

Betwixt & Between: Episode I Extract

By

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EPISODE I - THOSE ON THE VERGE

EXT. IANTO'S DREAM - THE SCHISM. DUSK

An adolescent boy of 15, IANTO, drifts within a vast, swirling void, lying peacefully with his eyes closed.

Silent words suddenly appear around him, manifesting out of the abyss before being washed away in the dark currents of the maelstrom.

FOOLISH BOY. YOU HAVE SO VERY MUCH TO LEARN. HAVE YOU ALREADY FORGOTTEN?

Ianto slowly opens his eyes, gazing forth into the vortex. Suddenly, a terrible, cloaked spectre looms out of the abyss, reaching for him with a grim, skeletal hand. Ianto gasps fearfully and struggles to swim away, but the figure of death pursues him, reaching to ensnare him.

CUT TO:

INT. IANTO'S ROOM. DUSK

Ianto awakens with a start, staring around to find himself in his room, the lair of a teenage boy - a jumbled mess of schoolbooks, dirty clothes and childhood toys scattered across the floor, posters of rockstars, supercars and supermodels adorning his walls, and a framed photograph of a younger Ianto in the arms of a woman, sitting on his windowsill. Unsettled, Ianto heads over to the window, gazing out across his town of ASH CITY, evening setting in as the sun descends through the sky.

CUT TO:

EXT. ASH CITY STREETS. DUSK

In the urban jungle of Ash city, under the pale amber of the streetlights and haze of the winter sleet, Ianto wanders down the quiet avenues, like a silent shadow passing by. He sports the uniform of a punk, with a black hoody, fingerless gloves, heavily ripped jeans and daps, his attire embellished with belts, chains and zips from head to toe. He conceals his face beneath his hood, only the pointy bangs of his jet black hair spiking through. He carries a bunch of bright pink Sakura cherry blossoms.

Kicking an empty beer can down the street, a piece of paper suddenly blows towards him, and he steps on it. He picks it

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up, realising it is a missing person notice, examining it carefully, before staring ahead to see a telegraph pole covered from top to bottom with them. He studies them all, before clenching his fist with determination, kicking the can aside and striding forth down the streets with purpose, his eyes scanning the environment carefully.

Ianto soon hears sirens in the distance, gazing ahead to see the incandescent glow of a fire, clouds of toxic smoke rising above the tall city structures. The sound of a girl screaming resonates in his mind. He lets out a mournful sigh, then heads towards the fire.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSEFIRE. DUSK

He arrives at the site of a tragedy, a tall apartment building engulfed in a ferocious inferno, the night illuminated by the flames, and the flashing of fire engines and ambulances.

Ianto watches from across the street as a firefighter bursts from the building, carrying the body of a young girl, lying limp in his arms. He shakes his head grievously as he takes her to her mother and father, and they weep tears of horror and anguish, their child taken by death.

As the last of the flames are extinguished, the edifice now a charred, crumbling frame of ashes, the girl is placed inside a body bag and taken away. Ianto suddenly reaches his hand out to his side, and clutches the hand of a small girl. Her body is without corporeal form, spectral and distorted, as if she isn't there. It is the disembodied soul of the girl from the fire, SEREN. She stares at her parents who hold each other for comfort, and she cries, unable to accept her demise. Ianto kneels down before her, clutching her hand and wiping away her tears.

IANTO

It's okay. This isn't the end. I promise, you and your parents will be together again, someday.

He hands her the cherry blossoms, and Seren gazes in amazement of their beauty, a smile appearing upon her face. She hugs Ianto tightly, resting her head in his shoulder, and he clutches her comfortingly, stroking her hair.

Taking her hand, he walks her down a dark alley, away from the disaster. The alleyway is flooded with shadow, Seren clutching Ianto's arm with fear but a small flame flickers

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brightly in the distance, and she peers forth curiously. They reach the flame, and around it, huddle a small group of ghosts. They see Ianto coming, turning to him with delight. They see Seren at his side, gazing at her sympathetically, and she cuddles closely to Ianto, nervous of them.

The ghost of a middle aged man smiles, and nods at Ianto. He reaches out his hand gently to her, but she is too scared to take it. Suddenly, the ghost of a Jack Russel Terrier calmly approaches her, its eyes wide and inviting. Ianto nudges her, encouraging her to stroke it, and she slowly reaches out her hand, stroking it gently. The terrier licks her hand, and she giggles playfully, following it as it turns and sits by the fire.

Ianto gazes at her, now together peacefully with the other ghosts, raising a pleasant smile, before turning and heading back into the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK. NIGHT

Meanwhile, three misfit adolescents hang out together in a children's park;
RIXIA, a petite girl with black and purple hair, sporting gothic attire and bearing three studs on either side of her nose. She sits high atop a climbing frame with a large pair of headphones over her ears, blaring out deathmetal;
REGGIE, a cocky chav with a braided ponytail, tinted spectacles and sporting ostentatious jewellery. Wielding cans of spray paint, he vandalises the park wall with his marvelous graffiti skills;
And RICKERT, built like an ox but quiet as a mouse, his curly hair protruding from his beanie, a thick tartan scarf wrapped around his mouth and neck, sporting a large, furry longcoat. He sits unassumingly by himself, rocking gently back and forth on a swing, a moth landing gently on his finger, and he strokes its wing.

Rixia, finally removing her headphones, shouts at the others.

RIXIA

Ugh, this is so boring! Come on boys, lets do something fun!

REGGIE

Chillax Rixia, I'm working on another masterpiece right here.

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RIXIA

So lame. Where the hell's Ianto
anyway?

REGGIE

Same as always I bet, off chilling
with his imaginary mates rather
than his real ones.

RIXIA

That jerk, always blowing us off
these days!

RICKERT

I miss the old Ianto. He had so
much life in him.

REGGIE

Wonder what killed it all.

CUT TO:

EXT. ASH CITY STREETS. NIGHT

Ianto continues to wander the streets, aimless in direction, but perceptive of his environment. His mobile phone suddenly sounds, and he takes it from his pocket, looking at it to see a text message from 'DAD', reading "YOU'RE LATE AGAIN. GET HOME NOW, OR ELSE!" Ianto scowls at the text, when suddenly he hears the cries of an old man, ignoring the message to run down the lane and help.

He finds a trio of thuggish boys kicking and setting fire to a bench on the side of the road, enscribed with the text, "IN LOVING MEMORY OF IDRIS THOMAS". The ghost of an old man kneels helplessly before them as they attempt to destroy it.

Ianto scowls with outrage, and charges furiously at them.

He tackles one of them, TORU, sending him crashing to the ground. The others stand back, stunned by Ianto.

IANTO

Beat it, bullies!

The others, MAX and DENNIS, also confront Ianto.

DENNIS

Ooh, look at this freak playing
hero of the dead!

Ianto cracks his knuckles, glaring at them fiercely.

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IANTO

Why don't you try kicking something
that can fight back, cowards?!

TORU

You asked for it. Kick his head in!

The trio charge Ianto, who fights back with all his might against the overwhelming odds. The ghost, Idris, covers his eyes in horror and disbelief, the sounds of fists striking, wails of pain and roars of fury filling the streets, echoing into his ears.

After a final thud, it all goes quiet, apart from heavy breathing. Idris fearfully looks to see Ianto still standing, but barely, hunched with pain and exhaustion, blood running down his face. The trio struggle on the ground, staggering back to their feet and running away. Ianto bellows after them with the last of his strength.

IANTO

Go on, scram! You better learn to
respect the spirits of the
departed, or I'll make you wish you
were dead!

Idris, overwhelmed by Ianto's valour, approaches him thankfully.

IDRIS

Thank you, sincerely.

IANTO

(panting)

Don't mention it. Have a safe
journey.

Ianto turns, striding away with a limp, heading back down the street. Idris raises a hopeful smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY. NIGHT

Ianto finally arrives a cemetery, carefully stepping through the field of graves, many restless spirits wandering around. He reaches a gravestone, engraved "AERONA LLEWELLYN, LOVING WIFE AND MOTHER." He speaks quietly to her, his voice breaking.

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IANTO

Hey, Mam. I bought you flowers,
but, there was this girl ...

There is no response from the grave, no spirit appearing before him.

IANTO

I went looking for you again ... I
know it's been a long time but ...
I've been having these weird dreams
lately.

FLASH CUT: A BLACK CLOAKED, DEATH-LIKE PHANTOM LOOMS OUT OF A CLOUD OF SHADOW.

Ianto shakes his head, wiping his forehead. Only the sound of silence answers from the grave.

IANTO

I just wish, I could see you again.

It suddenly begins to rain, a sudden but heavy downpour, and he finally gains an answer from the bellowing of thunder.

Ianto turns and heads out of the graveyard. The other ghosts in the cemetery suddenly begin to stir, retreating to their graves fearfully. Out of the shadows behind Ianto looms a spectral phantasm swathed in darkness, almost humanoid, but malformed into a demonic wraith, a SLUAGH. It leers at Ianto as he departs, letting out a grizzling hiss.