

## **Part Six – “This Is Penance”**

December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Fiona and Ash enjoyed dinner with the rest of the girls, but it felt *insanely* odd doing it without Andy around. In fact, for Fiona it had been the first dinner since she had arrived in New Eden without Andy at it, and that definitely changed the energy. All the women seemed a little nervous, even though they understood what was happening to Andy. Still, it was a very different between knowing and being comfortable with his absence.

And *nobody* was especially comfortable.

“You get your friend settled in, Em?” Ash asked the blonde brit, although Fiona could sense that the redhead almost wanted to get into it with the movie star.

“She’s still unconscious, Ash,” Em replied, trying to dodge the fight it looked like she was sensing approaching. “But I’m sure once she’s awake, she’ll be in a fine state and right as rain once more.”

Fiona had seen Niko pull Ash aside right as they’d gotten to dinner, and the two had had a brief conversation, one that had seemed a little bit heated, although Aisling hadn’t seemed annoyed at Niko so much as annoyed at someone else sitting around the dinner table, but it hadn’t been until this moment that Fi had figured out exactly where that anger was pointed.

She almost felt sorry for Emily, because the tiny Brit had no idea what she was in for.

“Did you think maybe you wanted to tell us all about the fact that we aren’t supposed to talk about her late fiancé with her, Em?” Ash said, a frown on her face. “You kept that from Andy until it was basically too late for him to back out, and you kept it from the rest of us even longer, so we didn’t have a chance to talk about this in advance.”

Sarah, Em’s closest confidant in the world, turned to look at Em, a look of surprise on her face, maybe one tinged with a streak of hurt. At that point, Fi realized Emily hadn’t even told Sarah, and the taller woman looked wounded over it. “What’s she talking about, baby?”

“I heard from Niko that Mali’s hoping that her regeneration is going to *erase some of her memories,*” Ash said, more than a little annoyed. “And that we’re supposed to avoid talking to her about her previous partner in any way, in case it might trigger a mental schism inside of her brain, if the things we ask try and trigger her thinking about memories about him, things her mind doesn’t have access to anymore.”

“Jesus, Em!” Sarah said. “What are you thinking?”

“Look!” Emily said, suddenly on the defensive. “I knew there would be some risks involved, not just for her, but for all of us, but I had to make the call about whether it was the sort of thing we could handle, because she asked me not to tell anyone in advance. She was terrified we would’ve turned her away in concern, no matter how ridiculous I told her that was. I *implored* her to be honest and open with the family, but my God, ladies, this woman was *hurting*. The only man she’d ever loved, ever been *intimate* with, he was gone, and she so desperately wanted to join him! She was talking suicide! We’ve been there, if not there, somewhere close to it! We understand what it’s like to have something so profoundly important taken away from us, just on the cusp of achieving our dreams. It was a gamble, and I knew that, and I still took it regardless, and if that’s going to make the rest of you cross with me, then I am sorry that my decision hurt you, but I was not about to abandon a friend in need simply because of a difficult choice that we would’ve deliberated too long in the making.”

“We’ll never know how long we would’ve have taken talking about it,” Niko said, clearly none too pleased with Emily either. “Because you didn’t come to us with it. You simply unilaterally decided *for* us. I *know* Andy’s going to be pissed about it when he wakes up, because

he was pissed about it before he fell into the regenerative state. And you know what? He *should* be pissed off. Because *I'm* pissed off! *I* didn't get a say in someone I'm going to have to deal with on a regular basis, someone who might turn out to be unstable or even dangerous. We're a goddamn *team* Emily, and if you can't respect that, you should just fuck *right* off!"

With that, Niko grabbed her plate, stood up from the dinner table and stormed off. Fi was about to stand up to go check on her when she felt Ash's hand on her thigh, imploring her to stay seated, as if pointing out to her *this* was where the action was going to be.

There had been conflicts within the group of women before, but Niko had seemed *livid*, and her anger had been almost palpable. And Fiona started to look around the table, to see if that opinion was reflected on other faces and found that most of the women present for dinner were none too pleased with Emily, including Sarah, who looked more genuinely hurt than angry.

"I take it the rest of you share that sentiment?" Emily said, looking more fragile than Fiona had ever seen her. "Perhaps I should eat alone for the foreseeable future, then, until I find some recourse to repair the damage that I have done."

She began to stand up, but Ash stood up first. "Emily Stevens, sit the fuck *down*," Ash said, her Irish accent dialing up to match the authoritative tone she was taking. Em looked startled but took her seat again immediately. There was something about the way Aisling spoke that took total control of the situation right from the get-go. "I see you about to run away from your problems, and you're going to learn we don't *do* that in Team Rook. I know we're used to having to look out for ourselves first and foremost, as if we're the only person that matters in this world, but we don't *live* that way anymore. This is *a family*. This is *our* family, and every one of you crazy bitches is part of it. We work on problems *together*. We run headfirst *into* danger *together*. And that means we need to know what it is we're up against, and we shouldn't keep secrets from one another. I am willing to put my ass on the line for any of you, but we cannot be a bunch of gossip girls, keeping our friends, partners, wives and fellow sex fiends in the dark when shit that's going to affect us will come to light in the end. You know what? Yeah, you fucked up, Em. You did. You're gonna have to work on that, and there's gonna be some bridges between you and members of this family that probably need rebuilding. You're going to need to apologize to most of us, and you're going to have to demonstrate that you understand *how* you fucked up, why it was a fuck up and convince us you're not going to do it again. But it's not the end of the fucking world, alright? And I won't have you making some kind of grandiose production about it to try and elicit sympathy because you thought you were doing the right thing. You were doing a *dumb and selfish thing*, one that didn't take in account the feelings of both the man you're looking to marry, nor the women you're going to share him with. Learn from it. Repair the damage done. Do better next time. Questions?" Ash looked around the table, and nobody seemed to want to add anything to it. Most of the women respected Ash's points, although a few of them seemed a little shocked at how direct and straightforward she'd been about it. "Alright then. Class dismissed."

As Ash sat back down, Fiona immediately noticed that Emily had turned to Sarah, and begun her apology tour in earnest, with the tiny Brit talking quite intently to her long-term partner in very hushed tones, and while Sarah certainly didn't look happy, she was at least listening, which might've been more than she would've initially gotten without Aisling's little speech. Ash had set the terms of how offended everyone was allowed to be and reminded them that they all had to get over this shit for their wedding next month. Fi leaned in and whispered to Ash, "Quite a bit of damage control you did there, Ash."

Ash politely shrugged it off. “You can go at things head on and solve them quickly and efficiently, or you can let them fester and it’ll come back and bite you in the ass later. Something I learned *very* early on in this little experiment we’re living in is that, like it or not, we’re all beautiful women, and beautiful women often have a tendency for men to try and solve problems for them. But when our problems are *each other*, if we didn’t find a way to solve shit for ourselves, we were just going to end up making Andy *miserable*,” she said with a giggle. “There’s only one of him and *loads* of us. So that means if I see conflict brewing between any of the women in the house, I tend to try and shut that shit down quickly, quietly and effectively. Hang on, lemme go over and remind Em that I’m not mad *at* her, but I’m mad *with* her actions, and then we can go check on Andy again before we head back down to continue our work. Sound good?”

“Works for me,” Fi agreed.

Aisling got up and moved over towards Emily and Sarah, who were still locked in intense conversation. They were far enough from Fiona that she couldn’t hear the conversation over the din of the various other conversations all going on at once around them at the massive dinner table, but when Ash put her hand on Em’s shoulder, the young Brit looked up at her with tears in her eyes. Ash crouched down and put her arms around Emily and let the two of them share a hug of forgiveness for a long moment. Fi could see Sarah mouthing ‘thank you’ to Ash, even from across the room.

Fi got up and was about to bus her own plate when Nicolette snatched it from her fingers, shooting her a sly grin, shaking her head, like she’d caught Fi trying to do her job for her. “I’ll take the plates to wash up, ma’am,” Nicolette said. “Go tend to the Master.” She then spun on one heel, making her skirt swish up to show off frilly lacy panties before walking back towards the kitchen. Nicolette had never been one to let others do her job for her, no matter how much they tried.

Once she’d relinquished her plate to Nicolette, Fiona headed back upstairs towards the master bedroom. Sleeping with so many people in one bed had certainly taken some getting used to, but now after about a month of doing so, it actually just felt *right*. They had to rotate who was next to Andy, simply because being next to him felt fundamentally important, but really, he couldn’t get more than two or three women touching his torso no matter how they tried to organize themselves while he slept. So while sometimes Andy would specifically ask for one of them to be up against him for the evening, he generally was happy to let them sort it out amongst themselves, and nobody had put up too much of a fuss about it.

When Fiona got into the room, she saw that Niko was eating over in the armchair next to the bed, and she’d just finished her meal for the evening. “I don’t blame you for being pissed at Emily,” Fiona said. “I’m none too pleased myself, but Em seems genuine in her apology, so sooner or later, you’re going to have to forgive her.”

“Oh, I’m sure it’ll be sooner rather than later,” Niko sighed. “But I want Em to stop asking for forgiveness and start talking about shit with us in advance. I’m as guilty as anybody else in this house of keeping secrets, but all of mine have been to *protect* people in this house, not to put them further at risk. But because she’s the little starlet princess, everyone’s just going to let her get away with it.”

Fiona chuckled, moving over to sit down on the footstool for the chair. “C’mon, Niko. You know Andy better than that. Do you really think he’s just going to let Em slide with putting the whole house in danger because she was in a bunch of movies that people like?”

Niko giggled a little. “When you say it like that, I sound like kind of an idiot, don’t I?”

“I’m just saying – Ash took Em to task after you stormed out, and I think Em knows she screwed up,” Fiona said. “I remember when I was her age, and I was worried that I wasn’t going to be able to help someone very important to me, and I’m sure I did the sorts of sneaky shit she’s pulling, barring, you know, memory erasing and imprinting and all that. And you know Andy sets the bar so fucking high by trying to help every person he meets it’s ridiculous,” she said with a soft laugh, glancing over at his sleeping form. “Yeah, that’s right I’m talking to you, shithead.” She giggled a little bit, rolling her eyes. “Andy’s willing to stick his neck out for people he just met, and we’ve all just hopped on his little crusade with him. Trying to fix the world one problem at a time.”

“Yeah, well,” Niko said, getting up before leaning down to press a kiss to Andy’s sleeping forehead. “He sets a good example. What’s that lyric from that song he loves? ‘Try and get better and don’t ever accept less’? Who sings that?”

“Frank Turner,” Fiona responded. “And thank God *he*’s still alive, because too many musicians Andy’s loved have died over the last year, but Frank got married just before the pandemic set in, and so I think he and his wife stayed isolated and are waiting for the UK version of the serum to get to them.”

“Right. Between them and that German band he loves—”

“Fury In The Slaughterhouse,” Niko said.

“Right, them. All six of those guys are still alive too, so maybe the musicians Andy likes most get a free pass or something.”

“Ha!” Fiona said. “Wouldn’t that be a riot? ‘C-list Fantasy Author’s Favorite Bands And Why They Survived The Pandemic.’ Anyway, I think Ash and I are going to sit watch for a little while, so you should go hammer out your beef with Emily before it gets its claws too deep into you.”

Niko scowled, fidgeting in her chair. “You think I should forgive her, don’t you?”

“Forgive, but don’t forget,” Fiona said. “Em’s a smart woman. She gets why you’re angry at her, and she knows you have every right to be. But look at it like this – Em’s trying to protect someone. Who do you think she learned that from?”

Niko rolled her eyes, shaking her head. “He really can be a total pain in the ass to all of us, can’t he?”

“Mmm,” Fi agreed with a smirk that said she knew neither of them meant it. “But I think he makes up for it in other ways.”

“He’s lucky he’s cute,” Niko teased, grabbing her plate, although she only made it halfway to the door before Nicolette had appeared, holding out her hand to take the plate away from her, not willing to let Niko bus her own dirty dishes. As soon as the tall blonde had wrestled the plate away from Niko, the maid turned around and headed out of the bedroom, leaving Niko to look back at Fiona in admiration, shaking her head once more. “I’ve seen her do that for months now, and I’m still not entirely sure how she knows.”

“She’s part faefolk,” Fiona offered.

“I would not be surprised,” Niko said, heading out of the bedroom just as Aisling was coming in. The two exchanged a little hug, but immediately after, Niko headed out, closing the door behind her.

“I was thinking maybe we just sit and keep watch on Andy while I’m telling you the next part of the story,” Ash said. “Give me a little bit of a break from painting.”

Fiona nodded, reaching into her pocket, pulling out her digital recorder, turning it on and setting it on the nightstand next to Andy, gesturing for Ash to take her seat there. “Works for me. You remember where we were?”

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So even though we’d gotten this beautiful mansion, being in lockdown in it still felt like we were just in a new setting for that. Of course, we also had all the staff to contend with, although we found our levels with them pretty quickly. The next challenge came in late October, and this one blindsided us all. We were just about to be given our release and allowed to integrate with the rest of New Eden, something I cannot adequately describe to you how eager we were to go do.

We wanted to go shopping. We wanted to go for walks around the new little township we lived in. We wanted to sit in a restaurant and order food off a menu and pay way too much for cocktails with way too little booze in them.

We just wanted to do *normal shit*.

So when October 26<sup>th</sup> rolled around and we were given the greenlight to leave the house as long as we stayed within the borders of New Eden, we were ecstatic. As of noon, we could leave and go exploring our new home at large. Which, of course, meant we were due for a surprise and boy did we get one.

The next of Andy’s partners had been dropped off a few hours before we were allowed off the manor grounds, but it was the rockiest arrival I think we’ve had before or since. Niko signed for her, and she was waiting in one of the living rooms while everyone got up and dressed and ready for their day.

What none of us knew in advance was that she had a previous relationship with one of us already. Taylor had been delivered, and it turned out she had figured out where Lauren had gone and specifically requested to be put with that Team, something which didn’t surprise me too much when I learned it.

My first glance at Taylor, I knew she was here for reasons primarily *other* than Andy. Which, don’t get me wrong, is *fine*. I knew Andy wasn’t going to be everyone’s dream boat, at least not on sight. I also knew that Taylor wasn’t exactly the kind of woman Andy would immediately be drawn to. Again, careful how much of this you put into print, but as gorgeous as Taylor is, she’s a little too Instagram pop princess for his tastes, you know? I mean, a knockout’s still a knockout, but Andy likes his women with some rough edges on them, and my first impression of Taylor was that she’d lived a life without any actual hardship or challenge.

Taylor had shown up in a white tanktop that didn’t come all the way down to her waist, showing off the gold belly ring she had, and the tanktop was pulled *tight* on her generous breasts. She was wearing jeans with ripped holes in the knees. She looked a lot like that girl from the “Jessie’s Girl 2” video, if I’m honest.

Niko had told me that Taylor had seemed very quiet and nervous, and I remember wondering if that had been because of the ostentatiousness of the house, and maybe she thought we were a bunch of rich, snooty people, but as it turned out, that wasn’t it at all. She was just waiting for Lauren to appear.

Fuck did *that* not go well.

As came out over the next few hours, Taylor was Lauren’s ex-girlfriend. Most *recent* ex-girlfriend, as a matter of fact. Lauren and Taylor had been dating until January of 2020, when

Lauren had come home early one night and found Taylor getting deep dicked by some guy. The fallout had been *epic*. Lauren had thrown Taylor out, avoiding talking to her on any level, just getting all of Taylor's shit out of the house and changing the locks.

Andy, the saint that he is, talked Lauren down from her immediate anger, which had been at like twelve out of ten, and worked to figure out how she wanted him to handle it. God bless Andy, but he would've sent Taylor back to the base to be reassigned to someone else if Lauren had asked him to. But Andy gave that choice to Lauren, and explained to her that whatever she chose, it was going to be what she'd have to live with for the rest of the foreseeable future.

By the time I got to the room, Andy'd at least calmed her down so that she wasn't shouting. I remember offering to do this thing that Eric's partner, Lily, had joked she was going to do at one point... 'cuntpunt' I think it was. It made Lauren laugh, which helped break the tension a little bit further.

I could see what Andy was getting at when he was explaining how he saw the rift between Lauren and Taylor, and he knew right away that whatever was between them, it wasn't settled yet. Lauren and he talked it out, but the decision they reached was that Taylor would be allowed in the house in a provisional basis, which was that for the first month, she wasn't going to be allowed to wear clothes, and only speak when spoken to. She wouldn't be allowed to stand on two feet unless told otherwise. She'd be forced to wear a dog collar, and at the end of the month, everything would be *forgiven*, but nothing would be *forgotten*, and Taylor would always sort of have to deal with the stigma of having been unfaithful hanging around her neck.

Andy was uncomfortable about how far Lauren wanted to take it, naturally, but he also understood that in some ways as weird as it sounds, the high punishment was for Taylor's own safety. When she'd stepped out before, the worst consequences she'd had to face was Lauren dumping her after her heart was broken. If Taylor stepped out with a different man post imprinting? She'd be signing her own death certificate within seconds, but Taylor, God bless her, seemed like she'd been so intent on getting back with Lauren that she might have avoided hearing about everything else surrounding that decision, and Andy couldn't afford to let her ignorance about what she was signing up for be on his conscience.

It was also the first time we learned people could request who they wanted to pair with. Taylor, as it turned out, had been playing detective for a while, and it had taken her a few months to figure out who Andy was.

I love social media, but Lauren's never been much of a big fan of it. Taylor, however, took it to the next level. She hired someone to code an image search for Lauren's face across any new images being posted on Instagram from the Bay Area, and so she showed up in some of the pictures I'd taken documenting our move from San Jose up to New Eden. From that, she was basically able to figure out that I was partnered with Andy, and that Lauren was probably paired up with both of us. It was a clever bit of work. That's why she requested to be paired up with Andy, and at that point, Andy had an open dance card and anyone requesting to be paired with him would just get delivered to the house.

We fixed *that* within a week or so for reasons I'll get into later.

Anyway, once it was decided that we were going to let Taylor in, but that she was going to be punished, Lauren made her strip down to nothing and apologize to all of us, saving Lauren for last. And then Lauren slapped her, and I do mean *hard*. I think it's the most violent anyone's ever really gotten in our family, because the anger in Lauren's eyes was one hundred percent genuine, and Taylor started to cry.

My heart was breaking for that girl, because I knew it was finally settling in just how badly she'd fucked up, and she was focusing only on that, and not the rest of it, y'know, the part where she could *recover* from said fuck up. After Lauren slapped Taylor, she then told the rest of us to get ready, because we were going to go out and see New Eden.

While everyone was doing their final preparations, I pulled Taylor aside, made sure she stopped crying and talked to her like a regular person for just a couple of minutes, hoping it would put her at ease. Taylor had moved her things into one of the smaller bedrooms but was clearly still incredibly nervous about walking around the house with nothing more than a leather collar around her neck.

I met her in her bedroom, closed the door behind us and had her sit down on the bed next to me. "Not the cheery welcome you expected, huh?" I asked her.

"No ma'am," Taylor said, looking down at her hands.

"Okay, Taylor, I'm only going to say this once, so I want you to listen to me. I know this hurts – mentally, physically and emotionally, but you've been given a second chance here. Lauren could've turned you away, and she'd have had every right to, but she's left the door open for you. The path from there to here isn't easy, and you're gonna probably be miserable for the whole time, but this is penance. Penance for being unfaithful to Lauren. Penance for deciding something *for* her instead of *talking* to her. Penance for putting your needs ahead of your partner's. And you were with Lauren longer than I've been, so you should know this better than me, but just in case you need reminding – she can be vindictive as all hell, but she's also a woman of her word, and above all else, she's *fair*. She's promised to give you a second chance if you're willing to *earn* it. You said you were willing to do anything to get her back, and while she's mad as fuck right now, and *she* may not believe you mean it, *I* think I see a hard resolve there that says you *do*. And maybe the punishment won't last a whole month but assume that it will and that you're going to have to make sure you don't show Lauren an inch of regret the entire time you're here doing penance. She'll come around eventually, I'm sure of it."

Taylor started to cry again, but she wrapped her arms around me and gave me a big hug, a smile on her face, like she'd needed *some* reassurance that the light she thought she'd glanced at the end of the tunnel was really down there.

Over the next few weeks, we went through quite a lot of shit, which we'll get into a little later. Taylor's imprinting was particularly rough, because Lauren thought it would be funny to try and push Andy past Taylor's comfort point and decided to try and get Andy so cranked up that he'd be willing to spit into Taylor's mouth. Taylor pretended that she was freaking out, used her safeword and Andy immediately stopped and backed down, and Lauren, bless her heart, did the *dumbest* possible thing she could do at that point.

She laughed and told Andy it had just been a game to see how far she could push him.

Now, you've known him longer than I have, Fi, but I have never, *ever* seen Andy so mad, before or since. He was *furious* that Lauren, this woman he'd invited into his house and heart, had been trying to get him to take a woman against her *will*. And we'd just been joking around, but I felt deeply *ashamed* that I'd been part of it, that we'd been betting on it hours earlier. We'd both known that Taylor hadn't given Andy her real safeword, and that in some ways this was just to show Taylor that Andy could be trusted, and wouldn't ever overstep boundaries, but he was right – it was a shitty thing for us to do.

I offered myself up for punishment, but it was clear that Lauren had been the ringleader, so he paddled her bare ass until it was as red as my hair. What came as a real surprise to *all* of us, though, was that it turned out Lauren *liked* a good amount of pain with her pleasure. She hadn't

told any of us, simply because she'd been nervous about it, worried that we might think she was a little bit freaky, something that sort of made us all laugh, because we were a million miles past judging each other at that point.

Still, now that Andy had learned Lauren *enjoyed* getting her ass paddled, it hadn't really landed well as a punishment. But as a testament to how smart our future husband is, he pivoted to a replacement solution almost immediately. Getting her ass spanked had turned her on, so he told her he *wasn't* going to fuck her for at least a few days. He'd gotten her engine cranked and turned her on so much that being left in that worked-up state was its own form of torture.

I sort of knew at the time when Lauren set her 'one month' punishment that she wasn't going to go through with it for the whole month, and, as expected, on November 15<sup>th</sup>, technically the day after you and Moira arrived, Lauren told Andy to let Taylor off the hook, giving her full freedom to be a regular member of the house.

All of this is sort of important so that you can understand how a lot of us knew that Lauren and Taylor were going to be a couple unto themselves within the whole Team, and that we were all okay with that. It was, in some ways, sort of a test run for us for you and Moira, although we'd already sort of had that with Sarah and Emily.

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"I remember being a little worried when you brought Taylor in completely naked to the game we played with Andy when he was blindfolded that morning. She was wearing only that collar, but she was smiling, so I'd guessed she was into it or that there was some back story I hadn't heard about in advance," Fiona said to Aisling. "I never really followed up on it because I wasn't sure that I wanted to get into it, or that it was any of my business."

"Oh, I'm sure they'd both talk to you about it, but I don't know if it's of any use to you and your book," Ash said. "The house is full of all sorts of little squabbles like that, and mostly, they're not much but a lot of talk. How's he looking?"

"It looks like there's hair growing where his bald spot used to be, but knowing Andy, he'll probably just keep shaving his entire head anyway," Fiona said. "Based on the amount of fluid that's dripped out of his eyes over the night, I'm betting he won't need his glasses when he wakes up either. He still get that random charlie horse in the middle of the night sometimes?"

Back when Andy and Fiona had been sleeping together in college, the first time Andy had gotten a leg cramp in his sleep, it had nearly scared the shit out of Fi. Andy had suddenly woken up from total slumber to hard awake and was doing his best to extend his leg as much as he could, claiming he felt an intense pain along the back of his knee, like the tendon of his calf had gotten stuck on something and was suddenly pulling as tightly as he could. The sudden motion had woken Fi right up with him, and she'd almost had a panic attack about the situation, when Andy had explained to her it was just something that happened to him a few times a year. Andy had talked to a doctor about it, and they'd said it was nothing to worry about.

"Yep, about once every couple of months or so," Ash said. "Scared the hell out of us the first time it happened."

"Yeah, me too. That'll probably be gone too, and if he's *really* lucky, all this excess earwax draining out of his ears means his tinnitus is likely healed as well."

"Looks like a handful of moles he had have fallen off his skin as well," Ash said, turning him over a little bit. "Still got a hairy back, though, which is good. I'd have missed that if it was



gone. His huge amount of body hair always reminded me a bit of Robin Williams. And all his tattoos are still there, which will make him feel better. I know Niko was worried his body might reject the tattoo ink as scarring rather than intentional modifications. According to Phil, tattoos have about 20-30% disappearance rate during regeneration, so I guess the odds were always in Andy's favor. They think the inks get recognized by the body as part of it."

"Odd trying to see what's changed and what hasn't," Fi sighed. "But it's good that some of the oddities about him that we loved haven't been regenerated away.

"I wouldn't have minded if he hadn't regenerated at all, although I'll bet he'll be especially thankful not to have that ringing in his ears all the time."

"We should get a selfie with him like this," Fi said, hopping up onto bed on one side of him as Ash hopped up on the other.

"I really want to write 'blackout' on his forehead in sharpie," Ash giggled.

"No! Bad fiancée!" Fi scolded.

That made taking the picture a *lot* harder...