

COSMIC



MASQUE



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EDITORIAL by Rik Moran

Editorial

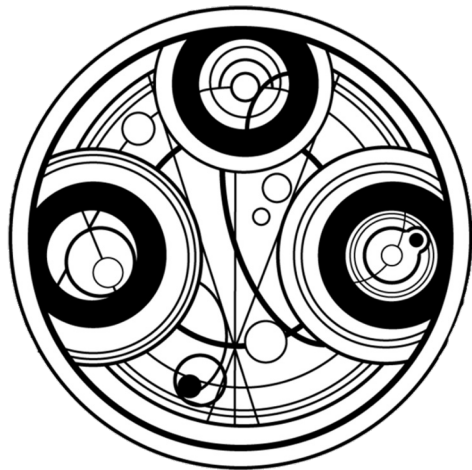
Greetings one and all. This issue of Cosmic Masque comes at a time, when, let's face it, there's not a lot going on in the world of Doctor Who.

So, whilst we may be light on reviews and features in this issue, it gives us the space to catch up on the fiction. Poor Steve was getting a bit of a backlog of stories. I'll let Steve tell you about the fiction contained in this issue in his Editorial and we will go back to having 3 stories in an issue next time around.

Once again, my heartfelt thanks to those who have contributed to this issue and until next time.

Stay safe.

Rik. ▲



Cosmic Masque XI

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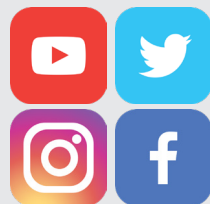
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The TARDIS is disabled, and needs serious repair. The Doctor, Liv and Helen are grounded, in a block of flats the Doctor once owned until things improve, and adjust to normal, early 21st century life for an extended period of time. They make new friends and enemies, and faces from the Doctor's past (or is it, future?) appear...



Stranded is in some ways familiar ground for Doctor Who; the third Doctor, of course, took an extended exile to Earth in the 1970s (or 80s) and in the novels, the Eighth lived through a century without

being able to leave.

Similarly, Matt Smith's Doctor in *The Lodger* and *The Power of Three* spends more time than he'd like here on Sol 3. And yet *Stranded* feels fresh; it's a great jumping on point for those not familiar with Liv and Helen, both of whom are sketched out adequately for newbies. The dynamic of the Doctor's stay this time comes without UNIT; the Curator is the (well publicised, this isn't a spoiler!) enigmatic guest turn in the first story, *Lost Property*; later, we have a familiar face from *Torchwood* in PC Andy enter the fray. The flats have a great mix of diverse – in every sense – occupants, and this is where *Stranded*

STRANDED

Review by Anthony David

comes in to its own in a very positive way. There's a delightfully bitchy elderly gay couple with shades of *Vicious*, a family with a young teenage son, mysterious others, and Tania. Rebecca Root underplays a quiet, shy, awkward woman – and warms in to the part, as we warm to her, through the course of the stories. By the time she's very gently romancing Liv and confessing she's trans in *Wild Animals*, which to Liv doesn't matter in the slightest, in a very touching scene, she's well established as a lovely, positive and inclusive new addition to the Whoniverse. Given recent controversies, and of course 2020 being something of a write-off due to covid for many, *Stranded* feels a little like it's dropped out of a parallel dimension, where everything is 'normal' and progressive. Ironically, something meant to bring Doctor Who in to the here and now feels more like escapism than it was ever intended to.

The stories are skewed towards adult drama – mature, rather than explicit, without being in any way overly horrific, while the romance is, as I say, sweet and chaste to all intents and purposes. *Wild Animals* has no sci fi elements at all, a "contemporary historical" with a sad murder and the resulting emotional fall out. Spooky *Sapphire and Steel* style shenanigans take us back in to more familiar territory in the third story, *Must See TV* by Lisa McMullin (a female writer! Excellent!) while the fourth is a full on Who, with aggressive aliens and a time travel twist that wrong-foots you into thinking you've missed rather more lore than you actually have, rather nicely.





Rather too much of *Divine Intervention* feels like set up for future sets, although writer David K Barnes's dialogue remains as excellent as ever, rather than a satisfying story in its own right, but the serial nature and subscription style of most of Big Finish's output shouldn't make this feel like a swizz. McGann is rock-solid as always, Nicola Walker and Hattie Morahan as Liv and Helen are excellent, relatable and mature companions, and Ken Bentley's direction is assured – great performances, pace and atmosphere. Tom

Baker is of course glorious, a delight to listen to, even if the Curator remains a big old enigma.

I'd recommended *Stranded*, especially if you've missed a few years of Eighth Doctor adventures and the sheer number of stories scares you, making you not know where to start. I'm looking forward to seeing how it develops – although I hope the next set has less of a cliffhanger... I think. And all hail diversity, in front and behind the scenes. ▲



SHADOW OF THE SUN

Review by Rik Moran

I went into my listen of *Shadow of the Sun* not knowing quite what to expect.

Big Finish made no secret that this is their first audio to be recorded during the UK coronavirus lockdown. With everyone recording their parts remotely rather than in studio, I was concerned at how effective this

could be. What would the sound quality of the audio be like? Well, having listened to it, I can say if Big Finish hadn't let us all know, I certainly wouldn't have been able to tell, it sounds exactly like all their other audios. The production levels continue to be top draw and the script and performances also delight. This might be a short 2 parter, however I found it riveting listening. The premise of "How do you save a ship of people from destruction if they don't want to be saved?" gives not only the Doctor a problem to solve but also gives the listener food for thought.

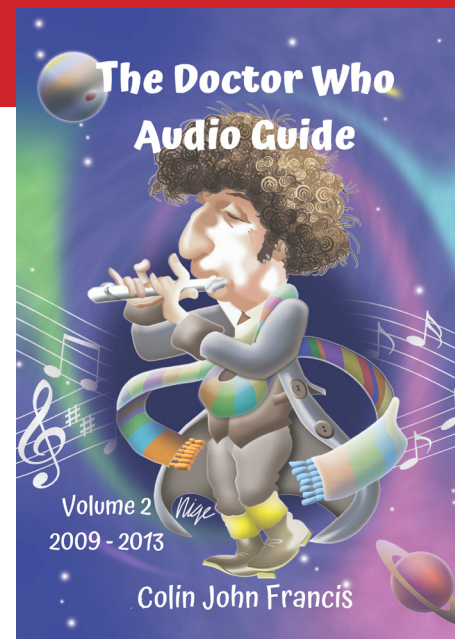
Well done to all involved.

8/10 ▲

THE DOCTOR WHO AUDIO GUIDE: VOLUME 2

2009 -2013

Review by Jordan Shortman



we've all got lives outside Doctor Who, so we'll forgive him just this once!

Starting in 1963/64 with The Daleks, the book rattles through the William Hartnell stories, giving us looks at slightly different versions of covers, from the original BBC soundtrack releases to the re-releases right up to the latest in the Vinyl-Who range from Demon-Records. Francis also offers some interesting little tidbits, I had no idea that 'Despite being number 126 in the Target Books Doctor Who library, the reproduced cover in the sleeve notes depicts The Time Meddler as number 114.' Or that the Galaxy Four vinyl release actually spells actress, Susanna Carroll's name wrong.

For each of the BBC audio releases Francis has included the run time for each episode and interview, for all of the televised stories as well as a full list of production credits as well as main cast stars, the narrators and recording information. It's nice to have such a complete look at the BBC audio releases. Also nice was getting a trip down memory lane looking at covers for releases that came free with newspapers back in the mid-2000s. I vividly remember having a copy of the Telegraph's Mission To The Unknown thanks to my Aunt. I've still got that somewhere, but like the story itself, my audio seems lost in history so it was nice this book gave me another look at it.

I love Doctor Who audio. Let us get that out of the way right now. Reading the introduction to the first volume of these guides Bernice Summerfield herself, Lisa Bowerman, gets it absolutely right when she says that from the ill-fated audio-drama of War of the Worlds in 1938, up to the then latest Doctor Who release, there is something about science fiction in the audio format that works so brilliantly well. So often science-fiction is subjective, what one person imagines is not what another person reads.

Author, Colin John Francis gives us the forward for the book, explains that the layout and specifically the consolidated index for volumes 1 and 2 covers every Doctor Who story to be released on audio between 1963 –2013, excluding Bernice Summerfield's main range at Big Finish because the Doctor isn't explicitly in it. That's ok because everything else in the book is a great roundup. Colin also apologises for the book taking so long to come out, which I found quite funny but

What was also nice was that the book includes a look at some of the recent animated releases, despite having it, I had no idea that my Power of the Daleks steel-book featured the 2005 reconstruction with images and the soundtrack. It was also nice to see the Peter Cushing movies get included with Francis mentioning that the soundtracks were released by Silva-Screen records. For the Target novelisations readings, it's also great

that a list of chapter names and runtimes are included, I love reading the titles for the Target chapters sometimes I think they were more exciting than the books themselves.

Another nice inclusion for the BBC books section is that Francis has also included was the 2011 releases of cd's that made up the Pandorica. A nice, niche inclusion that no one would have blamed him for forgetting had it not been included, but it's another example of how much time and effort went into making this book as complete as it could possibly be. These more niche inclusions include the 1989 Origins of the Cybermen and the 1990 The Cyber-Nomads. While not as niche as they seem, it's always nice to see and read bits on stories like Exploration Earth, Whatever Happened to Susan? and Doctor Who and the Pescatons.

Page 94 sees the book start to look at the extensive work of Big Finish, including the special releases like the edited version of The Mutant Phase with Doctor Who Magazine and The Veiled Leopard, that came free with Doctor Who Magazine, not before though the book gives two pages to the lost-story Shada, a story that has now been adapted so many times, its perhaps the one story that we've experienced many, many times!

Also, nice to see included is the Sarah Jane Adventures audios as well as the Torchwood ones that came out over the last few years

from BBC Audio. Also, of interest is seeing how a few seconds have been added on to any Big Finish or BBC audio adventure that has been broadcast on BBC Radio 4.

Any Doctor Who fans loves a good reference book. The Audio Guide Volume 2 is a great book. From yielding interesting facts, from items like actors' names being spelt wrong to the errors on the sleeve-notes concerning a track running time, the level of detail included here is astonishing. Its little wonder its taken Colin John Francis since 2009 to write volume 2. But the fun doesn't just stop at flicking through the pages and looking at the wealth of knowledge splashed across every page. After the index, Francis then goes on to give us what he believes the ultimate time-line including the televised stories and Big Finish and BBC Audio, for each Doctor. For fans wanting to do a complete re-watch and re-listen to experience every single Doctor Who story in some semblance of grand order, this list is a great place to start and helps wrap up a blinding good read.

Of course, this list only goes up to 2013, so given how many audios have come out since then, I'd love to see the up-to-date list. As a book written for charity, this is a great way to raise money. But it's a great book in general which will no doubt raise valuable money for the Marie Currie trust. Colin John Francis should congratulate himself on a job well done. Bravo sir. ▲

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PARENTS JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND

By Nick Smith

'Dad! Dad!' I said with feverish excitement.
'I've got some great news!'

Dad stood in the kitchen of our house in Bristol, a grin tucked under his moustache. He wanted to hear this great news of mine. He probably thought I'd found a serious girlfriend or a cool car. But my news was far more exciting.

'They're bringing back Doctor Who!' I was referring to *The Dark Dimension*, the 30th anniversary special that would feature five Doctors, Daleks, Ice Warriors and Yeti in a revamp of my favourite show.

Dad's grin disappeared. His saddened look sticks with me to this very day. His negative reaction sucked the joy out of me like a Friday evening traffic jam. If anyone understood how special this special was, it should be Dad. After all, he was partly responsible for my Whonacy.

Dad had been the one who had the show playing in our living room, letting it hook me with its music and monsters. He was the one who had driven me to Longleat for the 20th Anniversary Celebration, albeit too late so it was closed when we got there. He was the one who lent me his gym bag when I went to Panopticon '93 in Hammersmith – a gym bag with aftershave that got in my sandwiches, all I had to eat through the whole convention.

Come to think of it, maybe Dad wasn't the biggest supporter of my Doctor Who habit.

But I was still dismayed by that look on his face when I told him my news.

I wasn't the only fan who got excited about *The Dark Dimension*. With no new episodes for four years, we were hungry for new content. When we heard that Graeme Harper was directing a special for the BBC and we glimpsed a still of a skull-faced Cyberman

that looked scary enough to frighten Skynet, we had to tell our friends – and our family.

I had always kept my obsession to myself and my encounter with Dad convinced me I should keep it that way. I enjoyed attending conventions and savoured the sense of community I found in DWM, Celestial Toyroom and other monthly mags. But I no longer felt the need to shout it from the rooftops, especially after *The Dark Dimension* got lost in a recursive occlusion of interdepartmental bickering and budget concerns.

Dad was a hard worker who fixed bikes, mixed cement, flipped houses and did a whole bunch of manly stuff that I found boring. I always wanted to impress him, though, so I soaked up his rock music tastes and latched onto the TV shows he watched – including Doctor Who. In a way I overcompensated; I couldn't master the art of motorcycle maintenance but I could binge the heck out of a William Hartnell marathon. I tried to take an easy path to gain his approval and lost it instead.

There were silver linings, though. At times I felt the need to justify my obsession with Doctor Who and that helped me to explore what made the show so important to me and my fellow fans. After I had attended a few meetings of a local Who group, I tried to explain to Dad what we did and why. I started with trying to find a common connection, telling him we didn't just talk about Who but also horseracing, Wimbledon, the weather – y'know, normal people stuff. He still didn't understand, until I told him what our real fascination was.

It was the ideas. The scientific dreams, the cosmological concepts, logic puzzles, moral dilemmas, the studies of what it meant to be human.

Apply now! You don't need to wait for your renewal date!

I could almost see the blue light flashing over Dad's head like a Lungbarrow lightbulb. He nodded. He finally got it.

My love of ideas and 'what ifs' led me to a degree in screenwriting at Bournemouth University. Three years after our kitchen chat, Dad came to visit me at college. At lunch he asked if I'd heard of Jon Pertwee's passing. Although I was gutted by the news, I said that I wasn't really into Doctor Who any more.

Dad looked disappointed again, this time for an entirely different reason. His boy had

grown up. He'd lost the kid who'd sat with him on the sofa every Saturday teatime, wide-eyed and absorbing those precious ideas. He'd lost the youth sharing 'great news' in the kitchen. He would never see the same sheer excitement again.

But deep down that exhilaration is still there. It will always be there. Now, when Dad tells me how much he likes Peter Capaldi's Doctor or we discuss elemental ideas, he's the excited one. And he never disappoints me. ▲

FROM THE LAND OF FICTION

By Stephen Hatcher
(Fiction Editor)



Welcome to the expanded fiction section of *Cosmic Masque*. Such is the quality of stories that are being submitted to the magazine, that Rik and I both felt that we shouldn't make our writers wait too long to see their work in print; so here we are with five stories in this issue, not to mention several others, no less worthy, which are waiting their turn, for *CM12* and beyond.

Of those five stories, four are by writers new to *Cosmic Masque*, which is a matter of great satisfaction to me. The current public health emergency is prompting an explosion of creativity, in all sorts of areas; so it should perhaps be of no surprise to find that many *Doctor Who* fans are discovering that this is the time finally to write that story that has been bubbling away at the back of their minds.

Attendees at DWAS's *The Capitol* convention or The Whoovers's *Whooverville* will probably know, or at least be familiar with Paul Burns, who has become a regular at these and many other events. I was so struck by the sensitivity of Paul's writing, that it came as a bit of a shock to discover that *Devils' Keep* is his first published story. I'm sure you will agree that it is a beauty. Paul has now had another story accepted for a charity anthology and he is bursting with ideas for many more. I am sure he will grace the pages of *Cosmic Masque* again.

Jenny Shirt is one of those people who everyone both knows and loves – she even had the War Doctor's companion named after her in the fabulous charity anthology *Seasons of War*. Jenny wrote a delightful TV *Comic* style story for another charity anthology that I edited a couple of years back; but despite my nagging, *Whispers of Hope* is only her second *Doctor Who* story. It is however, one that is perfectly apposite for these troubling times. I think you will love it.

It's always nice to read a good straightforward adventure tale, featuring some thoroughly wicked monsters; and *The Coming of the Duat* by Robert John Cumming is just that. Robert captures the characters of the Sixth Doctor and Peri and the mood of those mid-80s stories to a tee. He is another new writer, who is bombarding me with lots of great story ideas – I would expect him to become a regular contributor over the coming issues.

Stories featuring the Master as the chief protagonist, whether from BBC Books, Big Finish, the recent fabulous charity anthology *Master Pieces* or the wonderful unofficial *Master Annual*, are becoming a mini-genre all of their own. *It's All in the Eyes* by Andrew D. Smith (no, not *that* one), would have graced any of those publications. Andrew's story sees the evil renegade imprisoned and undergoing interrogation in a gripping prequel to *The Sea Devils*.

Finally my thanks go to Nathan Mullins and Cameron Holt, the final instalment of whose four-part Thirteenth Doctor story *Requiem Among the Stars* appears in this issue. It is no easy task, to tell a multi-episode story, over several issues, extending over more than a year, while maintaining the integrity of the whole story and ensuring that each episode can stand alone. Nathan and Cameron have achieved this splendidly. I hope they will submit many more stories to *Cosmic Masque* – but boys, there is no need to set yourselves quite such a challenge next time.

Allow me to conclude by once again reminding you that we want your stories. Send us what you've got, to the email address at the front of this issue and your work will be considered for inclusion. We welcome stories (for now only ones that have not been published before), featuring the Doctor, his/her friends and enemies or generally set in the *Doctor Who* Universe. It doesn't matter

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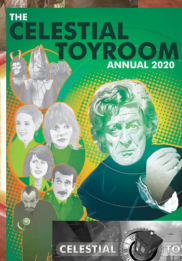
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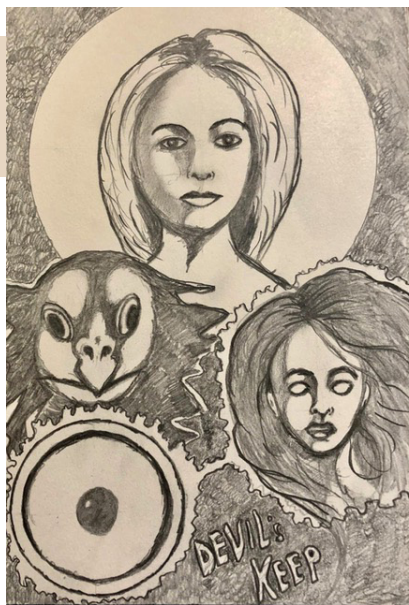
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if you haven't written anything before; I will work with you to tell your story. This is your chance to experience that special thrill of seeing your work, in print, here in *Cosmic Masque*.

Enjoy the stories. There will be lots more next time. ▲



Abby walked the relatively short distance from the retreat to the beach. It was dark, but she had made the journey several times and she enjoyed being enveloped by the night. The voices as obtrusive as ever, were keeping her company trying to dissuade her from the walk and the eventual comfort it would bring. All Abby knew was what waited at the end would be worth it, and every dissenting voice within her head would be quickly extinguished.

The air felt chilly and damp as she neared the sea. The waves were gently lapping against



DEVILS' KEEP

By Paul Burns

the shore and seemed more hypnotic than usual.

She sat on the beach. The coldness of the sand didn't bother her. She positioned herself, cross legged as usual, and brought her arms up to rest on her shoulders. Her dark eyes reflected the glint of moonlight from the orb hanging expectantly over the water. The voices were still bubbling away: a menacing choral cacophony that had kept her company for most of her life. But they seemed quieter and less encompassing with each visit she made to the shore. With heightened expectation, Abby sat as still as usual, breathing in the brine on the air and listening to the waves.

The staff in the retreat wouldn't miss her for a while. They were kind and showed no concern when she made her night-time visits to the beach. She ran her fingers down her arm and found the small indentations, still sore from recent activity. But this activity was happening less frequently.

Suddenly, there was movement in the water; the familiar disturbance that acted as a warning signal to the voices. The figure emerged as it always did, its comforting

lumber unsteady as it traversed the waves. Abby remembered the first time she had encountered the visitor. She should have been scared, but had found herself comforted by the reassurance of a physical familiarity. It was the warm gaze she had seen from her childhood pet; the pet that had understood her when no one else could. The one thing the voices initially hadn't told her to be afraid of. The visitor approached, as always; raised its right arm, with the connecting orb mimicking the warmth and comfort Abby felt looking at the moon, and bathed her in the usual reassuring light. The voices screamed their resistance, as they always did. It didn't matter, because after the light had faded, the voices ceased. They would return, quieter with each subsequent visit. But for this glorious moment, Abby embraced the silence. Her eyes fixed with the visitor's inquisitive stare, it then broke its gaze and examined the round glowing device that had silenced the voices. Abby was unsure what the visitor was doing and what it wanted from her, all she knew was that it was making her feel better with each encounter, and it would ask for nothing in return. Like a friend.

The visitor backed away from Abby and started its journey back into the water as quietly as it had come. No one else saw the brief but mutually beneficial transaction. It was Abby's and the visitor's secret. Abby realised it was time to return to the retreat. She rose to her feet and gave a last look to the visitor who was soon enveloped by the water once again. Abby breathed in the salty air and smiled at the silence. She walked back to the retreat and let herself into the building. Above the door, the sign, illuminated intermittently by a flickering light read: Devils' Keep.

Submerged in the inky black of the water, the visitor's orb lit up the murky surroundings and began processing Abby's voices. This human had proved to be a valuable resource and had become the his special project. Each voice had its own distorted path, its own story and information; cluttered and chaotic. But the visitor had noted that these voices had become over time less frantic and

erratic. As ever, these thoughts would be filtered and downloaded into the hive mind and used as valuable ammunition, when it was time for his race to emerge from the depths and reclaim their land.

The taxi pulled away as Jo Jones put her case by her feet and stood in front of the building. It was white and almost featureless with pinpricks of windows imbedded in the brickwork. Jo removed her phone from her jacket pocket and it lit up with the lock screen photo of her and Cliff. A last minute radiation emergency in Wales had stopped him accompanying her. She read her husband's text which simply said, "Be careful" followed by his customary kiss. She smiled and rolled her eyes. She was always careful; well, most of the time; but reality had an unpredictability that conspired against her best intentions. That wasn't her fault, it was life; and life Jo had decided, was a series of adventures over which she had no control.

Jo pulled down the sunglasses from the top of her head and turned around to look at the sea behind her. The waves were calm and reflected the bright sunlight. She loved the sea and she thought the proximity to it made this a wonderful location for the retreat. She looked up at the building as she walked towards it and thought to herself that the pinpricks of windows could not possibly allow enough light into the rooms. She always connected light with well-being. Living in light, she reasoned was healthier. The lack of gates also concerned her. It certainly created a feeling of openness that while it might facilitate well-being, could also compromise the safety of the occupants. Gates could stop things getting in - or getting out.

She rang the doorbell, thinking it was unusual there was no intercom, another example of lax security. The door was answered by a middle age woman in a white uniform; red hair swept back from her rather unwelcoming face into a tight bun; no name tag on the uniform. Jo was more receptive to auras rather than to appearance and this

woman's was powerful enough to cause an instant migraine. It was spiky and almost entirely devoid of compassion.

Jo smiled and extended her hand. "Hello, I'm Josephine Jones. I'm here to visit Abigail Bisley"

The woman introduced herself. "Good afternoon Mrs Jones, I am Nurse Green" The woman took the clipboard which was clasped under her arm and glanced at it. She looked at Jo, and nodded with cold efficiency. "Would you please follow me?" The nurse turned on her heel and Jo followed her into the facility.

They passed through a featureless and sterile reception area which led to lots of corridors and rooms. Jo noted there seemed to be an absence of staff. It seemed very unwelcoming and not the place she wanted Abigail to be in; but this was her first visit and initial impressions could be deceptive. She followed Nurse Green down one of the corridors and into a small room, containing two chairs and one small desk which the woman sat behind. Jo noticed there wasn't even a telephone. How did this woman function in this office? How did she run this facility, assuming she was the person in charge? Nurse Green beckoned at Jo to sit opposite.

"How is Abby?" Jo asked, taking a seat. But whether it was nerves at what the answer may be or the fact that a million things in Jo's brain were engaged in a race to escape her mouth, she didn't wait for a response before offering an explanation as to why it had taken her so long to visit.

"I've just returned from an expedition in the Amazon, I've spent weeks in a hot air balloon and communication is quite hit and miss. The nurse stared at her coldly. Jo continued "My husband eventually reached me and told me that Abby had written and asked me to visit her. Believe me, it isn't easy to turn a hot air balloon around in mid flight but I flew back as quickly as I could and here I am!" Jo was used to quizzical expressions whenever she

relayed her flights of fancy-literally in this instance- but she received nothing back from nurse Green, who stared at her impassively and finally spoke.

"Abigail is responding well to her treatment and we are very happy with her progress. We have committed staff here and we usually prefer to treat the patients 'in house' as it were but we have recently welcomed a doctor, highly trained in psychological disorders recommended by the British Government. She is looking after Miss Bisley." Jo sensed a slight unease in what appeared to be the nurse's well rehearsed speech. "Please wait here Mrs Jones and I will fetch her."

The woman disappeared and left Jo wondering what to do. Actually, she knew exactly what to do; leave the room and explore the facility on her own. She needed no invitation or permission to investigate any potential mystery. Why did the facility seem so basic? Why was the security so lax? There were definitely questions to be answered and Jo sensed Nurse Green was not prepared to answer them.

Just as Jo was about to leave the office, the nurse returned with another woman following behind her. Jo was struck with the calm reassurance she felt in this new woman's presence. Her aura fizzed with positivity.

"Mrs Jones, this is the doctor who is looking after Miss Bisley." The other woman offered her hand and smiled at Jo. "Hello Mrs Jones, pleased to meet you, I'm the Doctor... the doctor looking after your friend." Jo was taken aback; the Doctor's eyes were unmistakable. No wonder she had recognised the aura. No other person had made that impression on her. She had seen those eyes twice before at different stages of her life. From the father figure she had loved, to the young floppy haired Labrador she had adored to this... woman. She smiled broadly, bursting with joy at this wonderful and brilliant surprise. "Hello Doctor! How lovely to meet you."

Nurse Green left Jo and the Doctor in her office. The Doctor took out her sonic screwdriver and waved it around the room and under the table.

"Bugs! Just checking!"

"New face, new toys," Jo smiled. The two women hugged. Sometimes a hug can say more than words and the enthusiasm with which the Doctor gave this hug made her think that the woman had perhaps only recently learned to hug again. Jo wiped a small tear away from her cheek and grinned that irrepressible grin. "Oh Doctor. What a makeover! Typical you though! Still putting all my outfits to shame

And now you have the figure to do them justice!" She then looked serious. "But what are you doing here? Something's wrong isn't it? Is Abby in danger?" The Doctor pulled out a chair for Jo to sit down.

"Three days ago UNIT contacted me and asked me to investigate strange goings on in this retreat."

"Wait, Doctor", interrupted Jo. "I had heard UNIT had disbanded."

"Smoke and mirrors Jo. They're still around but deep, deep, deep, deep, undercover. Is that too many deeps? I'm never quite sure..."

"Anyway Doctor..." Jo said. "... A combination of UNIT authorisation and psychic paper got me into Devils' Keep and gave me access to the patients here," the Doctor continued, pacing around the office and gesticulating; illustrating her story with precise hand movements.

"The first patient I met was your friend... Abby isn't well, Jo. She has some stuff she's dealing with and this retreat is supposed to be helping her but I think there are other things going on. I think the staff here are putting the patients in danger." That word gave Jo a familiar sensation that combined excitement and safety, in the knowledge that

whatever the peril, they would overcome it and keep everyone else safe too.

"I listened to Abby's story. She's an amazing young woman, she just has too much going on up in her head; too much noise. Some people are better equipped to deal with overcrowding. Abby isn't one of them." Jo felt sadness knowing she had not been there for Abby.

The Doctor pulled up the other chair to position herself directly opposite Jo and continued her story.

"I met the other patients and listened to their stories; great people, funny but sad, warm but distant. But they all had one connecting story. They all told me about their visits to the beach; always on their own and always at different times during the night."

"What happened during these visits, Doctor?" asked Jo.

"I followed the patients when they went down to the beach. Abby was the first one and it became apparent very quickly that she was in danger."

Jo listened intently, looking concerned.

"She met an old 'friend' of ours. A Sea Devil Jo, she met a Sea Devil. I was all set to leap in and save her. But she didn't need saving. Abby wasn't frightened. It bathed her in light and returned to the sea. I followed Abby back to her room and she certainly didn't seem to display any ill effects from the ray; which is odd as they were used for destruction when we met the Sea Devils." Jo cast her mind back to their first encounter with the creatures, decades before. They certainly hadn't displayed peaceful intentions in the past.

"Later that night," the Doctor continued, "the same thing happened with another patient; the same process. The whole thing was repeated over the next two nights; always Abby first, then the others. We have to find out what the Sea Devils are up to Jo."

With that, the door opened and Nurse Green reappeared.

"Forgive the intrusion Doctor. Mrs Jones, I have given Abigail her medication and you can see her now."

The cold but efficient nurse led Jo to Abby's room. The two women embraced as Nurse Green closed the door and faced the Doctor who had followed and was standing before her. The time for deception for both parties had come to an end.

"Who are you?" demanded the Doctor. Nurse Green looked at her dispassionately.

"See this?" The Doctor brandished her sonic screwdriver. It was glowing. "Artron Energy. You only get that from travelling in the Time Vortex - and you are full of it! So who are you and where are you from?"

The nurse pulled back the sleeve of her uniform. On her wrist was a bracelet with a blue orb fixed to it. The orb began glowing and she waved it over the Doctor. She read whatever information it told her.

"Time Lord!" she sneered.

"May have to update your data banks," the Doctor replied, crumpling her nose.

"Always sanctimonious," snarled the older woman; "Thinking you have a divine right to interfere and impose your views. You imagined you were going to sweep into this retreat and just take over. My staff and I are just the villains who need to be stopped? You know nothing!" Nurse Green physically contained her anger but her eyes burned with indignant rage.

"Then who are you?" asked the Doctor. "What do you need these humans for? Why are you letting them go to the beach at night? What is your connection with the Sea Devils?"

Jo held Abby's hand as the two women sat on her bed. She brushed Abby's long dark

hair away from her face and the young girl smiled, remembering how kind Jo had been when she was in a relationship with her grandson, Santiago. How her problems had separated them and how Jo had been angry and disappointed at her grandson for leaving her when she needed him most. She looked at Jo.

"Thank you for coming. Please don't blame Santiago, I realised I needed help. With my condition, I needed solitude. My head can get pretty crowded and he was an outside voice who deserved better. I needed to be better. I just wasn't sure how to achieve that." Jo couldn't help but notice the scars on Abby's arm and her heart broke.

"One day I was searching the internet for... something and I found the Devils' Keep website. A lot of what it said made sense to me. I thought they could help me find some answers. Help me... The therapies looked like they were... well, made for me. The location was the clincher. The sea has always made me feel safe."

Jo clasped her friend's hand tightly. This young, vivacious girl whom she had fallen in love with when her grandson introduced them. The paintings they had done together, the marches they had gone on. Jo felt a sense of shame that she had missed Abby's other life, the life that had grown darker whilst she had been away on her many expeditions. Abby, reassured by the closeness of her friend, looked in her eyes.

"My... life is better. I have more room to breathe now. I have a friend, I visit him and somehow, in some way he makes me feel better." Jo felt her heart break a little more at Abby's story. This nightmare scenario of a monster bringing comfort to this poor girl was more than she could bear. But at the same time, was there an outside chance that the Sea Devil actually was helping her?

The Doctor fixed her gaze on the nurse, who turned away from her to look through the small window into Abby's room.

"Abigail was so angry when she came here, her demons threatened to explode out of her. We have found a way to stop them Doctor, to silence those harmful echoes."

Nurse Green turned to the Doctor.

"We are the Cyndasa, a race of beings with the ability to travel through time. We have knowledge of what these Devils do in the future to certain sectors of the universe. They are a cruel race Doctor. But we have stopped their kind before, using non violent methods to prevent genocide. It is what we do."

"Of course!" said the Doctor "I know who you are, dangerous meddlers! You've done this before, using the thoughts of other beings as ammunition. Words are powerful when spoken, but thoughts can sometimes be louder if they are screaming in someone's head." The Doctor's face displayed her distaste. "These thoughts can be harnessed as weapons if they are harsh enough, angry enough! But it hasn't always worked has it? Your clumsy 'non-violent' race has had its fair share of casualties, unwitting sacrifices to your self-appointed role as saviours."

"We are a peaceful race Doctor," said the newly revealed Cyndasa nurse. "But we are prepared to act whenever the level of threat justifies it."

The Doctor interrupted, "There is no justification for putting innocent lives in danger."

Nurse Green ignored her and continued. "We traced the very beginning of the Devils' campaign; the start of their domination. It begins here; on this planet at this time. We have travelled back in time to stop them, by letting the Devils capture the troubled and exhausting thoughts of humans plagued by demons; and so scaring the Devils in their infancy into remaining here on Earth, where they are." The nurse touched the bracelet on her wrist.

"Clever," The Doctor gave a look of approval. "Scanner and vortex manipulator all in one. Does it dispense custard creams too?"

Nurse Green ignored the attempt at levity. The Doctor waved her sonic over her. "Perception filter too. Very wise, as staff with translucent skin and fiery red veins may have deterred potential patients from coming here".

The nurse bristled at the Doctor's seeming insult to her race's true appearance. She continued, "The hive mind of the creatures will be terrified by the thoughts of the beings they seek to conquer. We will stop them without a war. We will use brainpower not firepower."

The Doctor looked at the nurse with a steely expression. "That is something I approve of wholeheartedly but you can't put these humans in harm's way. I won't let you use them like this! There has to be another way."

"But Doctor, it is working!" the older woman snapped "The patients improve and the Devils delay their attack. Our past victories have shown these types of reptiles are susceptible to our methods. It has to be working."

They were interrupted by the unmistakable sound of an explosion, coming from outside the retreat and then another. Screams from both the Cyndasa in the corridors and the patients inside their rooms filled the air. The Doctor and Nurse Green ran to a window to see what was happening. On the beach, an army of Sea Devils was emerging from the waves and moving determinedly towards Devils' Keep.

The Cyndasa nurse was clearly shaken. "But I don't understand, it was working... they should be terrified."

The Doctor shook her head in exasperation. "But that's just it, don't you see. It's not working at all - in fact your 'treatment' seems to be having the exact opposite effect. You've filled the heads of these Sea Devils

with all sorts of scary thoughts, now they've decided that humans are so terrifying that they had better destroy them. You've got so little security here, there's nothing to stop them."

The Doctor and Nurse Green ran down the corridor to the reception area. The Cyndasa staff had been mercilessly cut down. Luckily the patients remained in their rooms and for the time being were out of harm's way. The Sea Devils brandished their arm blasters, no longer a passive form of data-collection but now weapons of death and destruction, laying waste to the Cyndasa who were clearly ill-equipped to fight back.

"It appears your plan has backfired spectacularly," said the Doctor. She adjusted the setting on her sonic screwdriver and aimed it at the approaching creatures. The Doctor's aim was perfect and the creatures screamed as their devices were destroyed, leaving the Sea Devils themselves unharmed. However, she knew that this would do little more than delay them. Angrily she grabbed the nurse's arm and led her away from the reception area, back into the corridor leading to the patients' rooms.

"First priority: we have to keep the patients safe! Second priority: find a plan to stop this mess you're responsible for!"

Jo was used to things happening with the Doctor around. She listened to the sound of the carnage outside the room and hoped... no, knew that the Doctor would be in the process of stopping it. Jo looked through the small window of Abby's room and saw the Sea Devils shambling towards the facility. She returned to the bed, held Abby tight and promised that the Doctor would protect them. But she could see that Abby was confused. The sounds and screams she was hearing were frightening her, but when Jo looked at her, she realised that Abby wasn't panicking, but was trying to process what was happening. Jo had to warn her they were in terrible danger.

"Abby, you think these creatures are your friends, but I've met them before. They are evil and dangerous. I am so sorry my angel but they have been using you; and all of the other patients here too." Jo could see that her words were reaching her friend. Abby knew that she wouldn't lie to her, she never had.

Then with a start, the girl drew away from Jo and stood up from the bed.

"Abby? What's wrong, what are you doing?"

Abby didn't answer. She ran over to the door and before Jo could stop her, she opened it.

In the corridor the Doctor was attempting to halt the advancing Sea Devils. "Get back inside! Now!" The Doctor commanded. Jo ran over to her friend and attempted to pull her back into the room, but Abby just stood and looked at the face of the nearest Sea Devil.

She spoke to the creature. "It's you... my friend. But why...?"

Jo could hear the confusion in her voice. Why was the Doctor attacking her friend and his companions? She saw Abby notice the injured members of staff lying at the feet of the Sea Devils, her friend and his companions had hurt these people, who had been kind and had helped her. The look of confusion became one of horror and she gave a loud scream of anguish.

To Jo's amazement the Sea Devil began to scream too. Abby's dark eyes burst with light which was mimicked by the glowing orbs on the sea creature's arms.

"Of course!" said the Doctor. "Psychic link. Abby's exposure to the creature's rays have formed a psychic link between her and the Sea Devil. A sort of circuit – and one we can use." Jo became aware that light was streaming from under the doors of the other patients' rooms. The devices held by each of the Sea Devils were glowing too. "Doctor, look!"

The Doctor spoke to Abby in a calm and commanding tone. "Abby, tell them to go. Tell them to return to the ocean and tell them to go back to sleep!" She gently clasped Abby's temples.

"It's OK, I'll help." The Doctor closed her eyes and muttered quietly to herself. "Oh, there we are – connected! Now, that's interesting; you lot are different, aren't you? A new batch. Not like the ones we met all those years ago. You've been asleep I see; and now you've woken up and fancy doing a bit of conquering. And you..." She turned briefly towards Abby's 'friend'. "The others were getting concerned, weren't they?" the Doctor chided the creature. "They saw weakness, didn't they? They noticed how close you were getting to this human. And that's why they brought forward the invasion. Fast tracked the carnage!"

Jo watched the Doctor's face screw up in concentration as she focussed her thoughts.

"Now Abby, if I can link you up with the other patients... Yes, there we are... All thinking the same thing now; linking your thoughts, all issuing the same commands: leave in peace; be safe; sleep."

A tear ran down Abby's cheek. She realised the danger that she and the others were in. Her eyes glowed brighter than ever. She was in communion with her friend and she stripped away all of his violent thoughts in much the same way he had helped with hers. She was making him realise that the Earth was not his for conquest. All at once a brilliant final burst of light filled the facility, draining all colour and sound as it dispersed. She knew that it had worked. She, her friend as well as all the other patients and Sea Devils were standing motionless. Then it ended. The human to creature circuit was broken and both species now finally understood the other. It was the Doctor who had commanded the Sea Devils to abandon their dreams of conquest; but she had used the human's compassion to do it kindly. After all, despite their murderous nature, Abby

and the patients considered these creatures to be friends.

Abby felt the Doctor gently release her hold on her. She remained motionless, opening her eyes.

'Her' Sea Devil stood in front of her. This time, it had been Abby's turn to be the calming influence during their union. It had taken a Time Lord's kaleidoscope mind to process their connection, and through that colourful topsy-turvy mindscape, a kind of mutual peace had been achieved.

The creature broke its gaze with Abby. With the last traces of the link still in her mind, she knew that it had one last journey to make. It needed the sense and security of the sea. It needed to feel better; to return to its sleep once again. The creature started its journey back to the shore, followed passively by its fellows.

Abby felt weak. The Doctor grabbed her as she sank to her knees and held her tight. The danger had passed. The creatures would not be coming back. The Doctor had re-wired their brains to stop them. It was a peaceful solution.

An eerie silence filled the facility as Nurse Green solemnly surveyed the destruction. Jo took Abby from the Doctor, cradling her in her arms. "I'll look after her," she said.

The Doctor still had work to do. She contacted UNIT, who arrived almost immediately and began caring for the other patients. Then she faced the Cyndasa nurse, sadly tending to her dead and wounded staff. The Doctor helped her but as she did so issued her with a warning.

"By order of the Shadow Proclamation, you are forbidden from returning to the Earth. This planet has protection; it always has and always will have," said the Doctor. Nurse Green, shorn of her human appearance, looked at the Doctor, her veins boiling through her semi-transparent skin with molten fury.

"Sanctimonious Time Lord. What makes you so different to us?"

"Kindness," The Doctor replied. "Protection without jeopardy. You would have happily sacrificed the patients. Your recklessness has resulted in the deaths of your fellow beings. Every life is important! You may be a nurse, but I'm a Doctor!"

Nurse Green fixed the Doctor with a chilling look. This would not be the last time their paths would cross. The Cyndasa gathered around their dead and wounded and touched the time devices on their wrists. A circle of blue light surrounded them and they vanished from view, back to their own time and place. The Doctor used her sonic to remove all of the facility's online presence. She would make certain Devils' Keep would be closed permanently.

The Doctor and Jo walked out of the retreat and breathed in the sea air, looking at the calm waves. "It's a weird thing Doctor, knowing that a secret race lives out there," Jo mused.

"Weird is a very good word Jo. I can assure you that they will be very closely monitored by both me and UNIT. They shouldn't cause any more trouble – at least not for a while."

Jo moved over and sat on a bench joining Abby who was watching the UNIT personnel beginning the work of boarding up Devils' Keep. The two women sat in silence for a moment, processing what had gone on. Abby was the first to speak. "The voices have

gone... for now, but I know deep down I still need help. I'll get it and carry on."

"With me at your side, darling girl," the older woman answered.

"You always were my real friend," smiled Abby, leaning her head against Jo's shoulder.

Jo helped Abby into the taxi and turned to the Doctor. She threw her arms around her.

"No point asking you to keep in touch," she smiled. "You'll just turn up again, when I least expect it. New clothes; new face, but always the same. Brave, kind and always, ALWAYS my Doctor!"

"One thing Jo..." said the Doctor, reaching into her coat and proffering a card. "UNIT; they need a new scientific advisor."

Jo took the card and smiled. "You know I never did pass that general science exam."

"You have heart, bravery, kindness and that amazing smile - so much to offer Jo. Be nice to see you back at your old job. Believe me, they could use the help!" The Doctor climbed into her TARDIS and looked back at Jo. "But don't worry, I've told them to keep the fire extinguishers locked away for your arrival." The Doctor smiled as she closed the Police Box door behind her.

Jo rolled her eyes and climbed into the back of the taxi to join Abby. As the car pulled away she turned back in time to see the TARDIS disappear from view. ▲

As she meandered along the path, Polly Jackson could hear whispers as the wind blew through the leaves of the surrounding trees. She walked over to the statue, and looked up into the face of the unknown sailor. She always came here when times were hard. She read the inscription on the attached plate and smiled. As she took in the information, she imagined him standing there next to her as he would have done years earlier, along with Jamie and her own lovely Ben. Dear Ben, she missed him so much. After he died, her friends had told her that it would get easier with the passage of time; but if anything his loss had become harder to bear as the years went by.

There was a sudden loud thunderclap overhead, which disrupted her thoughts momentarily. Polly laid a single flower down at the base of the statue and smiled at the memories of her old friend whom she had known from her days travelling.

Lost in her thoughts, it took her a moment to notice the whirring sound that seemed to grow stealthily from a whisper on the breeze. Polly looked around her, half expecting that familiar blue box to appear. She could see nothing. She felt sad and a little disappointed at her imagination getting the better of her, but she knew deep down that it was unlikely he would return.

"Boo!" called a voice, nearly causing Polly to jump out of her skin. Her first thought was that the shout had come from the statue, but the next thing she saw was a mop of brown curls and a face with an enormous grin of dazzling teeth and twinkling blue eyes, peering at her from around the monument. "Hello Polly. I think that perhaps you were half expecting me; but maybe not with this face."

WHISPERS OF HOPE

By Jenny Shirt

Polly stared at him and was lost for words at this stranger who knew her name. He walked around the statue and appeared on the path next to her. She gasped as he took hold of her hands and turned her round pointing towards a space covered by trees behind them. Then she saw it, that glorious blue box; and it dawned on her that this was what she had been thinking about. Polly was completely taken aback that her thoughts could become this reality. She took the stranger's hands and looked him straight in the face, "Doctor, is that really you?" She was joyous and wanted to dance with him but she nearly tripped over his extra long scarf and just stared in awe of him.

The Doctor smiled at her and put his hands on her shoulders. "Listen, Polly. I need you to listen."

"What is it Doctor? What can I do to help?" She was about to say more but he shushed her suddenly and sat her down on the nearest park bench.

"Polly, they're here. Listen hard"

Polly did as she was asked. Immediately she could hear them, how could she have missed the whispers? They filled the air, travelling along on the mild, gentle breeze. Then for an instant she lost them again. There was a moment of uncertainty; she desperately strained her ears to listen and there they were. They were definitely there and she instantly thought she heard his name.

She cried out "Yes, he's here? Did you just call? Who are you and what do you want?"

She looked curiously towards where she thought the whispers were coming from, but as she did, they seemed at once to be coming from a different direction altogether. Polly was now certain that she could hear



something being whispered from behind her. She tried to make out words, but was both perplexed and rather bothered that she just couldn't work it out. Perhaps it was just her imagination, or even the cheese on toast she had eaten at the local coffee shop. But no, she was certain that the voices were very real, and they were doing their best to communicate with her.

The Doctor smiled reassuringly at her, and she instantly began to feel calmer in his presence.

He seemed to ponder a little then took Polly's hand. Drawing her up from the park bench, he led her over to the TARDIS, without a word being said between them and took her inside.

Polly was filled with happiness to be back inside that beautiful blue box. "Doctor, I don't understand, who are they? Who's whispering? Why are they calling your name?"

Gazing intently at a small screen just in front of him, the Doctor keyed in a few numbers and a sudden look of realisation appeared on his face. "It's your own voice Polly. It's the TARDIS. She knew that you needed a friend. Ha-ha! The TARDIS knew that. So, she set her own co-ordinates for this exact place and time. It was your own voice calling out for a friend to appear - and here I am. You're never alone. Remember that Polly, the TARDIS brings hope to you and to everyone.

Polly looked at his kind eyes and she felt reassured this was indeed her old friend from years ago. His face was different but he would always be her time travelling friend.

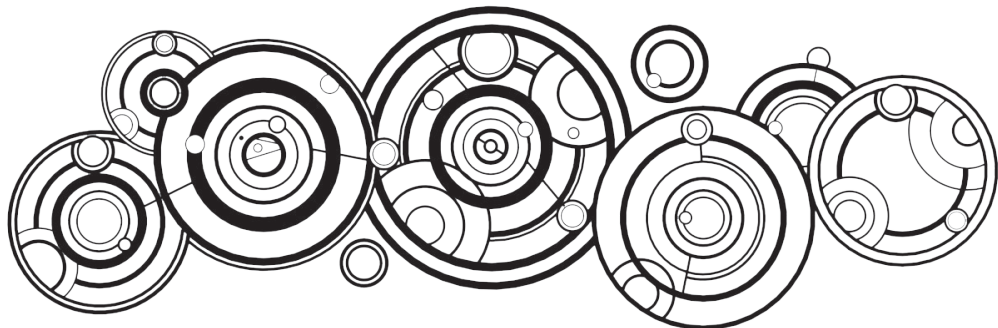
"So Polly, one more adventure then?" And he beamed at her broadly as he set the co-ordinates.

Her heart sang like it hadn't for years, not since Ben died. Inside she felt like a child again, her memory had brought back all those wonderful times she had spent travelling alongside the Doctor; and those memories had been so strong that they had become reality, and had brought the TARDIS to her. She would never forget her time with her Doctor, and she knew she could never really feel lonely.

Polly knew that when times are tough, we all think of those closest to us and that those happy memories can come back if you really want them to. Friends and memories are so important and Polly treasured them.

The sad and difficult times would pass soon and like her, everyone, would enjoy the company of friends and make new happy memories once more.

She gave the Doctor a silent happy smile and that feeling of warmth and love returned to her as she travelled on to her next adventure with her old friend. ▲



THE COMING OF THE DUAT

By Robert John Cumming

The metallic wheezing ceased as the TARDIS landed on a vast wasteland where a cold breeze blossomed from the direction of the planet's two radiant red suns.

The doors opened and the Doctor came out, his costume of bright colours looking like that of a very sad clown who had just failed an audition. He looked around, with a suspicious look. He was somewhat sick of fighting monsters, especially after witnessing the sickening horrors on Necros. All he wanted now was an easy job, like saving some doomed planet from the Terrible Zodin's incompetent brother, the Embarrassing Zardon. His companion, a young girl named Peri, Brown followed.

"So then, Doctor," said Peri, her accent betraying her American origin, "Where are we this time?"

"We, my dear, are on Eliseo Avok Ten, roughly translated it means 'The Eye of the Devil', a planet abandoned by its people centuries ago."

"Abandoned? Why?"

"Why? Why? Look around. This is a wasteland - the result of a succession of devastating wars"

"Wars? What Wars?"

The Doctor sighed and turned to face her, irritated by the question.

"Oh Peri, take your pick," he exclaimed, arms stretched out. "The people of this planet were at war constantly, against the Macra; against the Existential Lamp Makers of Algarson; against the Banzardreen Horde; or against the Metronorks of Mela Tor Six. Does it matter which war? All wars are caused by idiots who think they are doing the right thing

before they realize how pointless and stupid the fighting was and sign a peace treaty."

"Okay Doctor, no need to be aggressive about it," Peri replied, returning his irritation in equal measure.

"No need to get aggressive! My dear, I am the Doctor, if I don't get aggressive about war then nobody will."

The discussion was ended abruptly by the sudden roar of engines in the sky. Looking up, the Doctor and Peri watched the giant spaceship shaped like the head of a cobra as it made ready to land. The Doctor looked on curiously, wondering who this could possibly be and what it might mean for them.

"Here we go again," gulped Peri. Although she was trying to hide it, the Doctor could hear the fear in her voice.

"You two, get here now!" a voice shouted from behind them. "Come on, you fools. Don't just stand there!"

Turning they saw a human figure. He was battle-scarred and carried what appeared to be a cellular disruptor. "Quickly, get over here!"

The Doctor and Peri ran over and stood behind the man, kneeling slightly to stay out of sight. Their new companion had clearly not expected to find them there.

"What are you doing, are you morons?"

"No Sir, we are most certainly not morons. I am the Doctor and this is my companion Peri. We are travellers."

"Travellers? What sort of traveller chooses to visit The Eye of the Devil? This is hardly a pleasure planet!"

Peri suppressed a giggle. The Doctor remained silent; he was looking at the ships, trying to remember where he had seen them before, but it wouldn't come to him. He shook his head in irritation.

"You said you were a doctor?" the man asked.

"Not a doctor, *the* Doctor," answered the Doctor in irritation. His tone became immediately more concerned. "Why? Do you need a Doctor?"

"It's my men, some of them are injured."

Peri remembered what the Doctor had told her about the planet. "I thought you said all of the people had left this planet, centuries ago?"

"Yes, they did. How is this possible? Who is at war?"

"War?" the man almost spat the word out, "This is no war. This is a rebellion."

Before the Doctor could ask another question, he became aware that the ship had completed its landing. The group watched as the doors slid open without a sound and a line of reptilian figures emerged. They had hooded heads like those of a cobra and the Doctor could just make out three green fingers on each of their hands. They were each wearing black and dark sap green uniforms and carrying an energy weapon of some sort. They lined up and stood ready for action.

"Doctor," Peri asked, "who or what are they?"

"They, Peri, are the Selacavene, which means that we are in deep, deep trouble," the Doctor replied grimly.

"You two had better come with me." The man waved for the Doctor and Peri to follow and set off immediately across the desert, away from the spaceship, taking care to stay low and out of sight. With a glance to each other, the travellers followed.

On board the Selacavene mother ship, Commander Setotesh of the Fifth Selacavene Horde, Vanquisher of the Melkosh Gestalt, sat watching the screen as his second in command, Captain Taratesh, prepared the men for the siege. He smiled to himself in satisfaction. At last he would earn his new epitaph - Destroyer of the Human Scourge. He chuckled softly, a slow hiss of serpentine venom crackling through the darkness.

"Taratesh," he declared with a dim hiss, "Prepare the men for total assault on the human plague, I will stay here, in preparation for the use of the Duat."

"Yes Commander," replied the younger Selacavene with a hiss. Setotesh could hear the smile in her voice as she uttered the words. "Selacavene, prepare weapons, total temporal energy drain."

The warriors did as their captain commanded and marched in formation into the wasteland of Eliseo Avok Ten, into the Eye of the Devil itself. Commander Setotesh laughed with glee, knowing that death would be honoured.

As they walked, the man introduced himself as Jackal and explained that he was a member of the human resistance and one of the last surviving remnants of humanity in the Apollonetian Nebula. He told them how the Selacavene, the famous Conqueror's of the Skardesh Constellation had arrived without warning and taken over colony planet after colony planet; enslaving millions and bringing them to this wasteland, Eliseo Avok Ten, The Eye of the Devil.

They had not gone far before Peri's feet began to ache. Even though, during her time in California, she had taken part in a number of field trips into the desert, she had never before attempted to cover rough terrain in purple heels. She noticed that the uneven ground and the heat didn't seem to bother the Doctor. He hadn't even taken off his ridiculous multi-coloured clown jacket.

Soon, Peri noticed that they seemed to be heading towards a building – or something

– she couldn't really make out what it was. A structure had appeared in the haze of the distance. As they came closer, she could see that it was some sort of camp. A tall barbed wire fence surrounded a collection of rough shacks and tents. A few human forms could be seen among these structures, some standing, watching them silently, others sitting or lying in the dust. They were all, without exception, painfully thin – malnourished. Some bore deep scars, some were wounded and crippled. Peri became aware of a foul stench that filled the air - then saw the cause of it. There, in the shadows behind the shacks, were piles of burning bodies, the bodies of the dead.

Peri could see the Doctor's look of disgust. Knowing that she was on the verge of crying herself, she took a deep breath and shook herself. She managed to keep her composure – but only just.

"What happened?" she asked Jackal quietly, although she already knew the answer.

"The Selacavene happened," answered Jackal with a mournful anger. "The Selacavene brought us here to die, we decided to fight back and we have been fighting ever since."

"This is monstrous!" the Doctor declared angrily, "How have you managed to survive?"

"We have survived because we had to." The voice came from behind them. Peri and the Doctor turned to see a woman with blonde hair approaching. Peri would have put her in her mid twenties, although her voice was that of a much older woman. She was dressed in a leather jumpsuit.

"Doctor, Peri, this is Captain Sen," introduced Jackal.

"Captain?" the Doctor queried, "You're a little young to be a Captain, if you don't mind me saying?"

"Doctor, this is war. All of our former leaders are dead, somebody had to take charge - and so I did."

They were interrupted by a long, drawn-out hiss. Sen and Jackal turned and readied their weapons clearly knowing what was to come. The Doctor and Peri watched as everyone who could stand and carry a gun, rushed over to the gate and prepared to mount a defence.

Peri had no need to ask what was happening, but the Doctor told her in any case.

"I do believe that the Selacavene are coming." The Doctor's words carried more than a hint of intolerant dread aimed at the warmongers who were marching towards them. "This might just be the end Peri."

"The end? No, no, no! Don't say that. You have to do something" Peri almost pleaded.

The Doctor turned and watched the Selacavene warriors as they marched towards them, weapons ablaze. She saw him search his pockets but find nothing of use. She heard him sigh, beneath his breath, "If only I had made a new sonic screwdriver." She had no idea what he was talking about, was he proposing to build some sort of wardrobe? The thought almost made her smile for an instant. Then with relief she saw that he had noticed something to his left. "Plasma cannon," he muttered with a smile. He turned to her, "Peri, it's a plasma cannon. Now that might be just what we are looking for."

Rushing over to it, he examined the cannon. Her hope faded, as she heard him mutter, "Oh no, it's broken." But he wasn't giving up and her spirits rose again as he climbed inside and sat at the controls. He began twiddling with the various dials and knobs, tapping and waiting impatiently, "Come on... come on..."

"Doctor," she shouted. The Selacavene were getting close and preparing to fire. "They'll kill us. Do something!"

"I am doing something Peri, I can assure you that staying alive is right at the top of my priorities," he yelled back. "Ah-ha!" he exclaimed and began turning the small

circular rotor furiously and smiling with glee. She knew he had fixed the cannon and was even now aiming it at the Selacavene.

At that moment Sen turned and flashed a look of alarm at the Doctor. "What are you doing?" she shouted.

"Saving our lives, I thought you'd want that just as much as I do. Now duck!"

"Everyone, get down," Sen shouted and she, Peri and the ragtag bunch of soldiers all hit the ground.

Peri felt the blast first then heard the boom. She looked up to see the Doctor peering through the dust to examine the effects of his action. He turned and smiled at her, "Just a warning shot Peri. It hit the ground just in front of that horde, made all the positive ions diminish in equal numbers to negative ions and created a whopping great hole."

As the humans got to their feet, and the dust cloud cleared, Peri could see that the Doctor had achieved his objective. The Selacavene's advance had been halted. She knew in her heart though, that the danger was far from over. She became aware of a low rumble and as she watched, in the distance, the Selacavene spaceship rose menacingly into the air and began to fly towards them.

"Oh dear," said the Doctor as with Peri, Jackal and Sen at his side, he watched the enormous cobra-shaped ship come to a halt overhead. Many of the humans held their positions, either determined to resist, submitting to the inevitable or just transfixed with fear; others ran for what little cover they could find. Slowly and with hardly a sound, the bow of the ship opened slowly.

"It is their population killer weapon. They call it the Duat," Sen said. Peri could hear the tremor in her voice. "They're going to wipe everyone out."

As Peri watched, a black mass of energy, accompanied by a low booming noise, seemed to emerge from the open bow. She

considered running, but where could she go? All she could do was to stay by the Doctor and hope that somehow he would be able to save them.

He seemed strangely calm, almost detached; although she could see from the intense way he was watching the energy mass that he had never seen anything like it before.

"Sen, do you know what is powering that thing?" he asked, sounding more curious than concerned.

"We are," Sen declared, "It's fuelled by dead humans".

The Doctor looked at her in horror. The energy cloud began to swirl around as if it were looking for its first victims, then it struck, bolts of energy hitting the injured and the crippled, turning them to dust.

"Come on, take cover." Peri felt the Doctor grab her hand and together they began to run, Sen and Jackal alongside them. They managed to avoid the energy bolts raining down all around them; reached the comparative shelter of a hut and ducked for cover. A young boy ran towards them, desperate to escape the deadly storm. Peri reached out for him and shouted, "Here, quickly," but then screamed as mere inches from safety a bolt hit the boy full in the chest. She watched as his flesh and bone melted away in front of her eyes. He was torn to pieces in a matter of seconds, leaving nothing but ashes. With a shriek she realised that some of those ashes had come to rest on her outstretched hands. Almost manically, she began wiping them against her clothes, trying to expunge all traces of the horror.

After no more than two or three minutes, Peri realised that she could no longer hear the roar of the energy bolts. She looked over to the Doctor and saw that he was already on his feet, surveying the scene of devastation. The screaming had ended and the air was filled with low cries and moans, as the uninjured took care of those less fortunate Sen and Jackal went to offer what

help they could. The Doctor's eyes were on the Selacavene ground forces, still prevented from approaching the camp by his earlier actions. Without taking his eyes from them, he spoke quietly. "You know Peri, for just one brief moment, the thought occurred to me that it would have been better if I had just killed them. But no, that wouldn't have achieved anything. I'm not going to play their game."

She said nothing.

He set off towards the camp gate, "Peri, you stay here, with Sen and Jackal. I think it's about time that I had a little chat with the leader of these Selacavene."

With a start she realised what he was doing and ran after him. "Oh no you don't Doctor, you're not leaving me." She looked over to where Sen and Jackal were tending the wounded. "They don't need me. I'm coming with you."

He gave her a concerned look and paused before answering with a kindly smile. "Very well, come on then. But don't get in my way."

With a silent gulp she set off behind him, the realisation that once again she had volunteered to follow this infuriating man towards almost certain death, sinking in.

"You, stop where you are. How dare you approach the Selacavene?"

Peri watched as one of the reptile creatures whose gold braid and medals picked it out as a senior officer called out to them. Instinctively she obeyed the command, but the Doctor continued for a few steps more, making the point that he was stopping as and when he was ready to. The officer turned to her troops, speaking as much for their benefit as for the Doctor and Peri's.

"The human scourge know that they have failed in their attempt to stop our crusade. And now they send this pathetic clown to try and talk peace with us. How dare you insult

me, Taratesh, Captain of the Fifth Selacavene Horde, by coming to beg for mercy!"

The Doctor shook his head, as if in disappointment. "Captain, is it? Well, Taratesh, (was that your name?), I can assure you that I haven't come here to speak to a mere captain. Now, I assume your leader is in that big spaceship up there. Take me to him and quick about it."

Peri gasped at the Doctor's audacity but her heart was chilled by Taratesh's slow, venomous laughter that seemed to fill the air with a darkening black cloud of pure poison. "Do you seriously believe that a human could ever be allowed to defile the presence of a Selacavene commander?" He turned to the nearest trooper, "You, give me your weapon; I will kill him myself." She took the weapon and trained it on the Doctor.

The Doctor didn't flinch. "Oh, I see your mistake; that explains it. I'm no human. Really, do I look like a human? I, Madam, I am the Doctor, President Elect of the High Council of Time Lords, Keeper of the Legacy of Rassilon, Defender of the Laws of Time, Protector of Gallifrey, Vice-President of the Decadent Angels and Deposed King of Belgium – or perhaps I dreamt that last one – anyway, it doesn't matter. Do you think your leader might just want to see me now?"

Taratesh paused. Peri saw her talk into a communicator, then without a word, lowered the weapon and tapped a device attached to her wrist. She noticed that the Doctor, a satisfied look on his face, was fading into nothingness. Then she felt a feeling of wooziness in her stomach and before she knew what was happening, she, the Doctor and Taratesh were standing in an expansive room, full of banks of instruments and important looking lizard creatures. From the view through the large window, she could tell that they were in the spaceship, above the surface of Eliseo Avok Ten "Wow!" Peri exclaimed, "Talk about beam me up Scotty!"

Peri was very aware that Taratesh still had a weapon trained very much on the Doctor.

She – Peri was pretty sure that the creature was female – appeared very wary of them both. Taratesh spoke. “Commander, would you like me to kill the humans now, or will you take that pleasure yourself?”

A large, ornately decorated lizard swivelled slowly around in an equally ornately decorated throne-like chair and faced them. The air of authority he exuded left Peri in no doubt that this was the commander of the Selacavene. At first he said nothing, waving to Taratesh to stay silent as he appraised the new arrivals; then he spoke in a deep, low tone. “Time Lord? Lord President? You don’t look like a lord president – more like some sort of children’s entertainer.”

There was a ripple of laughter from the command deck crew. The Doctor showed no sign of being intimidated. “Oh really? Would you say so? Well, what exactly would you expect a lord president to look like? I can assure you that I am the Doctor and I am indeed Lord President Elect of the Time Lords. I assume I am talking to the leader of this rabble? Now, I need your assurances that you will stop your attacks on these humans and...”

He was interrupted by a bellow of laughter from the Commander.

Taratesh raised her weapon again, “Commander Setotesh, shall I...”

“Oh, be quiet Taratesh. All in good time. So, you are a Time Lord? Where is your ship?”

“My ship is quite safe, thank you very much - and don’t bother trying to get into it, it would be impenetrable to technology far in advance of yours.” The Doctor replied with an air of superiority, as he walked around the Commander’s chair, lifting Taratesh’s gun up as it blocked his path. “I assume that you have heard of my people?”

“Oh, I’ve heard of the Time Lords. I met one once on a planet I conquered. I roasted him over an open fire and feed him to the slaves. They say the Time Lords are immortal, can

come back after death. I didn’t see much regeneration with that one, as my assistant boot polisher was chewing on one of his leg bones. Yes, I’ve heard of them; vain, pointless observers; the curators of the Galaxy. Well, I hope you’ve been observing well Time Lord, so you will understand who it is who will end your pathetic existence.” He paused. The Doctor said nothing. Neither the Commander nor the Time Lord broke their gaze. Setotesh continued, “But I can see that you are a little different. Lord President, you might be, but a rebel also – a renegade.”

Peri could see that all eyes were on the Doctor and the Commander. She seized her chance to edge backwards into the shadows and found refuge in an alcove from where she could observe the unfolding drama, without being seen.

The Doctor replied, “A renegade? Yes, well, you’ve already noticed that my dress sense is more developed than that of most Gallifreyans – at least that is what my companion tells me.”

“Ah yes,” Setotesh smiled, “The human. He looked to where Peri had been standing. Where is she? Taratesh, find the girl.”

Peri’s heart sank. How could the Doctor have been so thoughtless as to draw attention to her? Then she realised what he had done. While the Selacavene were looking for her and their attention was away from him, he was taking the opportunity to fiddle surreptitiously with some knobs and buttons on one of the banks of controls that lined the command deck. She stepped out into the light. “Oh, sorry. Were you looking for me? I’m still here.” Taratesh motioned for both her and the Doctor to stand together, where they could be seen and easily covered by her weapon.

Setotesh pushed a button on the arm of his chair and a large screen came to life, showing the scene below in the human camp. Peri could make out Jackal and Sen, rallying the survivors of the attack.

“Time Lord, in accordance with your high rank, I will accord you a privilege. You shall watch with me as the human scourge is eliminated forever – and then you and your companion will be destroyed.”

““The human scourge...? Scourge...? SCOURGE! Are you serious? You, the Selacavene are the only scourge here. You have conquered galaxies, enslaved millions and killed billions. Killing is all you are good for. You are a typical bully boy. I’ve seen people like you again and again, all over the Galaxy. Kill and kill again all for the purpose of maintaining the purity of the race. I’ve seen despicable behaviour from some humans, but you know you’re not very different from them.”

Taratesh was trembling with rage. She raised her three fingered hand to strike the Doctor.

He continued mockingly, “Yes, you are almost human.”

The blow knocked the Doctor to the floor, but unhurt he rose back to his feet. Taratesh looked to her leader who gave a slight nod. From the back of her body, a long, gangly snake like tail protruded through her uniform and began to move towards the Doctor. “Peri,” he shouted, “Stand back; it’s poisoned.” Enjoying the moment of her triumph before it had arrived, Taratesh was caught unawares as the Doctor leaped over the tail and kicked the weapon from her hands, leaping to catch it and firing point blank, at the tail, reducing it to a small, blackened stump. Taratesh screamed, her tail worthless to her now and her entire body recoiling in horror from this mutilation. The Doctor threw the weapon to Peri, who caught it neatly, realising at once that she would have no idea how to fire it if she needed to; and picking up the severed tail, held it threateningly under the chin of Setotesh.

The commander spoke calmly, but Peri could see that he was nervous. “You cannot hurt me with a severed tail, Time Lord. The moment you cut it, the sting became inactive.”

“Oh Commander Setotesh, for a snake, you are a bad bluffer,” the Doctor declared. “I can smell the poison. There’s certainly enough for one kill, I don’t make a habit of this but I will kill you if you do not do what I say.”

Setotesh was beaten. “What do you want?”

“Withdraw your army, leave this place and never come back, or I will make an example of you.” From his tone, Peri could see that the Doctor would carry out his threat. Setotesh could be in no doubt.

The Commander remained still for a minute, clearly considering his options. It soon became clear that he didn’t have any. Reluctantly he pressed the button on his chair and spoke into the communicator, giving the order for his ground forces to withdraw. The Doctor and Peri watched the screen as they teleported back to the ship.

The Doctor threw the tail down in disgust, Taratesh retrieved her severed appendage and began nursing it, “Now,” demanded the Doctor, Peri and I will require teleporting back to the surface, before you leave this planet for good.”

Taratesh looked to her commander for confirmation. Setotesh gave a sly smile and nodded. Peri felt herself begin to fade into nothingness as the teleport was activated. As she left the Selacavene command deck, she heard the words of the Commander, “Yes, you can return to the surface Doctor, where you will die along with the humans. Did you forget that I still have the Duat? That’s all I need. Goodbye Time Lord.”

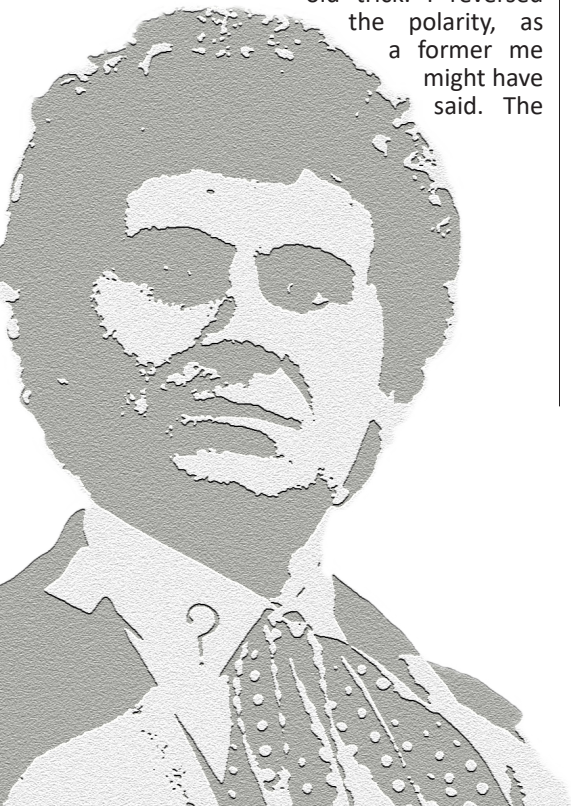
Peri and the Doctor reappeared in the human camp. She looked immediately up to the ship, alerted by the sound of the Duat, preparing to strike again. “Doctor, look!”

“Yes Peri, come on. He called over to Sen, Jackal and the other humans. “Everyone quick, take cover. There’s going to be some fireworks.”

From the same hut where they had sheltered from the Duat's first attack, Peri and the Doctor saw the energy cloud begin to emerge from out of the ship's bow. But something was different. As Peri watched, the black cloud began to change colour, glowing with a vivid orange. Then more quickly than her eye could follow, it seemed to be sucked back into the ship. Almost immediately the Selacavene mother-ship erupted in a deafening explosion. The cheers from the humans were almost as loud.

Peri looked at her friend in surprise and admiration. How did he always manage to come out on top like this? "What happened Doctor, what did you do?"

"Well, I rather thought that Setotesh wouldn't give up that easily and would try to use that nasty little weapon of his; so while you, very cleverly, were distracting them, I was able to get to the Duat control panel. I used an old trick. I reversed the polarity, as a former me might have said. The



Selacavene ship overflowed with the energy of the human dead. Humanity defeated them, even in death. It's all quite fitting really."

The Doctor and Peri said their goodbyes to Jackal and Sen and the other humans and walked out of the camp. Before leaving, the Doctor had repaired a damaged Selacavene prison ship that had been abandoned in the desert, so the humans would be able to leave Eliseo Avok Ten and return home, wherever home was now; or go wherever they wanted.

As they approached the TARDIS, the Doctor took out his key and intoned to no one in particular,

"If we must die-let it not be like hogs,

Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,

While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,

Making their mock at our accursed lot."

"That was quite fitting Doctor," Peri said. "Who is it by?"

"By whom, Peri please, mind your grammar." He smiled. "It's by Claude McKay. Fitting? Yes, just, perhaps, but Peri, what I had to do shouldn't have been necessary. I have seen death and indeed caused it many times, too many times to count. Maybe it's time... No, no, I must carry on." He sighed wistfully, turned the key and entered the TARDIS, Peri following warily. ▲

IT'S ALL IN THE EYES

By Andrew D. Smith

"Doctor Peterson, please come in."

The Master smiled, and gestured towards the rather luxurious Chesterfield incongruously huddled in the far corner of his Cell. "Welcome to my ever so humble abode. Make yourself comfortable."

Doctor Janice Peterson simply smiled; the Master's reputation for charm was well documented, and, seemingly, also well founded. Straightening her jacket, she turned to the guard posted at the entrance and, with an almost imperceptible nod, signalled that he should leave them alone. Acknowledging the silent order, the guard returned to the antechamber beyond the confines of the cell, and carefully ensured that the heavy door was kept slightly ajar.

"The decor is a little eclectic for my tastes," the Master continued, "but functional all the same".

"I must admit, this isn't quite what I was expecting", she coyly remarked, as she walked towards the rather large, yet plain, oak desk, set in the centre of the room. As she sat on one of the accompanying chairs, she noted the tangled array of technical schematics randomly discarded across the table, masking the scientific scrawl carved ineloquently upon the surface like a poorly conceived tattoo.

"Do excuse the mess, my dear, but your government insists that I must 'sing for my supper'. I am permitted supervised access to writing implements; primitive forms of communication, but occasionally," he remarked, gesturing towards the vandalised table top, "a useful tool to make my mark. Permanently."

"It seems rather luxurious for a prisoner," she stated with a wry, almost disarming, grin on her face.

"Oh, come now Doctor Peterson, I think we both know that I am not your typical inmate."

Peterson carefully placed the manila file that she had been carrying, down upon the only available space on the cluttered table top. Without averting her gaze from her unusual subject, she retrieved an ornate gold ballpoint from her jacket pocket and used the tip to flick the file open to the classified documents within.

"On that, we can at least agree," she replied, casually skimming through the reports.

"Would you like to start with my childhood?" the Master snorted in an obvious attempt to attract her attention.

Doctor Peterson simply paused, and looked up. "Are you mocking me?"

"Good Heavens no," the Master replied, "You must forgive me, my dear, I find Earth psychiatry a rather primitive science. I am considered something of an expert in galactic matters of the mind. I mean no offence."

"Somehow," Peterson mused, "I seriously doubt that. If we are so primitive, why agree to this session, at all?"

The Master simply smiled as he flicked over the schematics in a rather lacklustre attempt to tidy the makeshift work space, "Honestly? Boredom. As entertaining as the Guards can be, the military mind is somewhat dulled and uninspiring. Your government expects cooperation. In return for my specialist knowledge, I require certain, distractions."

"The new international satellite array?" she replied, peering over her file at the explosion of documents beneath. "I had heard that there were stumbling blocks..."

"Ah, the Master continued with renewed vigour, "the so-called 'Archangel' project? My, you are remarkably well informed, for a simple psychiatrist."

Peterson casually tapped the file on the desk with her ballpoint "You assume I am just a psychiatrist. I am graced with full alpha clearance on all current UNIT activities. Psychiatry is simply one of my many doctorates."

"I never make assumptions, Doctor Peterson," the Master continued, as he casually crossed over to a rather insignificant drinks cabinet, crouched timidly in the far corner of the cell. "You possess a highly sensitive document, no doubt detailing my extra-terrestrial origin, and you have unrestricted access to a highly secure, and rather classified, military detention facility. You would not have been allowed within a mile of this island, let alone to gain access to a room filled with top secret military schematics, without full alpha clearance."

Was that a trace of a smile on her face, he mused? Intriguing.

"Drink?" the Master offered, gesturing towards the fully stocked cabinet.

"A little early for me," Peterson replied.

"Time is relative, my dear, and it's never too early for camomile," the Master stated as he respectfully poured the tea from the steaming pot that had been hidden from view, into the refined china cup placed strategically next to it. As he continued to stir the aromatic liquid, he managed a casual glance towards the open cell door. Where were all the guards? Could they really be that naive?

"The guards are nearby, "Peterson interjected, as if sensing the Master's heightened curiosity. "You requested privacy. Like any other patient, I consider our sessions completely confidential."

"I am not a patient. I am a prisoner," the Master hastily retorted.

"A rather unique prisoner," Peterson interrupted, head bowed, scribbling notes on several pages of the opened document... "Your own personal prison, a sole inmate with countless rooms and privileges".

"Befitting my status; a sole inmate without a soul. You should write that down," the Master gestured towards the open file.

She had stopped scribbling as their eyes met. Another smile too? Or was it something else?

"I see myself as a prisoner of war," he continued unfazed, taking a long sip of tea for rather dramatic effect.

"An interesting point of view."

"Humanity on the one side, my intellect on the other."

She snorted. The arrogance of the man was positively Herculean. But he was clearly trying to engage; the first tentative steps towards a true dialogue, perhaps? As if confirming this observation, he simply smiled again and sat down in the chair directly opposite. His dark countenance seemed solely fixated on her now, and she almost shuddered, as if realising she had unwittingly been exposed to a concealed predator.

He felt the shift in balance too. Was that unease he could see in those deep-set, world weary eyes? This was easier than he had imagined. And yet...? There was something else, wasn't there? What was it? A slight hesitancy? Something was amiss, He could feel it. He could sense it. Her eyes seemed to flicker back to the schematics, only to return a moment later to the now defunct security camera in the corner of the cell. It was almost as if she needed constant reassurance that they were truly alone. And the pen? Doctor Peterson was grasping and rolling it with irritating, and almost hypnotic, regularity, as if comforted by the sensation, like an infant with a well worn blanket; her thumb gently pressing, and depressing, the top of the marker. But never pushing the button all the way down. Odd?

"You seem somewhat distracted my dear?" the Master continued, taking yet another long sip of tea.

"Not at all."

"You know," the Master remarked, changing the subject, "of all the prominent psychiatrists on this dreary little planet, they chose to send you? Why?"

"I'm sorry?"

"I am not one to boast, but I'd like to think I'd be considered a celebrity in the psychiatric field. The chance to interview an alien intelligence? Surely, the intellectual elite would be scrabbling around for their pound of cerebral flesh? So why you, my dear?"

Peterson gazed down at the pen, fixated by the single button at the top. "I guess I was just lucky."

There was the nervousness again. Subtle. Concealed, but the eyes flickered momentarily to that blasted pen. And the guards? From where he was sitting, there was no sign of movement from the antechamber. No shadows. Could this be a chance? He would only need one of these primitives to succumb, just one to influence and manipulate.

"Oh, I think I am the lucky one", the Master mused, as the sly, sardonic smile returned to his lips.

Peterson looked up, with a slightly puzzled expression.

"And I am also the Master," he emphasised, his gaze now locked on to hers.

"I'm, I ...I'm sorry?" Dr Peterson replied, almost whispering.

The Master leaned closer. He could see her pupils had widened significantly, the low sodium lights reflecting wildly within the dark mass.

"I am the Master," he continued, emphasising each word carefully, "and you will obey me."

He watched Dr Peterson freeze. He could sense the familiar slowing of her heartbeat. These humans, so frail, so very predictable. It was almost too easy.

CLICK

What was that? The Master sat back, startled; Peterson mirrored the move as she depressed the top of the ballpoint once more.

CLICK

At least 3 guards had entered the room to his left; swift, unnervingly silent, with their side arms pointed directly at his torso; summoned by a simple signal. He could also hear the familiar, shallow, buzzing of the surveillance camera behind him, activated by the first click of the pen, no doubt. Clever. How had he missed that?

"I must thank you for your co-operation," Peterson stated, calmly closing the file and depositing the offending ballpoint deep within her jacket pocket.

"We needed to 'field test' this unique and, given the circumstances, rather useful innovation," she continued. With a fleeting, almost balletic motion, Peterson swiped her fingers deftly across her right eye, removing the transparent contact lens from the surface of her eyeball, presenting the optical enhancement for closer inspection, with an almost reverential delight. "Remarkable device; the design of this lens is deceptively simple: a reflective, reverse stimulation of the optic nerve to prevent hypnotic manipulation."

"Truly remarkable," the Master agreed, nodding slowly.

"I must thank you, the results have been extremely positive. Once I return to Central Command I will approve mass production for all the guards at this facility."

"A sensible precaution," the Master sneered, as he drained the remaining tea from his cup.

"It's been," Peterson replied, considering her response with an almost audible pause, "an education."

"On that, we can at least agree, Doctor Peterson."

Peterson removed the remaining contact lens from her eye, and placed both of the optical devices in a metallic box that had been handed to her by one of the guards, who quickly retrieved the container with the reverence of a subjugated acolyte, scurrying out of the cell as deftly as he had arrived.

With a respectful nod of the head, Doctor Janice Peterson stood up, turned, and with an air of natural defiance, left the room.

The Master closed his eyes as the cell door slammed shut, and sat as perfectly still as he could muster, suppressing the insurmountable urge to hurl the china cup at the closed door. No, he must contain the rage. He must not lose control. He must not exhibit emotion. This was a simple set back. He must remain pragmatic; focus, and accelerate his plans.

The new governor was due to dock at the island within the next couple of days. More than enough time to procure what was required and secure his escape from this wretched facility.

The Master slowly opened his eyes, and gazed upon the 'Archangel Satellite' plans randomly discarded across the desk. So, his captors required an answer? He would give them more than an answer; he would give them salvation.

His smile returned once more.

"The primitive fools," he mused, quietly, "they think their simple technology can thwart my abilities? I will use their own eyes to enslave them."

His dark eyes narrowed, focusing his attention on the first tea stained blueprint to hand. "Your spy satellites: your 'Archangel'; your final destruction!"

"I am the MASTER, and you will ALL obey me!" ▲



REQUIEM AMONG THE STARS PART 4

By Nathan Mullins
and Cameron Holt

The TARDIS wasn't itself. The systems were playing up. The temperature had risen. The heat was unbearable. Graham dabbed at the sweat from his brow with a handkerchief from his pocket. It was all too much to take.

"Doc," he began, "what do we know about how this Osiran operates? It might just be me, but it seems like the TARDIS is reacting to our new friend. And when we were outside, I noticed a change in the atmosphere."

"I think you're onto something," the Doctor replied. "Perhaps her life force has been made stronger by whatever's reaching out to her; and her burning desire to find it has given everything in the vicinity a boost, a reinvigoration, including the systems aboard the TARDIS, and even, quite possibly, Sirius IV." She switched on the monitor at the control console. What she saw amazed her.

Sirius IV had undergone an incredible transformation. The sandy plains had vanished from the surface, replaced with an abundance of plant life, of all varieties, which had sprung from the soil. These plants had undergone their pollination phase and new life had quickly emerged, spreading far and wide. The speed at which the planet was terraforming was unbelievable.

The Doctor could see that weather was changing at every second. It was unpredictable, like the actions of the Osiran responsible. Rain fell from the skies at an astonishing rate. The plants drained their supply. Animals drank from the banks of rivers, now flowing again for the first time in too long a period of decline. Clear skies became dark and brooding, but only for mere moments that brought with them

uncertainty of the planet's true fate. Then the sun emerged triumphant and all was well; for the time being. Trees soared high into the skies. Branches grew outwards, interacting with their neighbours, as if they were greeting them. Birds fell from the clouds and made nests in the branches, squawking with glee and fascination. Wild animals roamed the land. Not since before the first human settlements had animals walked the surface.

"You're quite right Graham," said the Doctor grimly. "It's the Osiran who has done this. She had re-made Sirius IV. She could easily decide to destroy it. It's within her power."

"That's mad," exclaimed Ryan. "How'd you know, Grandad?"

"Didn't you see those dark clouds?" asked Graham. "I thought we were about to be drenched! If the TARDIS hadn't materialised around us in time, we might have got stuck in quicksand!"

"Never underestimate the power of a hopeful god," added the Doctor. "She clearly thinks there's still a chance of finding what she's looking for, and has no intention of giving up. To leave her tomb and go out into the world must have taken a tremendous amount of strength." She switched the monitor off, having seen enough. "Come on, we've got to find her!"

The TARDIS was huge. Beyond the console room were a thousand other rooms. And it wasn't known what was hidden behind each door. There were surprises, realms of fantasy which stretched beyond wild imagination. A low hum followed them everywhere. That,



at least, assured them the TARDIS was still functioning.

“What does the Osiran want?” asked Yaz, always right by the Doctor’s side.

“How about her freedom?” Ryan was always throwing things out there. “Why else would she be hiding aboard the TARDIS?”

“I don’t think she’s hiding,” confessed the Doctor. “There are things I’ve not told you. I’m still trying to piece it all together. I came to Sirius IV long ago; and what I discovered then horrified me; an idiot professor experimenting on an Osiran child... the child of the mother searching for her now here on board the TARDIS.”

“How on Earth did the child end up here in the first place?” asked Graham.

The Doctor locked eyes with him, “I brought her on board.”

She told them how she had placed the young Osiran inside the Zero Room, held her frail body in her arms - carrying her from the catacombs of the professor’s laboratory, across the sand dunes of Sirius IV, before arriving at the TARDIS. It had been an arduous journey and not one she had ever thought she would make.

“I tried to save her, long ago, and I don’t know if I succeeded.” The memories came flooding back. “I found her chained up and begging for help.”

“Why was she chained up?” asked Graham, looking at the Doctor sympathetically.

“Did she have the same powers as her mother?” Yaz pressed.

“She did, Yaz. She was deemed a threat because she couldn’t control those powers. She’d been practising when a civilian got in her way and died. She was blamed and labelled a murderer. They just didn’t understand, as humans tend not to. They

react first and ask questions later. I learnt that much from the Brigadier.”

“Who?” asked Yaz, but the Doctor didn’t stop to answer.

“She could control all life on the planet using her thoughts alone. But those thoughts crisscrossed with those of the drill worms, which then went on a rampage, killing many of the civilians on the planet. She was severely punished.” The Doctor sighed. “And I’m afraid that by calling her mother to her, she will have used all her strength and energy. I’d like to be proved wrong...”

“And the authorities blamed her for the deaths?” asked Graham, as confused as them all.

“Well, the drill worms don’t hunt on land. Not usually. It was the child who had raised them from the ground. But she couldn’t have known what effect her powers were having on the human settlers.”

“So, they incarcerated her and you weren’t going to stand for it? You rescued her. You did what you could. You helped when no one else would.”

“I tried. That’s all. It was all I could do. I made an attempt to revive her.”

“And she’s still on board?” asked Ryan.

“I never saw her leave,” admitted the Doctor, “but it would explain the actions of the parent, forcing her way into the TARDIS.”

“So you know how to find her, then?” asked Graham.

The Doctor nodded. “She’ll be where I left her,” she gulped, “in the Zero Room.”

Down in the depths of the TARDIS, the Osiran kicked and scraped outside the Zero Room doors. She roared with anger and purpose and sadness, screaming in a language all her

own. Any parent would recognise such cries, and the Doctor was no different.

The Osiran stiffened up, sensing movement nearby, and spun around.

“Maybe I can help?” said the Doctor.

At once she felt a powerful wave of psychic energy as the creature reached out with her mind. She moaned, grasping her head. “Argh! Okay, okay, maybe I deserved that... I did take your child away from you, her home, everything, but... you’ve got to know, I did it to help! To save her life!”

“You kidnapped her!” the Osiran bellowed. She strode towards the Doctor with such anger and authority that the Time Lord and her friends were taken aback.

“No,” said the Doctor. “It wasn’t like that!”

“Open these doors now!” the mother demanded. “Or... I will set the girl upon you!”

Yasmin’s eyes shone brightly as she stood motionless beside her friends. Ryan and Graham scrambled away, giving her a wide berth.

The Doctor hesitated, taking a long look at her companions, but did as she was ordered. She used her sonic screwdriver to unlock the doors, and the Osiran blundered in. The creature let go of her grip over Yaz, who sank to her knees.

Ryan hurriedly knelt next to her.

“Are you okay?” he asked, holding her steady.

“Yeah, I’ll be alright,” she said, smiling. “Thanks.”

The Doctor felt her shoulders relax. But then she turned her head. Hovering before them, in the centre of the Zero Room, was the Osiran child. She looked the same as the day she’d left her. Disturbed by her mother’s entry, the feeble creature dropped to the floor.

The Time Lord’s two hearts sank.

“Oh no,” she murmured. “No, no, no, no, no.”

Yaz, Ryan and Graham stepped forward, eyes wide.

“Is she... dead?” Ryan whispered.

Yasmin lowered her head. “I... I think so.”

The Osiran mother rushed to her child’s side.

“Wake up, please,” she begged, but there was no sign of life from the child.

There was a deathly silence.

“What is this place?” she demanded, now the only living Osiran left aboard the TARDIS.

“It’s called the Zero Room,” the Doctor replied. “It was supposed to heal her, to restore her, to give her a fresh start. But there was no guarantee. I didn’t know if it would work. I took a chance. It was all I had.”

“I do not believe your lies!” the Osiran screeched.

“I’m not lying,” said the Doctor. “I never lie.”

“And how can I believe that?”

The Doctor got down on her hands and knees. She heaved the child into her arms and gave her to the mother.

Looking at the body, the Osiran screamed, holding it close to her chest, wailing in unbelievable pain.

The Doctor couldn’t bear it. The guilt she felt was terrible, even though she knew that she had made every attempt to save the small, ancient being. She got up and walked towards her friends, trying to keep her composure.

“I will destroy you all!” raged the mother. “You will suffer!”

"No, nobody needs to suffer," said the Doctor, turning around as the Osiran got off her knees. The corpse of her child was left on the floor.

"You have left me with no choice!" the mother shrieked, at the top of her voice. "I will burn this part of the universe until there's nothing left but ashes!"

"But what about the countless people who live here?" the Doctor asked, "The many thousands of planets? They had nothing to do with this!"

"They are of no consequence!" she bellowed.

This was a level of anger even the Doctor was afraid to counter. An Osiran's fury was a terrifying spectacle - something she knew all too well.

"Think about what you're doing!" said Yaz. "You've lost your child, I know, but..."

"Yaz," the Doctor interrupted, "not helping!"

"No, hang on," she continued. "You'll be destroying so many innocent lives, including children, and for what? Do you really want to cause innocent people the same pain you've experienced? Entire families will be ripped apart!"

The Osiran hissed. "You believe that I should not hold the rest of the universe responsible for the crimes they have committed? They captured my child! Tortured her! Locked her in chains! Those vile snakes deserve to scream until the last embers of the universe go out, and I will make sure they feel it!"

She stormed out, heading straight for the console room. The Doctor and her companions exchanged worried looks.

"We need to stop her," said the Doctor. "The damage she could cause would rip through time itself. This side of the universe will never be the same!"

The Osiran burst into the console room. She gazed upon the controls, fingers hovering over the many buttons, switches and levers on display.

The Doctor descended a set of stairs, watching her like a hawk.

"It won't work," she called.

"No," said the Osiran. She hissed. "Isomorphic controls."

"And you know what that means?" replied the Doctor. "Only I can pilot the TARDIS."

"TARDIS?" repeated the Osiran. "So, you're a Time Lord?"

"That's right," she answered, "and I don't take kindly to god-like beings threatening the death of civilizations! I've had all sorts in here. Daleks, Cybermen, Slitheen, you name it... and they were all defeated. I don't want to cause you any more pain. I really don't. But you can't do this. You can't take your anger out on those who don't deserve it. And, honestly, I don't think you want to."

The Osiran breathed heavily, refusing to speak. Then she stared at the Doctor with those deep, emerald eyes.

"A rogue Time Lord, stealing the children of others; why?"

"I told you, I was trying to save her. She was dying. Her captor had locked her up over so many years and drained, not just her life force, but her powers too. When I finally caught up with her, I tried to make her see that I was her only hope."

"There are tales of the Doctor," said the Osiran, just as the companions entered the room. "A paragon of good, triumphing over evil. I cannot believe you are the same being."

"Then you haven't seen what she can do," said Ryan. "She's saved so many people, so many worlds..."

"And if I know the Doctor," said Yaz, breaking away from the group, "she feels every single loss of anyone at all. It doesn't matter who they are. But..."

"But I can't save everyone," the Doctor piped up, "no matter how much I want to." She thanked Ryan and Yaz with a reassuring smile and a wink. "As a Time Lord, there are rules I have to follow... rules which prevent me from altering the timelines and changing established history. But Ryan and Yaz are right. I never wanted this." Tears welled up in her eyes. "I hoped I could save your daughter, but the Zero Room... the chamber you found her in... could only heal a Time Lord. I'm sorry."

The Osiran looked at the Doctor as she mulled over her mistakes. Yaz tried to comfort her.

"You did your best," she whispered.

"Don't beat yourself up about it," added Ryan. "As Yaz said, you tried to save her, and I know what that's like..."

The Osiran cocked her head. "What do you mean?"

"It was the other way round for me," Ryan explained. "My mum died when I was a kid. She'd had a massive heart attack. I didn't know what to do. It was the worst day of my life. I tried everything, but... it didn't help."

"We've all been where you have," said Graham, confronting the Osiran. "I lost my wife, the person who taught me to be brave, and there was nothing I could do. That's how I met the Doc. She helped me in ways I... I can't even begin to describe."

"And we don't demand other people pay for our losses," said Yaz, "because if we did, how does that help? I'll tell you how. It doesn't. It wouldn't. It only causes more pain."

"And again," said the Doctor, noticing a distinct wetness to the Osiran's eyes, "think of the children, and those that haven't been born yet; the families being raised across

the galaxy, suddenly wiped out by your act of revenge. Think about the millions going through their lives with no idea what's happening outside of their own tiny bubble. I know this is the worst day of your life. It may not get any better for some time, but don't punish others by genocide. Grieve, yes... but don't do this, please."

The Osiran pulled the Doctor aside.

"I will never forget," she said sternly.

"No one's asking you to."

The mother remained still, her mood returning to a level of normal that the Doctor was beginning to feel less anxious about.

"I mean, I will not forget what you did for her."

In that moment, the Doctor saw the first glimmers of forgiveness.

"I wish that I could have done more," she lamented.

"You did what you could. I believe that now. I was wrong to assume otherwise." Her voice was croaky. "Your friends do you credit."

The companions had overheard. Reassuring looks crept onto their faces.

"What will you do now?" Yaz asked.

"I will mourn my child," said the Osiran. "She was all I had." She paused, taking a long look at the TARDIS team. "Thank you... for saving my soul."

In that moment, the Osiran vanished before their very eyes.

"Where'd she go?" wondered Graham.

"Back to her tomb, I suspect," mused the Doctor. "Possibly to get some perspective on what happened here today."

"Or what didn't happen," smiled Ryan. "Things could have turned pretty nasty!"

"If it weren't for you three," began the Doctor, "I think the rest of the universe would be paying the price right about now!"

"You're too hard on yourself, Doc!" said Graham. "You gave her child a chance. In the end, I think she saw that."

"Thanks, Graham," the Doctor replied, giving him a warm smile. "But before we put all this behind us, there's one thing left to do."

The Doctor returned to the Zero Room, expecting to find the young Osiran, but she too had vanished.

"Of course," she said, realising that it was silly to think the mother was ever going to leave without her child. "I should have known." She turned to leave and made her way back to the console room.

With a beaming grin, the Doctor flew towards the central controls.

"Right then, fam... where to next?"

"Anywhere" said Yaz, "so long as we can move on from this."

"Is it all sorted, then?" asked Graham.

"Yes," said the Doctor, as she chose her next words carefully. "I think they're both finally at peace."

Before any of them could utter a syllable, the Doctor yanked down the release mechanism, setting the TARDIS in motion. She didn't know where they would end up, and that was okay in her books.

"Watch out, Universe... here we come!"

▲ THE END ▲

EVERY DOCTOR INFOGRAPHIC

By James Watson

My two most prominent memories of Doctor Who from my childhood were the repeats of Spearhead From Space (as a child with an intense fear of store mannequins, it left a real impact) and the Comic Relief parody Curse Of Fatal Death. So rather than having 'my' doctor, I had a whole roster of actors that were floating around in my consciousness, that I knew weren't 'real' Doctors but I wasn't old enough or aware of the franchise enough separate the real Doctors from the pretend ones!

I started doing Graphic Design professionally in 2013 and my first job was designing a Doctor Who t-shirt (a snowy TARDIS scene) which would help secure me a position with a manufacturer of Doctor Who merchandise. One of my main responsibilities was also the planning of our vinyl figure ranges - a role which required an extensive knowledge of Doctor Who and the many characters, their costumes, and their relationships to one another. I left the role in early 2017 to work in a different industry, but I always missed working with Doctor Who and the BBC. Just before lockdown began, I lost my job, which allowed me to work on my graphic design and build on my portfolio.

I'd always enjoyed making infographics and I've spent a lot of time in lockdown planning and creating them. I'd been mulling over the 'Every Doctor Ever' image for a number of months, ever since the Timeless Child reveal at the end of Season 12 and the appearance of the Ruth/Fugitive Doctor. Obviously a very controversial storyline, but I loved it - suddenly there was so much we didn't know about The Doctor, and more importantly, it meant that, until proven otherwise, everything could be canon. I found this incredibly exciting and suddenly I had a drive to try and chart the timeline of The Doctor.

So I started out with a very basic timeline - we could assume the timeline from 1st to

13th with the inclusion of the War Doctor. Knowing that the Timeless Child and the Morbius Doctors came before seemed to be fairly straightforward. And we knew that the Curator was from somewhere in the future, possibly at the very end of the Doctor's life.

But then a very straightforward timeline started to split - the Meta Crisis Doctor should still count, so that's a branch off the 10th Doctor. What about the Dream Lord? Does he count? The Valeyard, The Watcher, The Fugitive Doctor, they should still count so they need to go in. At this point we're at already over 30 different Doctors, and this is still just the ones that have appeared in the tv show and are definitely (at the time of writing) canon!

As any longtime Doctor Who fan knows, there are a number of 9th Doctors that have popped up during the Wilderness Years. At one point the Shalka Doctor was the canonical 9th Doctor, so he should be there in a separate strand - after all, in a show about time travel that has featured parallel universes, who is to say what alternate timelines don't count? In the book The Tomorrow Windows, the 8th Doctor has visions of his future that include the Shalka Doctor, and features the first appearance of the Eccleston 9th Doctor BUT it also includes the Curse Of Fatal Death Doctor. Now, if The Curse Of Fatal Death Doctor is mentioned in a canonical book, that also includes the various regenerations from that episode so they all need to go in the chart. But then if we include one parody, why can't that also extend to other parodies? So I added Lenny Henry from his show, and Jim Broadbent from Victoria Wood's show - my rule being that they played distinct unique versions of the Doctor rather than an impersonation of an existing one, so no Jon Culshaw, or else I would have to include Richard Hurndale and David Bradley which would add an extra level of complication that wasn't needed, after

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all I was listing Doctors and not the actors that played them (note to self: could be a different infographic idea).

Much like The Doctor's regenerations, I've gone off on a tangent.

Back tracking slightly, one of the most famous Doctors that isn't actually canon is, of course, Peter Cushing's portrayal of Dr. Who in the two films. His version is human and is literally called Dr. Who, so does he count? Well, sure, he played him in two films, and I'm making the rules anyway! Plus he was the very first live action alternate version of the Doctor, I couldn't ignore him!

I started off the project thinking that I knew most of the alternate Doctors and that it would be a fairly easy thing to put them all together and maybe work out a rough timeline. However once I started down that rabbit hole, I realised just how little I knew about my favourite franchise! My research into the books, audio dramas and comics lead me to a number of Doctor's that appeared for one time only, some only for a few sentences.

When it came to the visuals, I was quite lucky in that the simplified style I was working with didn't require a lot of detail, so in some cases where a Doctor was described simply by the colour of their hair or the style of jacket, I could improvise. In some examples, like the

Morbius Doctors, where the only photos were of their head and upper torso, I researched similar historical outfits and used them as a basis. Other times, where no description was given, I had to get more creative - there's a version of the 8th Doctor that I couldn't find any description of online, so I used the outfit developed for the Big Finish audio plays (the blue jacket and bag) as I really loved the design and wanted to reference it in some capacity. For other examples, such as the possible future doctor referenced in the Rose novelisation, I based it on an outfit worn by T'Nia Miller in Years and Years, the drama written by Russel T Davies which started filming shortly after the publication of the novel. It's not unreasonable to think RTD had Miller in mind when he wrote the character in as they had worked together several times in the past, and she also had appeared in the first on-screen regeneration that showed Time-Lords could change gender and skin colour (which had been referenced but never shown) so I wanted to reference her in some small way.

The biggest obstacle I faced, was how to place all of these 80+ Doctor's in a way that made the most sense, I managed to break them down into a few rough categories:

Past

This covered the Timeless Children, Morbius Doctors, and The Other - a figure that could

still technically belong at the beginning of all of this. I also put Brendan in this category, because while he was always just a construct of the Matrix, he was still telling the Doctor's story and his absence seemed, to me, to be more noticeable.

Doctors 1 - 14

This started off simple and then got very complicated, I put the numbered Doctors in order, including War, and then added in Doctors that best matched the placement. Some were easy, Meta-Crisis obviously belongs next to the 10th Doctor, it makes sense to put Peter Cushing next to William Hartnell. Certain Doctors from the Unbound series of audio dramas had been given a number so that was easy. But what about David Banks's Doctor? Dubbed the Greenpeace Doctor by fans, his Doctor existed as a stand-in for Jon Pertwee's 3rd, so does he count as a 3rd Doctor? Where is best to place him? The play ran in 1989, so would it make sense to put him next to Sylvester McCoy's 7th? There's a similar conundrum with the Seven Keys To Doomsday Doctors - originally written as the 4th Doctor it makes sense to put him next to Tom Baker, but where do I put the Doctor in the version that ran 10 years later? Ultimately it was a lot of educated guesses.

Future

There were a number of Doctors that I really struggled to find placement for - while some canonically were 'future' doctors, there were others that seemed to have no fixed placement. The Ruth/Fugitive Doctor was one I struggled with, I could see compelling arguments for her to be placed in the 'past' section, but I felt the fact that she was somewhere in the future left more mystery.

Essentially, any Doctor that didn't have a semblance of placement in the timeline I put in the future.

Final

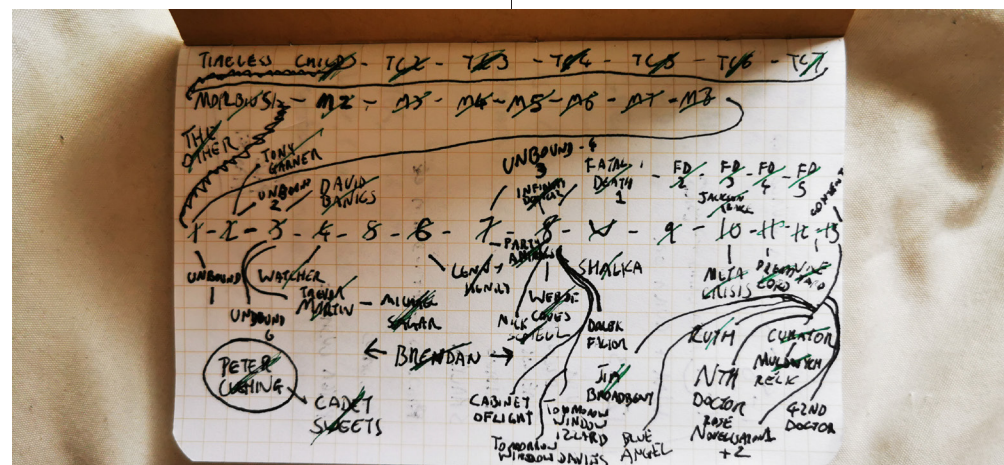
When I started this I knew I would have The Curator as the final Doctor, but what I didn't realise until I started my research was that there are at least five Doctors that could sit at the end of the timeline, including the Doctor's corpse. But I like that uncertainty, that even The Doctor has an end, but who knows what that end could be?

There's always some trepidation posting artwork online, but my years working with and promoting Doctor Who merchandise specifically has prepared me for negative comments, and I have been very lucky that the feedback I have received for this has been overwhelmingly positive! Of course, the second I posted it I was notified of several Doctors that I could have included, prompted a discussion about whether or not certain incarnations counted, and the placement of others within the timeline - but I wouldn't ask for anything else!

In the next few weeks I am aiming to animate the infographic which will allow me to add more details and information for each version of The Doctor, and I had such a great time creating this that I want to do more, up next - The Evolution Of The Cybermen!

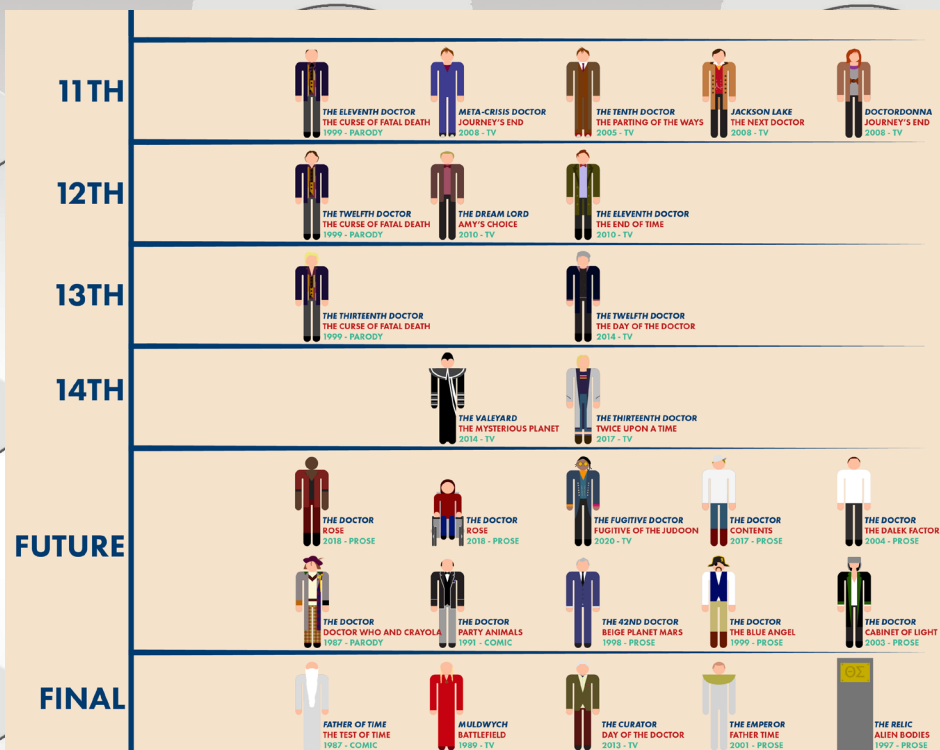
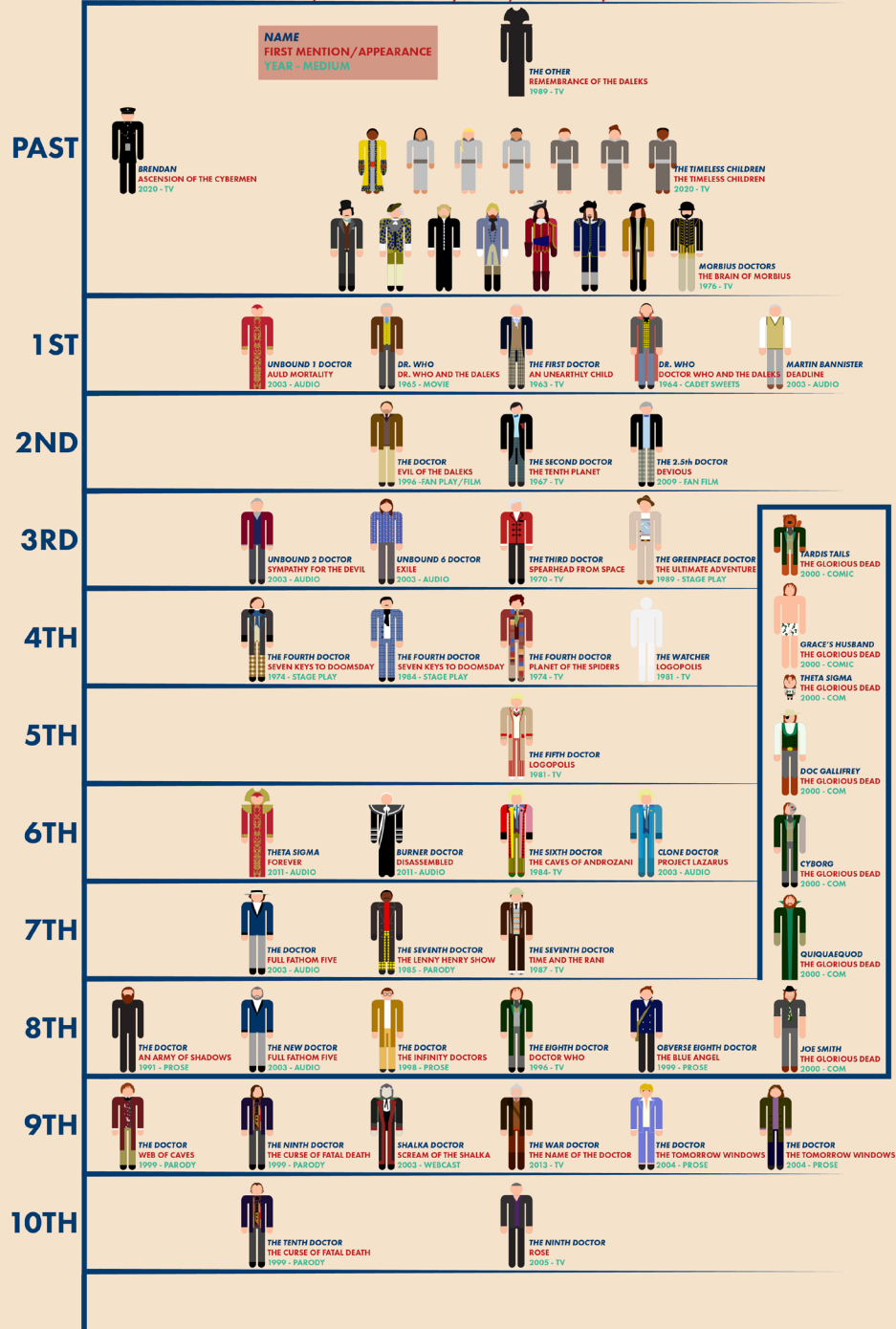
James Watson Is a graphic artist, you can view his work on his website:

<http://watsonprime.com/>



EVERY DOCTOR EVER

CANON, NON-CANON, PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE AND FINAL



NOTES

- Placement in the timeline is vague and constantly up for discussion
- Canon is always shifting
- Parodies don't really count, but some of them do

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THE BLACK ARCHIVE: THE UNDERWATER MENACE Review by Cliff Chapman

amongst a batch of odd episodes on VHS loaned from a local group friend, taped from a satellite broadcast. Yes, there was a time when I wasn't fussed about TUM either. But that fateful afternoon was still to come.

For those who don't know, The Black Archive is an enjoyably fresh range of books – monographs, each a lengthy academic look at a single Doctor Who story. They mix excellently researched content, going far beyond the familiar points we're used to, with intelligent examination and speculation that reaches out in terms of science and literature. Here especially, where there's speculation, it feels more rigorous and tested than the gossipy About Time books.

There is a production overview and a synopsis, which of course most of us have in some form or another. However they are a handy launching point for context, followed by a good 100+ pages of exploration and analysis.

Chapter One, *Prehistoric Monsters*, gives much framing about the difficulty in seeing even the more famous and lore-worthy stories, and Chapter Two, fandom's great surprise at the BFI in late 2011 when it turned out that Francis Walton had kept, and was willing to share, another quarter of the story. Jim was there – and so was I!

That was the fateful afternoon. (I don't think we actually met, there were a lot of people there.) The ripple of laughter that of all the episodes found, it had to be one from this story, and the subsequent enjoyment as the episode played out. And then it completely failed to appear on the DVD schedules, unexpectedly, for years. *The Underwater Menace* Episode 3 got a seemingly begrudged outing on VHS, tagged alongside *The Ice*

Warriors in 1998, but it was not always the plan – some of the team putting the package together strongly argued to bundle *Web of Fear* 1 with it, while others overruled the decision. It's arguable that much of the contextual text of this section could go in other Black Archives about missing and rediscovered stories, but Smith carefully keeps it relevant. Our reaction to *The Underwater Menace* is intrinsically informed by its availability, and lack of availability, and by the material that survives around it, such as the far more exposed *The Moonbase*; clever. (Clever, clever.) This, by the way, is the nearest I can come to nit-picking, and honestly, even that's barely fair.

Chapter Three deals with script development and the change of director, comparing versions and how the novelisation has remnants of earlier drafts, and in to the making of the story. This is information available, in part, elsewhere, but concise, brisk and a wide variety of sources, a few things I hadn't seen before.

Critical reaction to the story in light of the recovered second episode is next discussed, alongside telesnaps, and censor clips known before. There are further running comparisons with Cybermen stories, and the surprisingly brief totality of appearances by the Fish People.

Chapter Five looks at the historical possibilities of a real Atlantis and the religion represented in the serial.

Six focusses on Zaroff, and how popular fan interpretation of this (we think) most B-Movie villain has actually been rather unfairly overblown. The Seventh examines a particular aspect of the Doctor's costume, about to undergo change; the Eighth, his characterisation.

Excitingly, perhaps my favourite section, Smith explores what we know about Geoffrey Orme (we are surely due "Looking For Geoffrey" from Toby Hadoke and Chris Chapman on the blu rays at some point, and this must be the source). Smith looks at the themes in the story, and the work of collaborators, for clues to the kind of man Orme was. Two appendices round up proceedings; the first looking at the Doctor's name, the second, a Production Time Line, and then a bibliography.

This is a wonderful, clever exploration of *The Underwater Menace*, the early Troughton era as a whole and our reactions to unloved and missing episodes. There are a wealth of new facts and enlightening informed speculation on all manner of aspects regarding the script and the production, of which it is only fair of me not to spoil in my review. Pending the animation of the missing episodes, or, please Amdo, their return, it is pretty much the last word on an underrated and underdiscussed Doctor Who story. Critical exploration and analysis of Doctor Who might seem like a strange, pointless endeavour to the 'Not We', the snobbish, or indeed even a subset of modern fans who shy from this sort of thing as it 'critical' and 'criticism' blur to become 'negativity' but for some of us it's a joy, and a testament to the beauty of the show and the intelligence of its writers and audience that there is so much to say about these shows, and to learn about script writing, production and people. We can only hope that years from now, there'll be as much, and as much that's interesting, to say about what we consider the lesser episodes of the latest series. And with that...

Available from Obverse Books £8.99 (paperback) and £3.99 (ebook). ▲





THE BLACK ARCHIVE: THE RINGS OF AKHATEN

Review by Cliff Chapman

Will Shaw's approach to this Black Archive is different to Smith's for *The Underwater Menace*, but I'll try not to compare them *too* much and judge it on its own terms. This book is a good third longer, for something that had less than half that screen time, with extensive close reading of the key sections of the episode. A substantial interview with Farren Blackburn makes up one of the appendices, as well as his Director's Statement, which is unusual and interesting. Extracts from the interview are included occasionally in the main text. We get standard production info, and a synopsis at the front for handy reference.

There are fewer, longer chapters here. The first deals with "The Doctor as New Atheist." This sets up a harsh, critical tone, as Shaw sketches the "religion is evil" movement of Dawkins, Hitchens et al and discusses the Doctor's dismissal of religion, arguing that this is inconsistent with the character, and positing the Doctor as Imperialist when we are used to imagine him as quite the opposite. Shaw suggests that much of Nu Who between 2005 and 2008 was a reaction to the rise of New Atheism, and later episodes examined the fall, sending up Dawkins and making jokes at his expense.

"She's sacrificing herself, she should know what it means. Do you know what it means, Merry?" Given that Merry is, in fact, an extremely high-ranking member of her religion, it seems unlikely that she wouldn't know what it means. The Doctor, therefore, comes across as patronising and arrogant, taking on the archetypal characteristics of the Orientalist scholar in assuming to explain an ignorant native's own culture back to them, or indeed the New Atheist explaining the childishness of religion."

While this background is interesting, it's hard for this reviewer not to cling to the Doctor as one *not* for shying away from criticism of religion, and being very pleased when he doesn't. On occasion, Shaw doesn't tend to hedge his more contentious statements. Both in this section, and when examining the Doctor's relationship with Merry, the case for the prosecution is intense. Stodgier, older fans, even the more chilled and liberal end, like me, will interpret it defensively, this exposure seemingly demanding an idealised Doctor who says and does the "right" thing all the time, which we will argue back isn't really who the Doctor is, or what Doctor Who is, or drama for that matter. Things do calm this wounded old soldier; the case for the defence is eventually heard, and there is a conclusion to the thread that is less damning. It takes a good amount of time to get there, and some examples convince more than others. When you reach the third section and are told – "This chapter therefore focuses on *Rings of Akhaten's* flaws" I couldn't help but chuckle, having found few punches pulled already. It is odd to feel stung that the very nature of the Doctor and the show is not quite as robustly progressive as you had expected. Well, ok, it isn't, but in relation to this era, which was not much more than seven years ago but might as well have been yesterday in some senses – and a lifetime ago in others. (Let's not mention *Talons of Weng-Chiang* now, it's exhausting.) Referencing Edward Said on Orientalism is very timely (explore on Google if this is meaningless to you) and very much not unique to this work, but important in our assessment of how we treat and view other cultures.

Extensive discussion on Clara and her arc occupies the next section. Shaw looks at the criticism of the character from viewers, but is more balanced from the off between prosecution and examples in favour of the other side, with a remarkably detailed exploration of the potential meanings of Clara and Merry's interaction, playing out in to a discussion of feminism, the masculinity of the Doctor, Manic Pixie Dream Girls and Mary Sues. This has many well argued points, although the more tenuous and reaching

elements aren't always given the modifiers of "perhaps" and "could be seen to be" that feel necessary to this reader. Some will argue that this is a bug, and others a feature, of close readings; for example, the section where we examine Clara's first scene, waiting and then being delighted with the Doctor, feels to this reader in the bounds of "TMI" in that it's all a bit like stating the obvious for quite a long time. If it were based on specific questions from the interview with the director, then excellent, reference that – but it doesn't seem to be.

We also explore what Akhaten itself might actually be, the concept of Grandfather and Merry's role, and how much the Doctor and Clara are aware that they're characters in stories, from their actions and reactions, background for Neil Cross and comparisons with Luthor and *Hide*, a look at the big speech and how it exists as a moment loved by fandom even if the episode is largely ignored, a discussion on representations of race and other cultures, and the significance of this being a story from the 50th anniversary year, and the context of this in relation to the Doctor and Clara and fan commentary. All of which is detailed and enjoyable to work through.

Overall, this is an exhaustive, worthwhile work on a production many of us dismissed as having barely ten minutes of plot seven years ago, so it's great that someone has taken such a serious and earnest look at it and found far more depth than we imagined. Most of it I appreciated, although I didn't *always* agree with it, and felt on occasion a few cuts to tighten it up and differentiate the more speculative supportive statements wouldn't have gone amiss, as well as perhaps a little more humour (humour in academic works is allowed)... but perhaps this is missing the point. Will Shaw's *Rings of Akhaten* is a serious work, worth taking seriously.

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