seemed to have no trouble finding his way around this dark labyrinth of an archive, soon bringing Juette to the room he'd been looking for. He opened a drawer without even

checking the label plastered across the front and handed Juette one of the folders inside of it.
"Giant butterflies, is it?" Ianto asked.
- "Yes," Juette replied. "It's— well, I was curious. Can I take this back to my desk?"
- "As long as it doesn't leave the Hub," said Ianto. He did seem very attached to rules and regulations.
Juete nodded. "Yes, okay."
- "Shall I guide you back to your desk?"
- "That would be nice, yes."

Ianto took Juette's arm again, and they returned to the main room of the Hub in what seemed like no time at all compared to how long it had taken Juette to go so far down in the archives. Perhaps Ianto knew some kind of shortcut, or perhaps Juette's own sense of direction really was that bad.
"If you need anything else, just let me know," said Ianto. "It'll be much easier for you to let me fetch it."
- "I didn't wanna bother you," replied Juette.
- "You won't," Ianto smiled politely. "It's what I'm here for."

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