

DIVERGENT WORDSMITHS
GALLIFREY HISTORIA: ROMANA'S RECONCILIATION

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"I PROMISED A KINDER, GENTLER GALLIFREY. THEY EXPECT ME TO INVOLVE THE TIME LORDS IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE UNIVERSE. SHOULD I?"

A NEW DAWN: REFORMISTS TRIUMPHANT

As Romana took the Presidency, she began to make good on the promises of reform made by politicians since Ravolox but never implemented. After a speech denouncing isolationism, Romana commenced a full review of Gallifreyan foreign policy, which resulted in the opening of the first alien embassy on Gallifrey since the Rassilon Era. A Tharil delegation was welcomed into the Capitol, marking the beginning of a new era of Gallifreyan diplomacy. Romana personally led the ceremony, remarking:

"This is a new beginning for Gallifrey. No more shall we retreat and hide from the universe. The cosmos is our responsibility and we will aim to cultivate peace and prosperity across the stars. Through diplomacy, there will never be another Ravolox."

The initial months of Romana's Presidency was marked by a significant spring clean of unresolved issues from Rubrum's time in the role. In one of her first directives, the Advisory Council of Administration was dissolved, sweeping away the last remnant of the Ravolox chaos. In its place Romana reinstated the role of Vice President, appointing Wade to the position. Wade was expected to hold the role for a short period, as it was well-known he preferred retirement to Capitol politics, while the new President settled into her role. The reformists in the High Council arranged for Braxiatel to be appointed a Cardinal, enabling him to advise Romana whilst keeping her bloc of supporters in the Council organised. Her active participation in temporal adjustments put her in a unique position compared to her predecessors. The Master's theft of the Loom of Rassilon's Mouse and its subsequent recovery from Cheldon Boniface on Earth, with the assistance of the Seventh Doctor, signified the beginning of a personal trend for the Lady President. She became well-known among the officers of the Chancellery Guard and general security for her tendency to abscond with little warning, but always she returned and always her expeditions had been in the pursuit of Gallifreyan interests. Romana demanded that the Celestial Intervention Agency make her aware of potential temporal incidents much earlier than they had previous Presidents, believing that she should be active in the resolution of temporal conflicts. This habit of taking a personal interest in minor incidents upset the Agency leadership, who were accustomed to keeping the President uninformed of the specifics of such minor events.

In her sidesteps and surveys, Romana's review of foreign policy reached the conclusion that the Gallifreyan retreat from the galactic affairs had left a void which other temporal powers were increasingly filling. Emboldened by the apparent collapse of the increasingly totalitarian advanced civilisation. Attempts by previous administrations and the Celestial Intervention Agency to prevent their rise (both officially and unofficially) had produced nothing but conflict, and had spread distrust of Gallifrey. Romana endeavoured to engage with them instead, publicly announcing the policy of formal off-world diplomacy as a pragmatic addition to the Non-Interference Policy. Romana personally oversaw the despatching of delegations to the Monan Host, Nekkistani, Sunari, Warpsmiths of Phaidon and numerous other lesser temporal powers. Some of the powers had previously communicated with each other, but under Romana's initiative these diplomatic relations were enhanced and proper dialogue across the universe and Time established. An unprecedented level of temporal

diplomacy was enabled, which Romana hoped would enable a far more amicable governing of Time than under previous administrations.

BEGINNING OF THE TEMPORAL POWERS: THE ETRA PRIME INCIDENT

Mere months into her Presidency, Romana's fledgling temporal diplomacy was tested at Etra Prime. The planetoid, reputed to be one of the oldest in the universe, was within Archetrix space. Archetrix was home to a lesser temporal power, long a target of Celestial Intervention Agency espionage and one of the first to accept Romana's diplomatic overtures. During surveys of Etra Prime, Archetrixian scientists discovered evidence of elements that defied the known laws of the universe. They invited delegations from fellow temporal powers to investigate and Romana chose to take a personal interest. As it had once been the ruler of Gallifrey who had codified the laws of the universe, it was fitting that a ruler of Gallifrey would investigate this aberration. The CIA made no attempt to dissuade her of this notion, the conservative leaders of the Agency already cared little for the whims of their reformist President. The Lady President considered this a good sign. Perhaps now, after so long, the High Council would be permitted to rule without the influence of an external third party.

Disaster struck. Etra Prime vanished. 500 delegates from a variety of temporal civilisations gone without trace. Outrage swept the fledgling alliance. Wade was swiftly ratified as Acting President, now finding himself thrust from a temporary return from retirement into the centre of the most disastrous diplomatic incident in centuries. At home, political outrage was centred on the CIA. Both conservative and reformist High Councillors were furious at the humiliation and feared a second revolution from an angry populace deprived of their President. Wade had no desire to protect the Agency from what he deemed their own failure and called on Vansell to answer for them. For the first time, the Coordinator of the CIA became a public figure and was hauled before an inquiry. The position of the Agency was considered as much an embodiment of the organisation's policies as the President was of the High Council. It was a direct (and, as the Agency saw it, unprovoked) attack on their very right to exist in Gallifreyan politics. This humiliation left its mark. Thanks, in no small measure, to the personal resonance it had for Vansell himself, reminding him of the powerlessness and abasement of his Academy days. The CIA organisation swore to never be caught unawares again and sought to increase their intelligence on the temporal powers, suspecting one of them to be responsible for the disappearance. Off-world outposts were established secretly in foreign space under the guise of pirate transmitter stations, embassies and other establishments to gather intelligence and to further investigations of Etra Prime's location. This marked the largest off-world Time Lord presence since the dissolution of the colonies.



The CIA's investigations were interrupted by a temporal wave that swept through local space/time. First reported by the newly-established Agency outposts, Vansell travelled to one to personally investigate as the wave hit Gallifrey's system. A fleet of alien warships were now invading Kasterborous and making for Gallifrey—the Time Lords were now at war. Vansell's frantic investigations identified the attackers as the Knights of Valyshaa and found history specific to Earth and the Knights had been altered; with the Doctor's biodata present in each distortion. Vansell returned to Gallifrey with this news, as the Knights destroyed the outpost and laid siege to the seat of the Time Lords. Caught unprepared by the temporal shockwave, the Time Lords struggled to mount a defence as the Knights bombarded the Transduction Barriers whilst Vansell frantically sought to warn and assassinate the three incarnations of the Doctor caught in the centre of this temporal maelstrom. Under such unrelenting temporal assault, Gallifrey's hasty defences crumbled and Vansell's gambit failed. The Time Lords fell and the Knights of Valyshaa ruled the Web of Time. The Lords became little more than batteries to extend the Knights' diminishing lifespans, which had been compromised by their unstable form of temporal technology. The three Doctors were retrieved from the temporal distortions by the Temperon, a vast temporal being of ancient Time Lord legend that had been embroiled in the alterations to history, and it brought them to the ruins of Gallifrey. There they discovered the Knights' new history and the powers who had manipulated them to create it and thus achieve the fall of Gallifrey—the Sirens of Time. The Sirens were likewise of ancient Time Lord legends; creatures of paradox for whom the Web of Time had been a prison and thus its makers their natural enemies. The Doctors discovered the Temperon's physical form had been imprisoned by the Knights and freed it, allowing it to move against the Sirens. The Temperon used its full might to engage the Sirens in an eternal struggle, extricating them from history. With the Sirens' influence expelled from time, Gallifrey was restored. Vansell returned home from a CIA outpost, none the wiser of why he had left.

The shockwave left a scar in the continuum, however, which the Matrix soon identified as the result of a temporal cataclysm of unknown ferocity. The Matrix's analysis of the scar revealed one key detail—once again, the Agency has been caught unawares by temporal powers beyond their knowledge. The Time Lords, for all their arrogance, were still but the playthings of powers beyond their knowledge. Vansell suppressed the analysis, citing an ancient precedent to deny the Acting President access, fearing such a reminder would undermine the already declining faith in Gallifrey's defences.

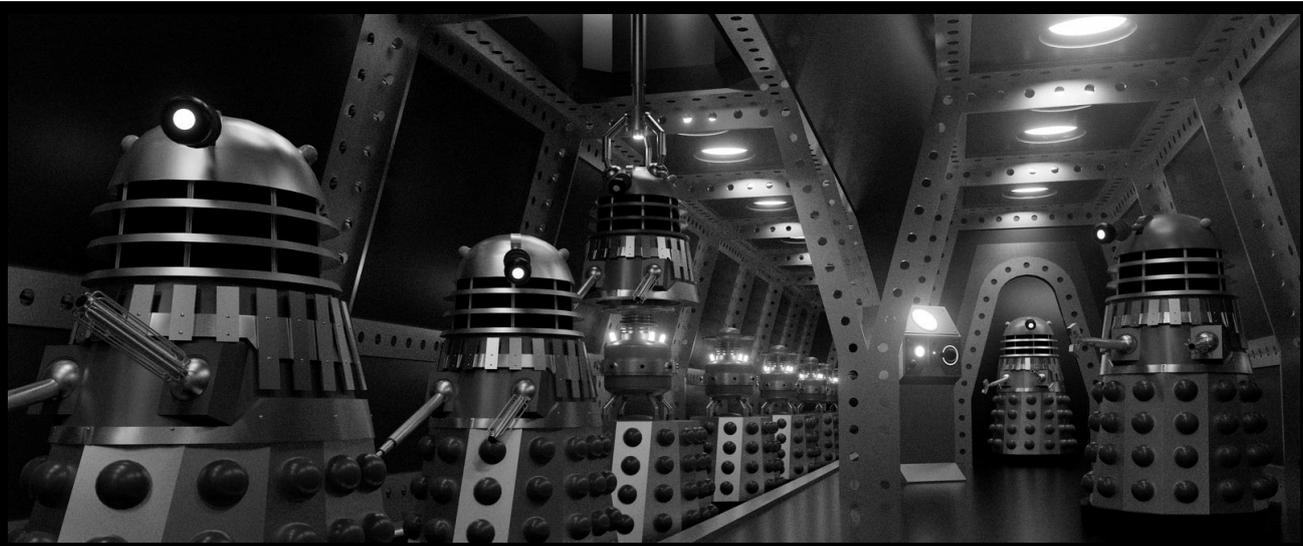
One year after the disappearance of Etra Prime, 300 bodies of delegates and scientists who had vanished with the planetoid appeared on Archetryx. The powers who had lost their citizens began mobilising. Suddenly, the site of the first great temporal collaboration looked set to become the *casus belli* of the next great time war. Wade, who had until now had taken his position as little more than a placeholder until the return of Romana, accepted he had to act personally to salvage Romana's diplomatic project. He recruited the few Time Lords with ambassadorial experience into a new Ambassadorial Mission, which managed to negotiate a delicate truce. An exchange was agreed; unarmed scientists from each temporal power would go to Archetryx and two bodies would be returned to each temporal power for examination on their own worlds. The cause of death for the delegates was quickly ascertained by each power's analysis to be time distortion. Distortion of such a degree was beyond the capabilities of Archetryx, so the temporal powers turned their espionage on each other. The Time Lords' investigations found little. The distortion was of an extent unseen since the reckless temporal weapons deployed in Morbius' final stand. A grisly fate Wade refused to believe the other powers were capable of devising. The CIA's espionage produced nothing, save that the other powers' investigations were proving similarly inconclusive.

Wade's caretaker Presidency continued for a further nineteen years. Gallifreyan politics was effectively frozen, as Wade feared any attempts of meaningful reform being dismissed as illegitimate due to the President's absence. Whilst he felt unable to progress Romana's agenda domestically, Wade concentrated on rebuilding the fragile alliance network that Romana had begun. The Ambassadorial Mission achieved tentative progress in reestablishing diplomatic ties, albeit with trust between the powers now even more fragile. Archetrix proved especially keen to participate in the renewed diplomatic project, determined to redeem itself in the eyes of the other temporal powers. This work culminated in the organisation of a new conference at Archetrix to discuss temporal affairs. The CIA grudgingly supported these efforts. Their espionage continued to produce nothing and public confidence in the Agency was steadily declining the longer the President was missing. Vansell hoped the Archetrix conference would provide an opportunity to make intelligence breakthroughs on the other powers and perhaps ascertain the cause of Etra Prime's disappearance.

WAR AMONG THE SUPREME BEINGS: THE DALEK INVASION OF GALLIFREY

The Daleks had been of little direct concern to the Time Lords in the years since the Skirmish. A savage warrior race who had an unfortunately vital contribution to the Web of Time and who the Celestial Intervention Agency occasionally had to ensure did not trespass in the temporal domain in the pursuit of their warped crusade of supremacy. In the grand cosmic scheme of things, their forces shattered by the Movellan conflict and an internal race war, the Daleks were a nuisance. As such they were utterly overlooked by the CIA's investigations into the disappearance of Etra Prime, and likewise by the other temporal powers. This attitude was to be proven an arrogant folly.

The Archetrix Convention began with relative ease compared to the past nineteen years of tense diplomacy. Wade and Vansell attended in person, to prove Gallifrey's dedication to temporal diplomacy and also to fulfill their personal desires to investigate Etra Prime. Vansell also saw the conference as a vital opportunity for the CIA to expand its intelligence on the other powers, an attitude Wade permitted in the hopes it would yield something on the Lady President's location. As the conference progressed, the delegations were briefly thrown into outrage when an unannounced Type 40 TT Capsule arrived on Archetrix. Emerging as an unexpected portent of great historical change, Wade and Vansell now had to negotiate the presence of their civilisation's most infamous Renegade, and in typical fashion there was a human accompanying him, Evelyn Smythe. However, the presence of the Doctor's sixth incarnation was quickly overshadowed by far darker elements than his trickster provocations.



The Doctor's arrival had been caused by an unidentified temporal wake interfering with his TARDIS. Vansell agreed to help him investigate, and the two discovered that vital Archetrix defences had been compromised by Dalek agents in senior positions, who had used the conference hall's shields to effectively trap the delegates, and that the temporal wake was Etra Prime itself—on a collision course with Archetrix. The Daleks attacked the conference hall after their agent, the High Minister of Archetrix, planted a bomb in the berthing bay, sealing off access to the delegates' time vessels. However, this simple act of containment and disorientation hid a greater scheme. In the confusion, the Daleks seized the Monan Host delegation's timeship. The extent of the Daleks' design was revealed when the Doctor investigated the gravity wells in order to disable the shields and discovered Dalek mutants infesting them. The Doctor succeeded and was saved from the mutants by the arrival of the lost President Romana. At this time, Romana had escaped from Etra Prime via transmat, after 20 years of bitter, gruelling enslavement to the Daleks¹. Discovering the mutants had been running a laboratory in the wells, they surmised the Daleks had been synthesising a substance in the unique gravity conditions. Likely derived from the unique elements on Etra Prime. Together, the Doctor and Romana assisted the delegates' counterattack, which had been organised by Wade, against the Dalek invaders so the surviving members of the Convention could flee as Etra Prime collided with Archetrix. Cataclysm claimed the fledgling temporal power. The Collision, as it has since become known in their history, crippled the course of the planet's development for centuries to come.

Aboard the Presidential TARDIS, Wade and Vansell made a hasty retreat to Gallifrey where they found reports of Dalek attacks on other temporal powers. The Unvoss, the Warpsmiths of Phaidon, the Malians, the Nekkistani, the People, the Souchunese, the Virgoans... Countless worlds were under unilateral assault. It therefore seemed natural that a Monan Host fleet arrived in orbit seeking sanctuary, claiming that the Daleks had invaded their world. Wade was initially reluctant to give them sanctuary, however Vansell argued for allowing their flagship to arrive for negotiations, in truth so he could examine their technology. Agency opportunism won out, and Wade permitted the landing in the TARDIS cradles. Upon materialisation, the truth was exposed, the Monan refugee fleet was a disguised Dalek war fleet and the Daleks were now invading Gallifrey. The Chancellery Guards had never faced such a foe. They hadn't fought a ground war, a real ground war, in centuries and never against an enemy whose immediate directive was extermination, not conquest. The Daleks were bred for war and cared not for any rules of engagement. As the Guards retreated from the Cradles, the Daleks extracted the eyes of the wounded and used them to bypass the Capitol's emergency retinal security protocols. The conflict unfolded in the streets of the Capitol; unleashing the most savage combat since the Eternal War. It rapidly turned into a slaughter.

Into the warzone came the Doctor, Evelyn and Romana, having been trapped in orbit whilst Romana gave the antique TARDIS necessary clearance to bypass the Transduction Barriers. Using a stolen Dalek thought-transfer crystal, Romana stunned the spearhead with her sheer hatred from 20 years of torture, enabling the three to evade the Daleks and escape the Cradles. In safety of the Capitol security centre, the Doctor took radical action to stop the massacre; he overrode all the retinal security and replaced them with that of his human companion and activated the bulkheads to contain the Daleks in what they had already occupied. Neither Daleks or Time Lords could now freely move through the

¹ Professor Qualenawitvanastetch, Chief of Multihistorical Research at the CIA, postulated a further undisclosed motivation beyond conventional imprisonment. He observed, in a study of the planets Vega VI and Omnia, respectively, that similar psychological stresses were placed upon Susan 'Angel of Mercy' Mendes and Magister Carmen Rega prior to their installation as soft power intermediaries. It would not be imprudent to suggest that President Romana may have been undergoing a similar programme of degradation prior to her escape. Potentially, to act as emissary between Dalek overseers and a subjugated Gallifreyan populace.

Capitol. The conflict was effectively frozen and Gallifrey's security was now entirely dependent on the safety of a human.

As the two former Presidents conferred, the Black Dalek, the Emperor's lieutenant, broadcast to the Time Lords. The Daleks would now destroy Galaxy 17A53 with their new element. Their element, created with the unique substances of Etra Prime, developed in Archetrix's gravity wells, imbued with the hatred of the Dalek shared mind of the transfer-crystals and accelerated by a temporal centrifuge of the Monan timeship, would react catastrophically with the fabric of space itself. They called it the Apocalypse Element. Wade and the Doctor called its bluff, believing no rational creature would dare deploy such a thing. The Black Dalek gave the order. The Seriphia Galaxy, four times larger than Mutter's Spiral and containing six-hundred-billion stars, burnt. The Daleks had unleashed a destructive force second only to entropy itself. Untold billions of lifeforms were beyond saving, the Time Lords could only hope to contain the effect. The Doctor, Vansell and Romana made a desperate gambit with the Eye of Harmony, using ancient stellar manipulator equipment in the hopes of forcing the fireball that was once Seriphia into a separate continuum to burn out safely. The Eye failed. The Apocalypse Element was beyond even the power of Rassilon's great creation.



As the Dalek spearhead began to self-destruct through the bulkheads, Wade and the Black Dalek negotiated. In a bizarre twist, the Black Dalek offered assistance containing the effect to save the universe. Wade, brought to desperation by a crisis beyond his worst imagining, conceded if the Dalek spearhead allowed him to disarm them. As he was in the process of doing so, a Dalek drone captured Evelyn and reported they no longer required cooperation to bypass the bulkheads. Fatigue and frayed nerves from such a gruesomely ruthless ordeal had left the leader of the High Council exposed. Lord President Wadeburlatch, after decades of service to the Gallifreyan people, was exterminated by the invasion force. For the first time in Time Lord history, a President had died at the hands of an alien.



With Evelyn their prisoner, the Daleks reached the Council chamber and disabled the Transduction Barriers. The Daleks had free access to the seat of the Time Lords. Under the personal leadership of the Black Dalek, a Dalek time machine materialised beside the Eye of Harmony. The Black Dalek ordered that the crystal Romana had stolen be thrown into the Eye, and upon doing so every Dalek on Gallifrey transferred their very life essence into the heart of Gallifrey's power. It was enough. The burning galaxy was contained and its continuum accelerated until the destruction had run its course. The Daleks died in the process, however before dying the Black Dalek revealed the true purpose of the chaos. In accelerating its destruction, the Time

Lords had accelerated Seriphia's rebirth. A new galaxy had been born, thousands of virgin worlds which the Dalek Empire was poised to seize. An unrivalled powerbase. The Daleks had won.

The domestic reaction to the invasion was one of sorrow and outrage. The CIA and Chancellery Guard had proven utterly useless in the face of a true threat. That the Daleks' rampage had only damaged the Capitol to a limited extent was entirely by virtue of the invasion's specific aims of lowering the Transduction Barriers and reaching the Eye. Had they wanted to, the Daleks could have slaughtered throughout the city. The Time Lords had been humiliated, again. Romana had no desire to protect the security forces from the outrage they were facing. Taking to the Gallifreyan media, the restored Lady President addressed her horrified people:

"We must now rebuild and rethink. Gallifrey was vulnerable and alone. Never again. Our intelligence agency failed to preempt this evil threat. Never again. Our Guards were not equipped to confront the invaders. Never again."

With the public knowledge of and hostility to the Agency at an all-time high, Vansell took a leave of absence from his role as Coordinator, believing he needed time to reevaluate his entire strategy as an Interventionist. Archetrix had been compromised from within, without his Agency detecting any overt signs of treachery, and his decision to allow the Monan vessel to arrive on Gallifrey had enabled the slaughter. He took the failure to hearts. Something had to change. In his absence, command of the CIA fell to Ferain, the Director of Allegiance and a staunch opponent of Romana's policies. Ferain was a firm believer in the need to restore Gallifrey's traditional strength and the invasion had prepared him to contemplate methods beyond the Agency's usual discretion. Vansell intended to return as Coordinator as soon as he believed he was able, his successor well prepared to forge his own path, and began research into the ancient secrets of Gallifrey to try to find ways to restore the lost supremacy of the Time Lords. He was particularly enthralled by the legends surrounding Rassilon and the power he once commanded. History, it seemed, had begun to repeat itself.

In the wake of the invasions, a new sense of unity spread across the powers. From the savagery of the Daleks, came a new diplomatic landmark. One which promised that halcyon future that the Time Lords had been craving since the deposition of Borusa. Rather than be forgotten in the massacre, the proposals discussed at Archetrix were pursued and built upon by the surviving time-active blocs. Mutual aid was established for a collective recovery from the Dalek attacks in the form of temporal lifeboats, the Convention was ratified and an alliance formalised. The Temporal Powers alliance was formally established. In an utterly pyrrhic victory, Romana's diplomatic dream of a cosmos united in their mutual cultivation of the Web of Time had been achieved. A simple piece of syntheskin vellum with a list of names and signatures, but one that would shape the course of history to come.

SERPENTS IN THE GRASS: THE GALACTIC FAMINE

The return of the Lady President Romana to her role following the Dalek invasion was marked by a significant change in the status quo of the wider cosmos. The assault on Gallifrey had been repelled, but not before Galaxy 17A53—better known as Seriphia—was exterminated and repopulated in a massive temporal convulsion orchestrated by the Daleks. They had failed to usurp the throne of Time, but their power base was now one that sat unrivalled in their history and would be the springboard for, at least, two major conquests of Mutter's Spiral.

In their efforts to catalogue the lasting consequences of the Etra Prime Incident, the Time Lords were involved in a crisis of equal proportions, but of a chronologically more pressing nature. The technicians within the Parachronistic Chamber beneath the Capitol discovered a spreading historical

anomaly within the Web of Time. A galactic famine stretching out across Mutter's Spiral in the twenty-fourth century that appeared to have no readily explicable cause to establish its effect. In the wake of such devastation in Seriphia, as was now etched into recorded history, a spatiotemporal balancing had occurred to counterweight the energy required to accelerate the galaxy's localised timezone. As such, the High Council of the Time Lords performed an uncharacteristic act of open intervention. They gathered refugees in lifeboats throughout Mutter's Spiral and shuttled them to Prydos on Gallifrey, an eccentric city known for its ready trade in foodstuffs and artefacts with the lesser species of the universe. One of the few cities to emerge from the Shobogan revolt after the Ravolox Affair battle-scarred, but uncowed. Unusually, the relief effort provided for the Galactic Famine was not endorsed, nor condoned by the Celestial Intervention Agency. They considered the High Council's transparency in this matter to be a potential sign that they may try to declassify the Agency's own activities in the future. A prospect they did not enjoy entertaining even theoretically. More so, they disapproved of Romana's choice of who should spearhead the effort—the Doctor.

In collaboration with Time Lord scientists, the sixth incarnation of the Doctor helped to develop a universal means of feeding the hundreds of teeming refugee cultures—from Altair to Zeta Cancri—that were being delivered to Gallifrey. The solution lay in Prozyme, a substance not too far removed from pond scum in texture, but one that would permit carnivores and herbivores to exist harmoniously side-by-side without culinary incident. He negotiated with the serpentine Malian overseers, tasked with safeguarding the refugees from harm (and, unofficially, to segregate them from the Time Lords), and attempted to smooth over many of the misunderstandings in the makeshift settlement that became known as Riff City. Unable to determine the nexus point that had triggered the Galactic Famine, the Doctor elected to go undercover among the refugees to see if he could find any leads. Eventually, his investigations led him to a twenty-fourth century refugee telepath from Papua New Guinea on Earth enrolled in the Prydon Academy who could provide a unique empathic insight into the minds of those around them. He was affectionately nicknamed “Wings” by his new sponsor for his desire to fly away from the tedium of Gallifrey. By that time, Riff City had begun to descend into anarchy, cajoled by a prolonged period of homesickness, culture shock and general anxiety. Its unmanageable size had necessitated stricter measures from the Malians to keep the peace. To the point that tensions between the refugees and their alleged protectors fell into brutal violence. In the confusion of a riot, the Doctor, Wings and a prospector by the name of Mack, discovered a unique chemical element had created a dimensionally-unstable space dust and a psionic megadroid acting as a telepathic amplifier for the increasing unease in Riff City. The Doctor was able to use his TARDIS to trace the compound to the Mandara system. The home of the Spire of Ninety Souls of the Ellisian Faith, a robocentric belief system, promoting the concept of mechanical beings with living souls who sought to claim the Gift of Life.

The source of the Great Famine stemmed from the Maker, a being who had usurped the original Father Ellis's position and massacred the followers of the Spire with flying Hoggarathi killers. In its place, the structure became a deathtrap for all life who disagreed with the Maker's view that the android was superior. Outwitting death at the talons of the Hoggarathi with a makeshift sonic blaster, the Doctor and his accompanying travelling companions encountered one of Ellis's former followers, an android named Suri, and made their way to Mandara and the cul-de-sac of the Maker. In that dimensionally-permeable realm, they were pitted against nightmarish visitations stolen from the mind of Ellis and the inorganic slaves chained under the Maker's thrall. They faced primordial fears from their subconsciouses, a ruthless Herne-like figure known as the Slayer and areas where the laws of physics themselves were pitted against them. Reaching the Fortress, the Doctor challenged the Maker to a contest bartering for access to unlimited travel in space and time, the power of a Time Lord. In the confusion, the Doctor persuaded Wings to pass on his telepathic empathy to Suri, allowing her to rally

the shackled androids, robots, automata and droids to action and overpower their oppressor's forces. Father Ellis was freed from his prison and sought redemption in his destruction of the Maker. His Dorian Grey portrait of divested evil. He succeeded, casting his first creation into the depths of the Fortress, but the final exertion cost him his life. The prospector, Mack, remained with Suri to aid in what could be a difficult future for the freed slaves and the Doctor returned Wings to his parents after the Great Famine had resolved and Riff City had been dismantled.

The Doctor reported back to Romana on his successes. In his absence, the President had attended to matters in Riff City personally and forced a stalemate between the two factions before the violence could spill beyond Prydos. With the Maker's megadroids rendered inoperative, much of the tension at home and food shortages abroad weakened substantially. The refugees were returned to their native timezones with no memory of the Time Lords' assistance. That said, the Doctor was careful to highlight the support of the extraterrestrial Wings and Mack in his defeat of the Maker. It was important to remember, he pointed out, that Gallifrey existed stronger among its fellows than standing alone. With the situation resolved, the Time Lord departed once again for further travels abroad. It's believed that this incident may have catalysed President Romana's interest in permanently opening up the Academy to non-Gallifreyan students.

NEVER IS AN AWFULLY LONG TIME: THE ANTIVERSE INVASION

The Web of Time is a curiously paradoxical structure. On the one hand, it forms the backbone for reason and logic which defined N-Space and kept at bay the chaos which blighted the early days of the Dark Times. On the other, it was immensely fragile and is sometimes damaged by the most innocuous of actions. It was in part for this reason that the Time Lords had stuck to their non-interference policy and regulated time travel. They knew deep down that the order imposed by the ancient pioneers was far more delicate than their outward power suggested. Any misjudgement could be terminal to Rassilon's design.

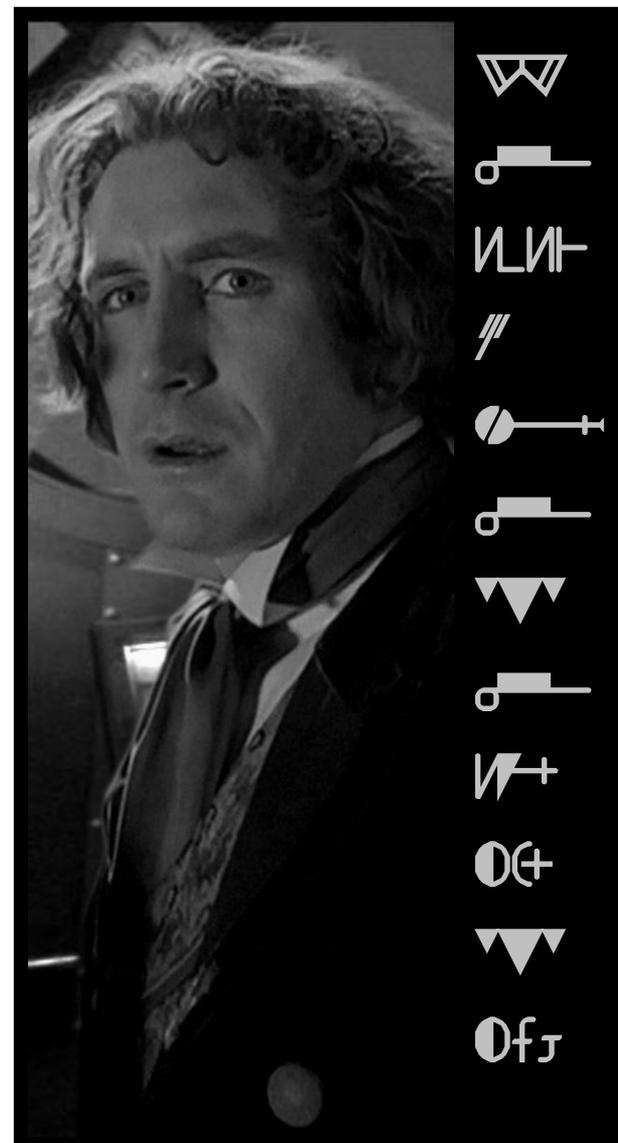
The Doctor, as was their custom, proved this caution justified. The Renegade had crossed Time many times before and come to its defence many more times. It was arguable he had become over-confident in its ability to compensate for alterations to the patterns of history. A view certainly held by the Celestial Intervention Agency. As such, the Doctor, in his eighth incarnation, found himself at the crash of the R101 in 1930. A nexus point in the Web due to the number of fates determined by a single event. He saved a Human woman who should have perished in the crash, Charlotte Pollard. A brief wound in the Web of Time, which in theory should have been able to resolve it for itself. The intervention of the Antiverse prevented this.

The Antiverse was a realm anathema to the Time Lords. Fringe scholars of the Academy often speculated that the irrationality the Anchoring of the Thread had purged had been displaced rather than destroyed. A mirror universe, not only without Time but a poison to it in the same way anti-matter was to matter. A state of being referred to as anti-Time. This theory never gained traction in learned circles due to simple fear of its implications. If such a place existed, it would be everything the Time Lords feared and despised, a realm hostile to their state of being. The theory, unfortunately, proved an irreconcilable fact. The antiverse existed as a real dimension without cause and effect, without past or future and home to entities beyond rational understanding. The only sentient life—at least, in the conventional Gallifreyan understanding of it—were the Neverpeople and their existence was entirely due to the Time Lords.

Since the days of Rassilon's tyranny, Gallifrey had retained a secret punishment for the most heinous of crimes, that of non-personhood, total erasure from the timeline. The instrument of this execution was the Oubliette of Eternity. Only usable by joint agreement of the President and Coordinator of the CIA, the Oubliette was designed such that the executioners could choose not to retain any memory of having used it. If they chose to, necessary shielding would enable them to recall the person they had erased. No President availed themselves of this feature, choosing to live in ignorance of the act they had sanctioned. In this respect, President Romana was no different to her predecessors. The Time Lords had never investigated what became of the individuals they purged; it was assumed they just ceased to be like the dematerialisation methods employed in tribunals of the most heinous of criminals. In truth, the erased individuals were banished to the antiverse. The last remnant of their existence condemned to persist forever in a nightmare they themselves could not begin to comprehend, yet alone thrive within. Through the Oubliette, the Time Lords were sending their criminals to the Gallifrean equivalent of purgatory.

As the Doctor embarked on his adventures with Charlotte "Charley" Pollard, discontinuity and errors began to manifest and spread, like a virus, through the continuum. Inadvertently, she had become a conduit for anti-Time and its warping effects. Rare temporal phenomena became more commonplace. Distinct to the Doctor's interactions in space-time, temporal distortions began to rewrite vital moments in history, including a paradox at Edward Grove that violently disrupted causality, a total realignment of Earth's timeline wrought by the Nimon, culminating in the creation of a temporal fissure cut its way through the Time Vortex. A weakness that the Dalek Empire sought to exploit through alteration of Earth's history. For the first time in millennia, the Web of Time was beginning to fray outward like cracks spreading from an impact point in a mirror. President Romana met with her Inner Council and determined their course of action. The Recorders of the Matrix would be devoted to remembering the true course of history, enabling the Inner Council to identify deviations and authorise corrections, whilst Coordinator Vansell would lead the CIA to identify the cause. Uncharacteristically, Vansell became intrigued by the similarities to the folklore of a figure known as Zagreus.

Vansell was a firm believer in the foresight of the ancient pioneers and was convinced this ancient parable held some truth. The damage to Time was clearly a symptom rather than the intent. As he pondered the implications of the anti-Time theory, the Agency's analysis bore fruit. There was a clear pattern of the temporal distortions, those with the heaviest footprints, so to speak, occurring on the time track of the Doctor's TARDIS. Its pilot, by accident or design, had caused this crisis. Vansell reported this development to the Madam President, but considered her emotionally compromised due to her past association with the Doctor. He devised a possible exit strategy. The termination of Charlotte Pollard due to reasons of practicality. The only logical strategy was to stem the flow at its source. The Legend told of Rassilon using a bridge to travel to the antiverse, perhaps Charley would serve the same.



After consultation with the fringe scholars who studied anti-Time and Zagreus theories, Vansell devised a voyage to rival those of the original pioneers. Aboard a time station, equipped for the transference, an expedition would enter the realm of Zagreus via Charley and confront the source of Anti-Time. Captivated by the Legend, Vansell had not stopped to consider how the story fit almost perfectly with his ambitions. The story of Zagreus was in fact a fabrication, the Neverpeople had used the breach to alter Gallifreyan history and seed the Legend into ancient Gallifreyan lore. A change normally detectable by consulting the Matrix, but with the entirety of the Recorders devoted to archiving the original Web of Time, no alarm was raised. Zagreus was a lure, and Vansell had fallen for it, in words of an Earth phrase, hook, line and sinker.

Following a close encounter leading to the Doctor's interference in the Cimmeria system, his TARDIS's trail was picked up again after the Daleks' efforts to alter Earth's timeline were thwarted by the Doctor. Their fleet caught in a time loop that would have to be resolved by the Time Lords in order to maintain temporal stability. However, more pressing concerns occupied their immediate attention. Time torpedoes placed the Doctor's TARDIS in stasis and CIA agents spent a number of centuries systematically breaking down its defences, liaising with the Time Station after only a few minutes from its perspective. Whilst agents prepared Charley for transformation into the gateway, Romana briefed the Doctor on the extent of the situation. The Matrix was near breaking point, the Web was on the verge of collapsing and their voyage may be their only hope. Reluctantly, with full knowledge of the stakes, he agreed. The breach within Charley was opened and the Time Station passed through, though unexpectedly the Doctor's TARDIS was pulled through as well. Upon arrival, the Time Lords gazed upon their worst nightmare. A universe without linearity, without firm laws of physics, without Time. No past, no future, just an eternal present. The Station's sensors were flooded with utterly incomprehensible data. Inexplicably, in the maelstrom, there was a still point. Reasoning that the Doctor's TARDIS would have honed in there, with Charley reconstituted aboard, the Time Station set a course of the planetoid using the human as a beacon. As they approached, they floated the theory that this planetoid may be alien to the Antiverse too, a fact that led credence to a possibility sought (dare, hoped) by Vansell.

There, after a collision caused by an impatient Doctor, the Time Lords made contact with Neverpeople. A culture led by Sentris, a former Agency coordinator who committed suicide by the Oubliette of Eternity, once learning how many of her own People she had condemned to unpersonhood. As her people fed on energy leaking from the station's damaged time rotor, Sentris hinted to Vansell that what he was seeking lay nearby. Seizing the initiative, Vansell led the expedition onto the planetoid, where they reunited with the occupants of the Doctor's TARDIS, only to be forced to retreat into a cave by acid rain. The cave's interior expanded into a derelict TARDIS control room. Operating the controls, Vansell found confirmation of his foremost desire. The wrecked TARDIS belonged to Rassilon. Damaged beyond repair fighting Zagreus, and Rassilon himself lay in suspended animation in a time cabinet held aboard. Sentris arrived and struck a bargain with Vansell. In return for the cabinet and the cessation of anti-Time leakage, the Neverpeople would be periodically allowed to enter the universe to feed on Time to give themselves meaning. To ensure the bargain's strength, one Time Lord was instructed to remain behind with them. Vansell agreed to the terms and volunteered the President as guarantor (and hostage). Vansell could return to Gallifrey with the Founder and discard the reformist President he loathed in the process. After centuries of being overlooked and diminished, first by peers at the Academy, then by ungrateful Presidents and, finally, by the Gallifreyan public themselves, Vansell would rise to the status of the pioneers he so revered. Abandoning the Doctor and Romana, Vansell and his loyal Interventionists took the cabinet back to the self-repairing Time Station for the return journey to Gallifrey. The Coordinator had never risen higher.

All pretence of civility discarded, the Doctor and Romana were subjected to humiliation in an arena of Neverpeople. They felt no kinship with their Time Lord brethren, those of N-Space were alien to them and their intentions. Romana herself had perpetuated the Oubliette's use (without knowing) and two of her closest friends at the Academy had faced its punishment. In reality, the time cabinet contained a concentrated pocket of anti-Time that, once released on Gallifrey, would stretch out and contaminate the Web of Time irrevocably. It would be the biggest redress of cosmic balance since the imposition of rationality during the Age of Reason. Sentriss' plan, however, met an unexpected setback by a chance malfunction aboard the time station. The Interventionists were unable to rectify the fault, due to the effect the casket was having on their time sensitive minds, consequently, Sentriss allowed the Doctor and Romana to return to the station to effect repairs. There, they plotted for Romana to change the authorisation codes necessary for allowing the Time Station to pass through the transduction barriers. Unfortunately, her only point of access, the Matrix, was flooded with information from their damage control strategy. The Doctor was forced to reconfigure his TARDIS to materialise around the vessel and contain the explosion.

An unusual record, purloined perhaps from the Doctor's TARDIS's own memory banks, indicated that the Ship had been momentarily suspended in a time bubble. By what or whom is not clear, but evidence would suggest that Rassilon may have engineered the moment—a gap in Planck time—to revisit the Renegade's intentions. Content the Doctor was sure of himself, Rassilon permitted him to continue and fulfil the necessary link in the causal chain. If true, it's not unreasonable that the High Evolutionaries would ponder for sometime just how close Rassilon had felt to the Doctor.

The unusual materialisation was a success and the threat contained at considerable cost to both the Doctor and his TARDIS. The occupants of the Time Station, Interventionists and Neverpeople both, were obliterated. The only survivor, President Romana and the "cured" Charlotte Pollard with the former receiving a private audience with Rassilon to discuss the effects of the anti-Time infection. The open wound had now scarred over and the threat to history was now a part of it. With his blessing, Romana returned to Gallifrey to resume her Presidency with an increasingly pressing agenda and now bereft of her old friend.

DELIRIOUS IN WONDERLAND: THE ZAGREUS GAMBIT

Six months passed on Gallifrey after the Anti-Time Invasion with no signs of life from the Doctor's TARDIS. Romana dared to hope his sacrifice had actually resolved the threat. Suddenly the infected timeship vanished. Not dematerialised, but transducted by a power higher than the President. After the near collapse of his Web, Rassilon had truly awakened in the Matrix for the first time in centuries. No longer content to stand aloof with the High Evolutionaries, the Founder would once again seek to take radical action for the betterment of the cosmos and defence of Gallifrey. Within the TARDIS, Rassilon's greatest weapon had been forged. Infected with Anti-Time, the Doctor had awoken and to the shock of the reconstituted Charley had declared himself to have become Zagreus.

During the six months of dormancy, Rassilon had made an offer to the Doctor's TARDIS. The Doctor was lost to Anti-Time, but from his ashes Rassilon had an opportunity. The TARDIS would assist the Doctor's transition to Zagreus in return for being relieved of duty in confining him. Like its reckless owner, the timeship was suffering a split personality from Anti-Time and the Zagreus half was inclined to support Rassilon's proposition. Filled with bitterness from its treatment, the Zagreus personality longed to be free of the Doctor. Rassilon informed it what he desired Zagreus to do - to become his

assassin. A weapon of pure personified Anti-Time with which Rassilon could eliminate any more threats to his Web of Time. First on his agenda was a purge of the Divergents. In the years since Rassilon had imprisoned them there had already been one breach into their universe, due to Project Dionysus on Earth in 1950, and the Matrix was predicting another, more cataclysmic, one near the end of the universe. After the near collapse of his Web of Time at the hands of the Antiverse, Rassilon was no longer willing to countenance the risk. Zagreus would purge the Divergents for good, and then any further threats would likewise be eliminated. Zagreus would surpass Shayde and be Rassilon's ultimate weapon. As the Doctor/Zagreus wandered its corridors, the Zagreus-TARDIS used an avatar to experience a variety of Matrix simulations pertaining to the Divergents, alongside Charley, and decided to accept the offer. It expelled Charley into the Death Zone, along with three incarnations of the Doctor who had manifested within the simulations due to the normal TARDIS attempting to reassert itself. It delivered the broken Doctor to the Dark Tower where Rassilon had established a Matrix projection of his Foundry. Rassilon was still limited to the Matrix however and desired to physically manifest, using agitated protoplasm. After the millennia, the tyrant would escape the bounds of his prison and truly retake control of his Web, with Zagreus at his side.

“

**“ZAGREUS SITS INSIDE YOUR HEAD,
ZAGREUS LIVES AMONG THE DEAD,
ZAGREUS SEES YOU IN YOUR BED,
AND EATS YOU WHEN YOU'RE SLEEPING.**

**ZAGREUS AT THE END OF DAYS,
ZAGREUS LIES ALL OTHER WAYS,
ZAGREUS COMES WHEN TIME'S A MAZE,
AND ALL OF HISTORY IS WEEPING.**

**ZAGREUS TAKING TIME APART,
ZAGREUS FEARS THE HERO HEART,
ZAGREUS SEEKS THE FINAL PART,
THE REWARD THAT HE IS REAPING.**

**ZAGREUS SINGS WHEN ALL IS LOST,
ZAGREUS TAKES ALL THOSE HE'S CROSSED,
ZAGREUS WINS AND ALL IT COST,
THE HERO'S HEARTS HE'S KEEPING.**

**ZAGREUS SEEKS THE HERO'S SHIP,
ZAGREUS NEEDS THE WEB TO RIP,
ZAGREUS SUCKS TIME AT A DRIP,
AND LIFE ASIDE, HE'S SWEEPING.**

**ZAGREUS WAITS AT THE END OF THE WORLD,
FOR ZAGREUS IS THE END OF THE WORLD.**

**HIS TIME IS THE END OF TIME,
AND HIS MOMENT TIME'S UNDOING.”**

Rassilon required his Ring to fully activate the simulacra of his Foundry and complete his physical manifestation, so he reached out beyond the Death Zone. He targeted Lady Leela, the only mind within the Citadel who had no mental defences, and used a dream to convince her to come to the Dark Tower. His prisoners could never have anticipated an alien mind being in such a prime position in Time Lord society. Leela was quickly convinced and fought her way into the presidential chambers to ask Romana's help. Already alarmed by the disappearance of the Doctor's TARDIS, Romana recognised the old man in Leela's dream as Rassilon and had the transmat beam made ready to convey the pair, accompanied by the President's K-9 unit, to the Dark Tower. Together they would answer this call for help from the Founder and perhaps even save the Doctor. Upon arrival Leela fell into Rassilon's mental influence and was compelled to pluck his Ring from his Tomb. Possessed, she led the President into the chambers where Rassilon had re-established his Foundry. There Rassilon took possession of his Ring and revealed his plans to the President. He offered her papers to formally surrender her authority to Zagreus, threatening to have Leela kill her. The Founder's intent was that Romana would continue as a public face, but the true power would rest with him and Zagreus. She refused and Rassilon left her to the possessed savage's mercy. If she would not comply, he was certain her successor would. At the same time Charley and the three aspects of the Doctor were traversing the Death Zone and making for the Tower, arriving in time to save Romana from Leela. With Leela freed from Rassilon's influence, the

group moved further into the Foundry. Charley believed reuniting with the Doctor with the aspects may yet restore him. They were delayed by the 'TARDIS' avatar, given physical form in the same manner as Rassilon, which Charley, Leela and Romana cornered in a crucible.

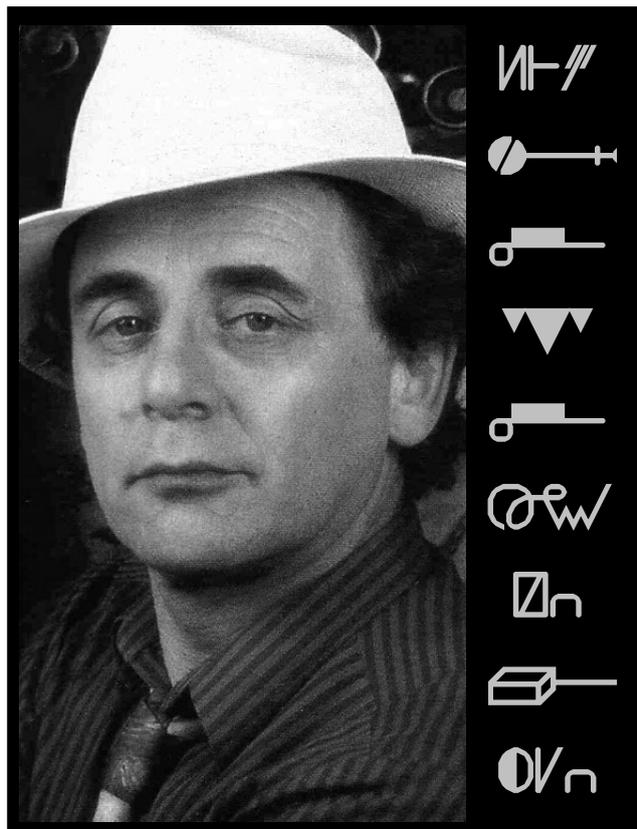
The aspects found the Doctor a broken man. His 'TARDIS' outer shell had been smelted before his eyes, breaking his spirit and letting Zagreus dominate. Zagreus was now forging a sword from the 'TARDIS' shell, imbued with Anti-Time. As they attempted to reach out to him, Rassilon arrived and used the sword to cut them down. As the Doctor spiralled into insanity, Charley arrived. He begged her to kill him, and to Rassilon's surprise she eventually complied and stabbed him with the sword. The blow gave the Doctor clarity and he realised, in a dream with his past three incarnations, he did not want to die. He embraced the Anti-Time to survive and freely became Zagreus. The Founder believed he had triumphed once more, that he had taken the shattered remains of a hero and formed the ultimate weapon to purge Gallifrey's enemies, however he had misunderstood Zagreus. Unleashed from the Doctor's moral resistance, Zagreus was the personification of the Antiverse's chaos and bitterness. As such he refused to obey Rassilon any longer. Zagreus seized Rassilon and cast him through the gateway into the Divergent Universe. Cut off from his people, his Matrix and his Web, Rassilon was truly powerless, in an alien universe of his own making. The Antiverse had achieved a pyrrhic victory.

Zagreus's hold on the Doctor ended moments later, when the avatar of his TARDIS intervened. The crucible had reunited it with its molten shell and enabled the normal personality to reassert itself. The avatar provided its pilot with zero matter, which had formed deep within its dimension in the Station's explosion. The matter stabilised the Doctor, enabling his normal personality to return. Knowing both him and his timeship still carried Anti-Time, even though it was suppressed, the Doctor decided to follow Rassilon. He would enter the Divergent Universe, where Anti-Time could do no harm due to the lack of Time. Romana bid him farewell as a friend and gave him a warning as President; the Time Lords would ensure he kept to his exile. The Doctor departed, unaware Leela had enabled Charley to sneak onboard.

All knowledge of what had occurred in the Dark Tower was suppressed. Romana briefed her Inner Council, which unanimously agreed to never let word spread. Omega's turn had been a shock to Gallifreyan psyche already, knowledge of Rassilon's actions would shatter faith in the ancient pioneers irrevocably. At the same meeting, the President brought another secret matter before the Council; negotiations with the Daleks. An accord had been reached with the Dalek Emperor; in return for its release from the time loop, the Daleks would cease all hostilities with the Temporal Powers. To ratify the treaty, a second concession had been made. To satisfy the Daleks' form of justice, the Time Lords would surrender the Master and permit his execution on Skaro. An agent would collect his remains, and that would mark the peace. The Council supported the agreement and allowed the President to appoint the agent. The perfect agent for such a situation would be the Doctor, however he was now permanently unavailable. Romana turned to her advisor Cardinal Braxiatel who pointed out the Doctor was not gone. His past still existed, and one of his previous incarnations could be summoned to fulfill the task. There was precedent for such an action. Believing no other Time Lord could face the Daleks and live, Romana authorised it and Braxiatel arranged the summoning of the Doctor's seventh incarnation. Word reached the CIA of the President's decision, infuriating the de-facto leader, Director of Allegiance Ferrain. The President was now bending the Laws of Time to make a deal with aliens and perhaps even paradoxically save her friend from his present fate. Without Vansell to temper him, Ferrain ordered his agents to properly investigate the Doctor, to establish at last who he was, and to prepare to move against Romana. Ferrain believed the point of no return had arrived.

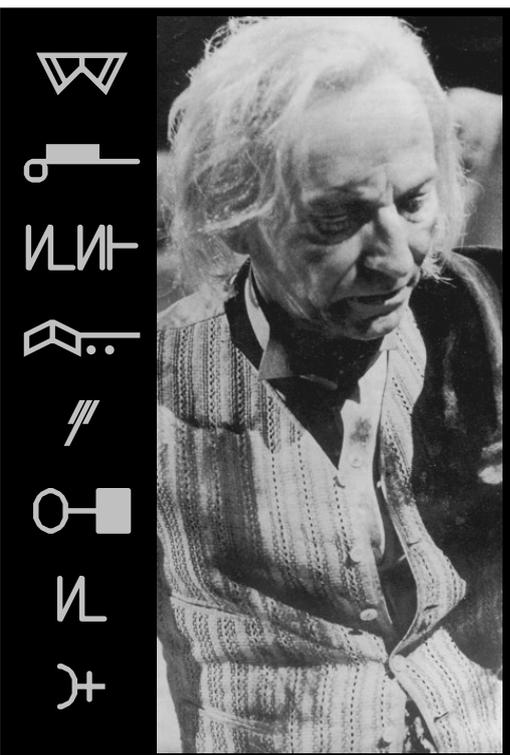
RECONCILIATION ABROAD AND RESISTANCE AT HOME: THE LUNGBARROW AFFAIR

The rapid and numerous reforms passed under the Romana Presidency put her administration at odds with the Celestial Intervention Agency on multiple occasions. The relationship was taut, but largely amicable in face-to-face dealings. However, the undertow of conspiracy and intimidation that dogged the more open governmental tenure is perhaps nowhere more explicit than the Lungbarrow Affair. Much is still uncertain about this event as there are conflicting reports that both disavow and affirm the minutiae of the events that took place then. What can be known for certain is that direct confrontation was precipitated by the most innocuous of practices. The Lady Leela, paramour of the Castellan Andredaselus and former tribesman of the Sevateem, had begun research into the family history of her beau. Unexpectedly, she discovered a link between the House of Redrooms and that of her former travelling companion and mentor, the Doctor. Almost seven hundred years previous, one Captain Redred was dispatched to investigate an allegation of census misconduct in the Doctor's family home, the House of Lungbarrow, shortly before it disappeared without trace from Mount Lung. Further investigations into the discrepancy brought Leela and her mobile computer, K9 Mark I, into conflict with a simultaneous investigation being conducted by the Celestial Intervention Agency. The covert organisation attempted to remove all traces of the records to conceal their involvement, however, when the aliens persisted, Leela was charged with treason and imprisoned in the CIA's Watchtower for interrogation by the Director of Allegiance, Ferrain.



At the same time, another former companion of the Doctor, one Dorothee McShane, was transducted from Earth in nineteenth-century France to attend the Lady President personally. Unfortunately for the President, her guest was intercepted mid-transportation and diverted to the Matrix where she could be interrogated. Questioning of both McShane and Leela on the subject of the Doctor revealed little more about Renegade than before. However, events began to move faster than anyone had anticipated. A singularity bomb, planted in lift by a terrorist group, was diverted from its appointed destination at the Tharil Embassy into an empty section of the Capitol. A device of Dalek make, but not necessarily dispatch². Nevertheless, the incident provided conclusive proof for the Agency that Romana had absconded from her place of office in favour of consorting with alien powers. The attack diverted staff from the CIA Watchtower, allowing Castellan Andred, his loyal guardsmen and the two K9s to launch a recovery mission for the abducted Leela and Dorothee. Both were taken to the Presidential Offices to be briefed on the events transpiring. The situation on Gallifrey was becoming critical. It was imperative that they convey a message pod to the Doctor in the House of Lungbarrow, who had also been diverted from his meeting with Romana, containing a data extractor that could be used to recover essential information from the Great House. The two women escaped aboard Dorothee's timecycle moments before Ferrain and his operatives enacted their military coup and seized control of the government.

² Although the attack went unclaimed, it's not unreasonable to draw comparisons between the *modus operandi* of the mystery insurrectionists and the Free Time movement.



Tensions between Romana's Presidency and the Agency were apparent from the first day of her inauguration, but this latest flashpoint lay within the fabled House of Lungbarrow. Once an esteemed and regaled Prydonian manse, perched on the western face of Mount Lung and overlooking Cadenflood River, it had long ago succumbed to the petty doldrums of bureaucracy and pen-pushing. The last recorded Kithriarch, Quences, was known to be an ambitious figure within the Household. Especially in regards to the Doctor. His death and the Doctor's apparent refusal to appear for his deathday drove the House of Lungbarrow to self-inhumation. Buried beneath the mountain with its living inhabitants entombed within. However, the history behind that event is scarcely straightforward. From declassified archives from the era of the Romana Presidency, we can determine that the Doctor's elopement from Gallifrey occurred roughly at the same point in Time. Prompted by a series of elements, both known and speculated, but all catalysed by a confrontation in the Scrutinary Archives between himself and a fellow family member, Glospin. A jealous figure seeking to usurp the Doctor's inheritance of the House. Frightened and disgusted by his peers, the Doctor left an anonymous warning for the Prydonian Chapter of a census fraud in the House of Lungbarrow and left Gallifrey with the Hand of Omega in tow. Never intending to return.

Not much is explicitly known about the final hours of the House of Lungbarrow. Only the product of rumours, unsubstantiated claims and gossip. Consultations with the new Household grown to replace the old have confirmed that Redred was indeed recovered from an incomplete transmat. The family itself appeared to survive the ordeal, although certain members such as Glospin were left conspicuously unremarked upon. Whatever threat or boon these facts may have presented for the Time Lords of that era, they vanished with the toppling of the House of Lungbarrow. Whatever the Doctor's secrets, they remained his own. Conditionally.

At the risk of appearing superstitious, this chronicler must confess a certain unusual trait of the planet Gallifrey, detected by chronometrologists, that disappeared not too long after the Lungbarrow Affair. The world of the Time Lords has retained a unique relationship with the warp and weft of Time, yet it became clear, in retrospect, that its isolation from the outside cosmos had triggered a malady that can be traced not too far from the deposition of the Pythia. Definitively and quantifiably, only within the bounds of their world, there was an incremental shift in the flow of Absolute Time on Time Zero as Rassilon established the Eye of Harmony. Every so often in the planet's unique timestream, an attosecond would be lost here, a femtosecond there. Not enough to be of concern or even noticed by the instrumentation of the day, yet a phenomenon that persisted well over the ten million years of power that the Time Lords had engendered on their world. Prior to the coup, Romana's negotiations had been with the Sisterhood of Karn and with the express hope of mending the rift between their two peoples and returning what was stolen from Gallifrey when the Pythia died. That revelation diffused the incipient legitimacy of the CIA's rebellion, but there were still calls from the High Council for Romana's impeachment on the grounds of consorting with aliens, neglecting her duties and flaunting her office. In order to protect her friend from harassment by the CIA, the Lady President made a deal with the Director of Allegiance. The Doctor's freedom, in exchange for his use as an ambassador to the planet Skaro, as had been originally intended. From her meetings with the Doctor's next incarnation, Romana knew this mission would be a death sentence for the Doctor's seventh incarnation. The

timeline would be intact, the truce with the Daleks finalised and the Agency would back down. The bargain was struck.

Efforts to have Romana removed from office were eventually soothed by developments with the Sisterhood and promises of infertility being lifted altogether. An evenhanded political strike that appealed to both proponents of more radical intertemporal relations and those who sought to preserve Gallifrey's more conservative traditionalists. With this boon, the President was able to argue for greater transparency from the CIA and its activities. Tensions were allayed, for the time present, but soon to find a new footing in the ashes of Ferrain's faltered coup...

