

Jason and the Cybernauts

by Marcus Rowland

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Rating: K+

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This is a DC movieverse / Torchwood / Sarah Jane Adventures crossover, tenth in my *Supergirl Returns* series. For the purposes of this story only Torchwood Seasons 1 and 2 have happened, all seasons of the *Sarah Jane Adventures* have happened. See end notes for full list of crossovers. While the stadium mentioned in this story is real, the details described in the story are entirely imaginary.

"It's a quiet afternoon," said Martha Jones. "We could knock off early and go to the Shirley Bassey concert."

"It's sold out," said Gwen, "and don't you think there's an obvious problem?"

"Problem?" said Ianto.

"Shirley Bassey, right? Born in Cardiff, grew up in Splott, ended up a huge star; what are the odds that she doesn't know Jack?"

"And?"

"So he'll have shagged her, or her mum, or one of her husbands or kids or boyfriends, or her manager or her bloody roadie, or all of them in a row, and if we show up you can be sure that there would be trouble."

"You might think that," said Jack, coming into the hub, "but she's out in the public eye, and we're supposed to be a secret organization."

"Which doesn't necessarily mean 'no,'" said Gwen.

"A gentleman never tells."

Someone sniggered, and Martha said "Even Ianto can't keep a straight face for that one."

"I couldn't possibly comment," said Jack, heading back out to his office and whistling *'I am what I am,'* then raced back out as the Rift alarm sounded, saying "What have we got?"

"Bigger than man sized," said Gwen, sitting at one of the computer consoles, "but no more than a ton or so. Anything more accurate than that, you need to get someone to replace Tosh."

Jack ignored the familiar complaint, and said "Where?"

"It's about half a mile away," said Gwen, double-checking coordinates, "in the bloody Millennium Stadium."

"Okay," said Jack, pulling on his greatcoat. "Guess we're going to the concert after all."

* * *

"I'm pretty sure this isn't what I had in mind," said Martha, watching the stadium's security guards escorting out the last of the crew who had been setting up for the evening.

"Good thing they hadn't started letting the audience in," said Jack. "Okay, we've got about an hour before they'll have to cancel, let's see if we can sort things quickly."

"Whatever it was," said Gwen, checking a portable scanner, "the Rift trace is somewhere under the stands on the north-east side of the stadium. What's down there?"

Ianto checked a plan; "Offices, changing rooms, one of the bars."

"Whatever it was, it's probably still in the stadium," said Martha. "They've got the roof closed so nothing flew out, and we didn't detect anything odd going out through the doors."

"Okay," said Jack. "Ianto, take the security desk. They've got CCTV all through here; see if you can spot anything odd. Gwen and Martha, with me, we'll start at the bottom and work our way up."

Five minutes later Ianto called them. *"I've spotted someone... corridor B7, you should be coming up to it on your left. Looks like a man in a trench-coat and hat, but I think it's some sort of robot."*

Jack listened, and heard a loud clang and splintering wood. They drew their guns. As they reached the corridor Ianto's voice crackled on the radio again, saying; *"Make that two robots, they've broken through a door about half-way down the corridor."*

"What's in there?" asked Gwen, cautiously advancing behind Jack, with Martha by her side.

"It's a staff locker room," said Ianto. *"They're trying to force an inner door open; the plan shows it as a washroom."*

"Move it," shouted Jack, breaking into a run, "there might be someone trapped in there!"

Ahead they could hear the noise of wood splintering and something thudding, the crash of something metallic. They piled through the door, Jack still in the lead, and saw a trench-coat wearing robot staggering across the room, trying to remove a battered bucket from its head. There were more thuds from inside the room. Jack ran in, gun in hand, but couldn't dodge a blow that knocked it from his hand. Before he had time to react his feet slipped out from under him, and he slid across the floor in a puddle of liquid soap, thudding into one of the wash-basins.

He looked up dazedly. Another robot was lying on the floor, twitching as smoke and steam plumed from its mouth, ears, and nostrils. And standing over him was a scared-looking dark-haired boy, about twelve years old, wearing jeans, a denim jacket, and a black T-shirt with a Batman logo. The boy held a broom and obviously ready to strike again if he made a move towards the gun. Beside him stood a girl with chestnut blonde hair, about the same age and similarly dressed, apart from a faded peach shirt with a blue 'S' logo, holding a cell phone with the camera pointed at Jack.

"Hold it," said Jack, "we're the good guys. Are you okay?"

Outside there were more loud thuds, and a zapping noise that Jack guessed was someone tasing the other robot. There was a woman's voice coming from the phone, and Jack frowned; it was going to be hard to keep this one quiet. Ianto should be tracing the signal and shutting down the call, but there was no sign of it yet.

The boy hesitantly lowered the broom, and said "We're okay. Did we stop them?" He had an American accent. The girl put the phone back to her ear.

"I guess so," said Jack, getting back up. Outside Gwen swore loudly, and there was the clang of metal on metal. "You two okay?"

"Fine," shouted Martha. There were more thuds. "Bastard's strong; don't let it hit you!"

"Okay," said Jack, "they're coping." He turned back to the boy. "Did you see where they came from?"

"It was like Wormhole X-Treme," he said excitedly, "there was a... a swirly sort of circle thing, and they marched out of it, then it disappeared. Then two of them started chasing us."

"Two of them?" asked Jack. "How many are there?"

"At least five," said Ianto over the radio, *"Just spotted three others in the main electrical routing room on corridor A2. I think that they're trying to recharge or something."*

"Five?" said Jack, turning towards the door.

"Six," said the girl. She sounded British. The boy nodded his agreement.

"Did you hear that, Ianto, there's another one somewhere."

"On it."

"Mum wants a word." She held out the cell phone.

"I don't have time."

"She really wants to talk to you... Captain Harkness."

That was different; there weren't many people in a position to recognize him. He took the phone.

"Hello, Jack," said a familiar voice.

"Sarah Jane? Since when do you have a daughter?"

"I adopted Sky last year."

"And the boy?"

"Jason's a friend's son, he's staying with us for a few days."

"What the hell are they doing on the Rift?"

"That's a good question, and one I'd like answered later. They were in Ealing this morning."

"You know my job. They've witnessed a Rift event..."

"Don't worry; you can trust them to keep quiet about it. Just keep them out of trouble, I'll get there as soon as I can and take them off your hand. Oh, and if there's any hint of Retcon..."

"Yes..?"

"Oh, I'll think of something. I can be very creative." There was a click and the phone went dead.

"Sky, Jason," said Jack, "Sarah Jane says you're to stay with us and keep out of trouble. Understood?"

"Yes." "Okay."

"I thought Sarah Jane only had a son."

"Luke's at university," said Sky, "She adopted me last year."

"So why exactly are you two here?"

"We wanted to get some records signed. Mum's a big fan, and it's her birthday next week."

"I don't see any records."

"They're in the loo," said Sky, going to the door and getting a shoulder bag with several vintage LPs inside.

"Shouldn't we be doing something about the robots?" asked Jason.

"We? There is no we. You two stay back, we'll handle it." Both children stared at him incredulously.

"Yeah, like that's going to work," said Jason.

Martha came in with the head of the other robot under her arm. "Did I hear you say you're Sarah Jane's kid?"

"That's right," said Sky.

"Martha Jones. Say 'Hi' for me when you talk to her."

"The Martha Jones?" asked Sky. "Mum's told me a lot about you."

"I'm sorry to interrupt your mutual admiration society," Ianto said over their radios, *"but I have some tentative ID on the robots. They're cybernauts, very dangerous."*

"Cyber-whats?" Jack hurried down the corridor, followed by Martha and Gwen. The children were close behind.

"Cybernauts. Robot assassins, developed by a scientist called Armstrong in the sixties. As far as I can tell they're a slightly more advanced version."

"Okay, I remember now. They were pretty stupid and they ran on sixties electronics, any reason to think that these aren't the same?"

"That's about it."

"If we run into problems give Mother a call at the Ministry, she'll remember how to handle them."

"Mother? You mean Lady Purdy?"

"Unless someone else has taken the job."

"Okay, but she really doesn't like you much."

"Just because she caught me snogging Mike Gambit on her desk..."

* * *

"What's going on in there?" asked Jack, when they reached the steel fire door that led to the electrical room.

"Two of them are doing something to one of the transformers," said Ianto, *"the third has braced itself against the door. I think you'll need explosives to get through."*

"I can feel something," said Sky; "A sort of tingle. It was like that for a few minutes before they appeared."

"They're opening a portal," said Jack. "Ianto, get the power cut, right now."

"We'll lose the cameras and lights."

"Just do it!"

"Temper!" said Gwen.

There was a pause of about thirty seconds then the lights went out, and dim emergency lighting came on.

"That ought to stop them," said Martha.

"No," said Sky, "it feels like something is still happening, maybe not quite so strong."

"How long did the feeling last when they first appeared?" asked Gwen.

"About five minutes."

Jack looked around, saw a glass-fronted switch labelled "Fire," and broke the glass to pull it. An alarm began to ring, and soon cold mist was seeping under the door.

"It's still happening," said Sky.

"Damn, I was hoping that would start the sprinklers."

"They don't have sprinklers with electrical equipment," Gwen said scornfully, "it'll be Halon or something."

"If I could just get a clear shot," said Jack.

"Stay back," said Jason. Without any other warning he ran at the door, leaped into the air, and kicked it with both feet. The door shook and buckled a little, but failed to open.

"Strong kid!" said Gwen.

Jason ran back a few yards, stared at the door, and said "One's still bracing it, the others are to the left of the door and straight ahead at the back of the room. There are cables from one of them running to the machinery; I think it's powering it now that the electricity is off."

"How do you know?" asked Martha.

Jason grinned and ran at the door again, and seemed to accelerate and hit it much faster. The hinges tore loose, and it opened about four inches on the left hand side. He dropped to the floor and rolled out of the way, and Jack fired four shots into the gap before it slammed shut again. The last shot hit the closing door and ricocheted back down the corridor, smashing one of the emergency lights. Everyone ducked.

"You hit one," said Jason, "it can't move its arm, but that's about it."

"It's taking too long," said Gwen, "we need to take them out now."

"Switch off your radios," said Sky.

"Why?"

"Just do it!" She seemed to be concentrating, and her skin started to glow in the dim light. Jack hastily switched off his radio, the others followed his example. Suddenly there was a blinding flash and the remaining lights went out. The only light remaining was a faint slowly-fading nimbus around Sky.

"They're down," said Jason.

"And I can't feel their portal thingy," said Sky. "Better get in there quick, I can't keep this up for long."

Jason shoved the door with his shoulder, and it fell on top of one of the robots. Jack followed him into the room and carefully smashed the camera 'eyes' of the robots with the butt of his gun, then began to pull a spaghetti maze of wires from an open junction box, while Jason ran back the way they'd gone in.

"Everyone stay out!" shouted Martha, retreating from the doorway, "there isn't any oxygen in there."

"How is Captain Harkness breathing?" asked Sky.

"I'm not," shouted Jack, "but suffocation won't kill me."

"Weird."

After about thirty seconds the lights flickered and came back on, and Jack hastily retreated from the sparking wires. The robots began to thrash about on the floor but Jason reappeared with a bucket of water in each hand and began to pour it onto them. They started to spark and stopped moving.

"Well done," said Jack. "Planning to tell us how you two did that?"

"Nope," said Jason. Like Jack, he didn't seem to have any trouble with the lack of oxygen.

Sky gave him an exasperated look and said "Captain Harkness knows about this stuff, Jason, I think it's okay."

"Knowing Sarah Jane," said Jack, "I'm guessing that neither of you comes from this neck of the woods. Beyond that, it really doesn't matter, I'm pretty sure I can trust her judgement."

"You can," said Sky. "What about the last cybernaut?"

"*It's stuck in one of the east side turnstiles,*" said Ianto. "*It tried to go out of the stadium through an 'in' gate.*"

"Really not very bright," said Jack; "We'd better take it out and see if we can figure out the programming." He led them towards the stairs.

"Can you do that electrical thing again, Sky?" asked Martha.

"Not a good idea," said Gwen, "if that's some sort of magnetic pulse it could corrupt the programming. We need it intact."

"Which bits of it?" asked Jason.

"Head and torso, I think."

"No problemo."

"And now he's just showing off," Sky whispered to Martha.

"He's a bloke, it's what they do."

There were loud clangs as the last cybernaut tried to smash through the steel bars of the turnstile. The metal was slowly bending under the robot's relentless barrage of karate chops.

"How do you want to handle this, Jack?" asked Martha.

"I really have no idea. Blow its legs off with a bazooka?"

"No need," said Jason, staring at the robot. Its coat was suddenly burning, smoke billowing from its shoulder. Alarms began to ring, then water sprayed down from the overhead sprinklers and the robot was shrouded in steam.

"Oops," said Jason.

"Oops?" said Jack. "*Oops??* Any other bright ideas?"

Jason ran at the robot and jumped onto the turnstile machinery, dodged a blow and dropped down on the far side of the barrier. When the robot chopped at him through the bars he grabbed its arm and pulled and twisted. With a loud shriek of tearing metal the arm came off at the shoulder.

"Holy crap," said Gwen. "Can you do that again?"

Jason moved back towards the robot, grabbed its other arm, and repeated the trick.

"Pah, 'tis but a flesh wound," Martha quoted with a grin.

The robot continued to bash, kick, and head-butt the barrier. Jason considered it for a moment, then reached through the bars, grabbed its head, pulled, and twisted. After a moment there was a loud "twang" and the robot finally stopped moving,

"I think you broke it," said Martha. "Well done."

Jack looked at Jason thoughtfully, then at Sky, then said "Shouldn't he be the one wearing the T-shirt with the 'S' on it?"

"It's S for Sky, silly," said Sky.

"I'm sure it is, but there really aren't that many people around who can tear things apart like that. He isn't an ordinary kid."

"Can we keep this quiet?" asked Jason. "My dad's gonna go ballistic. I'm not supposed to do things in public. Not yet, anyway."

"Your dad being...?"

"I think you know."

"Okay," Jack said briskly. "Let's get cleared up and get out of here, they want to put on a concert and we want to check out the robots, figure out what they were up to. You two had better come back with us and wait for Sarah Jane."

"What about getting autographs?" asked Sky.

"It'll have to wait for another time."

"Do we have to?" asked Jason.

"We've got pizza and a pterodactyl."

"Cool!"

* * *

"This place is amazing," said Jason, watching Myfanwy swoop overhead, "it's like the Batcave, but Batman doesn't have a pterodactyl; just lots of bats."

"Batman's real?" asked Gwen, most of her attention on the cybernaut head she was dismantling.

"Sure he is. He's awesome!"

"Isn't he a wanted criminal?"

"Sort of," said Jason. "Dad says that he took the blame for someone else. The Gotham City police know it too, that's why they don't try too hard to catch him."

"You hear weird stories. Is he a vampire?"

"No, I've never seen one, but Kara has."

"Kara?"

"Supergirl. She knows someone that hunts them."

"Weird... Jack, the electronics in this thing are a lot more advanced than I was expecting. I'd say that it's eighties technology at least."

"You're right," said Ianto, his hands deep inside the robot's chest, "the main board in here is a custom design, but the processors look like they were pulled from a couple of BBC Micros. That puts it at the eighties. Eighty-one at the earliest, more likely later."

"Did they have computers back then?" Jason asked innocently.

"They did," said Ianto. "and... Jason, you can see through things, right?"

"Sure."

"Take a look inside the metal cylinder my left hand is touching, and tell me what you can see."

Jason stared at the robot then said "it looks like a big lump of silly putty. A couple of wires go into it and meet in a little metal rod, and there are a load of metal balls, they look like BBs."

"Thought so... Jack, this thing has a self-destruct, and I think it's still live. Sounds like a fairly nasty bomb."

"Get away from it," said Jack. "I'll handle it."

"I don't think I can let go without triggering it."

"Can I help?" asked Jason.

"It's too risky," said Jack. "I know what I'm doing. Ianto, guide my hand to wherever it needs to be."

"The relay is under my right thumb..." Jack put his hand inside and followed Ianto's arm down. "Yes, that's right."

Jack pushed his own thumb onto the relay, making sure that the pressure was never released. "Okay, I've got it, pull your hand back slowly."

"I hope you do know what you're doing," said Ianto.

"Okay," said Jack. "Gwen, Ianto, get all the bulletproof vests; Martha, get the kids out of here."

"I should stay," said Jason, "it probably can't hurt me much, and I might be able to help."

"Bombs can't kill me," said Jack, "but I'm pretty sure Sarah Jane will, if I let you get hurt. Go on, get out of here."

Jason and Sky reluctantly followed Martha out of the hub.

"Okay, pile the vests around the robot, and slide a couple under my body... that's right, cover it so that only my hand is exposed."

"You'll lose your hand," said Ianto.

"It'll grow back. Now get out."

"But..."

"Out! There may be a timer!"

"Come on," said Gwen, pulling Ianto away. "Bloody drama queen..."

By some instinct, Myfanwy vanished into one of her hiding places as Jack watched the door roll closed. He took a deep breath and pulled his hand back as fast as he could.

* * *

"It's going to take more than a lick of paint to fix this little lot," said Ianto. "We'll need to replace all of the monitors and most of the glass in your office."

"Put a shopping list together, the specifications for the windows are in - owwww!" Jack winced as Martha pulled another ball bearing from his chest. The wound slowly closed and vanished.

"Don't be a baby" said Martha, dropping it into a bloody dish; "Only two more to go."

"I don't know why you're bothering," said Jack, "they'd pop out sooner or later."

"Might as well be sooner, if I leave them in there you'll start setting off metal detectors." She ran an alien scanner over his chest, made a tutting noise, and started to cut another hole.

"How are the fingers coming along?" asked Ianto.

"About half way back," said Jack, wincing again. "Martha, did you ever hear of anaesthetic?"

"I did, shame your body recovers from it as fast as it does from everything else. There's really not a lot of point."

"Wonderful."

"I'll make your day complete," Gwen said over the intercom from the tourist office, where she was keeping Jason and Sky out of the way. "Sarah Jane Smith just arrived."

"Show her in, but keep the kids out; it's still pretty bloody in here."

A minute later Sarah Jane came into the Hub, followed by another woman wearing a white coat, dark glasses, and a scarf over blonde hair.

"Who's your friend?" asked Jack

"Kara Zor-El," said the stranger, "I'm Jason's cousin." She took off the glasses, revealing her unmistakable features.

"Supergirl?"

"No, an entirely different Kara Zor-El," said Sarah Jane; "Idiot."

"Sorry," said Jack, "I'm kinda in shock here." He wagged his slowly-regenerating fingers, "but that's no excuse for being rude to two lovely ladies."

"And now you're seeing double," said Sarah Jane.

"No, then I'd be seeing four of you... no, with Martha that would be six."

"Always the charmer. Now, I think I should apologise, I really had no idea that Sky and Jason were planning this little outing."

"It wasn't their fault this happened," said Martha, "and those robots would have been a lot harder to handle without the kids."

"About that," said Sarah Jane, "I spoke to dear Purdy on my way here, she told me that the Ministry lost a container of confiscated technology from a ship in Cardiff harbour in eighty-seven. Apparently it included a dozen cybernauts and some other equipment they thought was a teleportation machine."

"You mean that there are another six out there somewhere?"

"Not exactly;" She got out her phone, speed-dialled a number, and said "Mister Smith, I need you," and switched it to speaker

There was a short fanfare, then a mechanical voice said "Yes, Sarah Jane?"

"Tell Jack what you detected."

"On your instructions I began monitoring the Cardiff area after Miss Sky called you. Approximately twenty-six minutes after the last spike of Rift activity I detected six anomalous seismic events at depths of two to nine kilometres below Cardiff. They would be appropriate to objects of mass one hundred to one hundred and twenty kilograms teleporting into the rock then imploding."

"Thank you, Mister Smith."

"The cybernauts must have been programmed to use the teleport to attack an enemy base," said Ianto. "Maybe we interrupted things before the second six materialized."

"It's possible," said Jack. "Or maybe Rift energy boosted their intelligence, and they learned to use the machine without being programmed. We'll probably never know."

"Either way, I think it's all over," said Sarah Jane. "Apart from making sure that Sky and Jason don't bother you again. We can take care of that on the way home. Speaking of which, I'd better be on my way." She shook hands with Jack and embraced Martha and Ianto for a second before hurrying out.

"Okay," said Jack. "Supergirl, please don't tell anyone what you saw here."

"Of course not," said Kara. "And of course you won't mention my cousin to anyone, or put him into your reports. He needs to grow up a little more before he goes public."

"Okay."

"Thank you," said Kara, smiling sweetly. "I hope that you'll be recovered soon." She moved to the surgical table and kissed him, staring into his eyes for a second, then embraced Martha and Ianto, kissing them too.

For a minute or so after she left everyone was silent then Jack shook himself and said "What the hell was that?"

"What... What was what?" said Martha.

"When she kissed us," said Jack. "I think she did something to us."

"The hell you say," said Gwen, coming into the hub.

"I do feel a little fuzzy," said Martha. "Weird. Like I lost track of time for a sec, and I've forgotten something."

"I think you have," said Ianto. "We all have. What was that kid's name?"

"Sarah Jane's daughter? Sky."

"Not her, the boy."

"It was... it's on the tip of my tongue..."

"No it isn't," said Jack. "It's gone. And I don't think I'm even sure what he looked like."

"Supergirl bloody retconned us!" said Gwen.

"With a kiss."

"It's not retcon," said Martha, running the scanner over Jack's face. "I can't detect any drugs at all."

"Some sort of hypnosis then, or telepathy," said Jack. "Anything else gone? Anyone?"

"I don't think so," said Ianto.

"Me neither," said Gwen.

"No, that's it," said Martha.

"I'll bet there are some selective gaps in our recordings too," said Jack. "We were out of it for at least a minute, that's like an hour for someone with Kryptonian speed."

"Bitch!" said Gwen.

"No," said Martha, "protecting her family. I can't really blame her for that."

"Okay," said Jack. "We'll go with that. Let it rest, we'll worry about it if he starts trying to take over the world."

"Works for me." "I suppose." "Okay."

"What now?" asked Martha.

"Martha, did you finish pulling out the ball bearings?"

"Yes."

"Okay," said Jack, inspecting his hand. "I think we've all earned the rest of the evening off, and it's still half an hour until Shirley starts her performance. Get your glad rags on; we're heading out to the show!"

"Are you sure?" asked Gwen.

"Positive," said Jack. "And we run into any more trouble tonight..."

"Yes?" said Ianto.

"No snogging the bloody aliens!"

End.

Author's note: Shirley Bassey really does come from Splot, scene of several episodes of *Torchwood*. Any contact with Jack Harkness, however hypothetical, has been invented for this story.

Sky Smith really does wear the shirt I've described in one of the episodes of *The Sarah Jane Adventures*, with an S that looks a lot like the Superman logo. A Google image search for 'Sky Smith Sarah Jane Adventures' will show it if the image below doesn't work.



Cybernauts appeared in episodes of *The Avengers* (1961-1969) and *The New Avengers* (1976-77). The head of the nameless intelligence agency (sometimes referred to as The Ministry) in both these series was code-named Mother; I've assumed that agent Purdy (of *The New Avengers*) now has this post. Mike Gambit was Purdy's partner in *The New Avengers*.

Other crossovers mentioned in passing include the *Stargate* universe (in which there is a TV show called *Wormhole X-Treme*), *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* ('Tis but a flesh wound'), and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Kara's friend who hunts vampires; see an earlier story in this series, *Yesterday's Ghost*.) All stories in this series have had the Nolan Batman movies as part of their background; this one is explicitly set after *The Dark Knight*.

In canon Kryptonians are capable of super-hypnosis, most famously seen in Clark's erasure of Lois' memory (with a kiss) at the end of *Superman 2*.

Special thanks to Selenak who suggested the Bassey / Cardiff / Jack connection and some lines of dialogue related to it. Again, any such connection is entirely fictional.