

THE DEAD MAN'S STORY

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Jake Morgan looked up from the TV when he heard the sound of the front door opening. A big smile spread across his face, and he switched the TV to mute with the remote control. He leant his neck back so that he could see the hallway through the open door.

‘Hi, Fables!’ he called.

There was no answer. Jake just smiled more. His girlfriend was up to something, or else she would have replied. He listened as she potted about in the kitchen. He closed his eyes, imagining her emptying the shopping bags and putting things away. In his mind he could see her reaching up, her top racing up her back to reveal a tantalizing glimpse of the tattoo that she had on her lower spine. He sighed. He was a very lucky man.

‘Get your mind out of that gutter, you.’

Jake opened his eyes. Fay was standing before him, having managed to enter the room without his noticing. Despite having been at work all day she looked radiant, unlike most days when she usually looked very drawn. As usual she had her long fair hair pulled back in a ponytail, and she was wearing her woolly jumper and faded black jeans, her pink socks poking through.

‘It’s a nice gutter to be in,’ Jake said.

At this Fay screwed up her face. ‘Oh my god, I can’t believe you just said that! You are so corny.’

‘Well, you know me, I’m a hopeless romantic. It’s why you love me,’ Jake said, making a silly face at his girlfriend.

‘Yeah.’ Suddenly Fay looked a little embarrassed. She placed one hand in her jeans’ pocket and looked at the silent TV. ‘You know it’s a leap year?’ She turned back to him and he nodded in reply. ‘Well, do you know what that means?’

Jake pursed his lips together and shrugged.

‘It means I get to do this.’ She removed her hand from her pocket and lowered herself to one knee. It was only then that Jake noticed that she was holding a little box, just big enough for... She opened the box and took out a ring, then placed the box on the floor and took Jake’s hand. She looked up at Jake, looking him directly in the eyes. ‘Will you marry me?’

Jake’s reaction was instant. ‘Yes, oh yes.’

Fay’s face fell, and she released his hand. ‘Oh. You were supposed to say no.’

‘I was?’ He could not hide the confusion in his voice.

'Yeah, it's tradition. The woman proposes on a leap year, the man refuses and then he has to buy her a silk dress to make up for it. I wanted a lovely silk dress.' It was only then that Fay smiled, her eyes glinting.

Jake laughed and hugged her. 'You nutter,' he said, and helped her put the ring on his finger; he then reached forward and kissed her. 'You'll have the best silk dress ever,' he promised.

Jake Morgan crossed the road, feeling more buoyant than ever before, quite intent to cut through the back streets, when he noticed a most unusual sight.

Standing next to the phone box outside the petrol station was an object he had only ever seen outside Earl's Court tube station, and that was miles away. It was a blue box, just a fraction taller than the phone box. Above the doors, one of which was open, were the words Police Public Call Box. Jake had no idea what such a box was for, really, and he certainly had no idea why there would be one here. But he did know that it had not been here the previous night when he had popped over to the garage for some cola.

His natural curiosity taking over, he walked over to the Police Box to take a peek inside. The doors on the one in Earl's Court were always locked, and he often wondered what was kept inside that particular box, so this was an opportunity for an answer. And he was never one to miss an opportunity.

As he drew nearer to look inside, he heard a voice from within. It was a man's voice, sounding old and drawn. Jake stopped, caution superseding his curiosity.

'Yes, Jeremy, that one. No, not that one! *That* one there!' the man said, sounding rather peeved at this Jeremy character.

There was a bang and a flash of light. Jake's hands instinctively rose to cover his eyes, but they could not protect him from the jet of cold air that shot out of the Police Box. Blasted back, he hit the ground with a crack as his spine collided with the stone paving slabs. Despite the pain that was coursing through his body, part of Jake's mind could still make out a younger male voice coming from nearby.

'Oh, Lor!' it said.

Jake lay there for a moment, while the pain subsided to a manageable level. He flexed his fingers and placed his palms on the ground. Slowly he pushed down, attempting to lift his back and expecting much pain for his troubles. He was

surprised by the lack of feeling, pain or otherwise, and got to his feet very slowly, just in case.

He looked up and stepped back in surprise. There was a man standing in the doorway of the Police Box, looking at him uncertainly. Jake narrowed his eyes at the man's choice of clothing. Despite the frilly shirt, the way he dressed gave the man an elegant air, enhanced by the fine mane of white hair on top of his lined face.

Jake smiled. 'I'm fine, mate, probably end up with a sore...' No sooner had Jake started speaking than the man ran a hand through his hair and stepped back inside the Police Box. 'Oh, well don't mind me,' Jake muttered, annoyed by the man's reaction.

The longer he stood there, the more his annoyance festered. *Stupid old goat*, Jake thought, *you don't just get away with that, paly!* He had as much right to being respected as anyone else did. 'Right,' he said and marched over to the Police Box, but before he could step foot inside and have his say, the door slammed shut.

'Hey!' He shouted and went to slam a fist on the door. His hand passed right through the surface and a strange sound filled the air around him. He stood back, stunned, and looked around. It was as if the wind was angry about something, no longer simply whistling, but yelling at some unknown assailant. The sound died down and Jake returned his attention to the blue box, only to find that it was no longer there.

'Bloody hell.' He stretched his arms out before him, half expecting to feel the solid mass against his palms, but there was nothing. 'That's a bloody good trick,' he said, unsure whether he had imagined the whole episode or not.

Jake Morgan stepped up to the front door, still a little baffled by the unusualness of the evening so far. It had started off wonderfully enough, but after his possible daydream by the garage and the strange non-reaction from Robert in town, he was beginning to wonder what more could happen before he went to bed.

He reached into his pocket, pulled out his key and moved to insert it into the lock. His hand continued into the door and out of the other side. Jake pulled back quickly, only to see that there was no key in his hand after all. He glanced down at his trousers and noticed the shape of the key still inside his tight pocket.

His brow knitted tightly together, and he looked at the door before him.

With the Police Box he was certain he had made the whole thing up. That there had never been a Police Box, which is why his hand had passed through it, but this time...

There was no denying what had just happened.

Taking a deep breath, he pushed, and watched his hand sink into the door.

He whistled out a breath of amazement.

'Damn,' he said, closing his eyes, and walked forward.

Despite everything he still expected to have his nose squashed by the solid door, and was only half surprised when it did not happen. Instead he passed through the wooden door and came out in the small hallway beyond.

'Fay!' he called out, but no reply was forthcoming. All he could hear was the soft sounds of music drifting in from the living room. He was about to go into that room when he remembered his shoes. Both Fay and he had agreed at the beginning that shoes were not to be worn in doors. With a beige carpet it was a sensible precaution.

He knelt down to remove his shoes only to discover that he could not get a grip on them. As with the door his hand passed through his shoe *and* his foot, into the floor below. He lifted his hand out of the floor and stood back up, his heart rate increasing.

The first hint of a suspicion was forming in his mind, and he did not like it.

He took a tentative step onto the carpet then raised his foot. Where there should have been a muddy shoeprint there was nothing. He inspected the sole of his shoe, and was unsurprised to discover that there was no mud there, despite the stormy weather outside and the fact that he had cut across the grass to get home. As if to find further proof of his ever growing suspicions Jake shook his head and looked at the walls on either side of him. Nothing. Not a single splash mark from his wet hair.

He rushed down the hallway to the mirror on the far wall. Was his hair even wet? His clothes did not appear to be. The sight that greeted him gave him cause for a sharp intake of breath. Despite his fears he could see himself in the mirror, but only just. What he saw was a shadow of himself. He still looked like him, but he could see the hallway through him. He ran his hand through his blonde hair and his reflection mimicked the action. No contact was made, and he watched with a strange mixture of horror and amazement as his hand went below his hair and into

his skull. He twiddled his fingers and was relieved to discover that he could not feel the insides of his head. It was a small relief.

He thought back to his trip into town, and how Robert had ignored him. At the time Jake just assumed that his best mate was in a huff about something, maybe simply stressed out because of the long hours he was working, but now, looking at himself in the mirror, Jake was beginning to suspect otherwise. Could it be that Robert had not seen Jake because he was...?

Jake shivered. He could not complete that thought.

For a moment he closed his eyes. When he opened them again he almost jumped in shock. Fay stood before the mirror. She was brushing her hair, whistling along with the tune playing in the living room. Seeing her eyes smile, Jake's heart melted as the love he felt for her overtook his reasoning. But the deep feeling was soon replaced when he noticed that both of them were occupying the same space.

Jake staggered back a few paces.

Fay still remained before the mirror, completely oblivious to that fact that she had, only a second earlier, been standing *inside* Jake. Under normal circumstances the idea that she could have been inside him would have been very erotic for Jake, but at that moment the image horrified him.

'Fay...' he began, but could not find any other words to say. Even if he could, would she be able to hear him? Jake feared not, since his suspicions were slowly turning into fact.

He opened his mouth to try again. He had to say something. If anyone would be able to hear him and see him it would be her, he was sure. They had been through so much together in the previous two years, and he had to believe that their love counted for something. As it turned out he did not need to speak for it was then that Fay turned around. Their eyes met.

For several seconds they lingered, and Jake stopped breathing.

The moment passed, and Fay continued into the living room. Jake remained where he was standing, his mind awash with the thought that she had seen him. There had been an unmistakable recognition in her eyes.

He followed her into the room and watched as she switched CDs. 'Fay, I know you saw me then. Even if it was just for a second. Come on, babe, look at me again.'

She did not.

He stood there, thinking, and an idea came to him. He walked up behind her and leant forward until his mouth was just behind her ear. Slowly, and gently, he blew. Nothing happened. Not a single strand of Fay's hair moved. She stood up and walked over to the sofa, passing through Jake as she did so. He straightened up and turned to look at her.

Jake was not sure how much time passed while he stood there. She listened to The Chemical Brothers while reading another couple of chapters of Marcel Theroux's *The Confessions of Mycroft Holmes: Paper Chase*, and then turned the TV on to watch the news. In all that time not once did she look at Jake. Several times he tried to speak to her, but she gave no sign of hearing him. As the minutes, then the hours, passed by Jake's heart sunk further and further. He could not help but think that she was ignoring him on purpose, like Robert had been doing.

He walked across the room, passing through her line of vision, and stood by the window. Outside the world continued to turn. He stood there for a time, lost in his thoughts. Things would not have seemed so bad if only Fay would acknowledge him, as it was...

'Yes, he went straight there to tell you. You really haven't seen him?'

The words drifted into his thoughts. He turned to see Fay on the phone, a look of concern on her face. He moved forward and knelt before her. She looked right through him, but nonetheless Jake reached out a hand to comfort her. For a split second he had forgotten about his condition and was, as a result, taken aback when his hand passed through her leg. Jake pulled away as if stung.

'Come off it, you're pulling my leg, right? He's been gone for four hours, Rob.' Fay paused while Robert said something. She smiled. 'Yes, we've got engaged! And we've set a date for the wedding.'

Jake sighed. Seeing the smile on Fay's face was too much. He thought back to the moment they had agreed to get married. After he had promised to buy her a silk dress anyway, they had hugged. In that moment he felt like he was one with her, more so than he ever did when they made love. He sighed again. How could the wedding ever happen now?

'Yes, a date,' Fay was saying, the happiness in her voice slowly diminishing. 'He'd better bloody get back soon, though, otherwise we'll seriously have to rethink the whole thing.'

His heart aching, he turned to leave his home.

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Jake Morgan stood at the edge of the pavement, waiting for the lights to change. People were shuffling into position behind him. Some of them, the more impatient ones, were barging forward, intent on being the first ones across the road, as if there was some kind of prize for getting there first. He hated the way people in London pushed each other aside, as if no one else existed but them. He took a glance behind him, just in time to notice a very large man shove forward. Jake braced himself, not wanting to be pushed onto the road and as a consequence into the oncoming traffic. Once more he had forgotten his new condition, and was reminded when the large man stepped inside him.

Without any further thought Jake crossed the road, elated with the knowledge that nothing could hurt him. Not even the double-decker that was racing towards him.

Once he was across the road his mind went back to Fay. Being around her and not being able to touch her was too much for him to stand, which was why he was now in the streets of Hammersmith, hoping the distance from Fay would relieve a little of that pain. Darkness had fallen since he had returned home, which provided Jake with the illusion that it was later than it really was, but seeing the clock hanging from a building told him it was only just gone seven.

He turned onto King's Street, and was happy to see that there were few people about. It was a Friday, which meant that soon King's Street would be bustling with people. Some heading to and from the cinema, others coming out to have a pizza or two. He liked to come here on a weekend evening, it was one of the rare occasions that he felt that Londoners became aware of each other. As it was the few people presently on King's Street were so caught up in their own lives that they barely had time to notice the people around them. Jake remembered many mornings' walks to work, feeling like he was invisible. It was all so much worse at the traffic lights he had just passed, crossing from the Broadway shopping centre into King's Street. How many times had he been standing there waiting for the light to change when people would bump into him, almost knocking him onto the road, just so they could cross the road first? Too many. Unlike a few moments ago.

For the first time since returning home Jake smiled.

Part of him knew that he could have some fun with his new status. Being really invisible in a city of people who might as well be invisible could be fun. He could

do so much and get away with so many things. He could help himself to whatever he wanted, never having to worry about being caught. He could become Fay's guardian angel, protecting her from anyone who tried to hurt her.

He came to a stop outside of McDonald's, and watched the people through the windows as they ate their favourite burgers. It had been hours since he had last eaten, yet he did not feel the slightest bit hungry. But then that did not come as much of a surprise. Why would the dead need to eat?

He had to accept that small but important fact. He was dead; it was the only explanation for what had happened when he visited Robert, and for when he had returned home. As he thought back, he realised that only one event could account for his present state of being. The incident at the Police Box. Whatever happened had happened then, and he was sure now that he had not imagined it.

That blast of air, that flash of light, somehow it must have killed him.

His heart dropped at that thought. In his mind he could see Fay talking to Robert on the phone, smiling as she told him about the wedding. *Well, it ain't gonna happen now, is it?* He took a deep breath as his eyes began to well up with tears.

He turned away from McDonald's and blinked away the tears, and his eyes made contact with another person. The clothes the man wore were like something out of the '70s, and in the quiet King's Street he stuck out like the proverbial sore thumb. The man was standing outside Boots looking directly at Jake. If there was any doubt, the fact that he could see Jake was confirmed when he quickly turned away as soon as Jake noticed him.

Jake did not recognise the man, who was a little shorter than Jake and probably around about the same age. Whoever the man was, he was the first person to acknowledge Jake since the old man outside the Police Box. His mind drifted back to that moment, and he remembered that there had been another man's voice inside the box. It would have been a remarkable coincidence if the man on the other side of the street was not the owner of that voice.

'Oi, pal!' Jake called out. The man reacted instinctively. He glanced over at Jake, looking like a child caught doing something naughty, then turned to run. 'Oh no you don't.'

Jake ran across the road, and chased the man down King's Street. Being immaterial had another advantage, since Jake did not need to dodge the occasional person while chasing the man, unlike the man himself.

Jake turned the corner into Macbeth Street in time to see the man run into the Police Box. The light on top of the box started flashing and the curious wind noise began to rise again.

'No, wait!' Jake called, but by the time he was across the road it was too late. The Police Box had faded from sight.

Jake fell to his knees. While he chased that man the possibility that he was not alone had become real, and with it came the hope that maybe he could still marry Fay. If the two men in the Police Box could see him, then maybe they could cure him, too. But along with the disappearance of the Police Box went his hopes. In their place came intense feelings of isolation.

He looked up to the dark sky above and shouted out.

'Oh, god! Please don't let me be alone!'

Jake Morgan spent another hour sitting on the wet grass in Ravenscourt Park, not that the wetness below him was a problem. *The joy of being dead*, he thought bitterly.

For a while after the Police Box had gone, he had considered wandering around Hammersmith, but he could not stomach the thought of being among so many people yet being so alone. So, he decided to take some time out in the park, closed as it was, in the hope that the isolation would not seem so obvious. For the most part it worked.

Every now and then he would notice a group of people walking down the street next to the park, laughing and joking as they started their night out. Memories of such nights out with Fay and Robert and his latest fling would rush unwanted into Jake's mind.

Ahead of him, above the arches, the occasional train would rush past, through Ravenscourt Park Station (closed on the weekends) and onto Hammersmith. Silhouettes of people in the train could be seen from where Jake sat. All those people together, ignoring each other, not realising the wonderful gift they had. The gift of sharing their lives with other people.

In the moments when there were no people and no trains, he would consider some deep philosophical thoughts, which was so unlike him. When he was alive he was never a religious man, quite content to be his own boss, and unwilling to consider that there was a plan for his life other than the one he created himself. But now he was dead he found himself thinking about such things.

Was there really more to this life? Considering his current predicament, he would hope so. But if that was so then why was he still here, walking the Earth as a ghost? Jake did not know. He knew very little about ghosts, beyond what he saw in horror films. He refused to accept that for the rest of his time (eternity?) he would have to haunt people. If he was a ghost, Jake rationalised, then what about all the others who died? Was he really the only ghost in Hammersmith? He did not think so, after all there must have been loads of people who had died in the area. Muggings that had gone wrong, old folk in their beds, and as for the people who must have died in Charing Cross Hospital...

This led him to consider something he had once heard. Something about how ghosts were dead spirits who had to make peace with their former lives, so they could move on to the next life. Jake did not know the specifics, he did not need to know, but it made sense to him right now, sitting alone in the park.

He stood up. There were scores left unsettled in his life. Little known things between himself and Robert, things that Fay had no idea about, things that Robert and Jake never discussed, issues from their childhood that they had never resolved. Up until now Jake had never felt the need to resolve them, after all Robert and him had been friends since nursery and he had always thought they'd be friends until one of them died.

Jake smiled wistfully. They *had* been friends until one of them died, the one being Jake.

Then there was his father. Jake had not seen him in many years, not since they had moved the old man into the nursing home. They had never really been close, but in hindsight, Jake realised, that was no excuse to not go and visit.

Jake stood up and started for the way out of the park. Before the night was over he was determined to resolve these things, so that he could move on to whatever was next.

As he walked one other thing came to his mind. Somehow, he would have to sort things out with Fay, let her know what he felt.

Jake Morgan could not just walk into Robert's flat, although he knew that knocking on the door was not really an option. He supposed that now he was a ghost he should consider giving up the sensibilities of his mortal life, but there was a big part of him that did not think that being a ghost was a good enough excuse.

Just 'cause I am a ghost, don't mean I ought to be an impolite ghost.

Polite or not, the only way Jake was going to get in to see Robert was to just walk on in, so that is what he did. He just hoped he was not going to catch Robert with a new fling in a state of indiscretion.

He found Robert sitting in front of the TV, watching an episode of *Stargate: SGI*, snacking on some biscuits, which he would occasionally dunk into his coffee. Jake smiled fondly and took a deep breath.

'I hope this works,' he began, 'cause I feel a little daft saying all this now, all these years on, but I think we both knew we'd have to discuss it sometime. I know it's not much of a discussion with only one of us talking, but I kind of hope you can hear me, at least on some level.' He sat on the floor, in between Robert and the TV, so that, even though Robert was watching the TV, it felt like Jake had Robert's attention.

'What I want to say is that I'm sorry. I know we both think it's something small, but, well, it's something we've both held against each other a little. I'm sure you remember it, even more than I do, since it was you who was rejected. I can see it when you look at me and Fay, that part of you that still wants me. If things had been different maybe you and I could have been an item, but it wasn't meant to be, was it?' Jake laughed. 'Maybe that's why you keep having these flings. A new fella every other night. Trying to make me jealous?'

Robert laughed, too, and for a moment Jake thought that his friend was confirming things, then he glanced back at the TV and saw Jack O'Neill playing golf into the Stargate. This made Jake laugh, too. It was one of their favourite episodes, watched more times than he could count.

'I hope you know that I love you, Rob. Not in a gay way, obviously,' he added quickly out of instinct, then inwardly kicked himself. It was a comment he often made to Robert, and it always made Robert look uncomfortable. Maybe that was why Jake did it. 'I'm sorry for that, too. I'm sorry I rejected you back then, and I'm sorry for my snide comments. It's not that I've been trying to hurt you, but I suppose it must come across like I'm constantly rejecting you. I'm not.' Sniffing back tears, Jake stood up. 'You were my best mate, and we're gonna be together all the way. Take care of yourself, Robert, and look after Fay for me.'

With one last glance at the TV, he left his best friend behind.

Jake Morgan looked down at his father, lying in the bed, looking frailer than Jake had ever seen him. His dad was asleep, which was just as well, since Jake did not think he could take the scolding look that he usually received from his dad.

‘I just wanted to drop by and say I forgive you, Dad. I should have visited you before now, so we could both make our peace. Guess it’s too late for you to try and make your peace with me, but I can at least do my part. You never were a good father, never there when I needed you, too busy with that young tart of a wife. Always had time for her, but never for...’ Jake stopped himself, realising how angry he was making himself. He shook his head. ‘No, there’s no excuse. Never was. But I forgive you, cause that’s all I can do now.’ He looked closer at his father. ‘You don’t look long for this world, either. Guess I’ll be seeing you soon, then.’ He turned to leave, but looked back to say, ‘we can sort things out after, we’ll have the rest of time to do so.’

He walked to door and as he was about to pass through it, he heard a sharp guttural sound from behind. Jake span around quickly. His dad was convulsing, clutching at the blankets. With a dawning sense of dread Jake realised that his dad was trying to clutch his heart.

The old man was having a heart attack.

Jake rushed over to the side of the bed. ‘I didn’t mean it! You’re a fighter, come on!’ He ran out of the room, and once in the hallway he shouted out. ‘Somebody come! He’s having a heart attack. He’s...’ Jake stopped and looked back at the door to his dad’s room. ‘He’s dying,’ he finished limply.

He walked back into the room, and found his dad lying there, pain fixed on his still features. Jake swallowed and waited for his dad’s ghost to sit up.

For ten minutes he stood there, but nothing happened. His dad’s dead body remained inactive, forgotten about. Jake shook his head. ‘I really am alone,’ he said.

Jake Morgan stopped by the Police Box, which now stood outside his house. He tried to place his palm on the box, but, as he expected, it passed right through.

‘Almost time, then?’ Jake asked the box. ‘One more thing, then it’s time.’ He turned to his house and walked up to the door.

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Jake Morgan found Fay in their bed, but she was not sleeping. She lay there on her side, one arm wrapped around herself, the other holding a tissue up to her nose to prevent it from running, while she tried to hold back her tears.

He looked at the clock on the bedside table. It was almost one thirty in the morning. He had left to see Robert almost eight hours earlier, and as far as Fay was concerned he had not come back since.

He walked across the room and knelt beside the bed. 'I'm here, but you just can't see me.' He sniffed, unable to stop the aching inside. 'I'm so very sorry; I would give anything to hold you, but...' He reached out to touch her hair, and let his hand hover less than an inch above her head. 'We would have been so good together, just you and me against the world. Well, with Robert about, of course.' He smiled sadly. 'I love you, more than anything in my whole life, but I've to go now. Be strong. I'll never forget you.'

Jake stood up and walked to the bedroom door. He stopped there for a moment, eyes closed tightly, his lower lip quivering with emotion. Deep within he felt so hollow, as if his soul had been ripped out. He looked back at Fay, and whispered; 'Goodbye, babe. I love you.'

Jake Morgan stepped through the front door. He had come to think of the Police Box as his carriage into the next life, wherever it was that ghosts went. Saying goodbye to this life had been the hardest thing he had ever done, and staying around longer would have torn him apart. It was time to go.

He stopped, looking at where the Police Box had stood. The pavement was empty, and of the Police Box there was no sign. 'No,' he said softly, and quickly walked over to the spot where the box had been. He looked around, down the street, from one end to the other. All of a sudden it seemed like the street was never ending. 'I was ready,' he said.

Jake Morgan was his name, but it had been over two weeks since anyone had addressed him by that name or any other. As a ghost destined to roam Hammersmith forever, he wondered why he would need a name, after all it was a thing the living used to speak to each other. No one ever spoke to him. They did not even know he was there.

For the first few days he had kept himself busy by doing a few things.

Accompanying Robert to work, but that had soon bored him. There was only so much he could say without a reaction, and watching someone unpack boxes of books soon became more than a little tedious.

From time to time he would keep returning to the nursing home, hoping that his father might turn up. True, they did not see eye to eye on anything, but even his father would be better company than none at all. His father never did turn up.

Soon it all became pointless. All the funs things he had thought about doing seemed to hold no interest for him now. What fun was there to be had when you could not touch anything?

In the end he spent all his time at his house, doing his best to stay close to Fay. He had had to sit there and watch her mourn him. For a few days she tried to be hopeful, but as the days passed, he could tell her hope was starting to break. Robert came over often to check up on her, as did her parents and brother. One time both Robert and Fay's brother had visited at the same time. They spent an hour talking to Fay, trying to comfort her, but as soon she had excused herself for the toilet, they had fallen into each other's arms. Jake was quite shocked, since he had no idea that Fay's brother was gay, but he was not annoyed like Fay was. She blew up then, shouting at them about how she had lost her fiancée and all they could do was meet up here to snog! She had promptly thrown them both out.

That had been a few days ago, since then Fay had booked time off work. Jake was glad in a way, because to him that meant that he could at least be with her without her work getting in the way. That had not worked out as he had planned. Instead she had used that time to visit some friends living in Scotland, unknowingly leaving Jake all alone.

Three days with no one for company left a lot of time for thinking, but after only one day Jake had done more than enough thinking. Two weeks being a ghost with no one to talk to had given him enough time to think of everything he needed to think about. So, for the remaining two days he just sat in the corner of the living room doing nothing at all.

He was still sitting there, in complete silence, when he heard a familiar sound. It was a sound he had given up hope of hearing. It was that strange wind sound. He slowly rose to his feet and walked over to the window. Outside, slowly coming into being was the Police Box.

He ran outside quicker than he had ever moved before.

Moments after the Police Box had become solid the narrow door opened and the man Jake had seen in King's Street stepped outside. He jumped when he noticed Jake, and poked his head back through the door.

'Doctor, he's here!'

'Excellent,' came the old voice from inside the box.

'I knew you could see me,' Jake said with a lot more emotion than he would have expected.

The thin young man nodded. 'The Doctor's a wiz as creating these sorts of gadgets,' he said, pointing to a small silver device attached to his left ear. The device seemed to go inside the ear, while a small protrusion was pointing out parallel to the man's eye. 'Helps me see you. He's jolly clever.'

'Yes, thank you, Jeremy,' the man that Jeremy called the Doctor said, as he stepped out of the Police Box. 'Maybe you should go and wait inside the TARDIS?'

Jeremy looked crestfallen, but nonetheless did as he was told and entered the Police Box. Once Jeremy was inside, the Doctor turned to look at Jake. He, too, was wearing one of the silver devices.

'I'm terribly sorry, old chap,' the Doctor said.

Jake had so much to ask, but for now he pointed at the silver device. 'Is that a ghost spotter?'

The Doctor fingered the device. 'Good grief no, it just enables the wearer to see things that are out of phase with this reality.' He frowned, and scratched his nose. 'Oh dear, you haven't spent the past two weeks thinking you were dead, have you?'

Jake nodded. 'Well, I am. That beam of light killed me.'

'Oh no, that just knocked your physiological signature out of phase. My dear chap, you're not dead. No one can see you, and you can't make contact with anything, but you're not dead. I'm not a killer you know, at least never intentionally.'

Jake was trying his best to take it all in. 'If you knew this, why have you waited two weeks to tell me? Do you have any idea what I've been going through?'

'I can only imagine. I've been trying to find a way to bring you back into phase, but I can't. I suppose to all intents and purposes as long as you're on this planet you are dead.'

'Then what do you suggest I do?'

'I can take you somewhere in the TARDIS,' the Doctor indicated the Police Box, 'where you can live with people who will be able to see you. I've already arranged it with... erm... with a friend. I'll take you to him and he will take you the rest of the way.'

'But...' Jake began and looked over at his house. 'You reckon anyone wearing that ear device can see me?'

'Well, of course, I designed it,' the Doctor said, with just a hint of smugness.

'What about her?' Jake pointed at Fay, who was just getting out of her car. The Doctor looked over, then back at Jake, his features uncertain. 'She's my fiancée, and I have to say goodbye to her. She thinks I'm dead.'

'It might be better if you left it like that.'

'What?' Jake walked past the Doctor and pointed at Fay. 'I love her. Do you have any idea what it's like to be in love? To feel so incredibly happy just because someone smiles at you? Just the slightest disagreement and I'm devastated. Just imagine what she feels now? I have to tell her what's happened!'

The Doctor still didn't look so sure. 'Well...' He smiled, relenting. 'Very well, but I assure you this is a bad idea.'

Jake Morgan held Fay's hands in his for one last time. Both of them were crying, feeling both happy and sad at the same time. At first she had been shocked, but he had soon convinced her of the truth.

For half an hour they sat on the front porch, holding each other and talking.

He ran his finger over her nose. 'It's time we both moved on,' he said.

Fay took a juddering breath. 'But I don't want to move on.'

'Neither do I, but we must. We can't live like this. You need to find someone you can be with, properly.'

'I'll never love them the same.'

Jake bit his lip and took a very deep breath. 'Nor will I, but I have to go. Promise me you'll find someone to make you happy.'

Fay attempted a smile. 'I'll try.'

'That's all we can do,' Jake said.

They hugged once more, holding each other so tight that Fay found it hard to breathe. Finally, they let go and Jake stood up. Fay looked up at him.

'Goodbye,' she said, not even trying to hold back her tears. Jake just nodded at her, doing what he could to hold back his own feelings, then turned and walked away.

Jake Morgan stepped into the TARDIS after the Doctor, and turned at the threshold. He looked over at Fay and waved. 'Goodbye, babe,' he said and closed the door behind him.

With a wheezing and groaning the Police Box faded from sight, leaving Fay sitting on the porch thinking about the past and looking towards the new future...