unmade in a moment

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by thoscheii

Summary

The Doctors assume that when the Toymaker is defeated, his game will wrap up, and there will be no more trouble to deal with.

Except... the game didn't start in the Toymaker's realm. No, the game begun on the clifftop where the Doctor regenerated into a *very* familiar face.

A face that no longer exists, now.

Notes

reuploading my works from ao3

so, i edited the original work in ao3, and the fic below was a very rough draft i had to edit, so it is quite different from its ao3 counterpart. but it's more or less the same, too.

oh also i forgot the name of the work so that's going to be different too. the google docs draft was literally called 'inspo from youtube comment section' and i'm pretty sure that wasn't what it was called on ao3. so.

i think this counts as character death. the character is gone, and basically dead. on the other hand, if they never existed in the first place, did they ever really die?

‘I made a jigsaw out of your history, Doctor. Did you like it?’

This line echoes through the Doctor’s ears as he faces the Toymaker, his future incarnation following. The seemingly throwaway line is not so to the Doctor, because, well, putting aside the whole rewriting history thing, the fact that the Toymaker could mess with time makes him feel strange, something odd, bubbling deep in his bones.

What was even more strange however was the reappearance of his old face. This was absolutely unheard of in Time Lord society; he casts his mind back to an old legend, but it’s just ridiculous. Sure, he regenerated without changing his face many lives ago, and now he’s got that exact face again, *why?* However, all this is a mystery he would have to solve later, no matter how weird or crazy it was… as there’s a game of catch to win right now. He can deal with it afterwards, because he’ll have time- preferably in the TARDIS, with a nice great steaming cup of tea.

As it turns out, though, there won’t be one for the man- no tea, no time- later never occurs, and soon so won’t he.

The Toymaker just stares at the ball until it disappears down into the London streets below, unable to fathom the consequences that come with his failed catch. However, amongst the cruel scraps of fate that will write his future lies a gleaming bit of gold. No, it isn’t the tooth that holds the funny little mad Gallifreyan, although he wonders what would have happened if the man was set free. Oh, the *look* on the Doctor’s face.

No, it’s the fact of the game- in fact, *when* the game began.

After all, the Toymaker’s grasp on reality is far and wide, and he’s added a small loophole to the rules- although in the end it isn’t exactly *small* considering that many will be wiped from the universe, but it’s just a little Time Lord either way- and all the possibilities that came with. Perhaps it doesn’t make much sense now… but the game between the god and the Time Lord started further back than his opponent thought.

To put it simply, the Toymaker wins if he loses; he’s thought it fun to bring back a face that didn’t want to go, that desperate tenth, or twelfth face of his. The wide, sad eyes, the prickly hair, back in full force with his little amnesiac friend, *ja?* Albeit older, the both of them, but he’s never cared for such simple things as *age*. But the idea of the old being the new- the perfect, chaotic playhouse, what fun it will be!

Unfortunately, this plan will never come to fruition; the house, knocked down, before it will ever be built. But with the game starting so early, the loss of the Toymaker is now a loss of the Doctor’s face, his friend, this *world.*

The Toymaker folds neatly away into his little box, his loss a byproduct of a victory that never existed.

Soon, the timeline follows.

He'd thought their problems would vanish when the Toymaker did- but *no.*

The Doctor's future incarnation stares at the box, a growing expression of horror on his face. He turns rapidly towards the Doctor, a sentence spilling from his lips- *no!*

And then, he is unmade, for that version of the Doctor never existed, or rather, *will* exist- or *had* existed- in the newly made past- the past that always *had* been- His hands, his form, his very being is being ripped apart and erased by time.

The Doctor only has seconds, seconds to look at a Donna that never will be, and shall never have the chance to remember, before she is gone, too.

And then- the Doctor's fourteenth incarnation, the lynchpin that tied this timeline together, vanishes from the world; the universe has no choice but to follow, unmade in a moment.

Donna wakes up in her home, with yet another feeling of something missing. It's been going on for, what, almost two decades now?... oh, just *saying* that makes her feel ancient. But it definitely started that *one* night with that odd skinny man. She still remembers him, of course, a stranger who came into the house and never came back again, because there was something hanging about in the air that night, that made her want to remember, *weirdly*. The man was just some salesman, no doubt, but the sadness in his eyes- 16 years ago, and she hasn't forgotten.

That night left her with the strangest of senses, a feeling that there was more to her life than she could remember.

Then Rose calls for her, and Shaun rolls around on his side of the bed and starts snoring again, so she gets out of bed, quickly gets ready and goes downstairs to help her daughter, already forgetting about whatever it was she was thinking about.

'...tag, you're it!'

On the clifftop, the Doctor regenerates, feeling free, a smile on her face as she lets the regeneration energy loose. Thankfully, she has had the foresight to regenerate outside the TARDIS, something the man afterwards thanks profusely. Having his TARDIS blow up in his face again and having to find the old girl once more would just be *irritating*. Even if it would have been his fault.

The man- hang on! He's a *man.* Well, that's something quite familiar, being a woman was fun though. The Doctor takes a step forward and a deep breath, notes that his old clothing is a little too *small* and decides that grey and navy just *isn't* his thing anymore. He's craving some *bright* colours! Orange! *Blue!* Pinstripes, even! And he certainly wouldn't mind some tweed.

There's a strange furry thing above his lip the Doctor soon realises is a *moustache.* How fascinating! He's never had *facial hair* before!

Marvelling at the beauty of his new body, the Doctor clocks the deep tones of his skin and how it dimly reflects the sunlight, and for a quiet moment feels disconnected from his body, as if there's someone he's forgotten. Someone deeply important to him, *once*.

For a split second, one of his older faces comes back to him. Right, the one that really didn't want to go. He was *definitely* in his mopey era, thinks the Doctor. Thankfully, he's grown past that- he thinks, but their personality was largely influenced by trauma, something the Doctor still hasn't grown out of. But the Timeless Child and the destruction of Gallifrey- *again*- has added even more weight to shoulders that the Doctor previously thought had been freed by the Scottish incarnation.

So many problems and issues… but they could surely wait just a little bit longer.

For now, he would like to get out of these clothes. They're tight.

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