

COSMIC MASQUE



DOCTOR
WHO
APPRECIATION
SOCIETY
CM XIII

EDITORIAL

By Nick Smith

There's far more to Doctor Who than watching TV. There's the social aspect of fandom, the concepts to ruminate over, music and audios to listen to, novels to read and games to play.

From games of chase in school playgrounds and Ludo-style splash pages in annuals to RPGs, board games and video games, Doctor Who has always been something to be experienced and participated in, not just passively watched.

While compiling this issue of Cosmic Masque, I was reminded of the part that games have played in Doctor Who's history and my own life. In the '80s I marvelled at the role playing game and pored over the Target Quiz Books, in the '90s I spent many happy hours playing Dalek Attack on the Amiga, and more recently I needed my son to help me figure out how to play Fluxx.

Fluxx isn't the only game that has been given a Doctor Who spin – there are versions of Clue, Yahtzee, Risk, Trivial Pursuit and at least three variations on Monopoly – a regular version, a 50th Anniversary release and one devoted to villains. Of course, many franchises have been 'boarded up. But the sheer number of games available reflect the versatility of Doctor Who. It's fun to see how

they're adapted – for example, instead of Professor Plum committing murders in the library, Who Clue has a mind-controlled Strax knocking out the Doctor with lipstick on the moon.

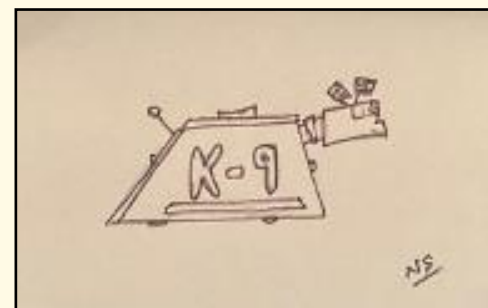
Cosmic Masque XIII takes a look at games in Doctor Who and a new 'found phone' adventure, which follows on from Blink. Adam Haught talks about developing the expansive game Time of the Daleks and Jordan Shortman reviews a new audio version of The Dark Dimension and a new Missy comic book.

I would like to thank Jordan, Andrew Black, Adam Haught, Christian Basel, Colin Brockhurst and Gareth Kavanagh for their contributions to this issue, and to Rik Moran for being my Cosmic Masque mentor.

Special thanks to cover artist Grahame Alexander Robertson, who was inspired to relive the colourful, glory days of the show's relaunch in 2005 after rewatching and hugely enjoying Eccleston's first season and seeing him join Big Finish.

Let the games begin!

Nick



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COSMIC MASQUE XIII

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PLAYING DOCTOR WHO: DALEK ATTACK

By Nick Smith

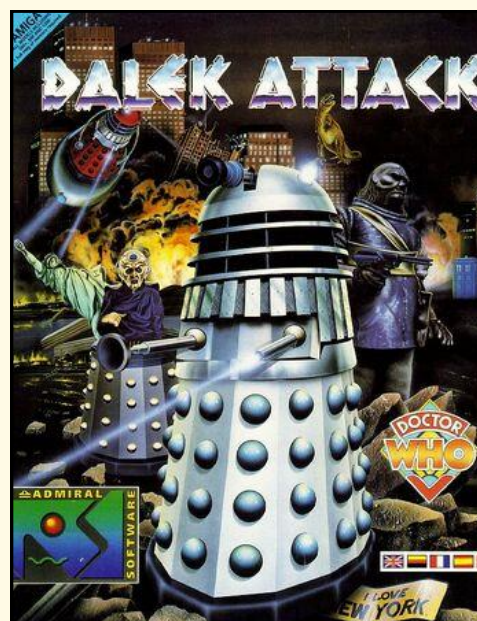
The Fourth Doctor hurries his way through a sewer, piloting what looks like a Dalek hoverbout. He zaps disembodied aliens, avoids giant spikey drill bits and is chased by flying Daleks. If he survives, he runs and jumps Mario-like across a city, throwing grenades and shooting bad guys with his sonic screwdriver.

The Doctor is the protagonist of Dalek Attack, a video game that was produced for the Amiga console and other game platforms by Admiral Software in 1993. At the time, I played it a lot despite it being, as one

player put it, 'horrendously difficult.' I forgave the fact that the Doctor used weapons rather than wits to conquer the five levels. This game was based on my favourite show! And unlike the other games I played like Zool or Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge, where I'd blare Guns 'n' Roses or Public Enemy while I played, this one had a soundtrack worth listening to with a tinny version of Ron Grainer's theme tune.

Dalek Attack opened with a comic-strip style prologue featuring the Seventh Doctor and Ace, then the current Doctor and companion. They would pop up again in the cut-scenes between levels. If I could survive long enough, there were detailed (for the time) graphics and easter egg appearances from Ogrons, Robocop's ED-209 (?) and what looked like Raymond Cusick's original Dalek design. You could tackle them all as the Second, Fourth or Seventh Doctor. But although it was entertaining, this shoot-'em-up didn't capture the essence of Doctor Who and did not make a lasting impression on my mind.

This wasn't the first time I'd encountered a Who game. Back in 1984, the computer club boys at school had installed a game where the Doctor had to get to the TARDIS past roaming Daleks. Extremely simple by today's standards, Daleks was a variation on Chase, where a player moves and tricks the pursuers into crashing before they get caught. It was the



most fun I could have on an Apple Macintosh. The future of computing looked bright!

The BBC soon provided their own games, *The First Adventure* (a series of mini-challenges) and Graham Williams' *Doctor Who and the Warlord*. But they were for the BBC Micro-computer, and who the heck had one of those? Luckily Atari had *Dr. Who Adventure* and *The Mines of Terror* was a multi-platform offering; the most notable part of *Mines* was that the Doctor had adopted a robot cat called Splinx.

Years later, *Destiny of the Doctors* promised so much, with new audio performances recorded by Nick Courtney, Tom Baker, Peter Davison, Colin Baker and Sylvester McCoy, as well as a fiendish video intro from Anthony Ainley as The Master. The game incorporated a multitude of classic monsters but lacked the playability of *Dalek Attack*.

Fast forward to last year, when I finally got to try a different Doctor Who game after being out of the loop, living in the States for some time. *City of the Daleks*, written by Phil Ford, had a fun retro Dreamland look and a solid pedigree: the music was by Murray Gold; the game was produced and voice-directed by Gary Russell; Matt Smith and Karen Gillan played the Doctor and Amy Pond. Of the games I've tried, it is the most accessible to non-fans and

feels more like the show with its puzzle-based tasks and tense atmosphere. All this adds up to make the game and its sequels feel like real slices of Who.

There have been many other Doctor Who video games, including a version of *Top Trumps*, an online multiplayer game, a virtual reality adventure and the digital trading card game *Worlds Apart*. But there's still so much more video games could do to capture the essence of the show.

Shoot-'em-ups and platform games are against Who's grain. Wit, problem solving and world building all have a place in gaming and would better suit our favourite Time Lord's way of life. The programme's versatility lends itself to so many options – a *Settlers of Cattan*-style game with a colony in space; a UNIT versus Zygon strategy game; a Silence memory puzzle or a *Fallout*-style game set on a planet we've never explored before.

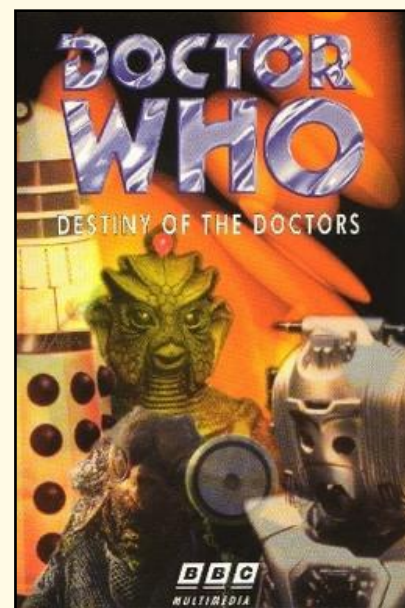
How about flight simulators for space pirates and Steven Taylor wannabes, a mechanical Animal Crossing featuring K-9, (literal) Candy Crush with the Happiness Patrol or a *Paradise Towers Tetris*?

Whatever comes next, the designers should apply the same level of care and attention given to RPGs and mega-games like *Halo*. Equally important is a sense of humour, an indelible part of Doctor Who that's



missing from most of its console adaptations. If the game is fulfilling enough, it will attract players whether they're Whovians or not.

Video games have helped our show to become an all-encompassing experience and provided hours of entertainment. Since little dots and TARDIS blocks popped up in the mid-'80s, these clunky, cosy, addictive games have become a long-term part of living the Who life.



GAME OF WHO

By Nick Smith

What Doctor Who can learn from Game of Thrones

It was must-see TV. Our buddy Chris Gatz invited my girlfriend Dana and I over on Sunday nights to watch new episodes, have snacks and drinks (just a couple, officer) and chat about the show.

We'd waited a long time for the latest season – two years of a hard, cold winter after learning that the hero of the show was the son of two powerful players in a game of thrones. Worse than the wait was the shortening of seasons, the penultimate cut to seven, the final year cut to a mere six. Yet we lapped up the episodes and looked forward to new ones every week. Until the bitter end.

I don't recall Doctor Who ever being 'must-see TV' like *Game of Thrones*, aka *GoT* – only the Who Christmas specials come close to vital viewing for the fans, their family and friends alike.

Game of Thrones doesn't have any Christmas specials. It has fantasy, violence, dragons and debauchery. But despite the hanky panky, it has many similarities with Doctor Who and the BBC can learn a lot from the

way HBO played the Game of Thrones.



Like Doctor Who, GoT has excellent British actors, celebrity 'stunt casting' (Ed Sheeran!) and a devoted, at times rabid, fanbase. It makes leaps of imagination and features characters from the grim North. It provides material for memes and catchphrases, cementing itself in the public conscious. It even shares several cast members (notably Maisie Williams, David Bradley, Mark Gatiss, Julian Glover and Iain Glen). Both shows have long waits between seasons, a shortened episode count justified with longer running times per episode, and storylines full of heroic, self-sacrificing deaths.

While GoT concluded in 2019, Doctor Who continues – ironically, streaming exclusively on HBO Max



in the US. While Who made a careful handover from Steven Moffat to Chris Chibnall and introduced a new setup for the show, keeping it fresh, GoT's showrunners David Benioff and D.B. Weiss had to switch from adapting George R.R. Martin's books to developing original scripts. They focused on wrapping up everyone's storyline in an unjustified hurry. HBO could make the same amount of merchandising profit from fewer episodes per season, thinning their gold egg-laying goose as much as possible.

The writers must be commended for tying up all the loose ends but they were lambasted at the time for ruining the show and admitted that they had no experience. 'They were exposed only when they ran out of material,' wrote Forbes senior contributor Dani di Placido, 'and had to finish the story themselves.' A change.org petition was started to demand that Season 8 be rerecorded with a better ending. The petition is nearing 2 million signatures. (Yes, there's also one to replace Chibnall with his predecessors, supported by 261 John Hancocks).

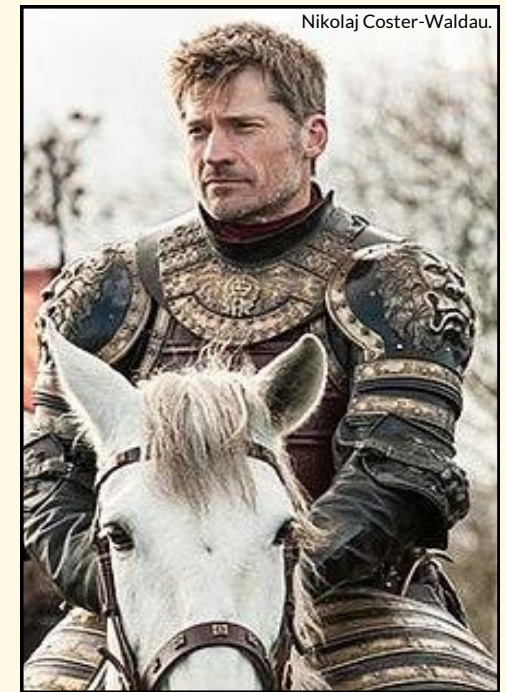
What Benioff and Weiss didn't know – or what they were unable to accommodate – is that viewers like Chris Gatz, Dana and I didn't stick around watching Game of Thrones to see everything tied up with a neat bow. We were hooked by the characters, themes and plot twists. 'Themes are for eighth-grade book

reports,' Benioff once said in an interview. Imagine Doctor Who without the themes of survival, heroism, loneliness, injustice or the consequences of your actions. Would the plot twists matter as much?

Series 12 had more than its fair share of twists of turns. In fact, they could have done with more breathing room, as demonstrated in Russell T. Davies' seasons where a name would be mentioned, then become more significant before its full weight was felt at the end of the year (Bad Wolf, Torchwood, Saxon, Adipose 3). In this regard Series 12 suffered from the same problem as GoT season 8, shoehorning a lot of story into a short amount of time.

Doctor Who has iconic characters (The Doctor, Davros, The Master, River Song) who have become more complex over time but there's room for plenty more. As Moffatt's run showed, Who can build a rich tapestry of events driven by protagonist choices, that appeal to children and adults.

More than one critic has pointed out that the GoT Season 8 writers were goal-oriented, focusing on telling the story over what was true to a character. We've seen it in dozens of movies – the hero doing something simply to further the plot. Horror movies have characters going into dark basements so that something scary will happen to them – if they kept the lights on and watched Net-



flix, the story would grind to a halt. In GoT, the main characters did things that did not fit their arc so that events could reach a rushed conclusion. Doctor Who can shift and refresh character relationships with a regeneration; GoT had no such trick up its sleeve.

Alexander Maasick writes that are two types of author, the architect and the gardener. Chris Chibnall may be the current architect of Doctor Who but there have been many gardeners over the years, nurturing the programme's hardiest produce while trying an exotic idea or transplant now and again. Our garden might look scruffy at the edges and we might not be able to explain why everything's there but it still grows and fascinates.

Doctor Who doesn't need a big budget. It will always have the cardboard corridor stigma of its early days but it stands or falls on its concepts, characters and acting, not how slick it looks next to the latest Marvel movie. GoT's big final battle scene lasted 80 minutes and took 750 people 11 weeks of exhausting night shoots to film; viewers were more concerned with a Starbucks cup left visible in a dining hall shot.

Now the GOT merchandise gathers dust in Books-A-Million clearance bins. Viewers have moved on to the next HBO show. To avoid the same fate, Doctor Who needs to retain a showrunner who cares and understands how important characters and themes are to storytelling. The writers need to understand what drives the show and its "fam" so that nothing too contradictory happens.

Chris Chibnall should not be too hasty trying to peck up all the bread-crumbs scattered at the end of Series 12. Doctor Who fans are patient. They did not demand instant answers to the questions sparked by An Unearthly Child or Andrew Cartmel's masterplan, appreciating that mystery has always been part of the show's attraction.



Dark Dimension

Review by Jordan Shortman

Ah The Dark Dimension, it's a story that's had a long and complicated existence. Originally envisioned as the thirtieth anniversary story, in 1993, it got three weeks into test filming and model work before the BBC and everyone involved decided to pull funding and the project was shut down.

It's a shame because there was a great story there, the Doctors, played by Jon Pertwee, Tom Baker, Peter Davison, Colin Baker and Sylvester McCoy find themselves in a parallel universe and have to set the universe to rights again, with the help of UNIT and older versions of The Brigadier and Ace, while facing old enemies like Daleks, Cybermen and Yeti.

It sounds like a lot of fun, and it's a shame that it never came about. Now though, thanks to the dedication of fellow fans, The Dark Dimension has been adapted into four-half-hour episodes released in audio format on YouTube. Under the name Doctor Who: Dark Dimension by Pharos Features, these episodes have been released featuring fans and some Doctor Who alumni from other projects lending their voices to different characters, all taken from the original scripts.



Project creator, Billy Garratt-John has done a tremendous job here, adapting some of the recently leaked scripts into a story suitable for audio originally from author, Adrian Rigelsford. If you look at some of the articles on other sites for the story featured in Dark Dimension, then much of this new take stays true to the original. The Seventh Doctor is dead and it falls to UNIT and Ace to try and save this dying Earth. Then they find a dying Fourth Doctor.

The first episode does a great job of setting the story and mystery up and I wouldn't be surprised if things take a bit of a detour from the original story. Rightly so, because this is a take that deserves to stand on its own two feet.

What's also astonishing is how serious this take on the story is from such a young production team, and elements and themes that feel very relevant today, especially its story

which seems to be focused on global warming. We finally live in an era where global warming is being taken a little more seriously so some of the dialogue here feels very timely and with the battle still ongoing in the real world, won't stop being timely for some time to come.

For long term fans, there are some treats too. As well as a few characters like Doctors and Ace, fans of the Peter Cushing movies will no doubt love the sound effects for the Daleks' involvement, immediately invoking images of characters walking around a large Dalek Saucer modelled off their movie version of Skaro and it was a delight to hear '80s Cybermen effects too.

The music is a treat for the ears too and music designer Luke Crichton should be looking out for a job offer from Big Finish in the near future. It blends effortlessly with the action and dialogue and doesn't distract from what is happening, instead en-

hancing the experience. And the music design works very nicely with the sound design from Eddie John who does a wonderful job of showing us what is happening rather than telling us, a trap that Dark Dimension has successfully avoided.

The cast are on fire here too, some who have worked in various capacities with other audio companies before and some who are just devoted fans; everyone does a brilliant job in their respective characters. They really evoke the, pardon the pun, darker dimensions, of this story, and feel like wholly rounded characters, not just cardboard cut-outs of UNIT soldiers and Doctor Who companions, or evil villains. And I think that Billy Garratt-John was having a blast voicing the Daleks here!

If you are looking for a brand-new Doctor Who story, with production levels at that of Big Finish, then The

Dark Dimension will be right up your street. As I'm sure you've noticed, there has been a lot of comparison here to the work from Big Finish. And everyone involved should be very proud that this audio, made with no budget, just genuine love for the material and our favourite show, that Dark Dimension stands tall with some of the best Doctor Who adventures out there. Well done everyone involved, hopefully this won't be the last we see from the talented folk at Pharos Features!

Although the official version of Pharos Features' Dark Dimension is no longer available "per prior arrangements with the BBC," some renegade fans have shared the adventure on YouTube. Catch it while you can.



THE BLACK ARCHIVE: VENGEANCE ON VAROS

Review by Nick Smith

At their best, the Black Archives shed new light on stories we know word for word, helping us appreciate even the least-considered of adventures (such as *Timelash*, which was reconsidered in Archive #35). We have grown up with this show, giving it an inordinate amount of time and thought. The scripts were written and the episodes filmed by adults with lifetimes of experience. The books respect this. The Archivists do not talk down to us, covering one story per book on an in-depth, intellectual level.

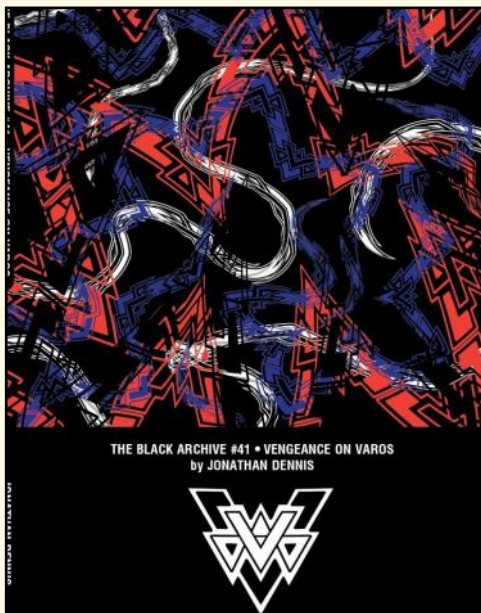
Such scrutiny could get boring in the wrong hands but this book devoted to *Vengeance on Varos* is a fascinating read. Author Jonathan Dennis gets to the nitty gritty of this '80s video nasty pastiche, treating it with the detailed analysis it deserves.

Dennis examines how the colourful Sixth Doctor, with his 'loud and abrasive' costume and character, fits in with dark world of Varos, arguing that this incarnation of the Doctor fairs best when facing a bleak opposition. Dennis points out that the downbeat *Vengeance on Varos* and *Revelation of the Daleks* are two of the era's most popular stories.

Science fiction can do so much – comment, reflect, warn. George Orwell's dystopian book 1984 was still high in the zeitgeist when Varos aired in January 1985. Big Brother was watching along with the citizens, represented by Arak and Etta. Dennis explains that 1984 is not optimistic at all, lacking the hope represented by noble characters in *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Man in the High Castle* or *The Terminator*.

The author looks at the definition of pessimism, arguing that although there have been downbeat endings before, 'there have been few that could be considered pessimistic.' Since gloom without compromise is bad for ratings, death and suffering are not the default state of the Whoniverse. However, the show became bleaker under script editor Eric Saward's auspice and Varos writer Philip Martin's contributions are described as 'the two most pessimistic Doctor Who stories' of the classic era. The Doctor's victory at the end of Varos is hollow, with the future of the planet left uncertain.

This is partly due to the world's harsh political system. Dennis explores its government and election system, where the leader risks his people's displeasure on pain of torture and eventual death. Dennis looks at different parallels from our own world, including the Bill Clinton administration's pandering to swing voters. To succeed, Clinton's Democratic Party deemed it necessary to



heed the will of the people. A flawed system of government that would not have been out of place on Varos.

Dennis also explores economic systems and the way they effect the dark world of Varos. He cleverly boils economics down to its relevant parts and applies it to Doctor Who – Morgus' machinations in The Caves of Androzani are a strong example of financial concerns helping to drive a plot. Dennis makes the reader comfortably familiar with terms like neoliberalism (using market solutions to solve social problems) and capitalist realism (capitalism as the only viable system to live by). Understanding the systems Martin set out to satirize increases our appreciation of Vengeance on Varos as a whole – and reminds us what Doctor Who is capable of in the hands of a skilled writer (see also The Sunmak-

ers, Oxygen and The Lie of the Land). In another chapter, Dennis looks at our fascination with and regulation of violence in film and television. Varos indisputably takes the 'video nasty' scare of the '80s and plays it out on a galactic scale. The scare itself is part of a cycle of blaming bad things on media, be they comic books, video games, the internet or VHS tapes available in corner shops. Dennis succinctly defines snuff films, where people are apparently killed on camera, although he does not delve deeply into real-life public executions, which are another influence on Martin's contentious script. Fortunately, Dennis notes, not that many people surf the web to watch extreme violence or torture – certainly not the whole planet.

Doctor Who ended four years after Vengeance on Varos aired. Like Arak and Etta, fans were left to ask, 'what shall we do now?' Many Whovians went on to create or participate in their own stories, which did not principally focus on violence or horror movie pastiches but on the sheer energy and enthusiasm of being a part of the show. Perhaps Varos enjoyed a new renaissance too. As this in-depth, well-researched book reminds us, the story itself definitely deserves a revival, or at least a rerun on our DVD machines.

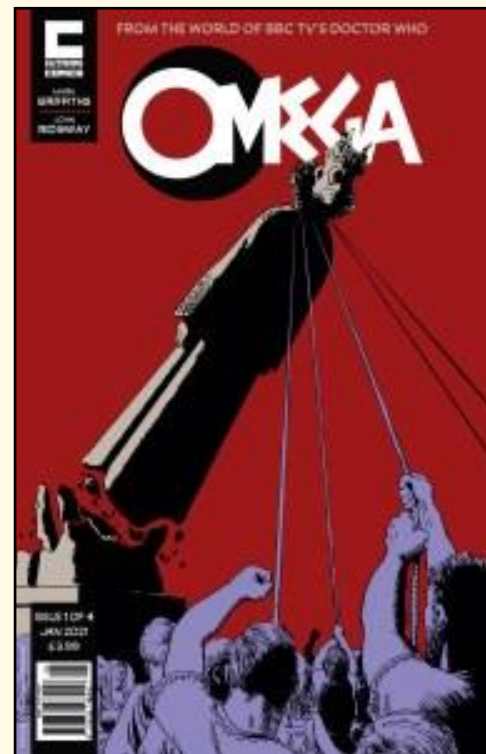
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OMEGA ISSUE 1

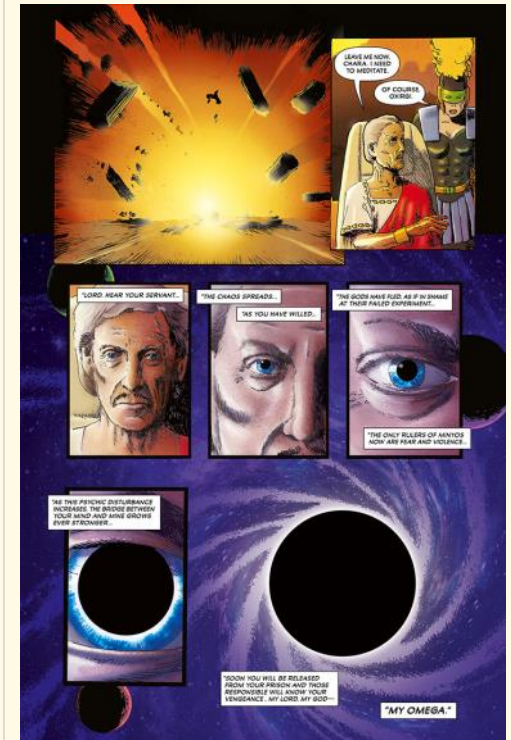
Review by Rik Moran

I was not sure what to expect going into reading issue 1 of Cutaway Comic's 'Omega'. All I really knew was that the artwork was being done by John Ridgway who had impressed me with this work on the 'Lytton' comic series.



Ridgway like with his previous work delivers more superb pieces of art yet gives a very different look and feel to 'Lytton' Both are period pieces and both are wonderfully captured by the artist.

Most important of course is the story. We get both a prequel and a sequel in one here. Full credit to writer Mark Griffiths for working out all the strands. It is cleverly done and I look forward to seeing how the story progresses.



If you've enjoyed Omega's previous appearances in Doctor Who, this is well worth checking out.

7/10

[You can find out more about the 'Cutaway Comics' range, including 'Omega' and 'Lytton' here](#)

THE LEGEND OF THE TRAVELLING TARDIS

Podcast Review by Nick Smith

It started nine years ago with a little die cast TARDIS.

Self-described super fan Christian Basel, from Florida, decided to take pictures of it wherever he went; on a shelf in Publix while he shopped for groceries; Home Depot and Lowes, the DIY stores; Staples while he bought office supplies. The little toy TARDIS got around town, and was seen in all sorts of notable nooks and crannies. But it was destined for greater things.

Basel went to conventions, meeting friends, attending and hosting panels. The travelling TARDIS came with him, landing in the hands of con-goers and guests. 'At first it was, "can I get your pic with the TARDIS,"' says Basel, 'then it was, "where's your TARDIS?"' Everybody wanted the hashtag to become part of the legend.'

Basel's hobby became a must-do photo opp. The panels and friendships led to podcasts and now Basel hosts The Legend of the Traveling TARDIS Radio Show, broadcast on iHeart Radio and several other media platforms. Needless to say Basel is no shy guy, with no qualms about

sharing his opinions about his podcast and Doctor Who.

'Gareth Pomichter has a show called Hangin With Web, which I was on,' says Basel. 'Then he said it was time for my own. I like being the Bernie Taupin to the Elton Johns [of this world], but I have been leader of band at conventions so after a while I was convinced.' Basel premiered with a 30-minute show the same weekend that Jodie Whittaker's Doctor fell to earth, the first of many podcasts covering a broad range of subjects, from classic monsters to new episode predictions.

Expanded to an hour, the show has featured an exciting variety of guests including Andrew Cartmel, Sylvester McCoy, Nick Briggs, Yee Jee Tso, Dominic McGlynn, Jason Connery, Katy Manning, Sophie Aldred, Tim Treloar, Velile Tshabalala (Rosita), Ian McNeice (Winston Churchill) and Simon Fisher-Becker (Dorium Maldovar), who has become part of the podcasting team aka a "travelling companion." Basel says the show is for, 'whoever wants to listen. We have audiences in the UK, Germany, Malaysia, Poland...' Despite having an estimated 42,000 listeners, Basel can't quit his job to run away and join circus yet, 'but we have sponsors that keep us going and make sure the show continues to run.'

From the outset, Basel wanted to address important issues such as



bullying in the Whoniverse, 'which escalated with the controversy of [female Doctor] Jodie Whittaker,' disabilities and the treatment of challenged characters, and the COVID Pandemic's effects on Who cast and crew. 'This was a situation where they couldn't do anything,' says Basel. 'They want to advertise the project they're working on.' Basel says the podcast gave them a voice to tell listeners about their projects – for example, Sylvester McCoy's movies The Owners and Lost at Christmas; Nick Briggs' Big Finish audios; even actors with cameos in sundry films and TV shows.

So why does Basel care so much about Doctor Who and the people who make the programme? He chalks it down to the inspiration Tom Baker's Doctor provided when Basel was a smart, nerdy kid. 'Everybody had their own favourite,' he explains, 'Transformers, GI Joe, Batman, DC, Marvel. From what I remember, the Doctor was the only

character I could relate to. He didn't pick up a weapon, he outsmarted the villains, calling them names like "Chop Suey the Galactic Emperor."

Basel's go-to hero was more cerebral than Optimus Prime or Bruce Wayne. He didn't have big muscles to take on gods and monsters and he did it with a big smile on his face. 'It was his alien side that I admired the most. At the end of Key to Time he does that eye flutter and Romana asks if he's alright... those kinds of things I love in my hero. He has no utility belt, he succeeds with wit, intelligence and style. He's almost the James bond of superheroes!'

Basel's passion for his podcast comes from another source. 'The driving force behind the show started when I attended a panel about Jodie – I think it was Florida Supercon. I asked everybody who was happy with the casting to raise their hand, then anyone who was on fence, then everyone who doesn't like the choice.' Two women didn't interact at all but talked to Basel afterwards. 'They didn't want to say it during the panel but they weren't happy.' Basel recalls. 'It sucks that people have to stay in the background. Everybody has an opinion. My show is anti-Twitter, I welcome opinions whether I like them or not. My favourite compliment of all time is when someone says, "Christian, I never thought of that but I agree with you."

The host is mindful that when Chris Chibnall was young, he took on John Nathan-Turner and Pip and Jane Baker. He feels that the Whoniverse has lost the freedom for fans to express their opinions without being attacked. He has his own issues with the current show and strong beliefs about what the Doctor should or shouldn't be.

'She's just a humble Gallifreyan,' Basel reckons, 'righting wrongs and going places. She is the Doctor because of the choices she makes. Chibnall said he wasn't going to have any classic writers, no classic monsters, nothing from the past. That is where you are wrong. Russell T. Davies could have started everything over but he used what made Doctor Who great, bringing in the Daleks, Cybermen and Sontarans along with new monsters like the Vashta Nerada and Weeping Angels. There's a 50-year treasure trove of unexplored stories.'

With its mix of controversy and tolerance, the Travelling TARDIS podcast is undeniably popular, Basel wants to keep it going and fulfil a life goal of going to all the major conventions. 'If I can talk about my favourite show and incorporate people into the podcast, then I've done my job.'

[You can visit the podcast website and subscribe via various channels by visiting the website here](#)

THE LONELY ASSASSINS

Interview by Nick Smith

Maze Theory has been creating fascinating games for three years with intricate adventures like Peaky Blinders: The King's Ransom and Project Engram. Their Doctor Who projects include the VR game The Edge of Time and an expanded console and PC game, The Edge of Reality.

Maze Theory has partnered with Kaigan Games, developer/publishers of Sara is Missing and Simulacra to make a new 'found phone adventure' called The Lonely Assassins, which brings characters from the beloved Tenth Doctor story Blink to your phone. An appropriately creepy teaser trailer dropped in February, featuring Petronella Osgood and Larry Nightingale.

Cosmic Masque reached out to Andrew Black of Maze Theory to find out more about The Lonely Assassins, and the questionable wisdom of putting the image of a Weeping Angel on a phone! Several people from the Maze Theory team joined in, from the CEO to developers, to give us the full story of this fascinating game.

Cosmic Masque: Tell us a little about Maze Theory and how it came to be.

MAZE THEORY: Maze Theory was founded in 2018 by Ian Hambleton and Marcus Moresby. Along with a founding collective of fellow, like-minded creatives and games industry veterans, they were inspired by the idea of creating content that explores interesting and unexpected narrative experiences. The company remains true that philosophy in the game content we have delivered to date and will continue to deliver over the coming years.

CM: Can you give us a timeline, from idea to release?

MT: The timeline from idea to release can be as quick as 6-12 months or can be 2-3 years depending on game complexity, development and tech resource requirements. All the Doctor Who games have been about a year in development, from ideation to launch. The team do a lot of work upfront, working with the writers to ensure authenticity – that lore from the Doctor Who universe is strictly observed – whilst also developing new and innovative ways to bring this incredible universe to life.

CM: Can you talk us through the gameplay a bit? How does it feel to play the game?

MT: The Lonely Assassins as a game exists in the same timeline as Edge of Time and Edge of Reality, but it immerses the player in an original story featuring well-known characters from the show. Without giving

too much away, it also builds on the events of one of our favourite Doctor Who episodes, Blink, looking at what happened to some of those characters after their first encounter with the infamous Weeping Angels. The style of game and gameplay is a 'found phone' game: you've discovered someone else's phone and, with the help of a special assistant, you need to uncover the mystery of what happened to its former owner by using the phone's interface and functionality. There are puzzles to solve and clues to uncover, emails to decode, and characters to interact with.

CM: How important was it for you to include Doctor Who characters like Osgood?

MT: We wanted The Lonely Assassins to really deliver on fan expectations of what a Doctor Who game should be, so not only was it essential to include known and loved characters such as Osgood and Larry, we also returned to the fan-favourite 'Blink' episode itself. Taking this absolutely seminal episode, we reimaged the story and created a natural extension of the story in a way we hope fans will love.

As well as working with the talented actors, it was also really important for us to work with a Doctor Who writer like Gavin Collinson [Snowfall, The Horror of Coal Hill], who has a deep understanding and appreciation of the universe.

CM: Do you have a demographic in mind?

MT: What we love about Doctor Who is that it is one of those rare TV brands that is both part of the popular imagination, but is also almost universally enjoyed by young and old alike. So with that, we don't feel there is a single demographic – we hope, like the show to appeal to a broad audience.

CM: What makes The Lonely Assassins stand out from other games like this?

MT: We think the answer to this is simple and twofold - 'Blink' and the strength of the Doctor Who brand. We also partnered with Kaigan Games, renowned for this genre of game, to bring the new episode to life in a brilliantly crafted experience. We think the result really sets the game apart from other mobile games, and specifically other found-phone experiences.

CM: Do you have long-term goals for The Lonely Assassins?

MT: Well, we'd like for as many people as possible to experience it! And we would of course love to continue the story beyond this first chapter.

CM: The Weeping Angels also crop up in The Edge of Reality. What do you think is their appeal?

MT: The Weeping Angels are defi-

nately one of the best ever antagonists in fiction period.

Their appeal is probably different for different people. For us, we think there is a general felt sense or fear that lifelike statues are always somehow slightly sinister. What we also think is really intriguing, is the surprise and terror generated by something seemingly static but yet also somehow a real danger.

And then there is the idea of the stalking threat which is a classic device in horror but somehow when embodied by the Weeping Angels is uniquely powerful, whether that's in -game or on screen.

CM: Anything else you'd like to tell us about?

MT: Pre-registration for The Lonely Assassins is open now on the App Store, Google Play Store and Steam, and we'll be offering a series of free reward packs that will unlock as more players register their interest. As soon as we reach the first milestone, we'll be releasing the Story Pack, and each additional milestone reached will unlock further free rewards at launch, such as wallpapers and posters. It's a brilliant way for us to say thank you to the Doctor Who community for supporting the game.

[To find out more about Maze Theory and the game click here](#)

10 THINGS I LIKE ABOUT WHO

By Nick Smith

It's hard to put your finger on the appeal of Doctor Who, or why it has lasted 58 years. Here are 10 motifs, characters and... things that have led to my personal passion for Who.

1. Mechanical Voices

The T-Mat reports to Commander Radnor. D84's calm request, 'please do not throw hands at me.' The warbling, childlike Quarks and the remorseless Cybermen. Memorable and easy to imitate, these voices help imbue faceless machines with character. They unsettle or scare you, help create a sense of a larger world outside their stories, and are sorely missed when they fade away.

2. Graham O'Brien



A wise man once said, 'you can tell a lot about people by their shoes.' You can tell a lot about Graham by the glee he gets from using his laser shoes. Kind, likeable and possessing all the best one-liners, this compan-

ion is down-to-earth even when he's marooned in space—a highlight of the Thirteenth Doctor's reign so far.

3. Kind-Hearted Jibes

'I think this is one of those instances where discretion is the better part of valour. Jamie has an idea.' The Second Doctor picking on Jamie, the Brigadier joking about the Doctor's singing, the First Doctor picking on Chesterton... these jibes are never cruel because we know how much the characters care for each other.

4. Twitch Trailers

The best aspect of the Twitch marathons of 2019 was being able to catch stories I hadn't seen in years, such as The Sensorites, The Green Death and Invasion of the Dinosaurs. The second best? The trailers that ran over and over, like a brainwashing tactic, between episodes, reiterating quotable quotes like, 'London 1965!' 'But I should have to put my hand inside!' 'You haven't seen the



quality of my footwork yet.' 'Do I have the right?' Twitch had the right to sync Fourth Doctor clips to the Trial of a Time Lord theme and, while

some action was matched, other clip choices seemed as eccentric as the Doctor.

5. Songs

Lockdown has brought new emotional depth to songs like “Vale Decem” but songs have been an intrinsic part of Who for a long time now. Delta and the Bannermen’s “Here’s to the Future” is simple yet spins perfectly on its ‘50s axis and Stormzy provided an unbeatable lure for giant spiders in Arachnids in the UK, while Soft Cell’s “Tainted Love” is the perfect classical music for the end of the world.

6. Nick Briggs

From interviewing Doctor Who’s cast and crew in the Myth Makers series to livening up conventions and playing the Doctor in audio adventures, it’s been a pleasure to follow the affable Nick Briggs’ career and see him become part of the official show, producing polished, licensed audios (Big Finish) and popping up in Torchwood: Children of Earth as Deputy Prime Minister Rick Yates. Will Nick join the official government next? Yates turned out to be unscrupulous, when the next election comes around I am fully prepared to Vote Briggs.

7. Messing Around with Wires

We’re not quite sure what the Doctor’s doing when he messes around with a tangle of wires but it certainly is fun to see him wrap those cords together and fix a machine in his messy manner. Nutty professor

meets elemental electrician in classics like The Seeds of Death and Remembrance of the Daleks.

8. Feeling Smart

Aztec rituals, Marco Polo’s travels, Nikola Tesla’s inventions... in its efforts to educate and inform, Doctor Who has left a fascinating trail to follow through science and history, guaranteed to increase your knowledge and make you sound smart at parties.

9. The Sublime Meets the Ludicrous

A robot dog versus a robot parrot. Companions flushed down a plug-hole. A flying shark and a killer Christmas tree. All these silly ideas have been taken from inception to mind-boggling creation with confidence and elan, leading to scenes I will never forget.

10. A Hopeful Future



Concerns of the past – that the Beeb will cancel or trash Doctor Who – are moot now that the show exists in so many media. There’s no need for distress. Even if the Doctor drops off the air, the Whoniverse will continue to exist and grow, enthralling the next generation of fans.

EDITORIAL

By Stephen Hatcher

Welcome again to another Cosmic Masque Fiction Section, in which I am proud to present five more previously unpublished Doctor Who stories, written by our members and readers.

The Plague Year of 2020 has been and gone but the New Year seems to have brought few changes to the daily lives of most of us here in the UK. We are still in Lockdown. Many of us have more time on our hands than usual; although, with home schooling and the mental demands of the uncertain situation, many of us have found that we are busier than ever.

The Lockdown has affected our writers in different ways. I am hearing from many, including from several experienced, professional writers, that they are finding it very difficult to process ideas and settle to work. Others have had extraordinarily productive bursts of activity, leading to some great writing from people who have known that they wanted to write for years, but have only now found the moment to get around to it.

One such is Paul Burns, whose first story Devil’s Keep was published in CM11. Paul has gone on over the past year to write several great stories – not all of them related to Doctor Who, and has contributed more than one to published anthologies, both online and in print. This issue, we are delighted to be able to print his fabulous evocation of the early 80s club scene, Scary Mon-

sters, featuring the Thirteenth Doctor and her crew, which was written to mark the fifth anniversary of the passing of David Bowie.

We visit the pop scene of a decade earlier in Mark Jones’ first story for Cosmic Masque. Space Rock is a terrific tale which features the Third Doctor, Jo Grant, UNIT and the Master. Mark is an experienced writer, who has written for television, including for Gerry Anderson. He has contributed to the Candy Jar Lethbridge-Stewart range and has written books for children.

Another new writer to Cosmic Masque is Nicole Monique Pollard, whose fun little story Are We Married? gives us a fascinating glimpse into the complicated social life of a Time Lord’s spouse.

Richard Wright is a returning writer, who contributed Creation Myths to CM X. His Out of the Pit is an intriguing sequel to the TV story The Satan Pit, featuring The Tenth Doctor and Martha Jones.

Finally, I thought it was about time I wrote another story for Cosmic Masque. I Dreamed That I Saw Unicorns features the Twelfth Doctor. The title is stolen from a line in the song Unicorns written by Bill Caddick, which is on the 1980 June Tabor and Martin Simpson album, A Cut Above. I urge you to have a listen.

I do hope you enjoy the work of our talented writers. Remember, we are always looking for more stories for future issues of Cosmic Masque. If you have one to tell, get in touch and maybe we can give it a home?

Stephen

SCARY MONSTERS

By Paul Burns

"Can you sign it to Graham please?" Graham O' Brien couldn't believe he was standing in front of David Bowie. The regulars of the Blitz Club were downstairs, unaware their musical hero was upstairs, signing a copy of the *Hunky Dory* album for him. Graham felt nervous, beads of sweat formed on his brow, and he couldn't think of a thing to say to his idol. The Doctor waved her Sonic Screwdriver around the window frame, outside she could see the long queue of hopefuls waiting to get into the club as the rain lashed down onto Covent Garden. She checked the readings on her device and joined the dry mouthed Graham and Bowie. "David, big fan," she smiled, almost curtsying: "That album sleeve for *The Man Who Sold the World*. Totally ahead of your time with that one. Genius."

David handed Graham's album back to him, and Graham instinctively hugged it to his body. "You still haven't really told me why you're here, Doctor, I did tell Steve and Rusty to keep my visit here under wraps."

"I appreciate your need for discretion," The Doctor replied. "But things have been happening here, things that are beyond the scope of the police. I honestly can't believe I'm asking this, to David Bowie of all people, but..." she fixed her eyes on

Bowie, "do you believe in aliens?"

Yaz leant against the wall of the small cloakroom with her arms folded. The man who had just insulted her clothes smiled in satisfaction to himself, then fixed her with a steely expression. "Girl, if you're going to get upset at a throwaway comment about your blouse, you're not going to last five minutes working here."

She looked at the man, his make-up was flawless. He carried an air of authority, and she watched him deal with the regulars as they were allowed in and gave over their coats to him. She quickly realised his waspish put downs, always delivered in that low, smoky voice, were not reserved solely for her. She started to smile at his sharp, cruel wit, which the regulars were obviously used to, and they simply returned arched eyebrows and chilly silences. The Doctor had used her psychic paper to get her and her fam into the club. She positioned Ryan on the door as security, and Yaz as a cloakroom attendant. Time was of the essence and introductions hadn't happened. "I'm Yaz," she said, holding out her hand to the man.

As his head turned, his dreadlocks, protruding from his oversized white skipper cap, were thrown over his left shoulder dramatically. "Georgina," he imperiously stated, followed by a smile. "You can call me George."

Spandau Ballet filled the club with their music, as brightly painted and

extravagantly clothed New Romantics swayed delicately. Some threw shapes, some simply posed. Androgynous youth, escaping the drudgery of life to express themselves with their chosen tribe.

Upstairs, the Doctor explained to Bowie why she was there. "There have been reports of people going missing from this club, and turning up, days later, acting very oddly."

Bowie raised his eyebrows: "How could you tell if the Blitz clientele were acting oddly?" he said, "That's a prerequisite for getting in here."

The Doctor crinkled her nose, "It's the missing part I'm focusing on. People here are leaving the club, and then losing thirty-six hours from their lives before they turn up in their homes." She then waved her sonic in the air. "Look, I know people go missing in London all the time, but this device is telling me there's definitely alien activity here." She stalled, and then couldn't resist it. "It's a real space oddity." Tumbleweed followed. She cleared her throat. "While I was downstairs, I noticed something, Black armbands! Has anyone died recently?"

Graham looked down at his album and narrowed his eyes. "Doc, this autograph. I've seen loads on eBay; this doesn't look like any of them."

"Plus, Graham, David Bowie has anisocoria. One pupil bigger than the other, giving the illusion of different eye colours. This 'Bowie's' pupils are exactly the same size. And speaking of illusion..." The Doctor dramatical-

ly brandished her sonic in 'Bowie's' direction. "Not so clever, missed out the tiny details like eyes and handwriting. Apart from that, a perfect copy!" She examined her sonic. "Graham, meet one of the Chameleons!"

Suddenly, there was screaming from outside. The Doctor looked out the window to see Ryan surrounded by the queue, reaching out to him. "Doctor, help! I'd fight back, but I honestly can't tell which ones are the men!" The Doctor aimed her sonic at a lamppost and it exploded. Ryan used the distraction to push through the crowd and into the club, to be met by George, leading Yaz by the hand, out of the cloakroom.

The queue had followed Ryan into the club and began attacking the people inside. "Follow me!" barked George, pushing through the escalating fray.

"In here!" George yelled, leading Yaz and Ryan into a back room in the club. Tony Hadley lunged at him and George punched him to the ground, before closing the door. George smiled at Ryan's shocked expression. "Honey, I may wear a bit of lippy, but under all this is a six-foot son of an Irish mother. I get all my best traits from her!"

After convincing Yaz and Ryan nothing was getting past a reinforced door that always ensured certain club goers' privacy, George handed them both cups of tea. "I do love a cuppa" he smiled. "Look, don't worry," said Yaz. "The Doctor will put a

stop to whatever's going on." George sipped his tea. "To be honest, I just thought it was a normal Tuesday. That was until Tony Hadley wanted to kill me. Literally this time!" George saw Ryan look at his phone: "What on Earth is that?" he said, grabbing it.

Ryan looked in panic at Yaz. "Look, it's a phone, but you're not supposed to know about them, they are way in your future."

George played with it and managed to find Ryan's playlist. Stormzy started pumping out. "Wow, how does it do that?" yelled George. "It's got all my tunes on it, thousands of them."

George raised a perfectly sculpted eyebrow. "Songs? I'm a songwriter. Every single one of them about my boyfriend, Jon. Had another row tonight, he can't make up his mind if he's Arthur or Martha."

Ryan looked shocked. "Pretty sure you can't say stuff like that." George shot him a death stare. "You know, PC and all that."

"What do the police have to do with this?" George replied.

Upstairs, in the small office, the Doctor stared at the alien wearing the form of David Bowie: "The Chameleons are survivors of an explosion on their home planet that robbed them of their individual identities." she explained to Graham. "They steal bodies and feed off the originals' life force."

"You stole David Bowie?" barked a furious Graham.

"Oh, this one's mind, Doctor," the

Chameleon hissed, "Glorious, fluid, ever changing. Bursting with imagination. We have never experienced such a kaleidoscopic landscape. With this mind as a beacon, it was easy to subjugate his acolytes. These New Romantics will be the foot soldiers of the glorious conquest of earth."

The Chameleon produced a ray gun and fired at the Doctor. She expertly countered the blast with her sonic. "Graham! The armband, tear it off!"

Graham flew at the Chameleon but was battered away. "I will not give up this form so easily, Doctor. I will drain his beautiful mind and bring his creations to life."

The Doctor gasped as phantoms began appearing behind the Chameleon.

"We've evolved Doctor. We can now make hidden demons, buried monsters come alive."

The Doctor saw the creatures, created by Bowie's rich imagination move towards her. Contorted versions of his many aliases. Ziggy Stardust, Aladdin Sane, the Thin White Duke and several nightmare images of Pterot clowns, with open mouths bearing razor sharp teeth, all moving slowly towards the Doctor. She smiled. "Parlour tricks!" she snorted.

"Oh, you're clever, making all kinds of gadgets like hypnotic pens. Not such a leap to create hallucinations." She pressed a setting on her sonic, waved it, and the phantoms disappeared. She leapt to her feet and ripped off the Chameleon's black

arm band. It collapsed, gasping. The image of David Bowie melted off its form, leaving behind a featureless husk of lichen tissue. "One chance. Release the club goers, tell us where the host bodies are, or you die." Realising it could not breathe in the earth's atmosphere without the connection to the human's host body, the Chameleon had little choice but to comply.

The Chameleon Controller mentally issued a command to the club clientele duplicates, they dutifully removed their armbands and collapsed. Spurred by the silence, George hesitantly opened the door to the back room and emerged. He bent down and picked up one of the discarded armbands. "I told everyone how cheap these looked." he sniffed.

Graham guided the controller downstairs. The Doctor followed and spoke to George. "Hi George, love the hat."

"How do you know my name?"

"Pretty soon, everyone is going to know your name. But for now, I need your help, we need to get the Chameleons into my TARDIS, then we need to pay a visit to the NCP car park outside and rescue your friends."

George, used to unusual requests, didn't bat an eyelid and replied: "Honey, I've carried Marilyn out of this club so many times, a load of unconscious peacocks will be a piece of cake."

"Oh my God! David Bowie!" squealed George, as he saw his idol among the bodies of the club goers in the car park. As he tried to retain his cool, unsuccessfully, the Doctor ensured that all the white arm bands, which kept the human hosts comatose, were removed.

Yaz turned to the Doctor. "This was all quite easy Doctor," she said. "No life-threatening danger, or even running down loads of corridors. I basically had a cup of tea with Boy George."

"The Chameleons are geniuses," the Doctor replied, "but basically, pretty stupid. They place all their trust in an arm band. Easy for them to take people over, even easier for us to stop them. Never mind, the Daleks will pop up soon enough!" Yaz smiled. "Right," said the Doctor. "The TARDIS is keeping the Chameleons in time-locked stasis to stop them melting into blobs, need to get them off this planet!"

The Doctor walked out of the car park, as each New Romantic host stumbled to their feet. Yaz grinned as she watched George continuing to gush over a recovering David Bowie. Ryan looked at his phone. "Yaz, look at what the biggest selling song of 1983 was."

Yaz looked at the phone and laughed: "Karma Chameleon by Culture Club! So, they're not all about Jon then..."

After travelling to the Shadow Proclamation and depositing the faction of Chameleons with the Judoon, the

Doctor used her TARDIS to travel back to Covent Garden. She walked over to David Bowie. "Just been chatting to Graham, nice guy, told me his old bus route went through Brixton," he said. "Get everything cleared up, Doctor?"

"No problem," she shrugged. They watched the club goers stagger from the car park, dazed and confused. "The Blitz Club was a perfect target for the Chameleons," said the Doctor. "Club full of people adopting different personas, new identities, ideal place to spearhead a stealth invasion." David smirked. "What a gloriously insane world you must live in, Doctor. Quite right too, I've always found staying sane overrated. That's kind of what my new album is about, the descent into madness." He took a glance back at the Blitz Club. "You know, I got the title Scary Monsters from a Corn Flakes advert, after what has happened tonight, it's even more resonant." He smiled at her. "Got a name for you," he said, his eyes twinkled. "Lady Stardust." The Doctor beamed her approval. "Love the Ziggy Stardust album. And I'll be proud to share that name with Marc! Thanks David."

He gently kissed her hand. She blushed. "Gotta go!" she said, regaining her composure. "Round the troops up. Have a fabulous life David. So many people depend on you. These New Romantics happened in part because of you. Disenfranchised youngsters finding their tribe, worshipping at the altar of the Starman. Keep inspiring people, because

your music makes so many people feel as if they're not alone in the universe. Me included." As she was about to leave, the Doctor produced another copy of Hunky Dory. "Sorry David, have you got a pen?"

The Doctor joined Graham, still standing outside the Blitz Club. She handed him the album; this time signed by the real David Bowie. Graham waved his goodbye to Bowie. "Not mind-wiping him then?"

"Nah, all this is fuel to a creative mind like David's. Not that I'm blowing my own trumpet, but who do you think inspired the lyrics for Loving the Alien?" The Doctor looked at her friend. "You've been crying."

"Sorry Doc, the old survivor's guilt kicking in." She placed her hand on his shoulder. "I've just met one of my heroes," Graham sighed. "That man's music got me through a lot of darkness in my life. I used to listen to Hunky Dory on my iPod when I was having chemo. Grace used to pull one of my headphones out and put it in her ear, and we listened together. That beautiful woman and Bowie, getting me through cancer. When he died, all I could think was, why did I make it, a bus driver from Chingford? Why did it take that brilliant, amazing man?"

The Doctor rubbed his arm. "Because, sometimes, it has to leave a few brilliant, amazing men behind."

Graham wiped his cheek and smiled at the Doctor. "Come on," she said. "Time to go."

SPACE ROCK

By Mark Jones

It all started on a sunny mid-summer Friday morning. The Doctor was in his laboratory at UNIT headquarters. He sat at a workbench cluttered with all manner of electronic paraphernalia. His entire focus was on the TARDIS dematerialisation circuit which he peered at intently through a jeweller's loop, all the while muttering to himself. In fact, it was more than muttering. It was a tirade of abuse aimed at the Time Lords for taking away his knowledge of time travel.

Across the lab, Jo Grant, the Doctor's assistant, sat perched on a high stool. As usual, she was fashionably dressed – keeping up with the latest trends she had informed the Doctor haughtily when he had queried her choice of footwear. Jo was wearing a purple mini skirt with thigh length white platform boots. The Doctor had enquired whether she was planning on going salmon fishing, likening her boots to a pair of angler's waders!

Jo glanced across the lab wondering to herself for the hundredth time just what the Doctor was trying to achieve. He had often described the antiquated blue police box that stood in the corner of the laboratory as a TARDIS and that it could travel

through time and space, if he could only remember how it worked. Jo took these remarks with a pinch of salt, often accusing the Doctor of teasing her.

The relative peace of the lab was disturbed by the entrance of Captain Mike Yates who was Officer in Charge of UNIT whilst Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart was away in Geneva attending a high-level security conference.

"Morning Doctor, morning Jo," Yates called out.

Jo was pleased to see him. She secretly thought the Captain was very handsome and dashing and she held out hope that one day he might ask her out on a proper date, rather than some secret undercover mission. Mike strode across to the Doctor's workbench and dropped a beige folder on top of the scattered electrical components. Transistors, valves, wires and fuses flew in all directions.

"For Pete's sake man!" exclaimed the Doctor in annoyance.

"Sorry Doc," replied Yates, "but this is urgent."

The Doctor removed the jeweller's loop from his eye and glanced at the folder which was clearly marked 'Top Secret' in bold red letters.

"Orders from the Brigadier, Doctor," continued Captain Yates. "He's just been on the phone from Geneva. Said I had to give you this folder immediately. He wants you to study the contents and be ready to receive further instructions."



The Doctor glanced at the folder. "You can inform the Brigadier that I do not take orders or instructions, Captain," the Doctor replied in a matter of fact tone.

"Sorry Doc, but I'm just following my orders," replied Mike as he made a swift exit from the lab.

Jo, who had been watching this exchange with amusement, crossed over to a transistor radio and switched it on. The lab was immediately filled with the sound of rock music.

"Oh wow, groovy!" she exclaimed. "Lunartune."

"What on Earth is that racket?" exclaimed the Doctor.

"It's Lunartune, Doctor," replied Jo. "Aren't they fab? This is their latest number, 'Cosmic Trip'! It's already number four in the charts."

The Doctor, trying to ignore the cacophony, picked up the folder and begrudgingly began to study the contents. Soon he was absorbed in the information ...

TOP SECRET: PROJECT QUASSIUM - UNIT FILE 1965/001

In December 1965, a white light was reported streaking across the sky in Llandegla, Wales. The 'object' was witnessed by a number of motorists travelling on the A494 between Ruthin and Mold. Reports stated that an 'object' crashed into a nearby valley, exploding on impact. Frightened locals reported the incident to local police who in turn informed the military.

An army unit was immediately sent to the location where they discovered the 'remains' of what was termed an unidentified flying object. Operation 'Secure the Nation' was implemented, and the area cordoned off for a radius of three miles. A specialist retrieval squad was deployed, and all remains removed. The area was then forensically cleaned, and all local witnesses were briefed under the Official Secrets Act not to say anything to anybody about what they may have witnessed. A cover story was issued to the press stating an RAF prototype jet had crashed during a test flight.

The recovered materials were transported to Fort X, the above top-secret research base situated on Gruinard Island off the west coast of Scotland. This base was established in 1949 fol-

lowing the island's use for biological warfare testing during World War II. British military scientists led by Sir Oliver Graham Sutton exploded a germ bomb on the island in 1942, releasing a deadly strain of Anthrax, 'Vollum 14578'. The 'success' of these experiments led to widespread contamination of the island, any human setting foot on Gruinard, signing their own death warrant. With this 'natural deterrent' offering an unprecedented level of security, it was decided to set up a research base on the island, hermetically sealed from the outside world, all personnel visiting the base having to go through a rigorous decontamination process on entry and exit.

The Doctor glanced up from the report, taking a moment to digest the information. He continued to read:

After several years' research, the scientists discovered that the object was indeed an 'alien craft' which used a propulsion system based on a complex chemical formula. Reverse engineering this, they were able to replicate the formula and named it 'Quassium A'. This fuel element was later used to power the UK's 'Black Arrow' rocket system based at Hengistbury Head on the Isle of Wight.

Quassium A proved to be highly effective and now a refined version, 'Quassium B' is being tested with the intention of using the fuel to launch a British deep space exploration mission, code name Avalon. Initial testing has proven successful, but scientists are

warning that Quassium B is more unstable than its predecessor and may have as yet unknown side effects on humans. However, the mission is progressing with a test launch scheduled in two weeks ...

The Doctor placed the papers back in their folder.

"Anything interesting, Doctor?" asked Jo.

She had been observing the Doctor for the past ten minutes, noticing how absorbed he had been with the folder's contents.

"As usual, Jo," he replied, "the military meddling where they shouldn't and paying no heed to potential catastrophic consequences."

He brushed off Jo's further questioning and changing the subject, asked her what plans she had for the weekend.

"I'm going to see Lunartune in concert this evening," she replied.

"Would you like to come?"

"Wild horses wouldn't drag me to listen to that row," he replied.

Later that day, the Doctor was still in his laboratory. The door of the TARDIS was open, and a trail of wires led from the police box to a gadget the Doctor had assembled on his workbench.

Captain Yates cautiously opened the door of the lab and looked around for the Doctor. Seeing the lab was empty, he was about to leave when the Doctor appeared from within his blue box.

"Ah, there you are!" exclaimed Yates. "What have you got in there,

Doctor?" he asked as he gestured to the blue box.

"Oh, bits and pieces, you know," replied the Doctor off-handedly.

"More orders from the Brigadier I'm afraid Doctor. You're not going to like them!"

"As I've said before on numerous occasions Captain Yates, I don't take orders," replied the Doctor. "Can't you see I'm busy!"

"Well you are UNIT's scientific adviser, Doctor," replied Yates calmly. "Look at all the supplies the position allows you to requisition."

Yates glanced at the workbench where the Doctor's 'gadget' was throbbing with power, emitting a soft golden glow.

"I presume you've read the report I gave you earlier. The Brigadier's orders relate to it."

Realising he would get no peace or be able to get on with his own work, the Doctor relented.

"OK, you win, Mike. What does Lethbridge-Stewart want now?"

Yates glanced at the piece of paper he held in his hand.

"He wants you to attend the test launch of the Avalon Deep Space Mission. It's scheduled for 12.00 noon on Monday. The Brig's got a feeling in his bones that something's not quite right and as UNIT's scientific adviser, he wants you on the spot just in case."

The Doctor sighed to himself. At least he'd have the weekend to continue with his experiments.

"One further thing, Doctor. The Quassium B is being transported

from Scotland over the weekend. We don't want to draw attention to the movement. Sergeant Benton and a small team are providing security."

On the quayside at Ullapool a non-descript furniture removal lorry was being loaded with wooden crates. The lorry bore the legend, 'Lett's Be Moving', along its side.

Sergeant Benton, dressed as a typical removal man, as were his men, directed operations, ticking items off a manifest attached to a clipboard. Each wooden crate held a canister of Quassium B.

Satisfied that the loading had been completed successfully, Benton climbed behind the wheel of the truck. Two men climbed in beside him whilst another three settled in the back of the lorry to keep an eye on the Quassium B. Benton fired up the ignition and the removal lorry slowly moved off, beginning its 670 mile journey to the launch site on the Isle of Wight.

Friday evening, 8.00pm, saw Jo and her friends outside the Roundhouse in Chalk Farm, London. A large crowd had fattered, a mixture of hippies, rockers, mods and intellectuals. It seemed that Lunartune's music appealed to a broad spectrum. The crowd surged forward as the doors opened and Jo was carried into the venue on the human tide.

Inside the Roundhouse there wasn't an inch of room. The atmosphere was heavy with cigarette smoke and most probably other 'substances'. The fogginess was enhanced by clouds of dry ice which wafted across the dimly lit stage.

At 9.00pm the house lights went down and to a thunderous fanfare of classical music, Lunartune took their places on stage. The crowd spontaneously erupted at their arrival, chanting the band's name in hypnotic repetition.

Zac Zodiac, the lead singer, held his arms aloft and the crowd immediately as one became silent. Then, with a slight nod to his band mates, Zac hollered into his microphone: "We are Lunartune and we are here to blow your minds!"

Again, the crowd erupted as the band launched into '*Cosmic Trip*', guitars chugging, the bass throbbing, synthesisers and audio generators howling and the drums pounding out a beat akin to a trip hammer.

As the music filled the venue at a decibel level the Doctor would have had a fit about, so a spectacular light show began. Strobe lights, lasers, magnesium flashes and all manner of pyrotechnics added to the spectacle. Had Jo known, the experience was very similar to the TARDIS's travels through the time vortex.

For the next 90 minutes, the audience was enthralled by the concert and when the final cataclysmic notes of the encore died away, it was as if they were coming out of a hypnotic trance.

Ten minutes later, Jo and her friends found themselves outside the stage door. Mindy Lewis, one of Jo's old school friends, knew Lunartune's drummer and he had invited them backstage after the show. The stage door opened, and a tough looking roadie beckoned them in.

The backstage area after a rock concert isn't the most pleasant place in the world and Jo wrinkled up her nose at the various unpleasant aromas. She didn't feel comfortable and couldn't wait to get home. However, her friend Mindy was in her element and she had soon received an invite from the band to return with them to Blackdene Abbey, an old mansion on the banks of the River Thames near Medmenham, where the band lived in communal style and where they rehearsed. Jo accepted the invitation, thinking a weekend break by the river would be fun. And so it was that half an hour later, she found herself on the band's tour bus heading towards Blackdene Abbey.

In a strange quirk of fate, meanwhile, the Doctor had come to a decision himself. He had had no luck with his testing of the TARDIS circuitry and had decided that he could do with a break. The Brigadier kept a small

cabin cruiser on the Thames to which the Doctor had a key. A relaxing weekend afloat and a bit of fishing was just what the Doctor ordered. Throwing a few bits and pieces into a holdall, the Doctor had climbed into his trusted roadster, Bessie, and set off for the Brigadier's boat, moored near Marlow.

Sergeant Benton rubbed his tired eyes. They were itching and burning from having stared into the darkness for hours on end. The roads between Ullapool and Glasgow did not have streetlights and although the moon was up, it wasn't full, and its glow did little to illuminate the countryside.

The headlights of the removal lorry pierced the darkness. Benton snapped to full attention. There was something dark blocking the road ahead. He blinked rapidly trying to focus more clearly, his brain trying to interpret the information. He slowed the lorry to a crawl. "Look sharp men," he said in a low voice. "Could be trouble."

The removal truck came to a halt. The road was blocked by a helicopter. The craft was painted black all over, including the rotor blades and had no markings of any sort. There was nobody around. Sergeant Benton and his squad climbed out of the truck and with side arms drawn, approached the helicopter. All was still. Reaching the chopper, Benton peered inside. A body was slumped across the flight controls. Not be-

lieving anything was amiss and assuming the pilot had had to make some kind of emergency landing, Benton opened the door on the pilot's side and reached out to the body.

Sudden movement and a flash of purple light. Benton staggered back as the slumped body sprang into action. The soldiers surged forward to defend their Sergeant only to be stopped in their tracks as a piercing whine emitted from a stubby tube the 'body' was holding. In seconds, all Benton's men had been reduced to the size of an Action Man and lay scattered on the ground beneath the helicopter. Benton recovered his senses and staggered to his feet.

"Greetings Sergeant," purred the Master. "How nice to see you again!" Benton took a step forward but the Master's tissue compression eliminator stopped him from any rash action. Benton then made the mistake of staring into the Master's eyes.

"Sergeant Benton, you will obey me," the Master silkily intoned. Benton's eyes fluttered before he muttered, "I will obey you."

The next half hour saw Benton transport the Quassium B from the removal truck to the helicopter. Once all was aboard, the Master drove the truck into woodland beside the road, very effectively concealing it from prying eyes. He then came up behind the docile Benton and slugged him heavily across the back of his neck. Benton slumped to the floor. The Master heaved the

Sergeant's body behind the wheel of the truck, paused to admire his handy work and then took his place at the controls of the helicopter. The peace of the night was broken by the sound of the chopper taking to the air and flying south.

The River Thames flowed serenely through the Buckinghamshire countryside. A small cabin cruiser bobbed at its mooring as if dancing in the pale moonlight. The summer night was disturbed by the crunching of tyres on gravel as the Doctor pulled up on the tow path in Bessie. He fished the boat's key from a pocket in his tartan cloak – a garment he habitually wore whatever the weather. He then athletically jumped on board the boat, unlocked the cabin and flopped down on the single bed. He didn't often sleep, but with the quiet of the night and the gentle bobbing motion of the boat he felt like forty winks.

Not far away in Blackdene Abbey an all-night party was in full swing. Music blared out across the landscaped gardens which surrounded the riverside mansion. In what had once been the grand ballroom, at least a hundred people were dancing, laughing, shouting, drinking, hugging, kissing and generally enjoying themselves. Jo Grant sat in a corner by herself. She wasn't a party pooper; indeed she had enjoyed many a good night; but since she had joined UNIT and become the Doctor's assistant, her view of the world had changed. She

looked around at the happy faces and reflected to herself that there would be a lot of sore heads in the morning. She had managed to grab a few words with Zac Zodiac and had found him to be a very pleasant young man despite his stage persona.

During their brief conversation, Jo had gathered that all was not rosy in the Lunartune camp. Sure, they were a successful rock band and seemed to be enjoying all the trappings that such status brought – just look at Blackdene Abbey for instance. However, Zac had revealed that they did not get on with their manager, Morgan Shade and the label he represented, Noir Records. Apparently, Shade was due at Blackdene Abbey that night and Zac knew his arrival would put an end to the party.

Jo was restless. The relentless noise and the heavy atmosphere of the ballroom was getting to her. She decided she needed to clear her head and a stroll around the gardens and some fresh air would do the trick. Nobody noticed her leave the ballroom. Jo ambled down a number of dark corridors with dark oak panelled walls hung with old tapestries. She wondered how Lunartune and indeed, their management could afford such a grand mansion. A large gothic arched door led to the gardens. Jo opened the door, which squealed in protest, and stepped out into the fresh air. The gardens lay

before her, draped in pale moonlight.

Flying low, to avoid radar detection, a black helicopter clattered across the countryside. A glittering ribbon of water lay below – the chopper was following the path of the River Thames. The helicopter, now at tree top level, veered left, heading for an open area of lawn, near to a large riverside mansion.

In the small cabin of the Brigadier's cruiser, the Doctor awoke. Immediately alert, he saw a black shape cross in front of the moon and there was no mistaking the sound of a helicopter. The Doctor glanced at the alarm clock next to the single bed and noted the time – 3.00am. Who was flying an unmarked helicopter over the river at this time of night? The Doctor could not resist a mystery and with his night now disturbed he secured the boat, leapt on to the towpath and began to follow the sound of the helicopter.

Jo was enjoying her night-time walk, the fresh air had cleared her head and the heady scents and aromas of night scented stock mixed with evening primrose, gardenias and jasmine were wonderful. She breathed deeply as she followed the path of a tall laurel hedge. An arch cut through the hedge and led to a vast area of lawn. The night was suddenly shattered by a thunderous sound, as from out of the dark sky a black helicopter came in to land. Jo hid behind

the hedge, momentarily scared by the situation. Sure, she had seen and flown in many helicopters, but somehow this one, here in the dead of night seemed, well, sinister!

Jo watched from the shadows as the helicopter settled on its twin skids, the rotors slowed, and the sound of the engine died away. All was silent. The door of the chopper opened, and a figure dressed from head to toe in black, emerged. The figure swiftly headed towards the mansion. Jo made to follow. She felt like a real spy now. Was this figure Lunartune's mysterious manager, Morgan Shade? A twig snapped somewhere behind her, and she heard a faintly muttered curse. Was this another night time visitor? She sought the cover of the hedge again. She could just make out a figure stealthily making its way along the hedge line. She decided to follow. The figure stepped into view.

"Doctor!" Jo gasped. He jumped.

"Good Lord, Jo?" whispered the Doctor.

"Doctor, what are you doing here?"

"I may well ask you the same question," the Doctor replied.

Jo quickly brought the Doctor up to speed.

"Well, now we're here, I suppose we should investigate," replied the Doctor, striding off with all the confidence in the world, as if he had every right to be within the grounds of Blackdene Abbey in the middle of the night. As usual, Jo followed in his footsteps.

The Master made his way into the mansion. The noise from the ballroom told him the band were 'at home'. He quickly sought out Lem Campbell, Lunartune's chief roadie. Lem, having seen the Master enter, quickly gathered his thoughts. He'd seen his employer in action and certainly had no desire to get in his bad books. With no greetings or other formalities, the Master addressed Lem;

"There are a number of wooden crates in the back of the chopper. Get some of the men together and move them to my quarters ... now," he ordered.

Lem did not hesitate and disappeared to do the Master's bidding.

The Doctor and Jo entered Blackdene Abbey through an unlocked door which led into the kitchen. They made their way through the old mansion, the throb of music providing some cover to their nocturnal investigations. Suddenly, a door opened further along the corridor and a figure stepped into view.

"The Master!" gasped Jo.

"If I were a betting man, I'd have laid money on it," whispered the Doctor in reply.

The Master strode off in the opposite direction. The Doctor and Jo followed. The old mansion was a maze of corridors. Jo hoped the Doctor's incredible intellect was remembering their route. The Master opened another door and began descending an old stone staircase. The cellars of Blackdene Abbey had not

been used for centuries and the brick built subterranean world made a perfect hideaway. They were dry although smelted musty with age. In years past the cavernous space would have housed casks of fine wine. Now, something more dangerous was stacked in one corner – the crates of Quassium B. The Doctor and Jo quietly followed the Master. Jo grabbed hold of the Doctor's hand as they descended the stone stairs into the gloom below.

"Typical of the Master to make himself at home down here," whispered the Doctor.

Pausing at the bottom of the stairs, the Doctor and Jo peered into the cellar complex. The Master was sitting at a desk situated within a brick alcove. He had the makings of a crude laboratory set up. On an adjacent table, an array of test tubes and flasks were filled with different coloured liquids.

"What's he up to now Doctor?" whispered Jo.

The Doctor had been carefully observing the scene. He noticed the stack of packing crates. The top one was open. A pile of straw was strewn around and a flask of Quassium B could clearly be seen.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed the Doctor. "He's got hold of Quassium B!"

"What's Quassium B?" enquired Jo.

"Don't worry about that now Jo," replied the Doctor. "Let's just say that the Master's up to his old tricks."

Jo couldn't help it – at that moment the dusty atmosphere of the cellars tickled her nose. She desperately tried not to sneeze, but nature could not be beaten. Immediately, the Master was aware of their presence. He grabbed his tissue compression eliminator from the desk in front of him.

"Well, well, Miss Grant and the Doctor. What an unexpected surprise," he purred.

"Not a surprise for us to find you skulking down here," responded the Doctor. "What are you up to now?"

"Ah, Doctor. Always suspicious and always the same questions," replied the Master. "Sergeant Benton kindly helped me acquire some Quassium B."

"I can see that," countered the Doctor. "Just what are you doing with it?"

The Master smiled. "Well, the best answer I can give you is a little demonstration. Follow me."

Keeping Jo and the Doctor covered with his tissue compression eliminator the Master picked up a flask of Quassium B and connected a valve to the flask from which led a length of rubber tubing. Keeping the two of them in front of him, the Master gestured them up the cellar stairs, down a long corridor and into a small butler's pantry.

"As you are probably aware Doctor, Quassium B has some interesting properties. Those meddling fools at Fort X of course, discovered that it

makes an excellent fuel. Did you know that the original formula came from a crashed Cryllian ship?"

He paused before continuing. "Of course, you did."

The Master removed a small wooden panel in the wall of the pantry. The hole revealed the grand ballroom of Blackdene Abbey on the other side, where the all-night party was still in full swing.

The Master fed the rubber hose through the hole in the wall and turned the valve connected to the flask of Quassium B.

"Let me demonstrate one of the properties of Quassium B, Doctor," gloated the Master.

A faint hissing sound could be heard. In the ballroom, the music throbbed, lights pulsed, and the revellers gyrated to the music, seemingly without a care in the world. Suddenly, as if in slow motion, the party goers began to slump to the floor. Within thirty seconds, nobody was left standing. The ballroom resembled a battlefield after a massacre.

"What have you done?" gasped Jo.

"Oh, don't worry Miss Grant," replied the Master with an icy smile. "They're just having a nap. I've only given them a small dose. Of course, they'll have a headache when they recover." He laughed. "I'm sure they would have done even without a dose of Quassium B!"

The Doctor glared at the Master.

"I presume that the fuel formula also has an effect on the human nervous system."

"Quite right, Doctor. In small doses it's relatively harmless. However, larger doses can have a devastating effect."

"Well, I'm sure this little demonstration wasn't just for our benefit," replied the Doctor.

"Indeed not, Doctor. You see, I plan to spread peace and goodwill at every concert Lunartune play. A little Quassium B mixed in with the dry ice effects and audiences will be mine to control." He paused before continuing.

"Let's go and take a closer look at my handiwork."

The Doctor and Jo picked their way through the sleeping bodies strewn across the ballroom floor.

"Excellent, excellent," the Master purred.

He reached the stage area and killed the music. The ballroom became silent save for the background hum of the PA system. The Doctor glanced at Jo, giving her a subtle wink. Jo knew that the Doctor had a plan. The Master, slightly preoccupied with his ghastly handiwork did not notice the Doctor pick up a silver Fender Stratocaster guitar, the lead for which was still connected to a wall of Marshall amplification. The Time Lord turned the volume knob on the guitar to maximum, having noted that the amplifiers were still switched on. He gestured at Jo, instructing her to cover her ears. The Doctor hit the strings of the guitar and immediately an earth-shattering

power chord of over 120 decibels echoed around the ballroom. Stunned at the sudden thunder, the Master dropped his tissue compression eliminator in surprise. The Doctor made a grab for it and in seconds had the Master captive.

Jo found a telephone and in quick time had made a call to UNIT HQ. Captain Yates was on night duty and arrangements were quickly in hand.

The Doctor's lab was peaceful. The TARDIS stood in its usual corner, a faint hum coming from within. Jo Grant was standing next to the Doctor, holding a soldering iron for him. Another pile of electronic bits and pieces were scattered on the Doctor's workbench.

"Now Jo, when I say, I want you to solder these wires to this transistor." The Doctor gestured to the jumble of equipment. "And take great care. I don't want your impression of a ham-fisted bun vendor!"

Jo raised her eyebrows but remained silent.

"Now," said the Doctor. Jo carefully began the operation.

"Morning all," Captain Yates crashed through the lab doors. Startled, Jo spilt solder across the delicate circuitry.

The Doctor practically exploded. Captain Yates, spotting with a military eye that his arrival might have caused the incident, quickly came to Jo's rescue.

"Sorry, my fault Doctor, I shouldn't have entered so breezily!"

The Doctor grunted. "Well, what are you in such a good mood for?" he enquired.

"The Brig's away for a few more days. Benton's truck has been found and he's none the worse for wear. Just a bit embarrassed at what happened up in Scotland."

"Couldn't be helped," the Doctor interrupted. "The Master's powers of hypnosis are without equal."

"Anyway," Mike continued, "the Master is now safely locked up in Stangmoor, all the party goers have made a full recovery with no ill effects, the Quassium B has now reached the launch site and the Avalon Deep Space Probe is due for lift off in seven days time. The Brig still wants you to be there, by the way ... just in case!"

The Doctor grunted again and returned to the ruined circuitry in front of him.

Captain Yates hesitated and then spoke again.

"Jo, would you like an evening out tonight?"

This is it, thought Jo to herself. At last, he's asked me out on a date.

Mike continued, "I've got tickets for a concert. A new band called Hawkwind. Their single, '*Silver Machine*' is number two in the charts. They call it space rock."

There was a clattering sound as Jo jumped off her stool and ran out of the lab.

"Was it something I said?" Captain Yates was left scratching his head ...



ARE WE MARRIED?

By Nicole Monique Pollard

"Are we married or do you want to marry me?" River asked, getting tired of the questioning and the long stares.

"Yes," said the Doctor with big loving eyes.

"Are you saying you want to get married, or that we are married?"

"Yes," the Doctor smiled. "I might remind you of your second wife."

'I don't have one. Spoilers!' River thought, but only smiled back.

Jimmy was having a party to celebrate his school. Everyone who was anyone was there. Jack Harkness showed up twice. Three of the male regenerations of the Doctor came but, of course, didn't stay long - there was this thing; then this other thing. The female Doctor seemed to be carefully avoiding her. River took her hiding for shyness and thought that the attitude looked good on her.

"How goes it? I never really go to parties but somehow on my way back home, I found myself here; Jim the Fish and multiple Doctors to see and with no work to do, nor help needed. You won't understand what I'm saying, but it's good to get it out."

River looked long and hard at her

journal. It was almost full; she had become very selective about what was journal-worthy.

Before she knew it, she was standing before her. The Doctor's expression told her that she could see the pain in her eyes. She placed a hand on the blue book.

"Hi," she said, reaching out with her other to shake. "I'm..." She leaned over and whispered her name in her ear.

River Song saw her life flash before her eyes, all one hundred and fifty years. The Doctor's smile ran over her face. "Second wife you said? I'm free."



OUT OF THE PIT

By Richard Wright

Martha strolled around the outer observation ring of the space station, from where she had the best view of the White Hole, which the Doctor had described as a 'spacey temporal inverse ouroboros'

"You mean a serpent that's creating itself?" Martha had attempted a translation.

"Let's just call it a White Hole". The Doctor had said.

Due to the spewing out of gravity energies, all artificial gravity systems were unreliable, so the Millar Station spun to produce centrifugal forces.

"The Windy Miller Station?" Martha had asked with a perfectly straight face.

"No, named after Tobias Millar an Azurian Scientist. Did the four-dimensional topography calculation that allowed this base to be so near the White Hole."

"Did his mates call him 'Windy' though?"

The Doctor frowned, there was always a glint of anger in his frowns that amused Martha. The Doctor did not like 'not getting it.'

The White Hole was like a gigantic Catherine Wheel - small sparks of material from it burst on the 'stuff that wasn't glass' that protected the observation ring and allowed her to

see the events clearly with her own eyes.

"Good old Windy," said Martha to herself.

There were hidden speakers that played the sound of the impacts on the Space Station, it was like the noise of the sea on a shingle beach. Martha was really enjoying the walk, the sounds and the view. It was a proper clean white Kubrick 2001 space station, much better than the grungy spacecraft that illegally harvested solar energy, where the TAR-DIS had taken them last. Even the air had a pleasant scent of lemon. As the Doctor had promised, this was the clean medical/scientific future that Martha had imagined and hoped would come.

Suddenly the impacts on the windows increased. The noise became a roar. The corridor became intensely bright and the sound was like a personal assault. Martha closed her eyes, covered her ears. The floor vibrated and flexed. Then it was over.

As Martha steadied herself. She heard something break further down the corridor. For a second, she feared the walls had cracked, but the sound was too small. With cautious urgency she set off.

Round the curve something came into view. A few more steps and she realised there was a body on the ground. Martha ran forward. She was clumsy - centrifugal forces did not behave exactly like gravity - the

Doctor had given her a little blue pill for the dizziness, but it did not help her coordination.

Martha thought for a second it was a little old bald man, then she realised the body was an alien, with a wrinkled, oval, larger than human face. It had a serious head wound, a gash with dark blue/grey blood. There was a vile taste like corruption in the air, but she ignored it and crouched down.

It appeared to have vomited up its own intestines; but looking more closely it was more like an organic beard.... part of its alien biology. The eyes were large and blood shot. Beside the body, she noticed some smashed plastic, or glass, that looked like it might have formed a tennis ball sized sphere. There was little she could do. She fished in the pocket of her marron leather jacket for her phone and called the Doctor.

The Doctor had called for help - or else some automatic system had been triggered, because a 'toaster-sized' medical droid zipped up several minutes before the Doctor arrived and swiftly fixed a gauzy bandage round the creature's head using metallic tendrils. It then inserted some of these tendrils into the creature's neck. Martha noticed that the droid bore the little green crescent moon, which the Doctor had told her was a universal medical symbol. It beeped and chittered as it worked.

"This is very cute," said Martha as

the Doctor jogged up. "It seems to have stabilised the vital signs." The medical droid hummed softly now, almost like it was purring.

The Doctor knelt beside the injured creature.

"She's an Ood." Said the Doctor.

Panna was half a minute behind the Doctor, she was an Azurian: short, a slender, blue humanoid, with three flexible tendrils on each hand in the place of fingers and thumbs. Martha realised the little medical droid's tendrils were based on those of its creators.

"She's an Ood." The Doctor repeated and stared at Panna. Martha was surprised at the accusation in his voice. "You use Oods."

Panna's tendrils flailed defensively. "No. Azurian facilities do not 'use Oods', we have droids - Ongar is a science assistant here. She assists freely."

Martha thought the Doctor did not look convinced.

"She was struck on the head with something, perhaps this stuff on the ground." Martha had tentatively picked a piece up.

"It is her.... what's her name again Panna?" The Doctor asked.

"Ongar."

"The fragments are from her communication orb. Someone smashed it and then hit her... Maybe her head was struck with the orb itself."

A floor level stretcher droid arrived, it had more powerful tendrils and gently lifted Ongar onto itself.

Another little droid came to clear up the debris and blood. The Doctor put his foot in its way and carefully picked up certain fragments.

"It's a crystalline memory structure, in a lab I should be able construct information on what happened."

"I'll take you there, Doctor." Said Panna

"How many Oods are on this station?"

"Just Ongar and Torgan."

"Martha, you go and find Torgan, let her know what has happened and check she is alright. They are telepathic, she may be distressed."

"Torgan is probably in one of the observation pods further round the ring." Panna added. The stretcher droid moved off and Panna led the Doctor away.

The observation pods were 'dark' like the dark rooms that used to be used to develop light sensitive photographic film and were designed to suppress all internal radiation signatures, so they were hyper sensitive to incoming emissions from the White Hole.

The first three pods were empty, but in the fourth Martha was aware of ragged breathing. Crouched in the corner, with his back to the equipment, was another Ood - Torgan. A thought came to Martha's mind - the TARDIS's translation circuit was clearly playing catch-up - Ongar and Torgan were ancient Alzurian for 'one' and 'two'. The names of the Ood were simply numbers.

Torgan's voice sphere flashed red, arcing, short circuiting.

"Please leave.... Please leave." His tone was a calm, polite, slave's voice. Martha knew now why the Doctor had been angry.

"What's the matter?" Martha crossed over to him, half kneeling. "Lights. Lights up!" She called hoping for voice activation, but it remained dark. The same stench of corruption was in the air. Martha involuntarily held her breath.

"He has returned." Before Martha could stop him Ood Torgan smashed his voice sphere to his own forehead. It burst with a flash. By reflex she closed her eyes in time to avoid being blinded. Splinters of memory crystal pricked deep into her face; a white heat burned the word 'returned' into her mind. Martha passed out.

When Martha came round her face was stinging. She tried to raise her hand, initially it moved fine, but some force stopped it.

Martha opened her eyes. She was in a hospital bed. Her hand was pressed against a light green shimmering in the air, where some sort of force field bandage was protecting her wounds. The Doctor sat fidgeting in a chair beside her. He looked so concerned, it was his most handsome, most human look.

"Did Torgan say anything?" And there it was, her heart sank, she tried not to show it on her face.

"He said, 'it has returned'." Martha's face tingled now, she felt reassured

that it was being healed.

Suddenly anger and hate, a festering bone deep alien hatred boiled in her soul. It was not her. It swamped her senses. She lost herself in panic and fear. The Doctor watched as dark writing, thick as black henna, spiralled and scarred over Martha's skin. She rose from the bed, the green force field darkened trying to hold her safely back down. The Doctor could not read the writing, but he recognised the ancient text. It was the writing of the Beast.

Panna stood in the doorway, paralysed by confusion.

"Increase the protocols, restrain her Panna. Now Panna!"

Panna started to speak. "Emergency three, increase hold..."

The possessed Martha gestured with her hand. Panna was thrown out off the door, smashing into the corridor wall, her neck broke with a crunch.

The Doctor placed the sonic to his throat, the blue light lit his face as he spoke....

"Emergency three, increase holding to maximum." His voice was slightly buzzy, but a recognisable imitation.

The forces holding Martha blackened further and the hospital lights dimmed to red. Three droids emerged from their wall charging points. One veered to attend to Panna. The other two lashed out multiple tendrils that wrapped around Martha and pulled her down onto the bed.

The force field returned to green and the room lights to normal brightness. The droid attending Panna signalled orange for her death.

The possessed body of Martha began to shake. It took a moment for the Doctor to realise it was with deep, dark, laughter. Martha's body went limp and the two attending droids spun away their tendrils thrashing madly. The medical field collapsed. Quickly the Doctor scooped Martha up in his arms, sonic held in his mouth and carried her towards the door. The two droids veered and began to follow him. The droid in the corridor moved to block the Doctor.

The Doctor was wiry and strong. He held Martha up with one hand, grabbed the sonic from his mouth and sent the corridor droid sparking and broken into the wall beside Panna. Wrestling Martha through the ward door he locked it with the sonic. One more gesture and the Millar Station's emergency siren sounded. Azurians came out into the corridors, bemused at first, but then the droids began to attack.

The Doctor staggered past, grimly carrying Martha as they passed a droid that simultaneously shocked, injected and strangled three Azurians. Martha started to come round. The Doctor put her down and stood guard with his sonic screwdriver.

"It's like before on Krop Tor - the

Beast manifests through a slave race. Then it was the Ood, here it's droids."

Martha shook her head to clear it hearing only 'It's the droids'.

The Doctor helped her to her feet.

"Are you able to run?" Martha nodded groggily.

The emergency lights cast an infernal hue and the alarm sirens screamed. They passed many Azurians. The Doctor tried to help, but only bought some extra seconds of painful, terrified life.

The Doctor led her to the stores where the TARDIS had materialized. Inside the TARDIS the Doctor shut the door. The familiar TARDIS hum was a beautiful noise to Martha. The Doctor ran round the console, flicking switches, banging it with a mallet, until the sound of dematerialisation began.

The Doctor pulled down the monitor and looked at it. His young handsome face lined with intense anger. "They are all dead. Not a single life reading."

"That thing, that hate! Does it not show up?"

"The TARDIS can't translate its life signs. It is something more ancient than Time Lords."

"What can we do?"

"This." The Doctor slammed over a lever. The gentle wheezing of the TARDIS dematerialisation became a guttural scream. The console sparked, the room rocked and spun. The TARDIS materialised in the cen-

tre of the Millar Station's power source. Matter and energies ripped asunder, space and time warped and shattered.

The TARDIS was left spinning wobbly in space. The Station was reduced to fundamentally particles dispersing at near light speed.

"I did not know you could do that." Said Martha.

"It is something we did in the Time War." Martha knew the Doctor did not want to say anything more.

"Is it dead then?"

"No. But it is smeared very thinly. Hopefully it will be too weak to influence or take physical form again. Martha leaned on the TARDIS console. The Doctor had shown her the future she had wanted to see: scientific research; advanced medicine; proper aliens and robots all working in harmony. And then he had destroyed it all.

"What did you know? What aren't you telling me?"

"I knew it was going to be destroyed... I did not know I would destroy it... I wanted to see if anything could be salvaged."

"You mean anyone saved?"

"Yes, anyone saved. Of course, I meant saved." The Doctor was angry and not obviously truthful.

"And we can't go back?" Martha asked. The Doctor shook his head.

"It's a fixed point now."

"That evil transferred from the Ood, to the robots, through me. If I had not been there Torgan's sacrifice would have stopped it coming."

Martha's voice was broken, the image of the Ood smashing the orb to its head was so vivid. She couldn't hold back the tears and they dripped onto the console.



The Doctor moved clumsily forward perhaps intending to put an arm around her.

"You don't know that, Martha. It's not your..."

"No, it isn't my fault. You play at being a god and you play at being human. But you are not a god and you are so, so far from being human."

He stopped and looked down. He had no answer.

I DREAMED THAT I SAW UNICORNS

By Stephen Hatcher

"Have you ever woken up in the morning and known immediately that something has happened; one of those times when your whole body tingles with the knowledge that you have had an experience so far from the norm that you feel changed by it; yet you have no idea how, nor any memory of what has taken place?"

The traveller gave no answer other than to raise a quizzical eyebrow.

"You lie there for a moment, trying to find a way for it to have been nothing but a dream. The more you wake up, the more you rationalise that this is exactly what it must have been; but despite the best efforts of your intellect, deep down inside – in every part of your body, but not yet in your brain, you know that's not true."

The old man was sure that the traveller's indifference was just a façade, noting how intently he was listening.

"Then perhaps, those feelings pass; the brain wins. A sound distracts you or a stray thought diverts your attention, and the moment is lost. But sometimes, that doesn't happen. The struggle between the conscious and the unconscious mind that takes place in those seconds between

sleep and wakefulness takes a different turn. The conviction that something has happened solidifies - a sensation, an image, a sound - perhaps a word comes into your mind; and the certainty grows that this was no dream. Something has happened in the night and your life can never be the same again."

"And this happened to you?" The traveller dropped all pretence. He leaned forward, fixed the old man with a piercing stare and bade him continue.

"Yes, my friend, it happened to me. I dreamed I saw unicorns."

The traveller glanced around the taverna to make sure no one had overheard. The old man smiled at his caution.

"Oh, you needn't worry about them. They've all heard this story many times before; so often, that they have become tired of hearing it. The only reaction I get these days is, 'Shut up old man, we don't want to hear your fairy stories.' I can't say I blame them. It's a ridiculous story. It just happens to be true."

The traveller could hardly contain his impatience now. "Please, do go on."

"You want to hear it, heh? Well you will my friend. But first, I am thirsty." He gave the stranger a meaningful look. The traveller just stared and waited, failing to take the hint.

"I said, I am thirsty."

The penny dropped. "Oh right, yes of course. Another glass of red is it?"

"Let's make it a bottle."

The traveller nodded and signalled

to the waiter, who without waiting for the order, brought a bottle of wine to the table. The old man poured himself a glass then offered one to the traveller, who declined with an impatient shake of the head.

The old man downed half a glass, then paused before continuing, as if considering the best way to tell his tale, but he could see that the traveller had recognised this for the artifice it was. He knew that he was in the presence of a master storyteller.

"It was during the summer of 1978. I was a young man then, before these limbs grew stiff and this hair turned grey..."

"Yes, very old, very grey hair, tell me about it... but not now. Go on."

The old man sighed at the interruption, then continued, "In those days, when the summer nights were warm and full of stars, I would often leave my home as the sun set and walk out into the hills. I would swim by starlight in the streams and wander through the woods and fields. Then I would settle down under a tree or on a mossy bank and sleep; before returning home to the sound of the birds, as the dawn broke.

"This was a night like many others. The sky was clear and the stars bright; the green lights of the glow-worms lit my path through the wood and a mild warm breeze stirred the sweet scents of the wild marjoram. As I drifted off to sleep under a tree, I knew that it was the sort of night when magic happens."

"Very nice, I'm sure." The traveller's eyebrows arched formidably. "So,

woods, glow-worms, stars, herbs, blah, blah. What happened?"

"My friend, if you can contain your impatience, I will tell you. I don't know how long I had been asleep when I became aware that I was no longer alone. It may have been a sound, or just a feeling; and in honesty I can't say for certain whether I had woken up or not. I lay still for a moment, careful not to give away my presence. I hadn't made a fire and although they are mostly very timid, there are wolves in the hills. I didn't want to be some creature's supper. It was then I realised that I could hear voices, strange musical voices, filling the air like the song of the birds, but it was clearly speech - and not in Greek, nor in the English or German that we hear so often in the coastal towns, but in a language that I didn't recognise. My first thought was that it must be some group of holidaymakers, who had wandered far off the beaten track, but the more I listened to them, the more convinced I became that this was no ordinary language. So, without moving, I opened my eyes. I could still hear the voices, but at first, I could see nothing. Then there was a movement among the trees and all at once there they were."

"What? What were they?"

The old man smiled, pleased at the attention. "At first I thought they were wild ponies. There were perhaps five or six of them, all white in colour and wearing some sort of coloured coat. I remember one was bright red, another green and I

think, one blue. The more I looked however, I realised that although my first impressions had been of small horses, they were no such thing. The shape was just not quite right - they were too slender; and the head wasn't quite elongated enough for a horse and bore a prominent horn on the forehead. Furthermore, no pony ever walked upright on its two hind legs, nor did it ever have hands instead of hooves on its forelegs - hands that were almost human in shape. As I watched, I realised that the voices that I had heard had been these strange creatures. I knew I was looking at unicorns.

"Unseen, I stayed silent and still, watching what was happening. As I observed, I became convinced that this small group of strange creatures was in distress. Some sat on the ground and began to weep; others comforted their fellows. The sound of their crying was like nothing I had ever heard before nor ever want to hear again. I felt their pain as deeply as if it were my own. It penetrated my very soul, in a way that I have never felt pain before or since - a pain of loss, loneliness and grief.

"With a start, I realised that I was weeping myself. I wanted to help these strange beings. I knew that there was nothing I would be able to do, but I had to try. I stood and approached them. I could feel no sense of threat or danger from the unicorns - I knew I was perfectly safe - but I felt their curiosity and through their grief, their kindness.

"I wiped my own tears and embraced them in friendship, then we sat together on the ground. We spoke to each other, I in Greek and they in their own language. Neither of us could understand the other, but we each knew that we had found friendship and comfort. I knew they were lost and longing to return home. I have no idea how long we remained like that, only that the dawn was starting to break, when one final piece of magic caused us to part."

"More magic?" asked the traveller. "Tell me about it. Please, tell me."

"As I said, I have no idea how long we had been sitting before it happened. From the warm summer air itself, a rumbling noise began to arise. It was like the sound of a distant earthquake, yet it wasn't distant, it was right there where we were sitting, almost all around us. The sound became louder, a wheezing, groaning and bellowing and then, right there before our eyes..."

"A large box materialised out of thin air!" The stranger jumped to his feet in excitement. "I'm right, aren't I? I'm right. A box... a blue box. Oh, that's just brilliant, nicely done Doctor."

The old man was astonished at this reaction – and that the traveller had guessed the next part of his tale. "Yes, you're right. Exactly that, a blue box appeared out of nowhere, right where we were sitting. My new friends jumped up in delight and began calling a name. 'Doctor, Doctor!' It was then that I realised that I could, for the first time, understand what they were saying – and when I

spoke to them, they could understand me."

"Yes, yes, the TARDIS telepathic circuits. Oh, well done Doctor."

The old man had no idea what the traveller had just said, but he noticed that his accent was becoming more Scottish, the more excited he became.

The traveller was smiling broadly now, "I bet I can guess what happened next... I bet a door opened in the box."

"Well yes, you are right."

"And someone stepped out..."

"Yes..."

"Well..." The traveller began pointing excitedly with both hands towards his own face as if expecting the old man to say something. "Well..."

"Well what, my friend?"

"Well, it's me! It was me, or will be, or will have been, or something... that doesn't matter... it was me who came out of the blue box, wasn't it?"

The old man shook his head, "You? No, my friend, it wasn't you."

The traveller sat down with a bump, suddenly aware that he had become the centre of attention in the little taverna. "It wasn't..."

"No, my friend. It was a young woman who came out. A young woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue coat and boots."

A smile that was a mixture of curiosity and satisfaction crept across the traveller's face. The old man continued. "She introduced herself as 'the Doctor' and explained that the unicorns – the Shahli; they were called

the Shahli – were the last survivors of their race and had been caught up in some sort of explosion in the fabric of the universe which had thrown them through time and space and left them here. She had come to take them to a new home. She thanked me for looking after them... she actually thanked me... then it was time for goodbyes and she ushered my new friends into her box; and with the same bellowing sound as the one with which it had arrived, it and she and they disappeared and I was left alone. I have never seen them again, but ever since then, I have known that whenever I go into the woods and fields, especially at night, there are unicorns that watch over me. And that, my friend is the end of my story." He raised his glass and downed the last of the wine. "But don't go. Stay and tell me what you know about this. You believed me; I can see you did. In all the years that I have been telling this tale – all those long years, you are the first." For the first time since that night under the stars the old man was truly content. He was sure that what he had seen had been real – it hadn't been a dream.

"I'm sorry, I have to go." The traveller called the waiter over and settled the bill, then he stood and took the old man by the hand, shaking it warmly, "Thank you so much. Thank you for telling me your story... and thank you again for looking after the Shahli."

He began to make his way towards the door, pausing as the old man

called after him, "Thank you for the wine, and for listening to an old man's fairy tales... but who are you? You didn't tell me your name."

The traveller gave him an enormous wink that was magnified by the terrifying eyebrows, "Can you not guess?" He turned and left.

Just as they had for the old man on the night of his dream of unicorns, the glow-worms lit the Doctor's path through the woods. Reaching the glade where he had left the TARDIS, he opened the door and bounded inside. Clara Oswald was sitting on the floor, surrounded by a pile of marked exercise books. She looked up expectantly, "Any news?"

"Yes, Clara it's all fine. We found them... or I did... or I will anyway. Look, the point is, the Shahli are safe. We can stop worrying. And another thing... This, you're going to like... And it'll be brilliant."



GAMES IN DOCTOR WHO

By Nick Smith

THE DOCTOR: Fine, I'll play your game. I'll be back.

THE MASTER: She won't. And it's not a game. Good luck, humans.

The Timeless Children

Games have featured throughout the history of Doctor Who. Sometimes they're familiar, like the Celestial Toymaker's challenges. Other times they're devious and take years to play out, as in the Seventh Doctor's era. Below are some remarkable instances of games in Doctor Who. Why are most of them so deadly?

The Celestial Toymaker

What better way to wile away eternity than to force travellers to play deadly childhood games? Steven and



From The Celestial Toymaker © BBC

Dodo are forced to solve riddles and survive parlour pastimes like blind man's buff (aka blind man's bluff), musical chairs and a scavenger hunt. Worst of all, the Doctor is powerless to help them or keep them safe.

The story takes games that are familiar to viewers and adds a dangerous twist, bringing a nightmare concept into the home as on Doctor Who can do.

The War Games

The Doctor faces more ultra-powerful beings, but the War Lord plays games of a different kind, into which the TARDIS crew are swept.

The purpose of a war game is not simply to test military ability but also to hone and strengthen an army – in this case, to conquer a galaxy. Although the Doctor attempts to beat the odds by peeking behind the curtain at the rules and rulers of the War Games, he's unable to set things to rights alone – the board is too vast, even for him.

The Five Doctors

A mysterious enemy has some fancy figurines to play with in The Five Doctors. As in The Celestial Toymaker, the Doctor is plonked in a dangerous arena with other players who may not have his best interests at heart(s). By participating in the Game of Rassilon, the Doctor realizes that winning is not always the best goal to achieve, even when it's as easy as pi.

The Curse of Fenric

The Seventh Doctor makes an impossible chess move to beat a demon. Since his second incarnation he's learned to look beyond the board. After surviving for almost a thousand years, perhaps the Doctor decides he can afford to outwit his enemies over a long period of time instead of focusing on short-term battles. The long game with Fenric arcs across three seasons, long before we hear the words "Bad Wolf."



From 'The Curse of Fenric' © BBC

Bad Wolf

Bad Wolf contains the most games of all. Its psychopathic version of Big Brother alone has 60 consecutive houses. Get evicted, get disintegrated – or at least, transmat-beamed off the show.

The Fourth Great and Bountiful Human Empire is full of people who do not think for themselves. The only questions asked are by Anne Droid and other game show hosts. The parallels to real-world programmes are obvious in another example of taking something innocuous and making it lethal, as in The Celestial Toymaker. The games in Bad Wolf



From 'Bad Wolf' © BBC

harken back to Stephen King's The Running Man and 2000AD's You Bet Your Life, an illegal programme in Judge Dredd's Mega City One. In all these future scenarios, Earth has evolved its bread and circuses into kill-happy quizzes and metallic makeovers. Bad Wolf makes it personal by zapping Rose, and revealing that the Doctor's deadliest enemies are manipulating more than just the ratings.

The Final Game

The Doctor and the Master have played a 'game' for centuries, outwitting and tricking each other... until the Master flips the board over and covets all the pieces in The Timeless Children.

Apart from the Holmes-and-Moriarty rivalry between the Doctor and the Master, the game continues to fascinate because we don't know their true relationship. Are they childhood friends? Family? Academy rivals? The Tenth Doctor's attempts to help the Master and the Twelfth Doctor's faith that Missy could be reformed show us that these two players are more than mere enemies – and that the final game has yet to be played.

THE END OF THE BEGINNING

Review by Rik Moran

The monthly Doctor Who releases began with The Sirens of Time in July 1999. Now that comes to an end with The End of the Beginning, the final monthly release as Big Finish move to individual releases for each incarnation of The Doctor.

The End of the Beginning - as with the original The Sirens of Time - is a multi-Doctor Story, this time featuring Peter Davison as the Fifth Doctor with Mark Strickson as Turlough, Colin Baker's Sixth Doctor with Miranda Raison as Constance, Paul McGann's Eighth Doctor with India Fisher as Charlie and Sylvester McCoy as the Seventh Doctor.

This multi-Doctor story consciously mimics the structure of the first. Each Doctor has his own adventure before they team up for the finale. Throughout the first three episodes, each Doctor is trailed by the sinister figure of Vagrass, Last of the Death Lords. It is not until the fourth episode that his purpose becomes clear.

The obvious highlight is the cast and the interplay between characters, particularly episode four. I'm glad they didn't go with obvious companions for the Fifth and Sixth Doctors, and it's quite nice to see Turlough, Constance and Charley interact. Da-

vison, Baker, McCoy and McGann are as brilliant as always

Kevin McNally as Vagrass oozes Master levels of evil, while David Schofield is a delight as the Doctor's former teacher Gostak.

Special mention must be given to Glen McCready who plays multiple roles throughout this story including my personal favourite El Zeddo.

There is a knowing moment at the end in which the Doctors discuss their forthcoming plans; The End of the Beginning indeed.

It's an extremely fun time with a wide variety of soundscapes and ideas that keep it engaging the whole way through. It's worth a listen just on sentimental value alone especially for long-time listeners and though it certainly has its narrative flaws that keep it from being a true great of the range, it's hard to say that it's not an appropriate conclusion.

7/10



[To order or download from Big Finish click here](#)

MISSY ISSUE 1

Review by Jordan Shortman

In recent years, Titan Comics have really dialled down their Doctor Who output. That's not necessarily a bad thing, I remember at one point there being so many comics it was impossible to keep up, but now, dialling it down to one title at a time, Titan have decided to honour the fiftieth anniversary of one of the Doctor's greatest adversaries, The Master.

Right off the bat, writer Jodie Houser nails the characterisation. The inclusion of the Third Doctor is a nice touch, especially as we last, properly saw him, a few years ago in comic form, and in typical Third Doctor fashion, he's up in the face of authority. It's a great little scene, with the Doctor once again bringing down the authority figure.

But this isn't a comic about the Doctor and it doesn't take Houser long to introduce Missy, wearing her typical costume, this time adorned by a question mark on her dress, possibly poking fun at the 80s Doctors. Houser nails her character throughout this debut issue but it's hard to pin down when this takes place in Missy's timeline. She's certainly acting good - for now - but this is probably set before she met the Twelfth Doctor or in-between her first two

on-screen adventures.

Houser also wastes no time in introducing the original Master, played by Roger Delgado and it isn't hard to hear him delivering some of the lines he gets here. It's clear that no matter Missy's insistence, he doesn't believe for a moment that she is the Doctor, but Missy's interactions with the original Master is just as delicious as it was when she met John Simm's incarnation.

With the entire issue set in the Stormcage facility, a prison that has been mentioned and seen in many a River Song tale, you might worry that the lack of action will make this a dull read. Luckily Houser keeps the dialogue sharp and flashy and there is a nice panel which shows some of the other prisoners.

Of course, as any comic book reader and fan will know, a comic book script wouldn't be complete with work from fantastic artists. Roberta Ingranata is once again on hand to deliver some stunning artwork. The pairing of Houser and Ingranata has been a match made in heaven in recent years and the characterisation and wonderful artwork really impressed me with the solo Thirteenth Doctor series.

Here Ingranata hits all the right notes once again, getting the likenesses to the Third Doctor, Missy and the Master correct from the very opening panel. What I've al-



ways really liked is that her artwork seems to be a combination of original poses and ones taken from stills from episodes and it's always fun to try to match the pose to the story it comes from. Of course, Ingranata doesn't rely on that aspect too much but it makes a nice nod to some of the original annual artwork from the 70s and 80s.

What was also fun was that Missy was after a segment of the Key to Time and it'll be interesting to see where Houser goes with this, will the other Masters try to use it for their own nefarious means and Missy will stop them, or will it be the other way around? Houser teases us with these questions just enough to

ensure we check out the rest of the series to find out!

If there was a little niggles with this opening issue, it's the cliff-hanger, in a cool call-back to the fencing battle between the Third Doctor and the Master in *The Sea Devils*, once again, the Master challenges Missy to a duel. It ends almost too abruptly but I guess that half the fun is going to be seeing how that wraps up in the next issue.

If you were wondering whether to check this series out, this opening issue definitely has enough to recommend about it. From the great character work from Jodie Houser, who apparently has always wanted to write for Missy and it isn't hard to hear Michelle Gomez saying some of the lines on offer here, to the fantastic artwork from Roberta Ingranata, Missy #1 is a definite must.

And with Big Finish's *Masterful* having kicked off the anniversary of the Master, Missy will be a great inclusion to the celebrations.

[To view 'Missy' at Titan Comics, and to order please click here](#)

[To see the wider Doctor Who range from Titan, click here](#)





VWORP VWORP! COLIN BROCKHURST & GARETH KAVANAGH INTERVIEWED By Nick Smith

Comic books have been an important part of Doctor Who since the '60s, continuing the Doctor's adventures while he was off screen and placing him in situations that BBC budgets could not stretch to.

In recent years the strips have been reconsidered, with a new bookazine collection of the Dalek chronicles and an in-depth fan magazine devoted to DWM, Doctor Who art and comics. Named after the TARDIS' sound effect, Vworp Vworp! is edited by Colin Brockhurst and published by Gareth Kavanagh.

Brockhurst and Kavanagh have also published the further adventures of Doctor Who characters Lytton (from *Resurrection of the Daleks/Attack of the Cybermen*) and Omega (from *The Three Doctors/Arc of Infinity*) under the imprint Cutaway Comics, with more spinoffs on the drawing board.

Cosmic Masque spoke to both of them about Vworp Vworp!, their passion for Doctor Who in sequen-

tial form, and a very special Manchester pub.

Cosmic Masque – Please tell us about your backgrounds and Vworp Vworp!

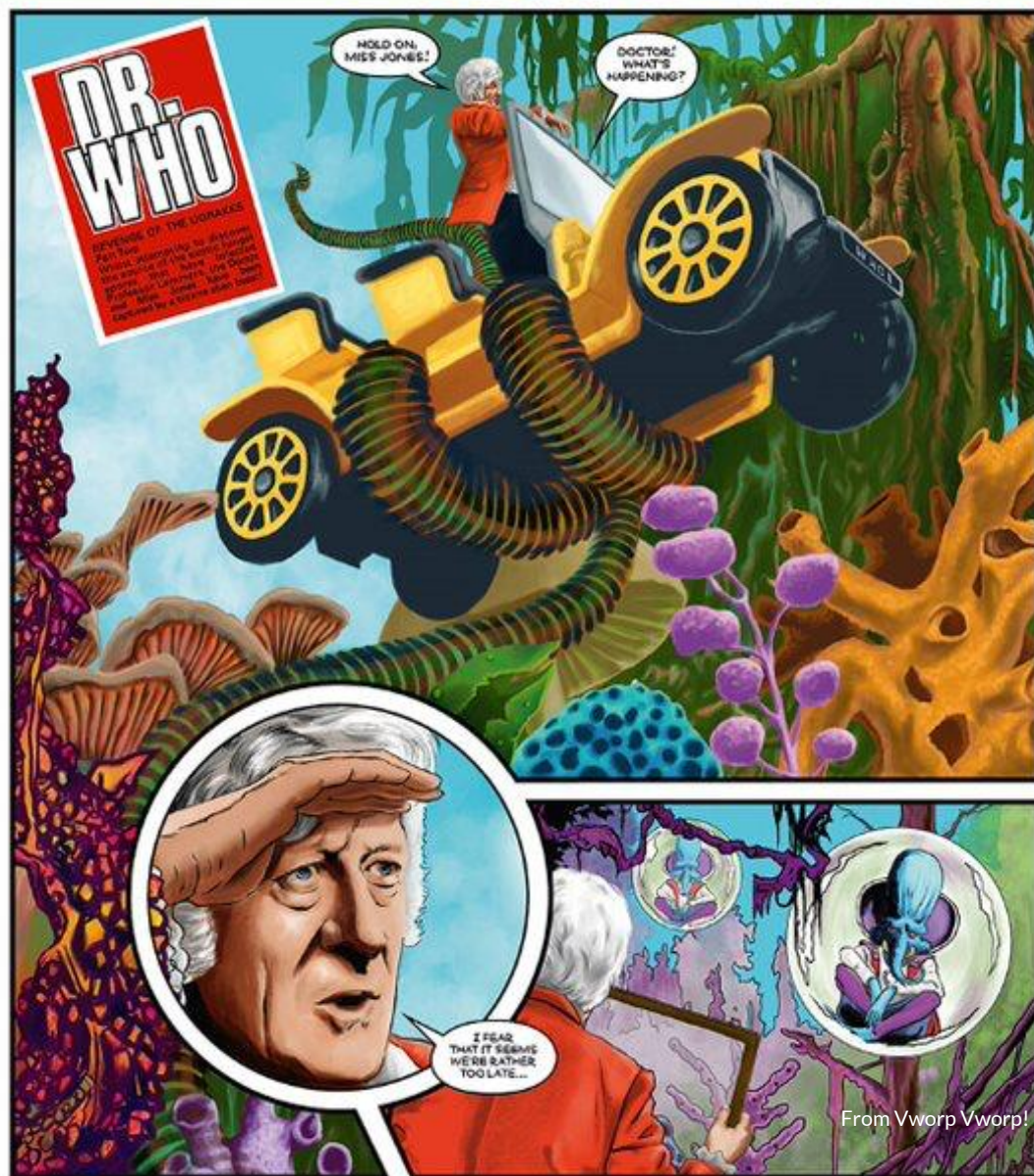
Colin Brockhurst – I've no real background in graphic design, just learned bits and pieces as I've gone along. I'm in my present job because of Vworp Vworp!, so must be doing something right. Doctor Who fan since the late '70s – Tom, Target, annuals... then the '80s, often quite a challenging time to be a fan, but the novelisations, DWM, fanzines and, finally, wonderfully, pirated VHS kept me going – and a fanzine editor since the early '90s. I was a shy, awkward, bookish kid and have grown into a shy, awkward, bookish adult, so I feel very lucky to have Vworp Vworp! in my life. People's love for it means a lot. Oh, and also an understanding, patient publisher who seems content to leave me to get on with the zine at my own snailish pace! Plenty of time to admire the scenery, as a great man once wrote.

Gareth Kavanagh – You've helped teach me tremendous patience and an acknowledgement that quality can't be rushed. Absolutely correct for Vworp Vworp!

I can't remember a time when Doctor Who wasn't in my life. I was 7 when Doctor Who Weekly came out and as a quite solitary child with a big imagination, those incredible

TV ACTION

+ countdown 5p



main and backup strips and the Target novelisations were my Doctor Who. 40 years on, I'm now publisher of Cutaway Comics making my own big budget backup strips with creators I've admired in some cases as long as I can read. In between I've worked in hotels, owned a pub, worked as a consultant on big schemes and refurbished arcade machines. All very exciting work in theory, but nothing compares to the thrill of publishing a new comic or a beautiful new Vworp Vworp!

I now work with talented people (not least, Colin) and people seem to like what we do. It's a huge honour and as long as we have stories to tell and an audience to enjoy what we do, I hope we'll keep on going.

CM - Why create Vworp Vworp!? It seems like a real labour of love.

GK - Like many great endeavours, Vworp Vworp! largely happened by accident down the pub. Back in the mid-2000s, I remember meeting three bright young things - Matt Badham, Leon Hewitt and Barry Renshaw in my old, much-missed pub in Manchester (2005-2014), the Lass O'Gowrie. Matt had enjoyed some of the comics-based stuff I'd written for another fanzine, Black Scrolls and having decent pedigree in writing articles for the Judge Dredd Magazine, wondered if there was space to explore the Doctor Who comics. We all met up and

mapped out an idea for a book which would take us through the strips one Doctor at a time, with a detailed interview with creators covering one strip per era. Matt also rather brilliantly suggested it could be called Vworp Vworp!

We'd meet month after month, but like virtually all wonderful things that begin and end in pubs, our enthusiasm never made it into a book and the idea slowly faded away. I did think the idea had merit though and I'd gone as far as pulling some material together for the book that never was. I kept thinking how at the time, the comics were a hugely (and somewhat oddly) under-explored part of the Doctor Who world. Which, was odd as they also featured some of the biggest talents in British comics at the time. Dez Skinn, Alan Moore, Steve Moore, Steve Parkhouse, David Lloyd, Dave Gibbons, Pat Mills and John Wagner. Giants of publishing and people with fresh stories we'd not heard before.

With the book seemingly dead, I began to think about maybe a fanzine could be a fun way to present the material I'd collated and see what we could add to it. Fanzines are something of a curio now (and indeed, it's probably very unfair to other fanzines to describe us as one, but I've always loved the format. All I needed was someone who could make it look as wonderful as I knew it could be.

DOCTOR WHO

DR. WHO and his grandchildren, John and Gillian, set off on another adventure. The Tardis has landed in the twenty-first century...



From Vworp Vworp!



The Trod Invasion of Earth Script: Steve Lyons Art: Shawn Van Briesen Letters: Colin Brockhurst



TVCOMIC



The Main Event

ONE OF THE WAYS DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE MARKED THE SHOW'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2003 INVOLVED A RETURN TO THE SIMPLER WORLD OF THE DOCTOR'S EARLIEST COMIC STRIP ADVENTURES: THE LAND OF HAPPY ENDINGS

WORDS BY PAUL SCOONES

Featuring



November 2003 saw the 40th anniversary of Doctor Who, a milestone celebrated in Doctor Who Magazine with a tribute to the origins of the strip in TV Comic. Published in issue 337, *The Land of Happy Endings* was voted best comic strip of the year in the DWM readers' survey, with one reader describing it as "a superb and moving tribute to Doctor Who in the comic strip medium".

The Land of Happy Endings is an affectionate pastiche written and illustrated in the style of the early TV Comic strips drawn by Neville Martin. The story sees Paul McGann's Eighth Doctor arrive on an alien planet with his grandchildren John and Gillian. The trio liberate the oppressed Dorbadians, whose imagination figments have been stolen by the dastardly Wargoun. On the final page of the single-part seven-page strip, the strip returns to modern narrative and artwork stylings as the Doctor awakes alone in the TARDIS. In a bittersweet moment it is revealed that the troubled, lonely Doctor has been asleep, dreaming about simpler, happier times.

The idea originated in a discussion between Scott Gray, Doctor Who Magazine's long-serving comic strip writer, editor and sometimes illustrator, and Clayton Hickman, who was at the time the editor of the magazine. The pair deliberated over how best to mark the 40th anniversary in

the comic strip. "Clay and I would endlessly talk about the comic strip, usually at lunchtimes or on the train back to London in the evening," explains Scott. "I'm sure he had plenty to say about this one!"

Clayton insists however that his involvement in the story's creation was limited. "When you have somebody of Scott's calibre on board, you leave him to get on with it. He's so creative and so brilliant, anything I thought up would pale in comparison. I'm much better at minor suggestions after the fact anyway!"

Doctor Who Magazine typically marked significant anniversaries with special comic strip events, often involving multiple Doctors (notably 1988's *Planet of the Dead*, 1993's *Time and Time Again*, and 1998's *Happy Birthday*). For the 40th anniversary however, multi-Doctor reunions were eschewed in favour of the comic paying homage to the earliest version of itself. "Doing another multi-Doctor story would have felt repetitive," says Scott. "I was looking for something that could harken back to the beginning of Doctor Who in a different way and landed on John and Gillian."

The Doctor's grandchildren were the product of TV Comic's desire to have relatable youngsters in the strip. They were introduced in the earliest instalment, in TV Comic issue 674 in November 1964,

and accompanied the First Doctor on every comic strip adventure. Seemingly unfazed by their grandfather's change of appearance between stories, the pair continued to travel alongside his second incarnation. John and Gillian eventually left the Doctor's side in June 1968, making way for popular television companion Jamie to join the strip. Other than a brief return appearance in a couple of TV Comic Annual stories later that year, the pair were never again mentioned in the comic.

Clayton recalls that there was some discussion about whether to do an anniversary strip at all. "We weren't very keen – there just seemed to be endless anniversaries in the Doctor Who world, and we were both more eager to get on with the main storyline, which was about to ramp up with *Bad Blood*. One of us, rather disparagingly, said 'What's left to do? Are we meant to bring back John and Gillian or something?' And rather than rolling our eyes, that sentence sort of hung in the air, and I think we both realised that we probably *should* do something rather charming and sweet with that idea. Not a spoof, not mocking those more innocent strips, but rather celebrating them."

An early idea was to bring them back in a present-day story. Scott envisioned the pair as "much older and sadder" but then realised that this "felt a bit naff". He

Enter: Colin Brockhurst. The design genius I found rather unexpectedly in the pages of Outpost Gallifrey. I was looking for a graphic designer to freshen up our posters and print at the Lass O'Gowrie and Colin offered his services. Part way through creating new posters for Sunday Roasts and retro computer nights, it occurred that Colin might be a good fit for Vworp Vworp!² Best decision I ever made..

CB - With most of the comics stuff already in place, I didn't have much to do in that area on the first issue, just designed the pages. But having edited fanzines for 15 years or so, I was keen to put my own stamp on it so added the stuff about Doctor Who Magazine, which was just turning 30. DWM was my main love, having been a reader since issue 63. Unlike Gareth, my interest in the strips came later - I read them and enjoyed them, but in my younger days they never seemed quite like the Doctor Who I knew and loved on TV. Now, of course, that's why they appeal to me.

GK - that's very true, the strip is arguably best when it's doing it's doing its own thing with minimum tinkering and oversight. As Dez Skinn (founding editor) always says, his experience with BBC Worldwide was generally a Thursday evening visit with copy and a few gin and tonics, and in-between he was left to put together strips with a fresh complexion that seemed to work for all

audiences, from hardened fans to young readers. It's a brilliant and difficult balancing act that other teams would go on to emulate over the years and as such, very interesting for further study in huge detail!

CM - What sparked your personal interest in Doctor Who and Marvel's comics/magazines?

GK - God, I loved those strips. The original Doctor Who Weekly strips and backups made my childhood come alive in a way few other comics managed, and it also seemed to grow up at the same time I did, showing us worlds and stories truly bigger and better than anything the TV could conjure up in the 1980s.² It's difficult to describe the impact to anyone who wasn't there in many ways. Comics were either funnies like Whizzer and Chips or the Beano that, essentially followed the same format since the 1950s or action titles like the Commando libraries. There was 2000AD, sure but it took a few years for it to work for me. 1979 was just a touch too early. But not Doctor Who Weekly. Custom built for this seven year old with huge, sweeping epics at the front. A Doctor Who brimming with peril and excitement!² That's my Doctor Who, courtesy of Skinn, Wagner, Mills and Gibbons. It just can't be topped.

CB - Not just Marvel comics for me. My affection for Polystyle's output, and the company's significant contribution to Doctor Who history, will be

writ large on issue four - the fun, lively storytelling and the beautiful art. Well, some of it was beautiful. TV Century 21 too, of course. I would have loved to have grown up with TV21 and Dalekmania.

GK - TV21 and the Daleks. I would have been all over those had I been around, same for the Trigan Empire. There's a confidence and sophistication in those strips that outstrips all the other Doctor Who output at the time, arguably including the show at the time. I don't quite share the love of TV Comic, but I can see there's an interesting tale to tell around them and for the fan generation before us, the love is clearly there. The scarecrows one is pretty good, that said, and while frequently bonkers, it's at least never dull!

CM - Gosh those Steve Parkhouse strips were good, weren't they?

CB - Unbelievably good, and on levels I didn't appreciate back then. Mythic sagas of gods and men that span millennia, told with dizzying intelligence and humour.

GK - What Colin says! Nobody quite pushes the envelope like Parkhouse in those Sixth Doctor strips. It's quite possibly some of the most ingenious Doctor Who ever written, enlivened hugely by a talented John Ridgway at the zenith of his powers. I still look at some of those *Voyager* pages and just marvel.

CM - For you, how does the comic book Doctor fit in with the TV adventures?

GK - There are times, especially in the post 2005 era where it fits almost too neatly and, arguably the show becomes a chokehold over it. But then, with the show now a huge part of the BBC's identity it's probably inevitable that things have to feel like a single whole. My personal preference is for a looser relationship with the show. A strip that features the Doctor but also goes places and does things the show can't. The Pat Mills strip Doctor absolutely works with Tom Baker, but the 2000AD influences are unmistakable. Parkhouse takes us on incredible flights of fantasy with the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Doctors. The grimness of *End of the Line*, the Arthurian swoops of *Tides of Time* and fantasy spectacle of *Voyager* are all unmistakably forward-looking and bold, in a way the show couldn't be. Even Scott Gray and Alan Barnes' Eighth Doctor run gives us a huge, Hollywood conception of the show and is still the high watermark of the last 25 years. But it's all Doctor Who, whether you like it or not.²

CM - How did you unearth Brian Bolland's spec strip?

CB - Brian unearthed his own strip! A couple of pages had appeared in various places over the years, and he was happy to dig out the third. The surprise was when he suggested col-

THE POINCARÉ RECURRENCE THEOREM

Artwork by TIM KEABLE

TRANSLATED FROM THE CONTENTS OF A GLASS CUBE HE FOUND IN HIS GARDEN, **ALAN STEVENS** RELATES THE HISTORY OF THE DALEKS, THOSE SWORN ENEMIES OF ALL HUMANITY (AND THE TRODS, TOO), IN *TV COMIC*, *COUNTDOWN* AND *TV ACTION*

Doctor Who first appeared in *TV Comic* as a two page black and white strip on 9 November 1964 (cover date 14 November). The opening adventure, *The Klepton Parasites*, was the third draft of a story outline which had originally been intended to pit the Doctor, accompanied by his then-unnamed grandson and granddaughter, against the Daleks and their evil plan to use a "mind control" device to enslave the peaceful Thals and force them to excavate more fuel for the huge reactor that powers the apparatus. At the story's conclusion, the mind control device is captured by the Doctor and with the command, "The Daleks are bad — Thals fight, Thals fight", he induces an uprising at the work camp.

Reading the storyline, Donald Wilson (BBC Head of Serials) was unimpressed, noting that it was "a direct crib of our 'Dalek' serial. If they want to do this they must do the Dalek serial and

make acknowledgement, including financial acknowledgement, to the copyright owners, namely, the author and ourselves." Although Wilson is evidently making reference to the first Dalek serial, there is also a strong similarity between the outline produced by *TV Comic* and the yet-to-be-televised sequel, *The Dalek Invasion of Earth*. This story also featured humans under Dalek mind control (Robomen), a work camp employing slave labourers for a huge mining project, and a conclusion in which the Doctor used the Daleks' mind control apparatus to order the Robomen to "turn on the Daleks" and provoke a rebellion across the excavation site.

As the outline was received by BBC Television Enterprises on 22 September 1964, with the first episode of the new Dalek serial due for broadcast in November, this was either a remarkable coincidence or somehow *TV Comic's* editor Arthur

C Thorn had obtained plot details concerning the forthcoming adventure. Indeed, as the launch of the *Doctor Who* strip was timed to correspond with the transmission of the show's second season and capitalise on the publicity surrounding the Daleks' return to television, the latter explanation seems a feasible one.

Under the terms of the licence agreement, the BBC were granted script approval, which meant that on 24 September, the BBC wrote to inform *TV Comic* of its special arrangement with writer Terry Nation as regards to merchandising. In other words, his permission was required before the Daleks could be used in any publication. *TV Comic* responded by producing a second version of the outline; essentially, apart from a few minor plot changes, much approximating the first, only with the Daleks and the Thals now called the Matiks and the Thains respectively. The Doctor's

ouring them. Gareth and I spent a while trying to work out who the 'Lyncross' outfit the pages were drawn for might have been, but frustratingly we didn't get anywhere. I'd still love to know!

GK - The secret of Lyncross! Agonisingly close, we were too. I even bought a Wallace and Mrs Simpson souvenir booklet they published looking for clues, but the trail ran cold and when Colin throws in the towel as probably one of the best bloodhounds in the business, that's that. Of course, that's also the great thing about *Doctor Who* research, arguably. Although it's the most researched TV show in history (arguably), there still remains a core of facts that are essentially unknowable. That's what keeps us going. The tantalising unknown!

CB - Although a mystery Polystyle artist is identified in issue 3, there's one to go - the old-school artist behind *Who's Who*. When even David Roach can't put his finger on who it is you know you're in trouble, but I refuse to give up.

CM - What writers and artists would you like to interview/write about, and why?

CB - I've ticked off a few in issue 3 (John Canning and John Woods, for a start), but it would be great to arrange an interview with Grant Morrison at some point (so if anybody wants to volunteer...!). I'd also like to

talk to Paul Crompton. Always loved his work for the annuals (the more surreal the better). I think it would be an interesting interview; he's had a difficult journey so I'm pleased he's reappeared and working again.

GK - There's undoubtedly a bigger story to tell behind Dez Skinn, his hits that led up to the *Weekly* and his role within the comics industry, of which our beloved *Doctor Who Magazine* was just part of. And one day, we'll pin down RTD for a long-promised chat about his love of comics and whether the DWM strips were influential in bringing the show back. He's a lovely man, ridiculously busy but always lovely about Vworp Vworp! so we'll keep asking.

CM - How far do you want to go with Vworp Vworp? Surely there are a limited number of stories and creators to cover. Would you expand in other directions?

GK - That's very astute, actually. One of the things Colin has been a passionate advocate of is widening the remit of Vworp Vworp! to cover interesting aspects of art, design, merchandise, how we respond to the show as consumers, the animations and things of beauty surrounding *Doctor Who*. We've got some way to go before we run out of road, and there's still a lot of creators we'd love to spend time with getting their stories down for posterity.

CM - What else would you like to



see in comic book form?

GK - Oddly, I'm getting to scratch so many of these itches with Cutaway Comics already! That said, new TV21 Dalek strips with stunning art and a standalone Delgado Master comic would make my heart soar.

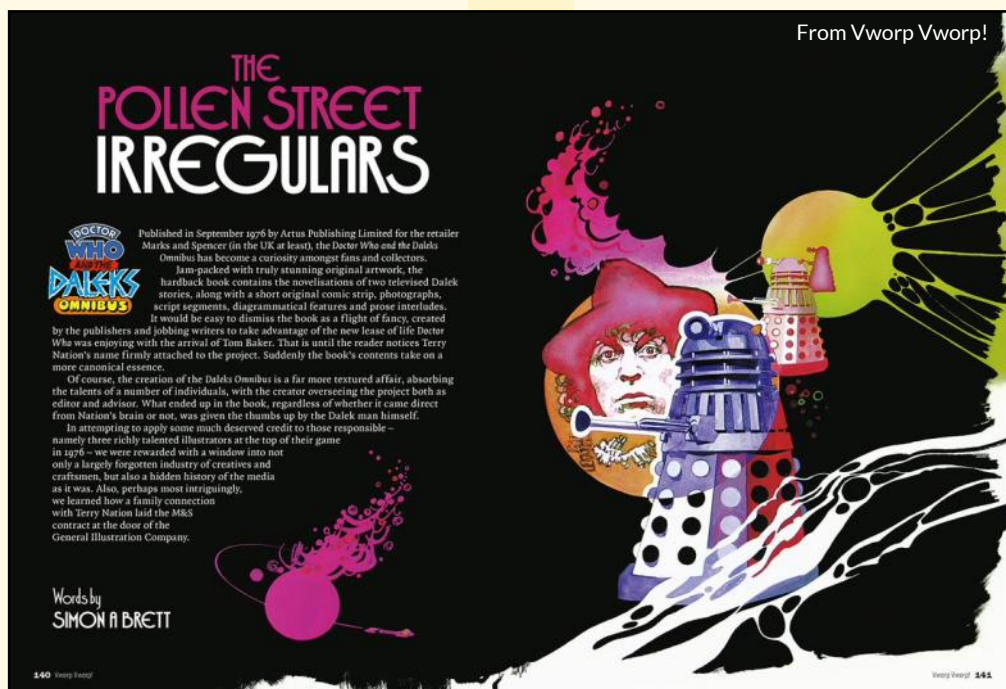
CB - I think the Delgado comic must surely be only a matter of time, with the announcement of the Missy comic. But yes, it would be lovely to see more of the best Master there ever was. Apart from him, I don't know. Just less of the endless team-ups, whose novelty wore off years ago, in comic strips and on audio!

GK - The backup strips must be due a revival in some form. I'll keep banging the drum. In fact, I'm still waiting on Alan Barnes and Adrian Salmon

to give us that epic Ice Warriors v Silurians one page strip. And in general, that short form, crisp ever so slightly EC Comics-infused style of dark storytelling is surely due a revival. I've never quite understood why publishers abandoned them. Brevity is a huge strength of traditional British comics. We could do this!

CM - What writer or artist would you like to tackle Doctor Who, that hasn't done so before?

GK - Doctor Who is SO lucky that actually, we've arguably already had the greatest artists of the late 20th century work on it. That said, Kev O'Neill, John Higgins, Boo Cook and Simon Bisley would undoubtedly all bring something new to the table.



[CLICK TO VISIT VWORP VWORP!](#)



INTERVIEW WITH TIME OF THE DALEKS CREATOR ADAM HAUGHT

By Nick Smith

Time of the Daleks is a board game in which you play your favourite Doctor. You are pulled out of your regularly scheduled travelling to clean up after Davros, who disrupts the web of time in his attempt to wipe you from existence. Does he have the right? Of course not. Along the way to your home planet you will meet companions, and Daleks!

Adam Haught is the brains behind this complex but eminently playable game from Gale Force 9, the New Zealand-based company that also make games based on Firefly, Aliens and Dungeons & Dragons. Cosmic Masque spoke to Adam about developing and expanding the game, and his lifelong passion for Doctor Who.

Cosmic Masque: Why Doctor Who?

Adam Haught: I fell in love with the show at a young age, watching it with my dad as a toddler and I never stopped watching it, reading the books and listening to the audio adventures. Creating an official Doctor Who game was always a childhood dream of mine. I was 8 years old

when I created my first fully playable game, it was a Doctor Who game revolving around the Keys to Time story arc. So, when Gale Force 9 pick up the Doctor Who license I already had a working ruleset to pitch. Not only did I pitch the game we ended up making but I also showed my passion for Doctor Who. That's the secret ingredient that is behind GF9 games, having designers who are passionate about the franchises they are designing games for.

CM: What research did you undertake specifically for this game?

AH: Well to be honest I've spent my entire life watching and re-watching the show. I also bought and played every Doctor Who game I saw come into my game store. With my background knowledge and my massive Doctor Who DVD collection, books and reference book library I had everything I needed to design the game before we even got the license.

CM: Does Time of the Daleks use a new system or is it similar to another one?

AH: The game itself is not based on any existing system. When designing games, I tend not to design a cool mechanic then skin it with the franchise. Instead I take the franchise and figure out what is gameable and unique about it. There are several unique aspects from Doctor Who that created unique rules for the game, like regeneration, the rela-

tionships between the Doctors and their companions, time travel, and so many other things that make Doctor Who the show that it is. And when you do that, you get game mechanics that can't exist anywhere else. What other game can have everyone playing a different persona of the same character?

CM: Was there a 'goosebump' moment when you added a rule or a story option and got excited?

AH: Soo many, I love the simple nods to my favorite stories, like Enlightenment and The Doctor's Wife. But the fun exciting parts for me are hidden deep in the details. For example, in the game we have Sonic Charge tokens. These tokens are kind of the game's currency. When designing them I needed to limit the amount of these tokens that each player could have at any one time. Once I figured out what the limit was, I could create the economy around the tokens. The limit ended up being five tokens, why? Because in an episode (Silence in the Library) the Doctor removes a part from his Sonic Screwdriver revealing it has 5 power bar indicators inside, so that created the limit of 5. Even those small details in the rules tend to be tied to the show.

CM: What other games have you worked on/designed?

AH: At Battlefront and GF9 designers tend to work on lots of different

things. I started off working on Miniature games, creating campaign systems for Flames of War and doing some assistant design work for Flames of War and at that time Dust. I become one of the head designers for TANKS and Modern TANKS, and I worked on all the TANKS expansion and organized play kits for those games. As for designing board games, Doctor Who Time of the Daleks was my first. Since Doctor Who and all of its expansions, I worked on several other board games, Firefly Adventures, World of Tanks, Aliens and its two expansions, as well as some other upcoming games that I am not allowed to talk about yet.

CM: GF9's parent company Battlefront produces a good number of combat-oriented games. The Doctor tends to rely on wits rather than guns 'n' ammo. Has this created a challenge for you?

AH: Not really, as a designer I play loads of games, it's like what they tell you when you want to become an author, "Read anything you can as often as you can". I am always keen to try new games. So the concept of a non-combat-oriented game was not a foreign one to me, and to be honest it was a good change of pace.

CM: What is your intended audience? Has any unexpected sector of your customers played the game and enjoyed it?

AH: I designed the game for Doctor Who fans, the fans who love every aspect of the show, new and old. The unexpected sector was from reviewers and friends of Doctor Who fans that really like the game despite never watching the show. The goal is always to create a good game, but I created the game for the fanbase. To this end the game is full of references fans would love to discover as they play, an experience I thought the non-fan would find unappealing or go unnoticed. But I was wrong. I've seen several reviews from non-fans that really liked the game, which as a designer is always awesome to hear.

CM: What kind of reactions to the game have you seen?

AH: I've only really received positive reactions on the gameplay and rules themselves. The best ones are from the Doctor Who fanbase. Like myself they have been waiting for a Doctor Who game that did the theme justice. There have been fun Doctor Who games in the past but the theming was never really that strong. To be honest my heart jumps a little when I hear a Doctor Who fan review the game and say, "Finally a Doctor Who game".

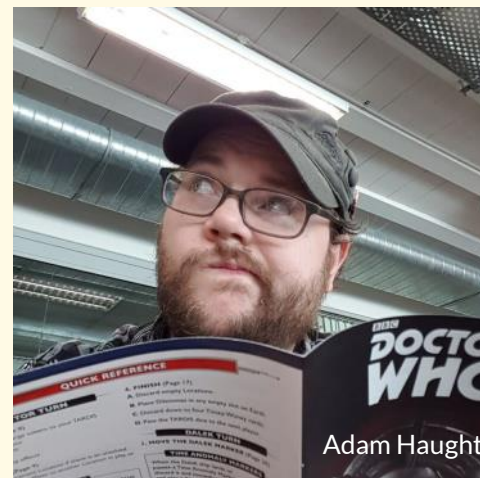
CM: How did you capture the different companions personalities?

AH: One of the key mechanics in the game is the Doctor's relationships with his companions. The Doctor

knows everything and sees the big picture where his companions tend to ground him and help him focus on what's important, and this dynamic is how the dice system was born. The Black story dice have all 6 skills on it, where the color or focus dice focus in on 3 skills each. The Doctor mainly has black dice, as he knows everything, while the Companions swap those dice and literally focus the Doctor to the task at hand. Each colored die represents a core companion type, green is your noisy, investigative, and talking types, blue is your clever science-y types, and red is your brash aggressive types. Rose, Sara Jane Smith are classic Green types, Nyssa and Martha Jones are definitely blue types while the Brigadier and Captain Jack are your red types. Some companions are a mix of colors to better match their personality. Some of the aspects of companions cannot be solely described by the color dice they use. To this end some have extra rules that better tells their story, for an example Rose can look into the heart of the TARDIS and save the day, with consequences that reflect what happened in the show.

CM: Why create expansions? Which is your favourite?

AH: Doctor who is a massive franchise, it spans back to the 60's. There is so much content that it would be impossible to get it all into one affordable game while still highlighting all the Doctors to the level I wanted



Adam Houghton

them to be. I knew at the start that I wanted to be able to showcase each Doctor because every Doctor is someone's favorite. So I wanted everyone to be able to feel like their Doctor was represented in the game. Choosing my favorite expansion is hard, they all have something I love about them, but if I had to pick one it would be the Fifth and Tenth Doctor expansion. The Fifth Doctor is the first Doctor I remember watching, and your first Doctor always holds a special place.

CM: What other franchises would you like to tackle?

AH: Well the ones I have done so far are Doctor Who, Aliens, and Star Trek. Ones I would love to do are, Supernatural, Final Space, Red Dwarf, The Expanse, and anything created by Neil Gaiman.

Thank you Adam for your time.

[You can visit the game rule book here.](#)

THE MOST DANGEROUS GAMES

By Nick Smith

There are 10,000 channels transmitted from the Game Station in the year 200,100, with revivals of vintage shows like Ground Force and Stars in Their Eyes (with actual stars in their eyes) courtesy of the Bad Wolf Corporation.

The Doctor, Rose and Captain Jack survive futuristic versions of Big Brother, The Weakest Link and What Not to Wear. But many other programmes are being recorded on the station, some of them deadly, others only fatal to some species – namely, human. Here is the cream of the broadcasting crop...



GAME STATION TIMES

SATURDAY tv

6.20 pm

Dancing with the Star Beast

Contestants dance the night away, perfecting their foxtrot and cha-cha-cha while trying to avoid getting disintegrated by pint-sized presenter, Beep the Meep.

6.50 pm

Kaldor's Next Voc Model

Ornate and beautiful robots compete to be the template for the next line of Vocs. Will these art deco doyens win the probing judges over before the robots strangle them? Switch on to find out!*

Not recommended for robophobes.

7.20 pm

Junkyard Demon Challenge

Players use scrapheap bits and bobs to build an unstoppable killing machine before their opponents beat them to it.

Sponsored by International Electromatics.

7.50 pm

Ready Steady Cook People

With your host Shockeye of the Quawncing Grig. On tonight's episode, Shockeye discusses how meat is tastier after a chase.



8.20 pm

Who Must've Dunnit

Find a stranger standing over a dead body and accuse him of murder! The suspect has 4 episodes to convince a panel of expert personalities that he is, in fact, an innocent traveller who just happened to have blood all over his hands.

8.50 pm

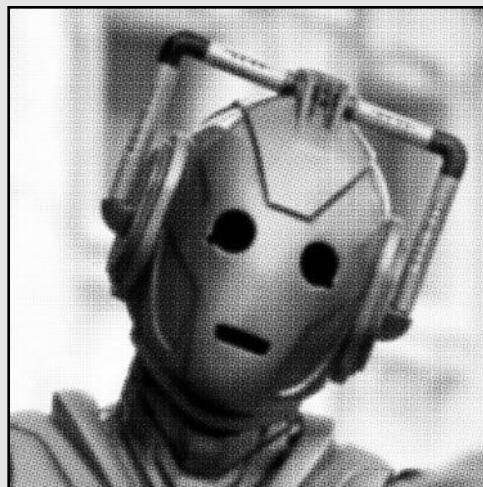
Blankety Blanked Memories

Can't remember your companions? That may be because you've been a contestant on Blankety Blanked Memories, where we erase portions of your past, entertaining audiences with your tragic confusion. If you're not sure if you were on the show, don't ask us - we can't remember.

9.20 pm

Man O Cyberman

In the past season, over 10,000 viewers have been converted to this show! Why choose a man when you can pick a cybernetically augmented boyfriend without petty emotions like jealousy or ennui? He'll never leave, unless he deletes you from his life.



9.50 pm

The Ultimate Adventure Game

Two celebrity guests join a regular human to perform challenging tasks on the planet Arg. Their final task is to jump across a grid without falling into the vortex while singing vaguely memorable showtunes in a laser mist.

10.15 pm

The Great British Bakers

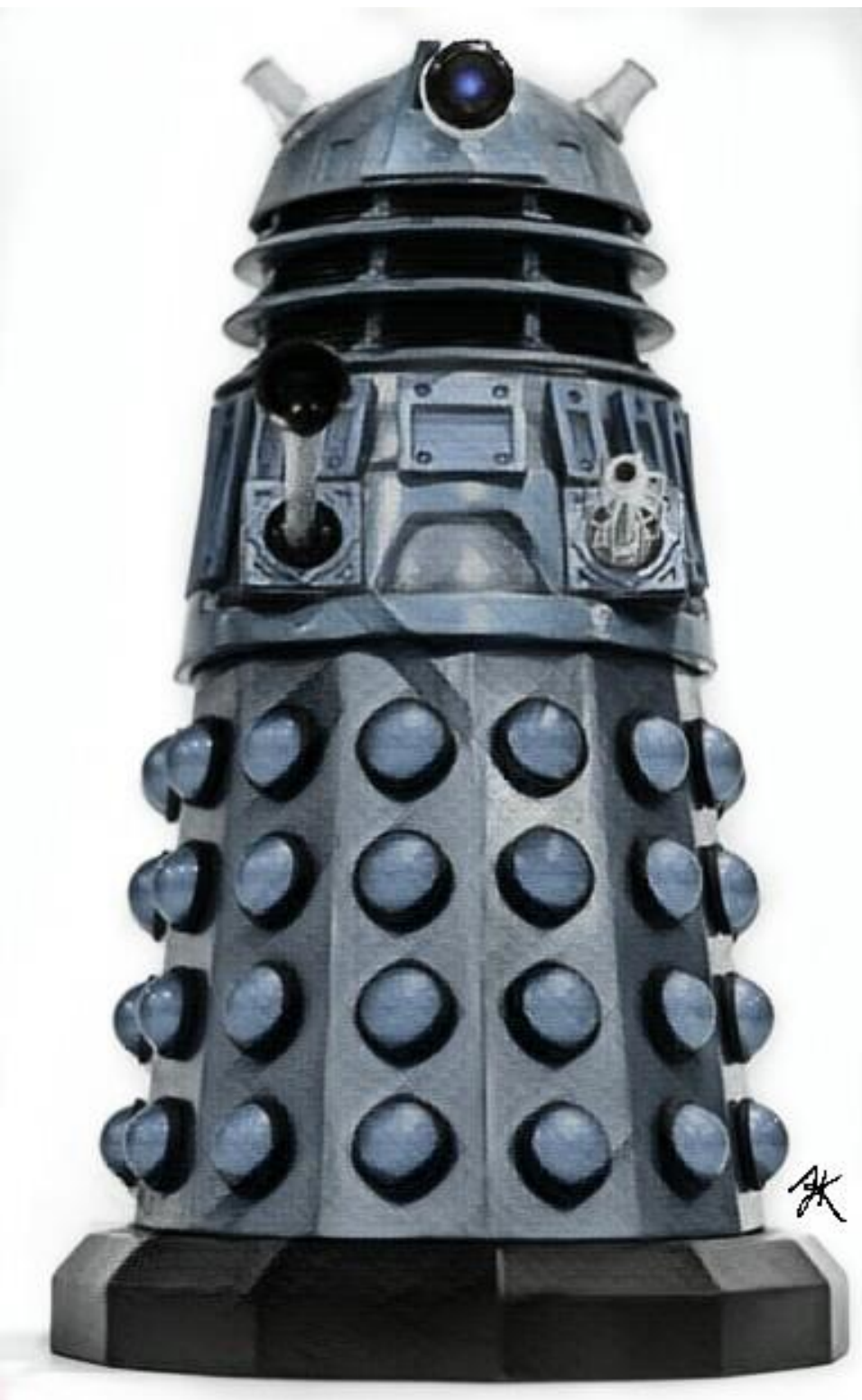
In this week's double-length episode, the unorthodox Tom and Colin eschew the game show elements of their programme and have a good old natter instead.

11.15 pm

The Eurovision Sonic Contest

Hold onto your screwdriver! The Eurovision Sonic Contest is part song competition, part home improvement show. Who will win Best High-Pitched Tune and who will figure out the Ikea instructions and build a zero cabinet before time runs out? Psionically tune in to find out!





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