

DOCTOR WHO

AND THE FRIENDS OF THE DOCTOR

ARJ KERNOW AND ALAN CAMLANN



First published by Divergent Wordsmiths in 2021

a Doctor Who writing community
at <http://divergent-wordsmiths.weebly.com/>

This is a non-profit fan project and not intended to infringe or query any copyright belonging to the BBC and/or its associated parties.

Front cover designed by Jay Smith
Compiled by AFJ Kernow and Alan Camlann

Target cover generator used created by
<https://metebelis2.com/cover>

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted

Doctor Who series Copyright © British Broadcasting Corporation 1963

“Purloined from the exquisite biomechanical computer systems of the Catchvane, the Wordsmiths have deciphered, transcribed and generally squabbled over the Doctor's vast gallimaufry of cosmic ventures. While many have been recorded by reliable sources, they are more curious of the accounts that have, as the Tellurians would say in their idiosyncratic tongue: 'fallen through the cracks.' The Wordsmiths' efforts to document these lost exploits are furnished in the tomes below, left by a divergent scion and reappropriated for the Earth's admittedly primitive global computer network...”

All characters in this publication are fictitious and any resemblance to real persons, living, dead or in the process of regeneration, is purely coincidental.

FRIENDS OF THE DOCTOR
A.F.J. KERNOW AND ALAN
CAMLANN

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM US ALL AT DIVERGENT WORDSMITHS

**This story is dedicated to all those involved in the creation of
the UNIT family and the actors who brought the UNIT era to
life so memorably.**

It is also dedicated to all “Friends of the Doctor”.

Past, present and future.

“Mr Smith, I need you,” Sarah Jane called to her crystalline super computer. In the attic of an otherwise nondescript house in England, a grandiose fanfare was followed by the shifting of a fake brick wall in the chimney stack. A futuristic computer with a glowing opalescent screen was revealed.

“Have you located all the former companions of the Doctor and sent my invitation?”

“I have Sarah Jane, and I have linked any responses to your email account. Will that be all?”

“Yes, thank you, Mr Smith.”

She wondered if anyone would reply. She had recently met yet another Doctor who had been ridiculously youthful. At the same time, she had encountered Jo Grant, a companion to her original Doctor.

This event had set Sarah thinking. How were other companions of the wandering alien known only as the Doctor coping? Fellow travellers and exiles marooned in linear Time on Earth. She set Mr Smith the task of locating the ‘left behind’.

With the Bannerman Road gang away, her mind had been given space to start its long, meandering trip down memory lane and all its blind alleys. Sarah had been bereft after being unceremoniously left behind in Aberdeen. If nothing else it would be interesting to hear the stories of those who had travelled with the Doctor. It could be such a relief to talk to people who knew something of your experiences. She’d make it a party. Let people mingle and see what came of it.

“You know, I think this is almost going to be nostalgic.” She pulled on her navy-blue jumper, adjusting her hair. “A good party with pleasant company about an old friend. And if all else fails,” she picked up the print-out, “we have what Jo sent to fall back on.”

“The first email arrived eight days ago,” reported the computer.

“Show me, please,” she read the subject line and her face broke out into a grin. “Well, of course... Had to be them.”



“Doctor, you’re missing the party,” announced Jo.

“Am I? Good,” the Doctor replied without looking up from his workbench.

Undeterred, Jo walked up to the bench and pulled up a stool directly opposite UNIT’s tetchy scientific advisor.

“Jo, I’m far too busy to engage in socialising.”

“You can’t just sit in here while everyone else is enjoying themselves.”

“Look Jo, the sentries are still on duty, I expect there are radio operators working too. I was not aware attendance was compulsory.”

Jo blushed slightly at the brusqueness of his reply and they sat in silence for a few minutes.

“I’m sorry, Jo, but it’s infuriating. I’m stuck here as the Brigadier’s pet scientist and I won’t pretend I’m enjoying it.”

“Listen, Doctor, you might not be happy here but the ordinary soldiers really appreciate your work. It would mean a lot to them if you’d put in an appearance.”

Jo left the laboratory and the Doctor watched her go with a wry smile. Last Christmas, his frustration at being marooned on Earth at an all time high. He had been depressed because Liz had returned to Cambridge. He spent the entire holiday season returning the TARDIS console back to its usual home.

As had become usual, this year had contained many alien threats, but none as dangerous as his former friend, the Master. He was detained at Her Majesty's pleasure, but for how long?

And then there was his new assistant, the young Josephine Grant. She was impetuous, brave and inclined to get herself in dangerous situations. However, she was armed with empathy and charm that had even begun to crack his curmudgeonly carapace.

It was her willing self-sacrifice in the Devil's End affair that had really surprised him. She was still young, her life so full of potential, and yet she had been prepared to die. Not just for the human race, but—in that moment—for him. It reminded him of poor Katarina and Sara, whose deaths still haunted his dreams occasionally.

The Doctor rose and walked out of the lab. He walked towards the cheery music emanating from the mess hall. As he entered, a small cheer erupted from the soldiers.

Sergeant Benton who was balancing a paper plate piled up with sausage rolls, crisps and a mince pie spotted him and wandered over. As he and Captain Yates were technically on duty in the Brigadier's absence, they were still in uniform.

"Glad you could make it, Doctor. It's good the aliens have given us a day off."

“May I remind you Sergeant that *I* am an alien,” the Doctor replied, sharply.

“Sorry, Doc, I didn’t mean anything by it...” he mumbled, before noticing the Doctor’s grin.

“You had me worried there, Doctor,” Benton relaxed with his usual amiable smile. “It’s a shame the Brig couldn’t make it.”

“Yes, poor Alistair. He’s in Geneva isn’t he?”

“I believe so, but I think he arranged his trip so he could avoid Mike’s terrible taste in music.”

“Or the party food,” added the Doctor. “I might save the Brigadier a bun. After I run a few tests...”

“It’s not that bad, considering the budget we had. I think the Brigadier managed to wrangle some extra money for us.”

“Well, you endure extremely disturbing situations, the least Her Majesty’s government can provide is a sausage roll. I’m just sorry that the fatality rate for UNIT soldiers is so high. After facing Autons, Axons and the Master you all deserve much more than a Christmas party.”

“You do surprise me sometimes, Doc—*tor*,” Benton corrected himself, taking a sip from his plastic cup. “I thought you took a dim view of the military.”

“You have your job to do, a dangerous job and I have mine. While I may disagree with your methods and decision-making I appreciate your hard work. I disagree with the military, but I have no quarrel with you. The man behind the uniform.”

His hawkish features flickered a sad smile, “You know John, I’m feeling rather peckish myself, if you’ll excuse me.”

Bannerman Road had proven a little cramped for Sarah's purposes, so for the benefit of all involved, it was decided to host the meeting somewhere else. They had left Ealing in a series of cars and arrived at Hammersmith where a meeting room at a local church hall had been arranged.

Inside, Sarah had arranged the chairs in a circle on the grey carpet and let the others find their way in. The elderly couple were chatting about the White City tube station as if it were some in-joke only they were clued in on. Eventually, this died down to a respectful hush as others found the room and settled in.

Everyone grabbed a copy of stapled papers from Jo and skimmed the first few pages. Then, there was nothing. No conversation whatsoever. Sarah recognised the wariness, she'd felt it herself after the millennium. The trouble of travelling with the Doctor was you never quite knew friend from foe when you came back. You were out of the loop. Whatever happened next, happened to someone else and then washed over onto you. Nevertheless, she was patient and that patience was eventually rewarded.

A handsome white-haired man broke the uneasy silence, "I'll be honest, this feels a bit like an A.A meeting."

A dark-haired lady sitting next to him nudged him, "Ian, be serious."

"When am I not?" he teased. "All right... All right..."

She suppressed a smirk, it wasn't easy. "Sorry, I'm Ian's wife, Barbara, and we travelled with the Doctor and met the Daleks."

Many people gave an involuntary shudder at the mention of those implacable nasties.

“I see we’ve all got common ground,” Sarah noticed.

“I can’t believe I actually walloped them with a baseball bat,” a middle-aged lady with straight brown hair said proudly. She had a London accent and was dressed in a charcoal suit and white blouse. On her lapel a circular pin badge with a capital ‘A’ in its centre.

“It’s got to be something about being young, doesn’t it? That idea that we’re going to live forever. Suppose we grow out of that.”

“Well...” Ian hummed.

Barbara gently squeezed his hand.

“I’m Dorothy, by the way,” the woman said. The name sounded aged, matured like a corked wine in a cellar. “Although, when I travelled with the scheming imp and his question mark umbrella, I called myself Ace.”

The woman with blonde hair and a straight fringe over fulsome eyes perked up.

“Ace?” she asked.

“Well, I was a teenager. Growing up. We make a lot of mess as we’re growing up.”

“Oh,” she put down her cup. “Ben sends his regrets on not being able to attend from India. I’m Polly. We met the Daleks on a planet called Vulcan. They were frightening enough, but it was the Cybermen I hated.” She shuddered at the memory. “Does anyone remember them?”

“The worst thing about them is that they used to be human...” an Australian voice agreed. “We lost a lot of good people when we

fought them. Some of them didn't even get a full life. That's part of why I'm here today, I'm here to tell you about the ones that didn't make it back. Like my young friend, Adric. It was awful..." Her knuckles tightened in her lap to a bitter white.

Polly put her arm around her. "I'm so sorry for your loss... umm..."

"Tegan Jovanka... Doctor number 5, mostly."

"We'll be expecting a few late arrivals like Tegan here," Sarah informed the group, gently. "So, as a blanket rule, no one has to talk about anything that makes them uncomfortable."

"But it is what we're here for?" Ian asked.

Sarah nodded. "Yes, it is."

"You certainly encounter danger and many needless deaths when you travel with the Doctor," stated Polly, remembering the Vulcan colony. "Makes you wonder sometimes if it's worth it."

"Yeah," Dorothy's voice was almost a whisper, "but could you imagine what would've happened if we weren't there?"

"In Antarctica in 1985," said Polly.

"On the freighter in the twenty-sixth century," added Tegan.

"In London's 2100s," concluded Barbara.

"At Coal Hill in November 1963," muttered Dorothy.

"What?" Barbara looked alarmed.

Dorothy nodded, holding up her fingers. "This close, mate. This close."

"Just goes to show how thin that line really is," Barbara said. "Between the ordinary and the unearthly."

The Doctor headed to the trestle tables at the side of the room that still contained the staples of the British party food. Plates of sausage rolls, crackers and cheese, mince pies, crisps, peanuts, some chocolate cupcakes, scotch eggs and slices of pork pie.

Hardly a vegetable in sight, the Doctor sighed, as he selected a few items. To think, it was only a few decades ago that Britain was operating on ration books and good luck.

He became aware of a presence at his elbow, the dark-haired Corporal Bell was also surveying the feast.

“Typical fellas,” she smiled. “I told them to let me help with the food, honestly.”

“Yes, I’m sure you would have produced a more appealing display.”

Once she had selected a few nibbles they sat down on a couple of canvas folding chairs. It creaked unsettlingly beneath him.

The Doctor joked, “You take your life in your hands sitting in one of these. I always wonder if I’ll go straight through.”

They sat in silence for a while munching until Corporal Bell asked a question.

“Is it true what they say? Are you... an alien?” she shifted in her chair and looked embarrassed at her audaciousness.

“Tut, tut, Corporal Bell,” the Doctor raised his eyebrows. “Listening to gossip doesn’t sound like you at all.”

The senior ranks knew of the Doctor’s origins or, at least, a version believable to humankind, certainly. The man from the blue

box with the peculiar medical report. Most of it was kept under wraps, but naturally, tongues wagged. Snippets of information about this new eccentric and flamboyant scientist slowly percolated down through the ranks. There was all manner of talk.

The most popular theory at the moment was that he was a defecting scientist from the foreign opposition. It appealed to their sense of intrigue, flattered their pride or smudged any misgivings, but the nature of their enemy combatants caused the more imaginative among UNIT to make that further leap. His knowledge of the alien threats that they faced certainly added to the Doctor's standing among the squaddies and officers alike, either way. If a foe could be otherworldly, why not a friend?

Bell persisted. "Is it true?"

The Doctor was tired, fed up and felt unwilling to lead her by the nose this evening.

"I am not from your planet, Corporal. I am biologically different from you and my knowledge and experience comes from several thousand—" he paused, "hundred years of travelling. Does that answer your question?"

"I-I didn't mean to be rude, sir," the corporal stammered.

"You had a question, I answered it. There's nothing wrong with furthering your knowledge, Carol. Most commendable."

"Do you like it here?"

"If you mean here on Earth, then yes. I have some affection for this blue, watery world and its infuriating inhabitants. However, I am stuck here against my will and that I hate. I'm a political exile, Corporal Bell. Tried, sentenced and convicted by my homeland. I'm

used to exploring everywhere and everywhen, to be marooned in one location and stuck in one time is, at times, devastating.”

“I’m sorry. Do you think you’ll ever be able to leave?”

“When I’ve done enough dirty work for the powers that be on my planet,” the Doctor drained his cup and smiled ruefully at the sombre-faced Bell.

“Cheer up, this is supposed to be a party. Don’t let my predicament depress you. There is much to enjoy about your funny, damp little island.”

Carol laughed at that and the pair chatted until Jo sashayed over after dancing to Marc Bolan’s ‘T-Rex’.

“Phew! I need a drink after that,” his assistant said, pulling up a chair.



Jo, her smile ne’er dimmed by age, bobbed happily to confirm the Chestertons’ theories. “Yes, I remember the giant ants, too. Did he have Bessie with him?”

“On Vortis?” asked Barbara.

“Let me see, I brought my notes.” She thumbed eagerly through a dishevelled notebook. “Gosh. Looks as though we were on Earth when the Zarbi Supremo attacked. Can’t say when, though.” She giggled. “It’s all a bit of a muddle.”

“You know, Barbara,” Ian leaned over, “we spent all our time trying to get home, it might’ve been safer staying aboard the TARDIS.”

“You haven’t actually said, Ian, who was yours?” asked Tegan.

He looked at his wife. “Barbara?”

The former history teacher commanded the room with the same presence she’d used during her lectures recently at St. Cedd’s College, Cambridge. “Well, Ian and I travelled with an older man with white hair. At least, that was how he appeared. For someone of his age, he could move with incredible speed and was terribly nimble. As we get older, we’re trying to hold onto that.”

“Sounds like my Doctor,” Jo brightened.

“He was in London for the benefit of his granddaughter, Susan.”

“Oh. No, sorry,” She looked disappointed. “We’re out by about two changes, I think, if my Doctor was being accurate.”

“How’d you meet him?” Dorothy asked.

“Susan attended our school and, one evening, we got curious...” said Barbara.

Polly knew where this was going. “You pushed open the door...”

“And that curiosity led us on quite a lot of perilous adventures,” confirmed Ian. “He had no idea where he was going. Alien planet with acid seas one minute and meeting Marco Polo the next. If my memory serves, I distinctly recall... a dragon, yes, Alexander the Great—at least once—and those last days on Venus.”

“Mind you, he was very hostile to us at first, selfish and arrogant too,” said Barbara. “But then, he was so terribly frightened of us, wasn’t he, Ian?”

“Yes...” Ian said, solemnly. “It’s ironic, really, looking back on it. He was as frightened of us, as we were of him, but hey,” he nudged her gently, “that didn’t last, did it?”

“No.” Barbara smiled, remembering. “I like to think we helped soften some of his rough edges. We learnt about him, so we could learn about ourselves and he did the same. He was sad to see us go.”

“So were we.” He leant close to her. “I never expected to see him at our wedding.”

“It was right, though, wasn’t it?” she raised her eyes knowingly. “Think about it, Ian... I mean, he *had* to be there. Even if it wasn’t the same face.”

“Could it have been mine? He was young and dashed around everywhere,” said Tegan. “Blonde? Beige clothes? Sweet? But never let him know I said that.”

Ian shook his head. “Dark-haired. Chin. Terribly young. At least, on the outside.”

“Different man.” Tegan shook her head. “I think I met your Doctor, the old one, he was still tetchy, though. Seemed preoccupied with more than just the Zone.”

“Zone?” asked Jo.

“The Death Zone on Gallifrey,” Tegan, Sarah, Ian and Polly answered at once.

“After your time, I think,” Sarah added.

She turned to Ian and Polly. “How do you know about it?”

“We were caught up on a backup board, according to the Doctor,” Polly answered.

“Anyway, Tegan, you were saying.”

Tegan continued, “Well, he had Susan with him, but she was much older than school-age. She must have come from later.”

“You met Susan?” Barbara’s eyes widened and she smiled.
“How was she, were her and David still together?”

“I didn’t have much chance to talk to her,” replied Tegan.
“But yes, I think so. She had a son, too. In... I think it was called New London, but don’t quote me on that. I met two other Doctors that time, too. A tall one in fancy clothes and a little one who reminded me of Charlie Chaplin without the moustache.”

“Ooh, I met him too, he was ever so funny,” Jo smiled.

“Oh, he was ours,” pointed Polly. “Ben and I travelled with him. Did he have his recorder?”

Tegan shook her head. “Technically, I started with the one before mine. He had teeth and curls.”

“When we first met the Doctor, he sounded like Ian and Barbara’s. White-haired and a bit grumpy sometimes,” remembered Polly.

“Did you ever find out why?” asked Barbara, curious.

“He wouldn’t admit it, but...” Polly picked at her fingers.
“Well, he wasn’t well. At least, not during our time with us. Something had happened and his mind, it was sharp as ever, but his body was falling apart. Then he *changed* and we thought the Doctor had been kidnapped. This man was so different, funny and almost child-like. He refused to tell us one way or the other who he was. I’m not even certain he knew. However, we soon realised he was the Doctor when he sorted out those Daleks.”

“I saw him change right in front of me,” said Sarah with a faraway look.

“So did I,” said Tegan. “It was like a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis. He was reborn.”



The Doctor scratched his nose, feeling at the lines and contours of his cheekbones.

How long will I have this face, I wonder? He pondered to himself. *When— if my sentence is ever finished and I’m freed... Will they take this life away from me as well?*

“So, you decided to drop in on us ordinary mortals, after all. I’m glad,” said Jo, drawing him into a half-hug. “Hope he’s not being too gloomy, Carol.”

“No, it’s been an interesting chat, he’s making the best of things.”

Suddenly, the record Mike was playing slowed, stopped and then started playing backwards. There was much derision from those enjoying the music.

“Don’t give up your day job, Mike.”

“Tony Blackburn must be quaking in his boots...”

Mike shrugged and stopped the player and replaced the record. He made a careful check of the player’s controls and started the record. The Kinks’ latest tune began to play, but suddenly started getting faster and faster until the Davies brothers sounded more like Pinky and Perky.

The Doctor was out of his seat like a shot, handing his paper plate to a bemused Jo. He arrived at Mike’s side who was trying to stop the record playing. He was unsuccessful, the record played

faster and faster until there was a bang and a small puff of black smoke emerged from the back of the player.

“Turn to Side B,” Mike coughed.

“Looks like the motor’s burned out. What caused it?” the Doctor asked. “Any problems with it before, Mike?”

“No, it’s virtually brand new, I think the receipt for it is in admin.” His face fell. “Oh, it’s not even mine... I’ve borrowed it from Palmer. He’s going to have a fit.”

The Doctor started examining the player, he used his sonic screwdriver to undo the turntable from the base of the player. A strange sticky blue residue coated the electronics.

“Oh, no, can’t we even have one night off!” he frowned, pocketing the screwdriver.

“What do you mean, Doctor?” Mike added.

The Doctor was prevented from replying by an extraordinary wave of anger that spread across the hall. He could feel it, sense it, driving itself up the walls like a coat of red paint.

“Mike...” the Doctor cautioned.



“Sounds as though there are more Doctors now than days in the week,” Ian observed.

“I’ve met many over the years,” said Sarah wistfully. “I actually travelled with the tall one who liked driving cars. Ours, Jo. He had a yellow Edwardian roadster and one that could fly.”

“Was it called Bessie?” asked Dorothy. “UNIT kept it in storage for him, I actually drove it.”

“Good to hear it’s got some mileage left in it. After he changed, he became, well, very unpredictable. You see...” Sarah clasped her hands. “He *died*, or at least, came as close to it as he could for someone like him.”

Depending on the companion, there were looks of solemn acknowledgement to outright disbelief on their features.

“How’d he survive?” Dodo asked.

“A friend, someone like him, saved his life but the results made him difficult for a while. He was... Childish was the word I think I used. He never quite outgrew that, he had bouts of it, but I learnt you could still trust him. He saved my life lots of times.”

“How’d you find him?” inquired Dorothy.

“I snuck onboard, didn’t I?” Sarah admitted, almost sheepishly. “Common thread around here... Best story I ever investigated for the Met and I never even got it published. Not that one, anyway.”

Barbara held up her copy of the papers. “Did you write this?”

“Me, actually,” volunteered Jo. “I had to be very careful, I’m still bound by the Official Secrets Act. I’m not supposed to reveal anything that would ‘contravene the public interest’, but we’re not interested publically, are we? Hey...” She tapped Sarah on the shoulder. “Did yours still fiddle about in the laboratory?”

“He dropped in now and again, but we were well and truly back abroad. He had his habits. He liked jelly babies and had a massive scarf. But he could be so...”

“Alien.” The word rippled through the room.

“Do you know he once said to me that he walked in eternity? And he does, he meets us, we travel with him and then we leave, and he moves on with his life.”

“Wanderers in the Fourth Dimension,” Barbara echoed.

“Eventually, when he had to bring me home, he dropped me off in... Aberdeen,” Sarah clapped her clasped hands together. “I lived in Croydon.”

“Oh, he spent ages trying to get me back to Heathrow,” remarked Tegan. “And then when he actually managed it, it was too late. I’d been sacked in my absence. It was only thanks to what we did for Concorde that British Airways picked me up. I was lucky, I had people to vouch for me—but then, that was only after he’d left me behind! I told him straight, a broken clock keeps better time than you. At least it’s right twice a day.”

Ian threw back his head and chuckled at Tegan’s turn of phrase.

“Even when we arrived somewhere peaceful and relaxing and tried to take a break, something always interfered,” said Tegan. “He’s a good friend, one of my best, but he attracts trouble, that’s for sure.”

“He got us home eventually,” said Barbara. “Although, not in the TARDIS. We had to take a Dalek time machine. We arrived in 1965 and then had to explain where we’d been for two years.”

“We told everyone we’d been missionaries in Africa,” added Ian. “A few bought it. Not everyone did. We got picked up by someone from the government, we’re still not entirely sure who.”

“We think it was most likely MI5 or MI6.”

“It seemed the Doctor became quite an important man not long after we resettled.”

“They were probably C19.” A voice that had been silent for most of the discussion chimed in. “I’m Dodo, Dorothea Chaplet, I was still shaken up from being hypnotised by a rogue computer called WOTAN when I left the Doctor,” she said, taking off her glasses and twiddling them absent-mindedly in her hand. “I was glad to be home again, but part of me felt I could have seen some more.”

“It’s addictive, isn’t it?” said Dorothy, her eyes shining. “You see such beautiful and amazing things. Meet lots of interesting people and do a lot of running. Occasionally, you get to blow something up...”

“Oh, I know,” Dodo had a giggling smile. “I once played tennis with an invisible alien and, on our near to next stop, I had to play deadly hopscotch in one of the Toymaker’s games. We even went to Tibet and the OK Corral in Tombstone. While poor Steven was forced to sing, I had to play the piano for some trigger-happy cowboys in a saloon. Let me see now, I still remember it. *With rings on their fingers...*”

She sang a verse and chorus of ‘The Ballad of the Last Chance Saloon’ with great gusto. A ripple of applause went around the circle. Sarah crept across and closed the door of the meeting room.

Dodo did a mock bow in response, “Why thank you, you sure are a much more appreciative audience than those cowboys.”



Fists started swinging, groups of men started brawling.

“Don’t you tell me what to do, you stupid—!”

“—he’s one of them Autons. Get ‘im!”

“What did you call me, you—?”

“Stop right now! That’s enough!” Mike waded into the groups of combatants and tried to separate them. “What the devil do you think you’re playing at?”

The Doctor surveyed the room looking for Jo. He was aghast to see Corporal Bell and Jo having a blazing row. The Doctor took out his sonic screwdriver, adjusted the settings and activated it.

A loud high-pitched sound, impossible to ignore, caused everyone to freeze.

“Right! Now I’ve got your attention. Everybody out, now, to the fire assembly point. Captain Yates? Sergeant Benton? Where are you?”

A couple of hands emerged from the melee and waved.

“Get them out of here, gentlemen. I’ll explain when we get outside and please bring a loudhailer.”

Yates and Benton ordered the rather sheepish and bemused-looking staff and soldiers out. The Doctor headed straight for Jo and Corporal Bell. Jo was distraught and Corporal Bell had a red mark on her cheek.

“I’m so sorry, Carol, really I am. I don’t know what came over me.”

“A filing clerk, huh?” She rubbed the bone above her left eye.

“Time for apologies later. I need you both outside quickly.” said the Doctor, as he guided them gently towards the door.

While the evacuation proceeded, the Doctor sought out the TARDIS. He emerged carrying an A4 leatherbound book.

“Now then Professor Postgate, don’t let me down,” he flicked through the pages as he walked swiftly to the outside exit.

“Bandersnatchers, Daleks, Echons, Hoothi, Ice Warriors, Impyra... *Hah!*” He tapped the page, triumphant. “Of course, of course... Right now let’s see what she knows about them...”

It was a cold, but mercifully dry night. The Doctor joined Yates and Benton just as they were finishing roll call. The Doctor stood at the front of the dazed UNIT personnel and took the loudhailer from Benton.

“Now, listen carefully everyone. The UNIT base has been infested by the Impyra. You can’t see them or hear them, but rest assured, they can see and hear you. The best thing you can do right now is head back to your quarters,” the Doctor lowered his mouth from the microphone, “if that is agreeable to your senior officers.”

“Well, I’m in command at the moment,” replied Mike. “If you say there’s a threat to the security of UNIT staff, Doctor, and we need to disperse then we will. I know you’ll give us the answers soon.”

“Thank you, Captain Yates, I will need Sergeant Osgood, Corporal Bell and Jo. If you ’re all feeling able to help, I would appreciate your assistance. We’ll go to my lab.”

“What are you thinking, Doctor?” Jo asked.

“If you were a misfit set about causing trouble on the Earth. Where would you look first?”

She realised. “The TARDIS. Oh, no...”

“Barbara do you remember when he lost the TARDIS playing backgammon with Kublai Khan,” said Ian.

“Oh, yes, and when you got knighted by King Richard, I kept calling you Sir Ian when we started teaching again. The children heard me say it once, and started doing it too.”

“Yes, thank you for that one. I had to let it go as at least they still called me Sir. It could have been worse, I suppose.”

“I don’t think we’d have gotten away with a high priestess on school grounds,” Barbara sighed.

There was a knock at the door. The assembled group turned to see the new face, walk in with a black vinyl bag swung over her shoulder. She was a young woman with long dark hair and clear brown eyes.

“Sorry, the tube was absolutely bonkers. I nearly got my scarf caught in the door on the way in.”

She pulled it off her neck. “Like so. Hell of a way to say hello, right?”

“Doctor Jones,” Sarah extended her hand. “Pleasure.”

“Just Martha, I’m not on duty,” she smiled, shaking Sarah’s hand.

“When we travelled into Earth’s history, we met smugglers in Cornwall and arrived in the aftermath of the battle of Culloden.” Polly laughed. “The Doctor ran rings around everybody by disguising himself as a washerwoman!”

As Doctor Jones settled herself in a chair she asked, “Meet anyone famous from history?”

“A few. Who was your first?”

“I met... William Shakespeare, at the Globe theatre,” said Martha. “Haunted by a lot of things, but God he was incorrigible. He even tried to chat me up. Clever, though, he soon realised we were not from his time. I must’ve sounded like a house officer. I had so many questions about time travel. Just loads.”

“Lucky you. My Doctor would never let me in,” said Dorothy, wringing her hands of bad memories. “He always kept me in the dark. At least, at the beginning. He became obsessed with plans and clever stratagems to beat his enemies, sometimes before they’d even realised they had lost.”

“Oh, I had some of that. ‘Don’t worry, I’ll tell you later.’ That used to drive me insane,” agreed Tegan. “And he usually forgot, or he told you so fast it made your head spin.”

“He once took me to a creepy house I had been to as a teenager, just to face my fears. Who did he think he was?” said Dorothy, her face suffused with anger. “The final straw was on a planet called Heaven. The Hoothi...”

A flicker of recognition passed across some of the companions’ faces.

“Think invasion of the body snatchers... times a billion. And then the worst betrayal, he couldn’t tell me his plan and I lost my... His name was Jan.” Dorothy’s eyes hardened, her head bowed to the ground, a cold-blooded anger rising through her body. “Anyway, I told the Doctor what for, left him with Benny and walked

away...” She exhaled, letting Ace pass over her. Dorothy sat in her wake. “We did meet up later though. I forgave him, built up the trust again and we became a good team.”



In the Doctor’s laboratory, the TARDIS stood like a sentinel in the corner.

“Splendid,” its owner wheezed a sigh of relief. “No signs of tampering for the moment.”

“Yes, but that could soon change,” observed Mike.

Jo fetched a cold compress for Carol’s cheek. The five of them—Jo, Mike, Bell, Benton and Osgood—were perched on stools dotted at intervals along the bench. They were like a council of war awaiting instruction from the Doctor.

“First thing we must do is tell the radio operators to remain in the operations room and lock the door. Corporal Bell, can you see to it?” asked the Doctor.

Bell moved to a corner of the lab and relayed the Doctor’s message.

“Now, Osgood, old chap, I’ll need any UV lights you have, speakers and some circuit board. I’ll radio you the rest of the components in a bit.” He nodded at the Doctor and left. The exile pulled a pencil from his pocket. “I’ve got to design an Impyran trapper first...”

“What are they, Doctor? And how do you know they’re here?” asked Jo.

“Well, the gumming up of the record player was my first clue something was up. The fighting only confirmed it. A regular midwinter’s nightmare. Professor Postgate’s careful observations will give us the information we need to rid ourselves of these...” he thumped the book against his table, “*pests*.”

“You didn’t answer Jo’s question, Doctor. What are these Impyra?” asked Mike. “How much of a threat are they?”

“Sorry, everyone.” He began pacing, pinching his lower lip. “Well, basically, they are called the Impyra and they have sworn vengeance on any human colonies they encounter. Fortunately, they are mischievous rather than malevolent.”

“Like faeries?” asked Jo.

“Of a sort, Jo, of a sort.” The Doctor unfolded a sheet of paper from a nearby drawer and began drawing on it. “Rather than kill humans, they disrupt them. They foul up weapons and technology and spray an artificial pheromone, Impyrox, that causes humans to become aggressive and belligerent. When they are satisfied they have created enough havoc and get bored, they hitch a ride on an unsuspecting spaceship to another colony and start the whole process all over again.”

By the end, he had a circuit diagram.

“But how did they get here?” asked Jo.

“I’m rather afraid they could have hitched a ride in the TARDIS, after our recent intergalactic mission for the Time Lords. It would explain a few unusual problems I’ve had with the old girl over the past several days.”

“How many are we talking about here Doctor?” asked Sergeant Benton.

“I’m not sure, until we get on their wavelength,” replied the Doctor. “Corporal Bell, can you ask any sentries and radio operators if they’ve picked up any strange voices?”

“Benton, do the sentries. Corporal, you talk to the operations room,” ordered Mike.

A walkie talkie crackled into life, “*Greyhound Five to Greyhound Two over.*”

“Go ahead Greyhound Five, over,” answered Mike.

“*Tell the Doctor I’ve found two UV spots, what else is required, over?*”

The Doctor took the radio from Mike and reeled off a list of parts. Osgood carefully repeated each one.

“*Right, Doctor, I’ll bring that lot over asap, out.*”

Turning to Benton and Bell, the Doctor asked, “Has anyone reported any weird voices?”

“The sentries reported hearing high-pitched laughing,” replied Benton. “We checked it out. No damage to the perimeter. No danger. We logged the report and decided to follow it up in the morning.”

“I see.”

“At worst, we thought it might be a late Rag Week practical joke.”

“Oh yes, highly amusing, sergeant. Well, we won’t be laughing for long.”

“Doctor, comms have reported at least two maybe three distinct voices,” reported Corporal Bell. “They are currently eating.”

“No one had better touch that food. When they eat, they secrete an alkaloid over so they can digest it like Vortisian Zarbi. They also taint any food they don’t eat, which induces immediate regurgitation if eaten. Fortunately, it’s nasty but not lethal.”

“Yeuck,” Jo stuck out her tongue.

“Charming little beasties aren’t they?” sighed Benton.

The Doctor adjusted the receiving frequency on the walkie-talkie. There was the crackle of static then buzzing, eerie voices emitted from the speaker.

“We must find their weapon store and disable them or perhaps seize it to our advantage.”

“Agreed. These humans cannot be everywhere at once. What concerns me is that someone here was able to help the humans recover quickly from the Impyrox.”

“We must be careful.”

“We need to increase our strength, so we can multiply.... It is fun, is it not?”



“I had to leave him when my family got hurt,” said Martha.
“During the time the Master ruled the Earth.”

“I don’t remember that,” said Jo.

“You wouldn’t, Time was rolled back. Everyone forgot the dreadful acts the Master committed. The labour camps, the deaths of innocent people, the cruelty of the Toclafane. The Doctor was out of action, so it was up to me to save the day. I wandered the Earth, saw things that still cause me nightmares.”

Martha noticed many of her fellow guests shift uncomfortably at their own memories of wastelands and devastation. Ian and Barbara, in particular, looked several lifetimes older.

She continued, "My family were forced to serve 'our victorious Lord and Master'. After it was all over, I stayed behind to help my family heal from the pain of their memories."

Jo put a comforting arm around her shoulders. "That's why you left?"

"That and... I had a lot of time to think." She looked at Jo. "I couldn't play understudy. I needed him to look at me, rather than... through me. He was still grieving for someone and I couldn't be her replacement."

"A good friend and I had that talk," Jo nodded.

"You weren't alone," Sarah leant in. "It took a while for him to get used to the fact that I didn't know what you knew, Jo. I think you left quite the impression."

"We all do," added Jo. And she really did believe it.

"And when he had to turn himself human..." Martha had psyched herself up for this. She wasn't going to stop. "I was left pretending to be his servant in a boarding school in 1913 England. As you can imagine, I was right at the bottom of the pecking order. Some of the boys looked at me as if I was dirt under their shoes. The educated adults were no better. The Doctor was in a rush, they were chasing us, I get that, but..."

She turned to Dorothy. "You talk about him having plans?"

Dorothy nodded.

"Did he take much time preparing them?"

“Lifetimes, potentially.”

Martha sighed and sat back. “This was him on the fly and it was one of our worst. I like him, I really do, he can be incredible...” She shook her head. “But that was one of the hardest things I had to go through aboard the TARDIS. The hardest.”

“I am so sorry you’ve had such a wretched time, Martha,” said Jo and turned to look straight at her. “I had all my UNIT buddies to talk to. You had no one. You’re *amazing*, Martha. That’s what you are. Marvellous Martha.”

Murmurs of agreement rippled through the room. Tegan raised her cup to the young doctor.

Martha smiled gently at Jo’s warmth and sincerity.

“Honestly,” Martha said to her, “I can’t imagine what he would’ve been like when he thought he was never leaving Earth. It must have been hell pushing against that sense of... standing still, day after day.”



The lab door opened and Osgood entered pushing a metal trolley.

“Here you are, Doctor, Merry Christmas,” smiled Osgood.

“Good work, man, that was quick.” replied the Doctor. “We need to continue to monitor their communications. The Impyra don’t know we can hear them and that gives us the upper hand. Now, Sergeant Osgood, are you ready for some quick-fire soldering?”

“If you tell me what goes where, I just want to get rid of these pests.”

Jo picked up the book from the bench where the Doctor had left it, and idly flicked through it.

“The pages are a bit dog-eared, it’s got Autons in it, Daemons too, and here we are...” She cleared her throat, “The Impyra are an insectoid race perfectly adapted to avoid predators, and to be predators themselves. They cannot be seen except under ultraviolet light. They communicate by using the upper end of the radio spectrum, in the VHF and UHF band. Therefore, they can only be heard via a radio receiver tuned to high frequency bands. They reproduce by parthenogenesis but need to be fully grown in order to multiply.”

“Maybe that’s why they are so busy guzzling our party food,” said Bell.

“You see, annoying little pests,” the Doctor mumbled, a screwdriver clenched between his teeth.

“Just another day at the office,” Corporal Bell sighed. “All we can hear is chomping noises and arguing about what their next move should be.”

“Good, that gives time for the boffins to get to work,” replied Mike.

“Anything I can do?” asked Jo.

“Yes, take Corporal Bell, very quietly, use those espionage skills of yours. Sneak up to the door of the mess hall and press the button on the screwdriver against the keyhole, it should hold them

till we get there. Then, come straight back here. If you feel the red mist descending again, run straight outside.”

“Right. Good luck.”

After they had gone, Mike asked, “Why didn’t you ask me or Benton?”

“Boots, gentlemen, very difficult to sneak anywhere in boots.”

“I’d better inform the Brigadier about the situation,” said Yates.

“No, wait until we’ve dealt with them. I don’t want Geneva up in arms, they’re liable to make the situation worse.”

“Worse?”

“Well think, man, if troops are sent in—even local ones—they have to come in their own transport. We’d essentially be giving them licence to spread across the country. Also, Benton, would you mind fetching me a vacuum cleaner from the stores, there’s a good chap.”

Benton looked puzzled, but hustled away on his errand.

“Now then, Sergeant Osgood,” the Doctor crossed to him. “How’s that amplifier circuit coming along?”

“I think it’s finished, Doctor.”

“Excellent. Very neat bit of soldering and thanks for putting in a spindle potentiometer. Makes it easier for me to adjust. Now we need a large plastic funnel...”

Benton returned carrying a battered-looking rectangular, red vacuum cleaner.

The Doctor opened it up and began installing the circuit inside. Osgood meanwhile, drilled a hole in the casing for the

would-be volume control to go through and stuck a control dial onto it. The Doctor fashioned a crude diamond shape made of thick copper wire and mounted small speakers on each corner facing inwards to the space within the diamond.

Osgood then wired the speakers into the circuit, after which, the Doctor put the cleaner back together. Together, they drilled holes into one of the metal tubes so that the wire speaker diamond could be screwed into place. Finally, the Doctor taped a plastic funnel into the hole at the end of the tube. They joined all the tubes together to give them the longest reach they could.

The converted cleaner was placed carefully on the trolley and they wheeled it in the direction of the mess hall. They met Jo and Corporal Bell on their return journey.

“They are *not* happy about us locking them in,” said Jo.

“It sounds like they’re smashing the place up,” agreed Bell. She tilted her head and appraised the contraption on the trolley. “Sandra isn’t going to be impressed, that’s her favourite Hoover.”

“It’s an antique,” said Benton with a smile.



Dodo felt accepted enough to be honest, “This is more a therapy session than a party.”

“Life with the Doctor was rarely one of comfort,” Barbara admitted. “I think what kept us going was each other.”

“I remember reading your account of that terrible year, Martha,” said Sarah. “The Doctor has his faults, no one is perfect. He always tried to do good, to save as many as he could.”

“Mine seemed to lose more than he won,” said Tegan. “He tried his best and I only found out later that he regretted every lost soul, every frustrating failure. He was a good egg... Though I never understood why he wore that celery on his jacket.”

Nobody knew what to say about this piece of information.

In the silence, Polly had a question. “Why did we all come here today?”

“How do you mean?” asked Ian.

“Well...” she shrugged. “Just that. Tegan, I know you came from Australia.”

The Australian’s eyes slid to a far corner of the room. “I was in the neighbourhood...”

“Dorothy?”

She tweaked her ear. “Checking up on potential old mates.”

“Dodo?”

“I was curious,” she smiled, sheepishly, with a half-laugh.

“Chestertons?”

Ian had caught Sarah’s eye. “I... think Miss Smith might have the answer for us.”

The former journalist smiled, looking at all the many faces crammed into the entertaining space.

“We’re like family,” she enlightened.



The Doctor and his assembled task force arrived outside the hall. A flash of remembrance tripped across the traveller’s features.

“Oh, sorry, everyone, the lights. Osgood, Benton please go and retrieve the lights. Everyone else, be very quiet.”

The lights were pushed carefully down the corridor and the Doctor motioned everybody to huddle together.

“Now then, Mike you’re on lights, when I give the signal, turn them all off. Osgood and Benton as soon as we enter, get the lights to opposite ends of the room and plug them in. Don’t look directly at the light. I’ll get the Impyra trap prepared and plugged in. Jo and Carol reseal the door. Everybody ready?”

The Doctor unlocked the door, and pushed it open.

The UV lights were pushed swiftly into position and plugged in. Mike killed the lights and the UV lights bathed the room in bright white light and revealed...

“You were right, Jo,” he whispered.

“They’re just like evil fairies,” murmured Jo.

The three hovering, insect-like Impyrans were the size of large dragonflies and glowed blue in the UV light. Each one had two large compound eyes like a fly, a mouth full of sharp pointed teeth, two arms that ended in three stubby fingers and a thumb and four muscular legs.

Captain Yates’s walkie talkie burst into life, buzzing with a pair of high-pitched voices, “*How dare you trap us.*”

“*How do you know how to detect us?*”

“Well, let’s just say I’m not local. You have two choices, surrender willingly—”

“*Why?*”

“*What alternative do you offer?*”

“Or I will capture you and hand you over to my People.”

“You cannot threaten us.”

“We will disrupt your paltry defences. Primitive humans!” as the second Impyran spat the last word, a blue gob of saliva landed on the floor.

“That’s very charming,” said Jo. “Nice manners, these Impyra.”

“Look, I require an answer,” insisted the Doctor. “A skipped vinyl is one thing, but once you incite others to kill and harm, you have crossed the line. If you surrender, you will be looked after, in locked quarters, until we can repatriate you back to Impyrax Prime—”

“We will never surrender to humans,” the Impiran spat, viciously, in the Doctor’s direction.

“Then take your childish games elsewhere. Leave the Earth in peace.”

“No.”

“Right, don’t say you weren’t given a chance. Osgood, switch on.”

Sandra’s adapted vacuum cleaner rattled into life. The noise of its motor amplified through the speakers. Everyone covered their ears. The Doctor turned up the volume.

“What is this toy?” the first Impyran scoffed.

“Ipax, that sound, I cannot resist, I must go to it,” the second Impyran groaned as it flew into the centre of the wire diamond. It tried to resist the suction, but disappeared down the funnel into the machine.

“Quick! Fly away, spray the humans...” ordered Ipax.

It was no use, the siren sound of the venerable vacuum cleaner drew them in and the suction hustled them into the dust bag. One by one, like grains of glitter, until the stardust stream of fae-like troublemakers was gone.

“Turn it off, Osgood, before we’re all deafened,” shouted the Doctor and scooped a plastic disc out of his pocket and pressed it onto the top of the cleaner. Once in place, it began to emit a soft blue glow.

“Is that it, Doctor?” asked Jo, lowering her hands.

“Are we safe now?” added Mike.

“The Doctor wiped his brow with a hankie and grinned like the Cheshire cat.

“Yes, Captain Yates. Mission Pest Control is a success. You can tell everyone in the barracks that the crisis is over. They can all come back.”

Jo’s eyes swung across the devastation. “We might have to do a run to London...”

“Now, I must get to the TARDIS, construct a message pod, and get them away to my People. It’s about time they did something useful...” He pushed the trolley out of the room. “Well done, everybody. I’ll be back sharpish.”

He hustled out into the corridor. Benton and Osgood gravitated towards the snacks on the table. It had been a terribly long day.

“Oh, one more thing,” called the Doctor. “don’t touch that food and drink...”

The two men flinched back, pretending to look inconspicuous.



Jo's story was enjoyed by all, particularly when she told them about Sandra's reaction to her missing vacuum cleaner. Faces were stuffed with cheer and food and Sarah Jane's once full to bursting cooler was practically empty.

"It was one of those amazing moments," Jo gushed. "The Doctor put the reinforced vacuum cleaner in a sort of black box and put it on top of the console. He went into a sort of trance-like state and, with this rumble of sound, the Impyrans disappeared."

Sarah looked at the clock on the wall.

"Well, our time here has run out. I'm sure there's many stories left to tell, but there's always next time. Do you want to meet up again?"

There was a chorus of agreement.

"I know there are other friends of the Doctor who couldn't make it tonight like Professor Shaw. I have some young friends who would love to meet you all and hear your tales. I know it's never easy living with your memories but at least you now have people you can call who know just how you are feeling."

"Whenever we're feeling adrift," Barbara sighed, contented.

"Or misunderstood," Dorothy added.

"Or curious," Polly rolled her shoulders.

"Or need to just... let off steam," Tegan and Martha said together.

“What should we call our little group?” asked Dodo.

“Oh... Oh! That’s it. How about Friends of the Doctor?”

suggested Jo.

“Not A.A then, a bit like Friends of the Earth,” smiled Ian, pulling himself to his feet on a walking stick. “Any last words for us, Jo?”

She gave it a quick thought, bundling up her notebook. “Oh!”



The next day, a briefing was held in the mess hall. A few broken chairs were piled in the corner. Some of the UNIT personnel nursed black eyes and bruised fists.

“The Brigadier has sent a telex,” announced Captain Yates. “His message reads: ‘Sorry to hear your party was ruined. Well done for keeping calm and getting rid of the blighters. Captain Yates has told me that you all followed your orders. I must thank the Doctor and his team, because of their efforts, UNIT remains resolute. Take advantage of any leave you have. We will need you all rested and ready to continue defending the Earth. See you all when I return. Oh, and Merry Christmas to one and all.’”

This brought a rousing cheer from the assembled company.

“I won’t forget *this* Christmas party in a hurry,” smiled Jo.

“Yes, Jo, hopefully next year we won’t have any uninvited guests,” the Doctor replied.

“Hey,” she gently knocked his shoulder with her own. “Still want a little time alone?”

He nodded, solemnly. “Yes, just a little.”

The traveller turned his back to begin the long walk back to his laboratory.

“Hey, Doc,” Benton called. “Where are you going?”

“Don’t tell us you’re skipping out on us now,” Mike sounded dismayed, the telex still in his hand.

Bell appeared at his shoulder. “After everything that happened yesterday.”

The Doctor surveyed the faces arrayed like a family portrait. There were more besides who weren’t able to be with him, but they all stood, united.

Jo’s face lit up, mischievously, in the middle of the tableau, “Well?”



The Friends of the Doctor gradually left the church hall, with goodbyes and promises to stay in touch.

As Sarah walked home, she gazed up at the stars.

I wonder who your friends are now, Doctor? I hope you are all safe and enjoying your travels. Perhaps we’ll meet you one day and you can tell the Friends of the Doctor your stories, too...