

Teleport Malfunction

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Because I had to.

Featured fandoms: drwho

Featured pairings: Martha/Astrid

A.S.S Story codes: ff

Story rating: PG13

Later, she discussed things with Jack, and they tentatively agreed on the theory that travelling in the TARDIS somehow messed people up so that they got far more than their proper share of the strange and unlikely in their lives. But that was later, long after it started.

It started in the very early hours of Christmas Day while Martha Jones, medical student with far more experience in practising medicine in primitive environments than her classmates would ever believe, sat in her couch unable to sleep. Her eyes were aimed at the television, but what was showing on it was so mind-numbingly dull that she forgot what it was about while she blinked. She was just about to give up, move to the bed and make yet another unsuccessful attempt at falling asleep when a pretty blonde girl in a kind of waitress' uniform shimmered into existence between the TV and the little table in the corner with random knick-knacks on it.

The girl's gaze darted all over the room before it finally settled on Martha. Martha's gaze, on the other hand, remained fixed on the girl's face. Well, almost. It may have done a dip to take in the very shapely pair of legs that held the girl up, and another to her cleavage, but only a very short ones.

"This isn't deck 31," the girl said.

"No," Martha agreed. "This is my living room. Who the hell are you?"

"Astrid," the girl said. "And I need to get to deck 31! The Doctor needs help!"

A complex mix of feelings exploded inside Martha. There was some happiness at hearing he was around, yes, but the majority was exasperation. Something weird happened. *Of course* the Doctor was involved.

Apparently, something of her inner turmoil showed on her face, because the girl took a step back, hitting the wall, and looked worried.

"Do you know him?" she asked.

"Yes," Martha said. "I do. And this isn't anything resembling a Deck 31, so just use that thing of yours, go back where you came from and try again."

The girl fiddled with her thick bracelet for a few moments, apparently without success, since she remained where she was.

"I can't control it from here," she said in a frustrated voice. "Maybe the console broke."

Martha couldn't even bring herself to pretend to be surprised.

"Let me guess," she said. "You're stuck here."

Astrid looked like she was about to stomp her foot, but didn't.

"The Doctor needs help!" she said. "He's in trouble."

"He'll manage," Martha said. "He always does. He wouldn't have lived to be over nine hundred if he didn't. Would you like some tea? Or whisky?"

And that was how Astrid came to stay with Martha. As exasperated as Martha had felt when she first showed up, Astrid's enthusiasm over things she hadn't seen before (which, given that she was on another planet, was just about everything) soon became contagious. Anybody who could become stupidly happy about the way the rain trickled inside her collar was someone you wanted around on a dreary Monday morning.

"How can you be so happy about getting wet and cold?" Martha asked after they'd reached the dry (if not exactly warm; this was still England) hospital reception area. Martha was getting close to receiving her doctor's license, and she'd managed to get Astrid a job as a cleaner. Which the little blonde considered *fantastic*, of course.

"How could I not?" Astrid said. "It's all so... *wild*."

"Wild," Martha said. Well, maybe in a way you could see London that way.

"Fresh," Astrid said. "Untamed. Unpredictable."

"You actually really like it," Martha said, still not quite believing it.

Astrid looked at her. She managed to look adorable in her formless janitor's outfit.

"Yes," she said. "Where I grew up, everything was tame. There were few surprises, and the ones there were were bad."

"Sounds like a dreary place to grow up," Martha said.

"Oh, it was," Astrid said, blithely ignoring the evil looks from her supervisor. She was, after all, talking to one of the high-and-mighty medical staff. "When I was a little girl, I used to dream that some gorgeous alien would show up, sweep me off my feet and carry me off to a better life."

Martha laughed.

"Well, who hasn't had dreams like that?" she said. "And instead you managed to carry yourself off."

"I guess I did," Astrid said. "But do you know what?"

There was a glint in her eye that Martha couldn't quite place.

"No," she said. "What?"

"I still hope that the gorgeous alien will sweep me off my feet," Astrid said.

And then she grabbed the lapels of Martha's white coat, pulled her down and placed a kiss squarely on her lips.

In spite of that, Martha did not sweep Astrid off her feet. Certainly not then, and absolutely not *there*. She pulled free from the short and slender but oh so cute extraterrestrial woman, mumbled something incoherent about having to get to work and left. Then she spent the rest of the day walking around like a zombie, much to her advisor's annoyance.

"I'm sorry I upset you," Astrid said when Martha came home. Martha always came home later, even though they started work at the same time. Astrid worked eight-hour days. Martha worked however long was needed. Which was usually rather more than eight hours.

"I thought you felt the same way," Astrid said. She had dressed in the same clothes she had been wearing when she first materialised next to Martha's television set.

"I'll leave if you want," Astrid said. "I think I know enough about this world now to get by."

Martha didn't say anything. She hung her coat on the rack next to the door, and walked up to Astrid. The blonde little alien looked nervous, but didn't back away. She held her place, looking brave in her cute little black dress with its frilly collar and optimistic cleavage.

They stared at each other for a few long, long seconds of silence, Martha down from her almost half a head of added height.

"Do you know what I'm going to do?" Martha said.

Astrid shook her head.

Martha had spent a large part of the day thinking about what she was going to do. Which, in an ideal world, would have meant that she had gone over all the available options and decided which one was the best. But this wasn't an ideal world, and what had really gone on in Martha's head was the same thing over and over again.

"This," she said.

She put her arms around Astrid, one hand nestling in the hair on the back of her head and one hand solidly against her back. She pulled her close, and bent down, and kissed her with all her heart.

"I want you to move," Martha said after they'd broken the kiss.

"From the fold-out bed to my bed," she added after Astrid's face had trans-

formed from delight to dismay.

"From...?" Astrid said, and then she hit Martha on the chest.

"That wasn't funny!" she said. "You're an evil alien!"

"Sorry," Martha said. "I couldn't help myself. Can I have another kiss anyway?"

Astrid smiled and shook her head.

"I'll think about it," she said. "Yes. You can. As many as you want."

And since Martha wanted many, many kisses, they lived happily ever until the Doctor showed up again.

Which, of course, he eventually did.