

THE DOCTOR WHO COMPANION



ANNUAL 2024

Welcome to the Doctor Who Companion Annual 2024

Hello and welcome to the fourth annual from *The Doctor Who Companion*!

And how great is it to have *Doctor Who* back on Christmas Day itself?! Not only that, but we have a new Doctor too: Ncuti Gatwa's Fifteenth Doctor might've already debuted in *The Giggle*, but he's yet to meet his new companion, Ruby Sunday (Millie Gibson) — that happens in *The Church on Ruby Road*. But for now, we've got three new short stories featuring the Sixth, Eleventh and Fourteenth Doctors (though not in that order), as well as reviews of not only the three 60th anniversary specials — *The Star Beast*, *Wild Blue Yonder*, and *The Giggle* — but also *The Daleks in Colour*, the truncated 1963/64 First Doctor classic that's been colourised and edited to celebrate 60 years of the Doctor's greatest foes.

With *The Church on Ruby Road* in mind, we've also got a feature stressing the importance of the Christmas specials; articles about the Toymaker, David Tennant's adventures in other mediums, the abundance of *Genesis of the Dalek* releases, and Tom Baker's curious relationship with anniversaries; an appraisal of *The Girl in the Fireplace*, and an on-location report, revisiting where *Revelation of the Daleks* was filmed!

As ever, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in this annual, and in the DWC in general; as well as, of course, all our readers, whether you're a seasoned reader or if this is your first time on the site. It's great to have you with us.

And stay tuned to the DWC over the festive period (and beyond) because we've got features and reviews a-plenty, alongside our usual news coverage. And with a fresh era of *Doctor Who* on our doorsteps, things are going to get very interesting and exciting indeed...

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Philip Bates,

Editor and Co-Founder of *The Doctor Who Companion*.

**THANK YOU TO JAMES BALDOCK, FOR CREATING THE BEAUTIFUL
FRONT AND BACK COVER ARTWORKS.**

Thainig na Cait

James Baldock



“Take it off.”

The Doctor blanched. “What?”

“Doctor.” Amy dropped her knapsack on the TARDIS console. “Some men can get away with wearing a kilt. Trust me: you are not one of those men.”

The Doctor looked at her sulkily. “I thought it suited me.”

“You don’t have the legs.” Amy was emphatic, and now she was pacing with her fingers loosely curled, halfway to a fist: this was never a good sign. “Now please. In the name of common decency, and out of consideration for my people, change. You can’t pull this off.”

“So you want me to take it off because I can’t pull it off.” The Doctor tossed the sentence around like a prospector tossing a pan of gravel. Then he grinned. “Oh, English. The unbridled nonsense of your peculiar language.”

“You speak English!”

“I speak Gallifreyan.”

“Whatever.” Amy seethed in exasperation. “I mean, you’re speaking English now.”

“Well, *maybe*.” The Doctor clapped his hands and strode over to the console, flicking the first lever his fingers brushed against without even looking at it. “Right! Edinburgh. New Year’s Eve, 1999. Fireworks! Haggis! Aaaand...” He span on his heels, and the bottom of the kilt billowed. “Texas!”

“And you’re sure it’s safe?” said Amy

The Doctor gave her an incredulous look. “Since when were you worried about safe, Miss Oh-Let’s-Press-The-Abdicate-Button?”

“No, but — you know.” Amy rummaged in the knapsack. “Riots. Edinburgh. They’re like peas in a pod.”

“I checked.” The Doctor was punching buttons near the telephone. “Last serious incident was three years ago, and that was more of a crush than anything else. *This one -*”

Punch, flip, twirl - "should go without a hitch."

"Hmm." Amy looked at the TARDIS doors. "Famous last words."

They landed not far from the Honeycomb, the battered old police box materialising with a wheezing, groaning noise that sounded both tired and arguably overused. The door was only a foot and a half from a lamp post, and the Doctor had to squeeze his way through: being comparatively thin, this didn't pose an enormous problem for either of them, although it didn't stop Amy from complaining.

"Couldn't you just..." Amy pushed her way past the cold metal. "I don't know, repark?"

The Doctor shook his head. "Tight space manoeuvring is tricky." He dropped his voice to a whisper. "Between you and me, the TARDIS isn't very good at three point turns."

"When you say 'the TARDIS', you mean *you*, right?"

The Doctor scowled, and straightened his Christmas hat. "Well, I can't be a genius at everything."

He marched up the street, past the club — shuttered and boarded and looking rather sorry for itself — and the hordes of people, making their way up toward the Royal Mile in various states of perambulation that ranged from the well-heeled dash to the crawl, by way of the drunken stagger. There were black bags and fly tipped donations outside the charity shops, chip cartons, and pizza boxes piled high against overstuffed bins, and the remnants of spilled food splattered across the wet pavements like the most provocative kinds of modern art.

"Niddry Street," said Amy. "Weren't there some underground vaults here or something?"

"It was a hive of disease, prostitution, and villainy," said the Doctor. "A hopeless, dispiriting place. A bit like Swindon, only with more of an atmosphere. Burke and Hare used to go hunting not twenty feet below where you're standing."

"Burke and Hare? As in the body snatchers?"

"Mm-hmm. Met them once. Lovely people, actually." The Doctor mused, remembering. "Played a decent game of canasta."

There was a bang from up the street. The Doctor looked at his watch, annoyed. "The fireworks aren't supposed to start for three hours!"

Amy was peering off into the distance, where the edge of Niddry met the Royal Mile. "I think that might have been a car backfiring."

"Oh well, *that's* all right then. Is the chip shop open?"

The Mile thronged with activity. The shops were open late, plying their wares — rows of London phone boxes, squashed boxes of rattly fudge (packaged in Maidstone), postcards that curled at the edges. Couples canoodled and men in their fifties sang filthy rugby songs outside the pubs. And yet there was a curious symmetry to the layout of the area, a

pattern that started to emerge, as they passed street artists and glow stick stands and a piper on every corner, and the shops began to subdivide into almost identical colonnades, each home to the same souvenirs and woollen gloves and overpriced cappuccinos. It was, Amy felt, rather like the endlessly repeating scenery she'd witnessed in childhood episodes of *Scooby Doo*, where doorways and paintings and suited knights had flashed past in an endless loop. Some days, when they had done a lot of running, life with the Doctor felt a little like that.

They bought chips and battered Mars Bars from a two-starred establishment three hundred yards from the Castle; the queue was out the door but the Doctor had waved his psychic paper and the owner, a disgruntled-looking man in his forties, had fobbed them off with complimentary portions and then shuffled away muttering something about "bloody hygiene inspectors with all the timing o' a Good Friday lunch date wit' Jesus". And now they stood outside on the pavement, watching the revellers dance and drink and meander in and out of gift emporiums with tablet and tartan, burning their mouths on the caramelised chocolate.

"I mean, on paper," the Doctor was saying (with his mouth full) "it just doesn't work. And at the same time, it does. It's one of those oddities of the universe that just fits."

"Kind of like you, then," Amy had been about to say, when she was drowned out by the noise of a dozen snares, all beating out the same roll. And now here they came: a full complement of drummers and pipers, playing 'Craggs of Tumbledown' as they marched up the Mile toward the castle's looming entrance, some four-and-twenty men in all, marking time to the thud of the bass, walking in perfect unison, eyes fixed firmly frontward.

Amy thought: *It's almost enough to make you feel patriotic.* And swallowed the lump in her throat.

The pipers and drums were followed by a platoon of Viking raiders (Danes, they would have had you call them) and then a quartet of fire-eaters, blowing jets of hot flame seemingly from their mouths. Other floats followed, trundling up the cobbled street in the direction of the gatehouse, as ahead of them the music blared before succumbing to the Doppler effect. Amy took it all in. She felt giddy, excited and yet somehow incomplete. It was as if she'd left a part of her behind, perhaps in the TARDIS. No. Not the TARDIS. Somewhere.

"You're quiet," said the Doctor.

"Just enjoying the spectacle," she said, realising this was uncharacteristically glib, although thankfully the Doctor let it slide.

"It's no' as good as it used to be, mind," said a new voice.

Amy turned her head. The man next to her was in full clan dress and had to be six foot four, with arms like steamed hams, and a bright ginger beard that hung almost to his waist. He was sipping from a plastic pint cup.

"No?" said Amy, wryly.

"Aye, well. Back in the day they'd have had twice this number. Stretchin' all the way back to the lights and beyond. Made a noise that'd wake the dead."

“Back in the day? This festival’s only seven years old.”

“Och, you know what I mean. Afore all this. Afore all the lights and the razzle dazzle and the overpriced tat. Back when it was all about celebratin’ the New Year. They’d have had dozens more pipers, real men an’ all, ‘stead o’ this lairy bunch.”

Amy regarded him quizzically. “Are you a piper?”

“That I am, lassie. Just no’ allowed to play, least no more. The drink did for me.”

“Amy?” said the Doctor. “Who’s your friend?”

“Sorry.” Amy coughed. “This is — this is...”

“Name’s Angus,” said the stranger, with a hint of suspicion and without extending his hand. “Angus McThistle.”

The Doctor’s mouth dropped open. “*Seriously?*”

“And why wouldnae it be?” the bigger man replied, contemptuously. “Summat wrong tae you, that name?”

“Not at all, it’s just — ”

“It’s just a bit unlikely,” interrupted Amy, who was anxious to avoid the fight that was brewing, and aware that her Scottish heritage probably gave her a tactical advantage when it came to defusing it. “You have tae admit, it’s a name worthy of a laird. And ye look more like a towerin’ chieftain than a wet sugg livin’ off the fat o’the land.”

The Doctor’s brow furrowed and his nose wrinkled just a little. “Is it me, or is your accent getting... thicker?”

But the trick seemed to have worked. Angus McThistle roared with laughter and clapped Amy on the back, hard enough to knock the wind out from her. “Aye, you’re a feisty one all right!” he bellowed, taking another swig from his plastic glass. “Come. Let’s stroll up the Mile and follow the parade.”

He led Amy by the arm, turning to the Doctor by way of afterthought. “And you, ye ruddy Sassenach? Ye can come, but mind yer manners and keep yer distance.”

It was hard to hear Angus over the blast of the pipers, but Amy got the gist. His story involved alcohol and sibling jealousy and the love and loss of a good woman. He’d found his way back from the gutter of addiction and depression, but the dark times had left their mark, and it was unlikely that he’d ever be allowed to play with the pipe corps again.

“ — and I’ve been sober for nigh on six years now. Nae touched a drop.”

“So what’s that, then?” Amy said, pointing to his glass.

“Shandy.” Angus looked almost affronted, but not for long. Instead, he looked puzzled.

“Maybe I’m gettin’ a touch o’ the shivers,” he said, “but I could swear that bagpipe just wriggled.”

Amy stared at him. “What do you mean, wriggled?”

“Exactly what I said. The pipes. The pipes were wiggling about. And not in a natural

way.”

The Doctor, who was graced with excellent hearing and who had heard the entire conversation, even the parts Amy had missed, took a step forward, peering between their shoulders. “Which one?”

“That one.” Angus pointed, although as it turned out he needn’t have bothered. Because it was at that precise moment that the set of pipes jumped clear out of the arms of its owner, sailing three feet in the air and then descending, attaching themselves to his face.

The pandemonium unfolded in several stages. First, the unfortunate piper lurched from side to side, his apparent physical pain manifesting in a scream that went largely unheard over the noise. Those either side of him were knocked, and their own piping ceased, as disgruntled Scotsmen expressed annoyance and then — a second or two later — sudden alarm. The afflicted piper was still thrashing, trying desperately to prise the instrument away from his jaws. He staggered forward, headbutting (actually it was more like pipe-butting) the man in front, which started a domino effect, as several men stumbled.

But there were more of the pipes wriggling now, further up in the ranks of assembled musicians, only this time there was an awareness, a sense that things weren’t right, and most of the men dropped their instruments in time. Most, but not all. A few sets of pipes managed the leap and dive, soaring momentarily into space as if spontaneously infused with life, before plummeting as if suddenly deprived of it. And each one of those sets that had managed a leap also managed to affix itself to a face upon its descent.

The first piper screamed one last time and then collapsed to the floor in a dead faint or something far worse.

The Doctor was on him in a second. He poked and prodded at the pipes, which seemed to have become limp, although they were stuck fast to the face of their unfortunate owner. The Doctor pulled out his screwdriver; it fizzed as he flicked switches and pointed. Meanwhile, Angus clambered up on a nearby table and yelled to the bandmaster at the top of his lungs. “WE HAVE A PIPER DOON! REPEAT, A PIPER IS DOON!”

“Doctor!” said Amy, rushing to his side. “Is he — ”

“No,” said the Doctor.

“You had no idea what I was about to say.”

“You were about to say ‘Is he dead’, weren’t you?”

“Well, no, actually, I was going to say ‘alive’.”

“Were you?”

“Why wouldn’t I?”

“You just never struck me as a glass half full person, that’s all, and — ”

“Doctor! Can we focus?”

“He’s alive but his vitals are failing. We’ve got minutes, and that’s a stretch.”

“Can we move him? Is it safe?”

The Doctor shuffled off his knees. "Only one way to find out."

Together, they lifted the fallen piper and began to carry him to the edge of the street, while around them the pipes leaped and snarled, going for passers by. Angus was ducking in and out of the parade, helping where he could. There was nothing to be done about the pipers who'd been smothered, but he could at least assist with crowd control.

"Keep people safe and out of the way!" the Doctor called out to him. "We'll be back!"

As he was crossing the street, he almost collided with an anoraked passer-by, holding a placard.

"Bugs!" he cried. "We knew, and they denied! The bugs are on their way!"

"Sorry." The Time Lord fought to hold onto the injured piper. "What did you say?"

"THE BUG! THE COMING OF THE BUG!"

"What bug?" asked the Doctor urgently.

"The Millennium Bug, you fool! Ah've been sayin' it for years and naebody listened! And now it's here! And it'll destroy us all!"

The Doctor shook his head in disgust.

They rested the injured piper on the pub table. The Doctor listened to his heart, while Amy placated the anxious landlady. She had seen her fair share of oddities over the years, but this was a new one.

"What the hell's that thing on his face?"

"It's a set of bagpipes," explained Amy, although there really was no need.

"What on earth happened? Was it a stag night? Or some kind of student prank gone wrong?"

"Neither," said Amy, and turned her attention back to the Doctor. He was feeling all around the edge of the pipes, in an attempt to loosen the bond.

"Are they eating his face?" said Amy.

"No, they're slowly asphyxiating him. The good news is we have a small window to get them off. And that's the bad news."

"Isn't there a way?"

"There is, but it's dangerous. I can oscillate the sonic to artificially stop his heart, just for a moment. And there's a chance that the thing will assume its work is done and cut him loose."

"You can't do that!"

"The alternative is he dies a slow and painful death, Pond," the Doctor snapped. "Now what would you have me do?"

Amy seethed. Aside from the endless corridors, these impossible dilemmas were the worst thing about travelling with him.

“Fine,” she said. “Do it.”

Grimly, the Doctor nodded. He held the screwdriver against the piper’s chest. Flicked three switches and then hummed a strange, atonal melody that seemed to act as a key, because the screwdriver suddenly went red, its pitch dropping.

The piper began to shudder and convulse and then stopped, as cold and stiff as death. Instantly, the pipes attached to his face went limp, their bonds cut. Amy grabbed them and the ends began to wriggle, thrashing dangerously —

She held them with both hands and smashed the instrument on the edge of the table. Once, twice, three times. And then it was still.

The Doctor flicked another switch. He pounded on the piper’s chest. He pounded again. The man coughed and heaved a huge groan. He was pale, and bright red marks bordered his sweat-encrusted face, but he was alive.

“Well done,” said the Doctor to Amy, with a weak smile.

“I’m sorry I killed it.”

“It makes my job harder. But you probably didn’t have a choice, Amy. It’s acting on instinct. I don’t know if you could have reasoned with it.” He placed the bagpipes on the table and prodded. “Looks organic. And carbon-based, which rules out at least a dozen galaxies. In fact, I’d go so far as to suggest it might even be from Earth.”

“But how is that possible?”

“I don’t know. There’s something else.” The Doctor ran his screwdriver up and forth along the creature, which lay splayed in a most undignified fashion at the long trestle table’s edge: at the other end, the piper was starting to get up, with the assistance of the landlady. “Something I’m missing.”

He said it in that low, muttery voice he used when his eyes got intense and he started biting his lower lip. It would have been a perfect moment for a theatrical pause, which was why it came as a surprise to Amy when the Doctor added, quite brightly, “*And, something familiar. Seriously, I haven’t had this much *deja vu* since I watched *The Force Awakens*.*”

“Since you watched *what*?”

“Spoilers,” said the Doctor inanelly. And at that moment the pub door flew open, and in marched Angus McThistle, his arms grimy with blood and grease.

“I think we took care of the last of ‘em,” he said. “It’s all gone quiet oot there. Well, for a New Year’s Eve.”

Amy stared at him, aghast. “You killed them all?”

“No, just one. And that was self-defence. It was me or it. Then the rest just sort of... scattered. Peeled themselves from the faces of the men they’d attacked, and just ran off.”

“Were they frightened?” said the Doctor.

“No,” said Angus, his face thoughtful. “It was like watching a pack of wolves. Almost like they were being summoned.”

“That can’t be good,” murmured the Doctor, back in intense lower lip mode. And this

time, there was no lighthearted afterthought.

The door banged again. This time it was a small, balding man of sixty, in full highland dress and the insignia of an officer. He carried a captain's baton under his arm and had a tidy white beard. He looked out of breath, but his uniform was immaculate.

"Saints preserve us!" he cried. "What shenanigans is this?"

"Captain Campbell," said the landlady by way of greeting. "Will ye be havin' a dram?"

"I'll be needin' the cask, Mary, at this rate! What in Satan's name is that mess out there? Why is one of my pipers spread-eagled in that armchair? And how have thirteen perfectly good sets of pipes wound up smashed or stolen, ruining what is the most important night of my year?"

He turned to face Angus, and his angry mouth curled into a sneer. "Well, well. Angus Mc-ruddy-Thistle. Might have known that where there's trouble, you'd be crawlin' along in its wake."

"Hello, Peter," said Angus, without smiling. "Nice to see you too."

"It's Captain Campbell to you, laddy."

"Not any more," said Angus. "Ye had me drummed out, remember?"

"Aye, well, you brought that on yerself. I couldn't have a piper wit' no self-control." Campbell indicated the mess on the table. "I take it you're responsible for this?"

"Actually, that was me," interrupted Amy, stepping forward with a hand raised, half in greeting, half in confession. "I mean, it was trying to kill me, so..."

"Kill you?!?" The little man's eyes looked as if they were about to pop out. "What sort of nonsense are you blathering on about? You've ruined this parade! This celebration! My career!"

"They're not bagpipes," said the Doctor, by way of interjection. "They're sentient life forms that look like bagpipes, and they were attacking your musicians."

"So *you* say," Campbell snorted. "I saw nothing."

"Yes, well, you were at the front. But!" said the Doctor, marching over to the armchair and placing his hands on the shoulders of the unfortunate piper, in the process of recovering with the aid of a large bottle of Glen Morangie, "This man almost had his face sucked off by one set of pipes, and it was only thanks to the intervention of *this* man" — and he indicated Angus — "and this woman" — and he indicated Amy — "that he's still alive. I think that deserves at least a modicum of thanks, don't you?"

"The last I was aware," replied Campbell, fully indignant, "we were halfway up the Mile and halfway through 'Flower of Scotland' and all of a sudden the damned parade is falling apart and half my men are running riot!"

"Your men are lucky to be alive!" shouted Angus.

"Poppycock!" Campbell may have been a foot shorter, but he made up for it with the venom in his voice and the hate in his eyes. "You may be able to fool this doe-eyed lass and her effeminate friend with your charm, Angus McThistle, but some of us see you for who

you are. A useless lump of a man, a knuckle-dragging ape with all the finesse of a damp squib, a mediocre piper and an embarrassing liability to respectable musicians and their kin. Oh, drumming out was too good for you. In another time and place I'd have seen you shot for SHEER BRAZEN INSUBORDINATION!"

It was lucky for Campbell that the window shattered, because Angus had been about to strangle him. Instead, they were beset upon by three dozen sets of sentient bagpipes, scampering through the doors and leaping through the windows. The noise they made was a strange fusion of wheezing and growling, half mechanical and half organic; it sounded like a dog being fed through a shredder.

They landed on the floor, pacing back and forth, aggressively but clumsily, snapping and wheezing at the assembled gathering, who stood, frozen in terror and shock — even the Doctor, Amy noticed, seemed unsure of what to do. She looked at the nearest set of bagpipes. It flashed what looked like teeth. But the creatures did not attack. It seemed as if they were waiting for something. Or someone.

As it turned out, it was a something. It was bigger than the others — if the bagpipes had been violins, this would have been a cello — and strode through the door unhurriedly, in the manner of a military general arriving at an inspection. It seemed to possess a greater sense of self-control and command over its own faculties, like a walking child in the midst of a sea of crawling toddlers. Moreover there was something about its gait that absolutely reeked of malicious intent, mixed up with not inconsiderable intelligence. The invading pipes all carried an air of menace: this one looked positively lethal.

It was looking at the Doctor. As if singling him out. Unfortunately, the Doctor happened to be standing quite close to Campbell, who assumed that the pipes were looking at him, having chosen him as the dominant alpha male, the one who would be challenged. He rose to the challenge by dissolving into a gibbering wreck.

"NOOO!" he yelled, hiding behind the Doctor. "Leave me be! Take him! Take him!"

And he ran behind the bar and dropped to his knees out of sight. There was a clatter, followed by a yelp of pain.

The Doctor turned to Mary with a one-word question. "Cellar?"

Mary pointed to the back, and the Doctor stuck two fingers in his mouth and whistled at the approaching bagpipes. "Hey! Catch me if you can!"

And off he went. With a wheeze and a snarl, the alpha leaped the nearest table and made for him. The bagpipes followed, scrambling over and under tables and between the legs of chairs, bypassing the others, relentless in pursuit of their chosen quarry —
— who was already lifting the hatch and receding into darkness.

The last of the pipes was through and heading down the stairs. Amy rushed to the hatch, desperate to follow, fearing it would ruin whatever plan he had made.

... He did have a plan, didn't he?

"Doctor!" she called into the darkness, willing him to reappear, and then there was the sound of snarling and wheezing and then the clatter of boots on stone. And he was up and

out and slamming the hatch shut behind him.

“Get me something heavy,” he said, but Angus was already on the case; quite literally, as he and Amy tipped the heavy bookcase on its side so that it covered the hatch, as Mills and Boons and walking tour guides and phone books (how long, Amy thought to herself, had it been since she’d looked at a phone book?) spilled out, creating an almighty mess through which the Doctor was now stepping and striding.

“Thanks,” he said, wandering through into the bar. “That’ll hold them for a bit.”

Inside, the scene was one of mute devastation, although mercifully no one was injured. Mary stood, staring at the windows in a mixture of dismay and fear. Campbell could be heard behind the bar, quietly sobbing in terror.

“It was the knuckle-dragging ape that did it,” the Doctor went on, looking at Angus and Amy. “Your Mr Campbell actually did me a favour, even if it was an incredibly rude one. Bang! Lightbulb moment.”

“What do you mean?” said Amy.

“Apes! Apes and evolution. Listen.” The Doctor sat down in a dining chair, one leg crossed over his knee. “Mary, come over here and stop fretting. There won’t be any more for a while, if at all.”

Obediently, Mary did as she was bidden. Amy had been travelling with the Doctor for some time and was still amazed at the effect he had on some people. Not everyone. Some just wanted to deck him. But others, the ones he could reach, found a quiet solace in that pleasant, open face. It invited trust. Some people, she realised, would move heaven and earth for this man, even if they scarcely knew him.

That, in itself, was a worrying thought.

“Story time,” said the Doctor. “Many years ago, when I was much younger and also much older, which shouldn’t make sense but would if you were there... I took a holiday in Scotland with a couple of friends. We walked around the countryside, visited the pubs, had a gander at Loch Ness.”

He smiled at Amy. “I wore a kilt.”

Amy’s eyebrow went up, but that was about as far as the interaction went — and undaunted, the Doctor continued. “While we were there, we discovered that an alien shapeshifting race called the Zygons had started a hostile takeover. Had a bit of a scuffle. Nearly turned very nasty, thankfully didn’t. Still: several people died. You know that thing in Loch Ness? That was them.”

Angus scoffed. “That’s a legend!”

“Angus, you’re handy in a scrap but you’re naive. Most legends are based in fact and this one is very, very real.” The Doctor was monologuing rapidly and his voice was becoming more and more intense, borderline snappy, the way it did when he had a tremendous amount of information to impart and next to no time in which to do it. “The Loch Ness monster? Them. Also them: the Biasd Bheulach. The Blue Men of the Minch: Probably not them, unless there was a problem with the colour settings.”

He sprang to his feet. “Anyway! Point is this: they work by impersonation. Steal their victims, copy the template, generate a bit of aggro, Robert’s your uncle. I thought the incident at Forgill was the first time they’d been on this part of the mainland.” He paused for breath. “Turns out I was wrong.”

“Wait a minute.” Amy — the only person in the room with any hope of reaching the same chapter of the Doctor’s thought process, if not necessarily the same page — got up. “You’re saying the bagpipes are... shapeshifting aliens?”

“Of course not, Amy. That’d be completely ridiculous. No, I’m saying that the bagpipes evolved from them. They’re an experiment gone hideously wrong.” He whipped out the sonic screwdriver: it now glowed orange. “I had it on the wrong setting. Managed to do a minor bit of calibration while I had them in the cellar, enough to get a new reading. They’re the original copies. Well, descendants anyway.”

Mary had her head in her hands. “None of this is making any sense. Not a drop of it.”

“Don’t be too hard on yourself, Mary, it’s only just started making sense to me. Try and think of it like this: the Zygons land, and the first thing they see is a piper. And the pipes are wriggling and bellowing, probably ‘Amazing Grace’ or something suitably cliched like that. What do they assume?”

There was a sea of blank looks.

“They assume that bagpipes are the dominant life form. That bipedal thing carrying them, he’s just a means of perambulation, like a car. No, not a car, a horse.” The Doctor did a bit of clip-clopping for effect. “So they copy the pipes, not realising that they’re simply copying the puppet. And eventually they figure out the piper was the puppeteer, and the invasion begins in earnest. But by that point, it’s too late.”

“What do you mean?” said Angus, sharply.

“Zygon lab security is notoriously slapdash. I managed to escape their detention block by twisting a couple of wires and holding my breath for a minute. At some point, no idea when, no idea how, a few of these things broke away from the pods. Came to life, got minds of their own.”

“How?” said Amy.

“Programming error. Twitch in the algorithm. Maybe a stray bolt of lightning during a thunderstorm. Doesn’t matter. The readings I got from the sonic are consistent with that turn of events. Which means...” The Doctor sat back on his dining chair. “You’ve had sentient bagpipes out there in the fields for decades. And they’ve been breeding.”

For a moment, the quartet reflected in a solemn silence. It was a lot to take in, but it also made a curious sense, once their brains had had the requisite time to process the facts. Amy got there first. Angus and Mary were still playing catch-up when suddenly, somewhere behind the counter, they heard the clinking of glasses.

“Peter!” barked Mary, her mind suddenly businesslike. “Anything you take, it’s going on your tab!”

“Assuming that any of this absolute nonsense is true,” said Angus, “why are they here?”

Now? On New Year's Eve?"

"No idea," said the Doctor. "But I've got a theory. Mary, you're a local. How's Edinburgh's property market these days? Any new developments? As in, you know, literal developments?"

Mary thought. "There's Collingwood's. That completed in September. About three miles away."

The Doctor snapped his fingers. "That's it! The great and bountiful human race strikes again!"

Miss Pond, always keen to defend her people in the presence of an uppity Time Lord, gave him a hard stare. "What do you mean?"

"You lot! You see a humongous green space in the middle of the countryside, glorious views, plenty of fresh air, you think 'Oh, what a lovely spot. I know! LET'S BUILD SOME HOUSES!'"

Amy conceded the point. Silently, of course.

"Only thing is, it never occurs to you that there might be wildlife living in that area. And that the wildlife, whatever sort of wildlife it is, has to go somewhere. Rats, or mice. Saints alive, Pond, did none of you ever read *Watership Down*?"

"So what?" Amy turned on him hotly. "What are you saying, we can't — we just can't build houses? Or shouldn't?"

"Oh, nothing so patronising." The Doctor smiled, suddenly quite calm. "This isn't Social Commentary 101. No, people need places to live, I'd be the last person to criticise you all for *that*. I'm just saying there are consequences."

"They're here, then," said Angus. "Marching across Edinburgh. What happened? Did they ingratiate themselves into the pipe band? What do they *want*?"

"They're animals." A new but familiar voice had joined the conversation, as Campbell popped up from behind the bar, getting shakily to his feet with a whisky glass in hand. The ice clinked and made melody in the bottom. "They're acting like savages."

"As much as it pains me to agree with you, I fear you may be on to something," the Doctor admitted. "But no, I'd say they're confused. The desire to attack you all is a race memory. That doesn't mean it's their prevailing mindset."

"So how do we discover that?" asked Amy.

The Doctor shot her a smile. "I'm going to talk to them."

A few feet below, the creatures amassed in the dark, plotting their next move. There was talk of ransacking the town. Currently they were in the middle of an argument as to whether they should eat the women and children first, or save them for later, or not eat them at all. There was some debate as to the protocol of things, and as this was uncharted territory for all of them absolutely no one could decide on the correct etiquette. The creatures were still arguing when the door to the cellar creaked ominously open, sending

an acute patch of light down the stairs, and casting into sharp relief the silhouette of the Doctor, standing at the top.

He was wearing, of all things, a set of bagpipes.

Amy had asked him if he knew how to play, to which the Doctor had replied that he certainly hoped so, although there was a good chance that he would be a little rusty after all these years, and that this wouldn't be the end of the world except that it might, in this case, actually lead to it. But here they were.

The creatures snarled and immediately made for the staircase, but a burst from the Doctor stopped them in their tracks.

“What did you say to them?” asked Amy.

The Doctor took his mouth away from the blowstick. “Hello, I think.”

He gave another burst, and the alpha creature — the large one that apparently led the others — gave a long, low rumble in reply. To Amy, it started like the beginnings of a drone.

The Doctor responded with a melismatic series of higher notes, stopping occasionally to translate. “We’re just opening a dialogue. They’re telling me to get out of the way, puny human, which is normally the sort of thing I’d take as an insult, only it’s really not the time. I’m demanding my rights to parley as per article 3.1572 of the Shadow Proclamation.”

“That’s your go-to for just about everything, isn’t it?”

But the Doctor had already begun to play again, answering the alpha’s arpeggios with a strange, almost atonal counterpoint, as the two of them went back and forth. And now something else was happening; other sets of pipes could be heard joining the conversation from the bottom of the staircase, as the attempts to thrash out a peace treaty reached a feverish crescendo with at least six or seven different melodies all jostling for attention.

Amy remembered the uncle who’d tried to get her into Ornette Coleman and how this was basically like that, only slightly more tuneful. And it seemed to be working. There was a sense of harmony in play now, with the tunes from the creatures in the cellar working almost in tandem with the Doctor, and making a noise that had moved back from unbearable and which was now skating the borders between grating and pleasant.

All except one. The alpha didn’t seem to be on board. You could literally hear it in its voice. Moreover the Doctor was running out of breath, his face reddening by the second. Angus noticed, and stepped forward.

“Should I take over, Doctor?”

The Doctor shook his head. Amy said “Leave him. He knows what he’s doing.”

All of a sudden the Doctor pulled his mouth away from the blowstick and leaned against the door brace, his hands on the bagpipes, taking in great lungfuls of air. “We’re almost there. I’ve offered them safe passage to a safe place, and everyone’s in agreement except... ”

The alpha flew through the air at the speed of a freshly-tossed caber, heading for the Doctor’s throat. He ducked with a microsecond to spare, but it managed to grab onto the top of his head, pulling the pair of them to the floor. The Doctor rolled around helplessly,

wrenching with both hands in a desperate attempt to free himself, while all the while the enormous bag was heading across his forehead and in the direction of his face. It was snarling and blowing and wheezing at the same time; it sounded unholy and foul.

“No!” the Doctor yelled, even through his cries of pain. “No, we can talk about thi—”

The pipes wriggled and shook and then attached themselves squarely onto his face.

But only for a moment. For here was Angus, charging forward with the battle-hardened anger of William Wallace at Stirling Bridge. With a great cry and surge of almost superhuman strength, he pulled the bagpipes from the head of the Doctor and ran for the door, holding the alpha at arm’s length as it thrashed and snarled all the way.

Amy set off in pursuit, the Doctor following not far behind. They reached the street just in time to see Angus heading through the open door of the chip shop.

“Angus!” the Doctor called out, but there was no answer.

“We have to stop him,” said Amy as they headed across the street. “He’ll get himself - ”

From inside: the clattering of metal, a hot sizzling sound, barely audible over the sound of screeching and thrashing, and then silence.

And then the piper emerged, bruised, bloodied and oil-splattered, but otherwise unharmed.

“Done,” he said. “But they’ll probably need a bit of deep cleaning.”

It was some hours later. The Doctor had herded the remainder of the bagpipe tribe into the TARDIS, having promised to take them somewhere safe, warm, and with little to no risk of impudent colonists desecrating the landscape. He’d been met with absolutely no resistance, with even the most bloodthirsty of the group falling abruptly and politely into line after discovering the fate of their leader. Angus McThistle was a man not to be trifled with.

It had made for quite the spectacle: the Doctor, herding the pipes down the Mile in the direction of Niddry Street, as gobsmacked locals gaped and wondered whether their drinks had been spiked. Several made resolutions, then and there and well in advance of midnight, to lay off the sauce entirely during the next year. This being Scotland, most of those promises had been broken within minutes.

Right now, they were waiting to watch the fireworks from the seclusion of an exclusive private function room at Edinburgh Castle, which the Doctor had secured by means of the psychic paper, as footmen dashed back and forth with trays of drinks for the new Laird of Dunans and his entourage. Said entourage included Angus, Mary the pub landlady, and also Captain Campbell, who had been invited up at the Doctor’s whim and Amy’s annoyance.

“I still don’t understand why you brought him.” Amy looked across at where Campbell was involved in a heated argument with Angus about something.

“Bear with me. Captain? Could we have a word in your shell?”

Campbell came across the balcony, wine glass in hand. Some of his earlier anger had evaporated, but that scornful front remained. “You know, I’m very grateful for the invitation,” he said. “But you’ll still not convince me that that little incident down at the

parade this evening wasn't a lot of smoke and mirrors."

"Ah, yes, well, smoke and mirrors explain just about everything," replied the Doctor. "But no, you see, I was thinking about our friend Angus here. Because it strikes me that he did us all a colossal favour today, without once thinking about himself or the danger to his own life. And that a man of that calibre might just be someone you want to have in your piping unit."

Campbell was already shaking his head. "No. No, absolutely not. It's completely out of the question. He was drummed out and I'm not about to drum him back in again just because of a sudden spurt of so-called heroics."

"Right, yes, understood." The Doctor paused before adding "Of course, we could just tell everyone about your heroics instead."

An eyebrow went up sharply. "What do you mean?"

"Well, it's all a bit of a blur, but to my recollection, when the creatures attacked in the pub earlier, you screamed like a marmoset in heat and then hid behind the counter, using several members of the party as human shields while you were doing it."

"It'd be a terrible shame if that got out," said Amy. "Especially here, in such prestigious company."

Campbell went pale. "You wouldn't."

"Oh, I wouldn't, absolutely not," said the Doctor. "How about you, Amy?" Campbell looked aghast at Amy's narrowed eyes and smirk. "But perhaps it needn't come to that. Now come on, what do you say?"

The captain looked to be on the verge of hyperventilation. After a moment or two, he had recovered enough of his composure to give a squirrely nod. "Yes. Well. I suppose we could come to some sort of arrangement."

"That's the spirit!" The Doctor clapped him on the back, and called over to the other side of the room. "Angus! You've got your old job back."

Campbell disappeared into the rest of the party, looking deflated. Angus joined them on the balcony. "You really mean that?"

"I do. Go and see the captain over there, and he'll thrash out the details. You'll be back in the platoon before you can say 'Flower of Scotland'."

Amy concurred. "Mm-hmm. I'd give it a few minutes, though. Let him have a drink to recover first."

Angus gripped the two of them by the shoulders with his big, brawny, bandaged hands. "I can't thank you enough. Both of you."

"Well, it was the least we could do. You did save our bacon back there."

"I confess to a bit of guilt. Killin' it like that."

"Don't worry. I'd rather have had it another way, but I think the alpha was too far gone, too animalistic, to be convinced."

"And the others?"

“Oh, the Zygon hybrids will be fine. They want what everybody wants, which is just to be left alone. Right now, they’re having a whale of a time in the TARDIS swimming pool. When we’re done here, Amy and I will take them somewhere quiet.” He took another sip. “Somewhere they can live in peace.”

“You’re a decent sort, Doctor. Ah’m sorry I called ye a Sassenach.”

The Doctor gave an enigmatic smile. “I’m not even from Earth.”

Angus nodded and drained his glass. “Funny thing is, I believe you.”

He left them to it and went off to find Campbell. The Doctor and Amy were left to themselves for a moment — but not for long. From outside, they could hear the sound of chanting. “Ten! Nine! Eight!”

And then the count reached zero and there was an explosion in the sky, and just for a change, it wasn’t a dangerous supernova or an exploding battle cruiser. The fireworks were bright, glorious and expensive, and quite marvellous to watch.

“Look at it,” said the Doctor as the rockets sizzled and burst, leaving glittering trails across the dark green sky. “The end of the millennium. Well, not really, that’s next year, but the year everyone celebrated the changing of the clock. Mankind with all its hopes and dreams and ambitions.”

“And building plans,” mused Amy.

The Doctor smiled. “And that.”

They could hear singing now, strains of a familiar melody that echoed through the function room and the crowds in the courtyard outside.

“Should auld acquaintance be forgot

And never brought to mind...”

The Doctor thought about the persistence of memory and the things we forget: because we choose to, because we must, or because they are taken from us. He gave half a glance at his companion and sighed. “Oh, Rory,” he muttered to himself.

“Who?” said Amy.

“Nobody. It doesn’t matter.”

Amy gave a slight frown but let the moment pass. “Anyway. Happy New Year, Doctor.”

“Likewise, Pond. For the sake of Auld Lang Zygon.”

“That” — Amy prodded him in the chest — “is a terrible, *terrible* pun.”

The Doctor’s grin was unapologetic. “If you can’t make terrible jokes in the holiday season, when can you?”

“Well,” said Amy. “I’ll drink to that.”

And so they did.

Every Christmas is First Christmas: The Importance of the Festive Specials

Philip Bates



With *The Church on Ruby Road*, *Doctor Who* regains its coveted Christmas Day slot. But why is that so important? As the 2014 festive special went to great pains to teach us, people get together at Christmas because they might not make it to the next one. It's a grim thought and not one entirely true: surely life itself isn't precious because it ends? Nonetheless, it reflects the morose attitude of many folk after a few sherries, and somehow feels right coming straight after the deathly overtones of Series 8.

Still, if every Christmas is *Last Christmas*, it's also First Christmas. In the general positive spirit of *Doctor Who*, we must

remember that it's always someone's first Christmas too. And that sentiment extends to viewers as well: this is primarily the importance of the *Doctor Who* Christmas special. It's someone's first experience of the show.

Of course, you could say that it's true of every episode, but let's consider the inflated viewing figures that Christmas Day boasts. Despite sensationalist headlines, *Doctor Who* typically attracts an impressive audience, as evidenced by the 60th anniversary specials, but there's a noticeable increase at Christmas. This is a time when family gather around, fresh from turkey, tinsel, and tipples, and

argue about whether to watch BBC1 or *Downton Abbey*. Television schedules are jam-packed during the season: this is a chance for channels to showcase their best shows and hook new viewers. Until *Last Christmas*, *Doctor Who*'s festive specials were watched by over 10 million viewers. While *The Christmas Invasion* and *The Runaway Bride* got 9.84m and 9.35m (still very respectable figures), between 2008 and 2013, only 2012's *The Snowmen* got below 10m – just. Its final figure was 9.87m. Sadly, *Last Christmas* got 8.28m and *The Husbands of River Song* 7.69m; overnights mean nothing and final figures don't accommodate for iPlayer.

These inflated figures mean Christmas is the perfect chance to intrigue, to entertain, and to otherwise hook new viewers. Christmas is a time for pulling out all the stops. But does it work?

The festivities actually prove to be tent poles, with audience figures reasonably high at the start and tail-end of each series but sagging in the middle. Unfortunately, it's difficult to assess whether people are sufficiently grabbed by the specials, enough to make them give a whole series a try. Figures at the end of each run certainly swell because people want to see the conclusion of an arc.

A fair test, then, would be how steady viewing figures are at the start of a series. Series 1 to 5 all aired in the spring (as did Series 7b), while Series 6 was split between spring and autumn.

Much was said about the decision to move *Doctor Who* to later on in the year: some suggest gritty tales designed to instil fear are enhanced by the early drawing in of night-time; judging from viewing figures, however, there does appear to be an increase in the spring. It seems the Christmas specials have a sort of knock-on effect, whetting our appetites for new adventures. But if the main run airs in the autumn, the enhanced interest of casual viewers looks to have waned somewhat. Whether the tactic works is entirely up for debate, but writers of Christmas specials (of the revived series, that's only Russell T Davies and Steven Moffat, discounting Mark Gatiss' *The Unquiet Dead* because it aired in April 2005) must still cater for that bigger audience. What does that mean? An engaging story, yes; one that's suitable for all the family, undoubtedly. Should it also steer relatively clear of heavy continuity, so as not to exclude any newcomers? Judging from the evidence, maybe not.

That's a surprising conclusion, but consider what has aired at Christmas: *The End of Time*, and *The Time of the Doctor* both featured regeneration; *The Christmas Invasion* and *The Next Doctor* required varying degrees of knowledge about regeneration; *The Runaway Bride* and *The Snowmen* recalled events from the previous run of episodes, as did *Last Christmas* (perhaps none to the detriment of the tale); and *The Husbands of River Song* tied up a character's arc that began in 2008!

Only *Voyage of the Damned*, A Christmas

Carol, and *The Doctor, the Widow, and the Wardrobe* are relatively free from the baggage of what came before. These three specials attracted impressive figures. 10.77m watched the 2011 special, and 12.11m watched the Eleventh Doctor's first festive offering. *Voyage of the Damned* remains the most-watched episode of *Doctor Who* since 1979's *City of Death*. Did 13.31m tune in because they love a disaster movie at Christmastime, or did they merely want to see Kylie Minogue alongside the Tenth Doctor? Who can say?

It'd be ignorant, however, to argue that the success of these three stories proves 25th December should be continuity-free. Because the show attracts huge figures, no matter what. Look at the other Tenth and Eleventh Doctor stories. *The Next Doctor* got 13.10m! And of course regeneration isn't seen as something to put people off. Folk want to see the last days of each incarnation. That's why *The*

End of Time: Part Two was seen by 12.27m, and *The Time of the Doctor* by 11.14m. Continuity, especially when it comes to the Doctor himself, might not be completely ignored at Christmas after all.

Regardless, it remains clear: *Doctor Who* is a key part of the nation's Christmas. Back in 1965, *The Feast of Steven* was a rare treat, but from 2005 to 2017, we expected the TARDIS to materialise on 25th December (and why it feels so good to have Ncuti Gatwa's first full adventure at Christmas). It needs to blow people out of the water. It needs to impress. It needs to be exactly what it pertains to be: *special*. These are viewed as trivial, something to pass the time, but attitudes need to change. With typically bigger audiences, *Doctor Who* should grab fans, casual viewers, and complete newcomers by the lapels and drag them into all time and space.

After all, every Christmas is first Christmas.



Reviewed: The Star Beast

Peter Shaw



Doctor Who is back! And I mean back, back. Fun, lively, challenging, and (appropriately) nostalgic... It's been 15 years since David Tennant and Catherine Tate lit up the screens as one of the very best Doctor and companion combinations (not counting the brief return for *The End of Time* specials). Just think, that's almost as long as the 'wilderness years'...

But what was remarkable was how natural it felt to have the Doctor and Donna back together. And returning showrunner, Russell T Davies, didn't waste time. After a rather clunky (but necessary) exposition-heavy recap, it was straight into the action. Less than 30 seconds pass after the TARDIS lands before the Doctor and Donna are reunited (a reversed riff on their protracted near-misses from their previous reunion in *Partners in Crime*).

Another 30 seconds and we hear that (now

iconic) name uttered, 'Rose'. This is where it pays to be a longstanding but not obsessive fan of the show. For me (and you probably), we knew Donna was calling her daughter, not the Doctor's other faithful parallel universe-stranded former companion, played by Billie Piper. That, along with the revelation about Beep the Meep being a baddie and Donna surviving for two more adventures, meant that I probably enjoyed those moments less than casual viewers.

I didn't read *Doctor Who Weekly* in 1980, but I did read the original *Doctor Who and the Star Beast* comic (by Pat Mills and Dave Gibbons) when it was reprinted in *Doctor Who Classic Comics* in 1994. And, for due diligence, I reread it a few weeks ago to inform this review. I know, above and beyond... RTD has taken the essence of that story but, like the TV adaptation of *Human Nature*, it does not slavishly replicate the

source material. However, Beep the Meep and the Wrarth Warriors have been reproduced faithfully to Gibbons' original drawings. As well they should.

RTD has gone on record saying that these early Tom Baker comics are basically the way he writes *Doctor Who*. And you can see how *Doctor Who and the Star Beast* has influenced his writing: spaceships crash landing in city centres, urban environments and ordinary family life interrupted by aliens, even the Doctor escaping in a double decker bus happened back in the pages of *Doctor Who Weekly* 40+ years ago. In fact, the bones of the plot of *Doctor Who and the Star Beast* is essentially the same as *Smith and Jones* in 2007: a harmless-seeming alien is pursued by monsters who turn out to be galactic police seeking a dangerous fugitive hiding on planet Earth.

I gauge part of the success of an episode by the reaction of my children: my son (12) and daughter (8). Frustratingly, the Thirteenth Doctor's adventures were regularly characterised by both of them fidgeting, playing with other things, forgetting to follow the story, and asking questions about the logic of what is happening on screen (and me not having a suitable answer). Not so with *The Star Beast*. Their attention was wrapped — they laughed, gasped, and shouted 'no!' at appropriate moments, staying pretty-much glued to the action the whole time. This was meant to be a welcoming romp, so there were no behind-the-sofa scares in evidence.

So, what do I say? It was a glorious return to a golden era of *Doctor Who*, enough nostalgic call-backs to be a worthy 60th anniversary special, but pushing things forward in the development of the



characters and visually more impressive than ever, thanks to the Disney+ funding... I could go on and on about how wonderful it was. And that lovely cute furry alien was so delightful... meep meep!

Oh, to hell with this. It was a steaming pile of tired tropes and laughable storytelling. The dreadful episode was a terrible missed opportunity, resorting to desperate fan service rather than pushing the boundaries of the show's potential. Plus all that Woke nonsense about gender and sexuality, which has no place on a science fiction programme for children. The 'Most-High' has an uncontrollable desire to kill Doctor Who! But the 'Most-High' must control himself. Business before... PLEASURE!

Sorry, I don't know what came over me... *The Star Beast* was always going to be in safe hands with Russel T Davies back at the helm, ably supported by veteran director Rachel Talalay, returning producers Julie Gardner, Jane Tranter, and Phil Collinson, and Murray Gold's glorious music. It felt nostalgic rather than naval-gazing; familiar but fresh. On the whole, not the most intellectually challenging of episodes, but the most fun, thrilling adventure for many a year. Stay tuned... as we head towards the *Wild Blue Yonder*. Allons-y!

Reviewed: Wild Blue Yonder

Simon Danes



Funny thing, *Doctor Who*. We're celebrating the 60th anniversary, so it's perhaps worth pondering again that the format has shown itself to be almost infinitely flexible; moreover, it has to have that flexibility to survive. Tonally, *Who* has had an enormous range: from a children's adventure series to a grim, quasi-*Quatermass* format (okay, I've been watching the early Pertwees again); from comedy-drama to a science fiction/horror hybrid. The two specials we've seen so far echo one of the most successful periods of 21st Century *Who*: late RTD1, with David Tennant and Catherine Tate reprising their performances but acknowledging that the characters have developed. It's similar – but it's also moved on.

As we only have Tennant and Donna back for three stories, it was a wise decision to make *Wild Blue Yonder* effectively a two-hander (for most of the episode, at least).

Not all of the companion/Doctor pairings would work in this format; it needs the strongest leads to carry it off. I realise it's not a view universally shared, but I think Donna's one of the best realised of all the female leads in the entire 60 years. She doesn't quite knock Sarah off her perch but she comes very close. It's good to have her back.

And, of course, good to have David Tennant back too. It's hard to find anybody who doesn't like his Doctor – though the Fourteenth Doctor is subtly different from the Tenth. Older, wiser, and perhaps a little more jaded. Less bouncy and less brightly optimistic. A man who carries burdens.

Wild Blue Yonder could be seen as a riff on the base-under-siege format (although it needs a bit of bludgeoning to bash it into that pigeonhole): secure environment infiltrated by hostile aliens. But that format always works well, so who's complaining?

The aliens were very alien. There was a real sense of otherness about them: unsettling, different, disembodied, drifting on the edge of the void. *Doctor Who* villains are often pretty straightforward: power-mad nutcases with an inflated sense of their own importance, motivated by a desire to dominate and to blow things up. (And why not?) These two entities, however, were genuinely cruel and disturbing: strip them of their powers, and they're no more than nasty, spiteful little playground bullies. And superbly realised by the two leading actors. Catherine Tate's sneer, the horrid teeth (both the prosthetics and the distorted CGI-exaggerated grins), David Tennant's sophisticated loutishness. Brilliantly done. The way the story was plotted, involving the audience by making them ask what the hell was going on, added to the real sense of menace.



It wasn't flawless. Some of the CGI for the spaceship wasn't great. The TARDIS interior is hugely impressive – but is it a bit too sterile, a machine rather than a home? I'm not going to carp, though: RTD is a genuine champion of *Doctor Who* and it would be churlish to criticise when he's worked so hard, and beyond the call of duty, to give us so much for the 60th anniversary. Not just the specials, but *The Daleks in*

Colour and persuading the BBC to put that massive archive onto iPlayer. He genuinely cares about the viewers and he's been enormously generous.

And then we had the final scene and the final appearance of Bernard Cribbins. It would have been wonderful if he'd been able to do more. Cribbins' association with *Who* spanned an extraordinary 56 years, from Tom Campbell in the second Cushing film to Wilfred Mott in the Tennant stories. A great actor, an integral part of 1970s childhoods, from *The Wombles* to his regular slots on *Jackanory*. (He narrated Terry Nation's *Rebecca's World* on that, too.) His range was extraordinary. He was, of course, a very effective comedy actor (not least in the many *Carry On* films he did), but he was effortless when realising straight and serious parts. (He excelled as Monsignor Quixote in Radio 4's dramatisation of the Greene novel.) Wilfred Mott was beautifully played: a totally believable human being, funny, eccentric, warm, compassionate – and capable of steel when confronted by viciousness, whether it came from ill-disciplined British soldiers or from the Daleks.

He was superb and we shall miss him.

Well, *Doctor Who's* back. Still pushing the envelope, still innovating, still changing. I marginally preferred *The Star Beast* but this was still damn good.

(My only problem is that the scene with Isaac Newton contradicted what the Doctor said in *The Pirate Planet* about how he climbed a tree and dropped an apple on Newton's head. This continuity conundrum causes me sleepless nights. I must work out how it fits into established canonicity. Only then shall I sleep again.)

Reviewed: The Giggle

Joe Siegler



This is easily the best of the three specials for me. Want more detail...?

In the 24 hours leading up to this story, I kept telling my family “regeneration day!” I don’t know why I get so worked up about that, but I always do. Saturday was no different. You watch regeneration episodes differently – or at least I do. Traditionally, the changeover happens in the last moment of the episode, you get a line or three from the new guy, and then you wait for the next episode. However, I felt something was going to be different this time, and it certainly was... but more on that later.

This episode starts off with a historical event, the first television broadcast. Not like we know it today, but the first televised image by John Logie Baird. This event is tied into the overall plot by the Toymaker, using the image of Stooky Bill (the doll) as

part of his plan. It was a nice opening scene between the Toymaker and a guy coming in to buy the doll for use in the experiment. We get an early look at Neil Patrick Harris’ Toymaker: an excellent updating of a ’60s era *Doctor Who* villain – in fact, only the third Hartnell era baddie to return (the others being Daleks and Cybermen).

I was very much looking forward to Harris in this story, and he did not disappoint. The character was properly creepy, well acted, and despite being dispatched in the end a tad too easily, was very well executed. I could easily see this being the same character Michael Gough played in 1966. I especially loved the look on his face when Donna accused him of cheating. His accent went to a few places, and I loved the scene when he would say loudly in an American accent “Well, that’s alright then!” Very very much enjoyed his performance,

and I really hope we see more of him in the future (which, given the way the story ended, seemed like it could be a possibility if they wanted to).



The overall plot was said to be a “worldwide” story, but it didn’t feel like that. It felt like it was stuck in London; we didn’t see much of the events of the Giggle ourselves — we were just told about it. Apparently, the Toymaker put an arpeggio and a laugh into each TV transmission ever made, something that was picked up by everyone, and when activated, changed how people worked. The story said that the Toymaker made everyone believe they were right about everything; an allegory to current day’s society. There were a few digs at current society too with the comment by a politician (under the titular Giggle influence) saying “Why should I care about you?” I liked that part, I just wished it was shown to be a bit wider in scale than it felt. It was during this scene where we got a body double for Wilf, as Bernard Cribbins wasn’t able to film anything here, and the character effectively disappeared at that point.

When the Doctor makes it to the

Toymaker’s shop, I laughed when Donna asked if he had his own TARDIS, because I could easily see someone thinking that (bigger on the inside). It felt properly creepy in there, with rooms going to nowhere, dolls that attacked you, and people who were turned into life size dolls — the atmosphere was great. When the Doctor and Donna escaped, and watched the Toymaker’s shop disappear, I got flashbacks to watching Dan’s house shrink into next to nothing from the Flux.

There’s a great scene in the middle of this where the Doctor and Donna are made to watch a puppet show by the Toymaker showing what happened to several companions of the Doctor after Donna’s time. At first, I wondered why they didn’t do more, but these are the ones that “died” (of a sort). The Doctor had an explanation for each, but I adored the puppet show of former companions — it even mentioned the Flux again. Once again, we’re not burying the Chibnall era, but leaning into it. I like that a lot. We also got the follow-up game to the 1960s story, but it’s just a straight up cut of the cards. That’s probably my biggest disappointment with the Toymaker. There’s two games with the Doctor here: one is a simple cut the cards, and the other is playing catch with a ball. Given the trilogic game from *The Celestial Toymaker* was more involved, these games felt like a bit of a letdown. Of course, the 1960s story had twice as much story time to fill (being a 4 x 25 min runtime and this special being one hour). A minor quibble, as they’re all played quite well dramatically. I just wish the games were a bit more involved than they were on screen.

Before I get to the big controversial part of the story, I wanted to talk about some of the fun stuff. While none of these specials

played out like a traditional special with parades of old characters and references, we got some of that here. Kate Lethbridge-Stewart appears here again, now making 7 on screen Doctors she's had some sort of adventure with (the Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth and War Doctors). Did anyone else think when she walked up to him on the base at first she was going to slap him? Felt that way to me. We very quickly discover that she hired Mel out of that companion support group at the end of Jodie Whittaker's final story, as Mel is working for UNIT now. The Doctor recognising her was sweet, and there was also a short scene later with Mel talking about what happened post *Dragonfire*. I loved the name drop of Sabalom Glitz, and saying how he died: a great scene that this old time *Who* fan geeked out on big time. That she's portrayed as a computer expert is great, given how the character was originally designed to be in 1986. What I

don't get though is when Mel talks about her family all being gone — I don't recall any talk of that back in the 1980s, so did I miss something? Speaking of working for UNIT, the scene when Donna Noble talks herself into a job with UNIT was also funny, and makes me wonder if it will get followed up on. Donna and Mel talking over which one of them was the first ginger companion was amusing. I also loved the Toymaker's dance in UNIT HQ — so much fun, and gave me a bit of the Master dancing vibes (both the Simm and Dhawan versions).

After the dance scene, the Toymaker takes over this huge gun that UNIT has and threatens everyone. He shoots the Fourteenth Doctor with it, and forces him to regenerate. We get the yellow glow and then.... Nothing. Something new happens here. David Tennant regenerates into Ncuti Gatwa, but remains himself. They called this on screen "bi-generation". The Fifteenth Doctor says "there's no such thing, it's supposed to be a myth", so basically, something Russell T Davies invented. On first view, I was like "WTF is



this”, but the more I thought about it, it kind of works. Something new. Now I don’t want this to be the standard going forward, because to this point, regeneration was always a mix of sad and happy. We’re sad that the old guy is gone, and happy for the new guy. That is taken away. I don’t *hate* this, but it is definitely different. I imagine a lot of fans will get bent out of shape over this, but *Doctor Who* has always tried new things over the 60 years it’s been on, so why not this? It does give us a multi-Doctor sequence in this episode, which we weren’t expecting, so that’s good.

catching up? It’s all wild speculation, nobody knows, except perhaps Davies, who obviously won’t play his cards this quickly if that’s what he’s thinking.

Anyway, after that scene happens, we get the aforementioned final game against the Toymaker. If you watch the cut of the game itself, it’s quite obvious the three of them are no good at this game — one of them says as much in the behind the scenes making of. Still, it’s fun to watch, and the Toymaker is eventually defeated. The Doctor claims banishment as his prize, and the Toymaker ends up inside the box that



It does raise some bizarre continuity here. Since the Fourteenth Doctor remains a Time Lord, what will happen when he naturally ages and regenerates properly? We don’t really know, but my guess is that he would turn into Gatwa properly, and Gatwa would come full circle and take off from that regeneration as well. Something that would be interesting to see during Gatwa’s tenure, a double regeneration from the Fourteenth to Fifteenth. This one here is the “too early” one, and the later one would be them

was his house from earlier. Kate says to bury it in the deepest place, surrounded by salt. That’s two episodes in a row they mention salt as a barrier. I wonder if that will come up again.

Speaking of coming up again, as everyone is walking off, we get a shot of the “tooth” that was inside the Toymaker’s mouth, which apparently contains the Master. We get some laughing when the tooth is picked up — this is *very* similar to the exact same thing we saw at the end of *The Last of the*

Time Lords when someone picked up the Master's ring (and in the 1980 movie, *Flash Gordon*). So it's pretty obvious we'll get the Master again. But whom? Simm? Gomez? Dhawan? I really want to see Sacha Dhawan's Master again: he was amazing, and I could go for more.

We then get a scene in the TARDIS with two Doctors talking about how this will work with both of them at once. It's in here we get a sequence of characters mentioned from the past — which I loved seeing in the final 60th anniversary special. They're all name drops, mind you; we don't see or hear any of them, but the list of characters and events we get checked are: the First Doctor, the trial in *The War Games*, Pertwee's exile to Earth, The Key to Time, Logopolis, Adric, River Song, Sarah Jane Smith, Rose Tyler, the Time War, the Pandorica, Mavic Chen, and the Gods of Ragnarok. That was quite a fun name drop there. My daughter who was a major River Song fan freaked out when they said that — much in the same way when I heard Mavic Chen!

There's a little fun wibbly wobbly where we end up with two physical TARDISES (TARDII?) here due to Gatwa's Doctor and leftover energy from the Toymaker. The new one has a wheelchair ramp; my first thought was "K9 can get in!" but it was Shirley Ann who was overjoyed at the ramp, which I found positively amusing that the Fourteenth Doctor then closes the door on her and doesn't let her in. There was a comment I read by RTD about this bit saying there is something coming in a future episode which will clearly state these are the same TARDIS, not two of them, so this will get revisited.

The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Doctors say



their goodbyes, and the latter takes off to future adventures. The Fourteenth stays behind with the family Noble, along with "Mad aunty Mel". This Doctor appears to actually "stop", although to what extent he's able to stick to that, we'll see. RTD has said there's no plans to bring him back, he's done — and it's an odd way to finish with a Doctor. It's never happened before. It's a super nice scene, but it just would have been better if they could have filmed it with Bernard Cribbins, who was said to be there, but out of shot, so Wilf lives.

The final shots are of Gatwa in his TARDIS taking off to the future. Ncuti stole every scene he was in. I've been a *Doctor Who* fan since 1983 when Peter Davison was the incumbent. Gatwa was *amazing* here. I thoroughly enjoyed everything he did on screen. When this was over, I truly can say that I have not been this excited about the new Doctor at the end of their first appearance in quite a long time — possibly ever. I really can't wait for Gatwa's first episode: we won't have to wait long — it's on 25th December!

Who Played the Original Toymaker?

Ida Wood



The Toymaker has returned to *Doctor Who*, to entertain himself and cause havoc, and he looks just like Neil Patrick Harris. That was in *The Giggle*, the last of the 60th anniversary specials.

He will be only the second actor to portray the mysterious and mischievous villain on television in *Doctor Who*, since most of the character's appearances have been in extended media. He has most frequently appeared in comics, and his facial features in print have tended to be modelled (within reason) off those of Michael Gough, the first actor to occupy the role.

Gough, who died in 2011, played the Toymaker in the 1966 serial, *The Celestial Toymaker*, and was set to do so again in *The Nightmare Fair*, a story written for Season 23 in 1986 that never made it into production. It was adapted for audio by Big Finish in 2009, but with a different actor as the main villain of the piece, David Bailie, since Gough had retired from the profession.

During his career, Gough was considered for several *Doctor Who* roles so played

Hedin in *Arc of Infinity*, and was as busy with film – particularly in America – as he was with television. His first on-screen roles were in films in the 1940s, and he appeared in TV movies before actually appearing in serialised productions. But even then, he took on one-off characters rather than recurring roles.

When theatrical productions started to be broadcast on TV by the BBC and ITV, he appeared in several of those, and he finally took on a long-term TV role in 1959 since his schedule featured fewer films. In addition to appearing in adaptations of many literary classics, he also appeared in shows that would be considered TV classics such as *The Saint*, *Colditz*, and *Blake's 7*.

Towards the end of his career, he was busy once more with big movies for the American market, including several *Batman* titles as the titular character's butler, Alfred.

Another connection Gough had to *Doctor Who* was he spent over 16 years married to Anneke Wills, who played the First and Second Doctor's companion, Polly Wright.

Who Is the Celestial Toymaker?

Jordan Shortman

Looking to catch up on the latest baddie to face off against the Doctor? The Toymaker has a long history in *Doctor Who*... and yet has only appeared on TV twice.

The Toymaker is a celestial being, who managed to create his own universe after, in some accounts, surviving the death of the old universe along with a handful of other beings. Since then, he could be described as a Rumpelstiltskin-like figure, commanding immense powers and rigging games and deals in his favour. For example, he might “forget” to mention certain rules and/or bend them to see that he always wins. His powers, however, are limited to rules he sets out for any given game, though when a player loses, he controls what happens to his victim (akin to the Grandmaster in the Marvel comics universe). Some games are rigged to kill, like the deadly game he makes Steven and Dodo play against Cyril in his debut story, *The Celestial Toymaker* (1966), and sometimes he might turn you into a toy.

There are times when the Toymaker will join in with the games, like playing opposite the First Doctor in his Trilogic Game. But the games are always rigged in the Toymaker’s favour. The First Doctor only won by tricking the celestial being, but the Toymaker is immortal and invulnerable so when the Doctor destroyed the Toyroom, the Toymaker wasn’t destroyed along with it — he survived in various forms to take up his deadly games with the Doctor throughout their multiple incarnations.

However, given his powers and immortality, the Toymaker was scared of

the outside universe. Whether this was because of his defeat at the hands of the First Doctor or because, as a creature of an old universe, the new is uncertain; either way, when the Twelfth Doctor met him in a comic book adventure, *Relative Dimensions*, he allowed the Toymaker to create a new toyshop inside the TARDIS before ejecting it back out into space when his old Toyroom broke down.

The Doctor first met the Celestial Toymaker, travelling with his companions Steven and Dodo in the story, *The Celestial Toymaker*. When the Doctor mysteriously vanishes before their eyes, Steven, Dodo, and the Doctor have no choice but to leave the TARDIS. The Doctor learns that the reason why they have been brought here is because the Toymaker is bored and wants a mind as brilliant as his to play against. While the Doctor has to play the Trilogic Game, Steven and Dodo are forced into playing a number of deadly games before they are able to get back to the real TARDIS.

The Toymaker hints that this isn’t the first time he and the Doctor have met but he left the Toymaker’s domain before he could play a game and that is why, this time, the Doctor has been brought here. The Doctor manages to make enough correct moves to make himself visible and eventually joins his companions by the real TARDIS. Once inside, he uses the Toymaker’s own voice against him, commanding the winning move on the Trilogic Game, realising that to make the final move in the Toyroom would have seen that world vanish and them along with it. In winning against his foe, the

Doctor, Steven, and Dodo are set free while the Toymaker's dimension is destroyed.

The comic, *Relative Dimensions*, saw him facing off against the Twelfth Doctor and Clara. The Toymaker is seemingly afraid of the outside universe but finds his own one breaking down. The Doctor does however help him make a new one, allowing him to enter the TARDIS and turn one of the rooms into his Toyroom, the Doctor then jettisoned that room from the TARDIS — allowing the Toymaker to continue his games under the impression that he wouldn't continue to take people from other worlds. Of course, this promise wouldn't last.

The Doctor also met the Toymaker in *Divided Loyalties*, when the Celestial being's body began to break down. Once upon a time, he had taken over the body of a Time Lord called Rallon. The Toymaker then decided to turn Tegan, Nyssa, and Adric against the Doctor, leaving the Time Lord alone so that he could take over his body. All the games came to nothing though, with Rallon fighting against the

entity that had taken him over many centuries ago and forcing his body to undergo many regenerations. The shock from this forced the Toymaker out of his body and Rallon died. This had once again destroyed his Toyroom and, with his servant Stefan in tow, the Toymaker fled to Earth and hid in a place called Blackpool...

This is where the Sixth Doctor and Peri encountered him (*The Nightmare Fair*); now calling himself the Mandarin and in a new host, the Mandarin was controlling a thrill ride, Space Mountain, as well as a number of deadly video games. The Doctor and Peri managed to trap the Mandarin in an impenetrable force field which was being powered by the Mandarin's own mental energy, meaning that the universe believed that he was finally trapped forever.

But how many times has a villain been believed defeated only to come back when you least expect it? The final encounters with the Doctor come out of order, but while he was still calling himself the Mandarin, he would play chess opposite

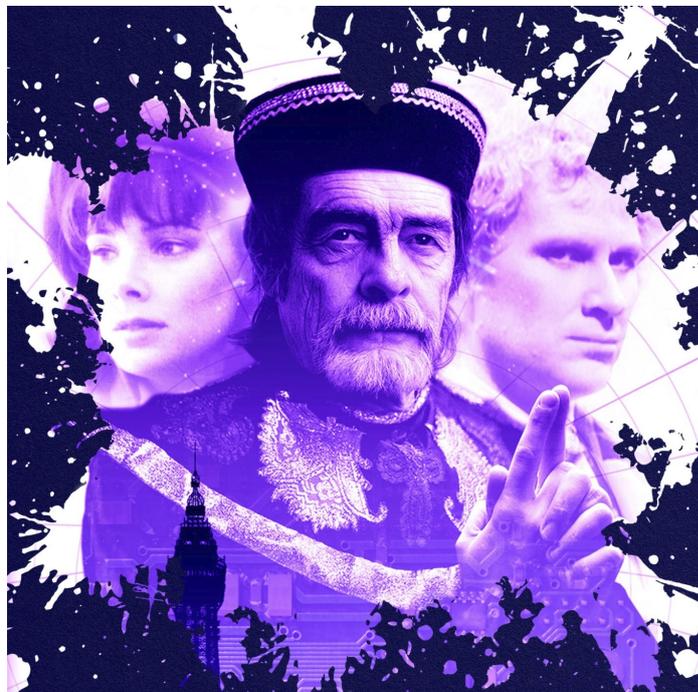


Fenic (from the Seventh Doctor tale, *The Curse of Fenric*). But when Fenric very nearly outplayed him, the Mandarin realised that a stalemate against this powerful entity was the only victory he was going to have. But this wouldn't be his last encounter with Fenric...

Now back to calling himself the Toymaker, his next encounter with the Doctor was in a comic strip called *Endgame* which saw the Eighth Doctor meeting Izzy. The Toymaker had taken over the village of Stockbridge, using an evil duplicate of the Doctor to try and defeat his enemies. However, the Doctor manages to convince his evil duplicate that he would only ever be a pawn of the Toymaker, a creature never to have a life of their own. While the evil Doctor distracts the Toymaker, the real one uses part of a machine called the Imagineum to create a duplicate of the Toymaker, who drags the real one into the shadow dimensions. With the Toymaker gone and the Imagineum destroyed, Stockbridge, the Doctor, and Izzy are returned to Earth.

This wasn't the last time the Eighth Doctor would encounter the Toymaker, though, as later the TARDIS was dragged into the Toyroom once again (*Solitaire*). This time, the Doctor was put into the body of a ventriloquist's doll, while Charley was forced to take part in the Toymaker's riddle. However, they tricked the Toymaker and his Toyroom was shrunk to nothing, destroying his current host body. Charley never faced the Toymaker again, though the Doctor would come up against him one final time...

The Doctor's last encounter with the Toymaker was when the Doctor was in his seventh incarnation. In *The Magic Mousetrap*, the Doctor and his companions



Ace and Hex find themselves in a Sanatorium in the Swiss Alps. With the Doctor's help, a group of survivors manage to defeat the Toymaker by imprisoning him inside a doll that they all eat parts of, splitting up the Toymaker and stretching him between too many humans to once again take one host. The Toymaker had regained his powers with the unintentional help of Fenric, who in his rising again had stirred the Toymaker from his dimension. Of course, the Toymaker had been in control all this time, trying to find out what it feels like to finally lose. But a chess-master managed to trap the Toymaker in a perpetual stalemate in his own dimension; the Doctor, Ace, Hex, and a woman named Queenie Glasscock managed to escape after everyone else was turned into wooden dolls.

Despite having only appeared in one televised story so far, the Toymaker seems to have been a popular villain since 1966. Many writers have used him in various stories and each time, the Doctor only just gets away by the skin of their teeth. The Toymaker even had a brief mention in the Thirteenth Doctor adventure, *Can You Hear Me?*, when she had to face off against some of the Eternals...

An Initial Relationship with the Celestial Toymaker: Looking Back at The Greatest Gamble

Colin Burden

Ah, *The Celestial Toymaker*. I'm not old enough to have seen it on its original transmission and, sadly, I have never read the Target novel (have you seen the price that book is now commanding?), but my original exposure with the Toymaker left me with a different interpretation of him, and not the evil entity he is supposed to be.

Let me start from the beginning...

My 'proper' introduction to *Doctor Who* fandom started roughly about the same time as *Doctor Who Weekly* was released. I was a paper-boy delivering out of a newsagent just off Wandsworth Common. Mr Patel, who owned the shop, introduced me to *Doctor Who Weekly* #1 as something I might be interested in. Having seen the programme on and off since *The Daemons*, I was immediately hooked.

I had also been a comics reader all my life and I primarily bought the publication because of the comic strips where I was enticed by Dave Gibbons' beautiful artwork (the definitive comic strip Fourth Doctor, in my humble opinion).

It was a back-up strip that introduced me properly to the Celestial Toymaker in *Doctor Who Monthly* (no longer weekly) #56: *The Greatest Gamble*. You see, gravitating towards the comic strips meant that many of the articles of past foes tended to pass me by. I only made a cursory note of the photographs that were used, in previous issues, so I was aware of the

Celestial Toymaker, but not who he was.

For those not familiar with *The Greatest Gamble*: a gambler, named Lefevre, is on a Mississippi paddle steamer playing Poker, sometime during the late 1800s. He spots an opponent palming an ace and shoots the opponent dead. At this point, the Celestial Toymaker appears and invites Lefevre to play against him. Agreeing, Lefevre is instantly transported to the Toymaker's domain. As he enters, he passes life-size statues of people. One I particularly remember noticing, on the story's last page, was of an American second world war soldier which would have been about half a century in Lefevre's future.

They start to play cards and initially, Lefevre does well, but when his luck changes, Lefevre tries to cheat. When the Toymaker cheats back, saying that he believed Lefevre had invented a new rule, Lefevre tries to shoot the Toymaker. This is the Toymaker's domain where he even controls gravity and the bullet lands harmlessly on the card table.

"The game is forfeit, and you have to pay!" cries the Toymaker and Lefevre is turned into a statue in which he is to become one of the Toymaker's toys.

Presently, a Roman centurion enters the domain, also having taken up a challenge from the Toymaker, and he passes Lefevre's



'statue'.

I was about 15 when I read that.

From that story, I didn't get the sense of evil about the Toymaker; as far as I was concerned, it was a morality tale about honesty. Lefevre is a nasty piece of work who kills in cold blood over a game! I presumed that all the other "toys" present had also been wrong-uns who ended up being turned to stone as they fell into their nefarious ways during their gamble. And

did the Toymaker choose these people for that reason?

On the face of it, *The Greatest Gamble* is a morality tale: a cheat and a murderer gets his comeuppance. But the tale itself relies on the reader's prior knowledge of the Celestial Toymaker. I didn't have that prior knowledge when reading this tale for the first time and this is only four pages long; the magazine's secondary strip doesn't have the time for any kind of resume.



As a result, what I perceived was that the Toymaker was bored and lonely; a celestial being plundering time and space for people to gamble against simply to relieve the monotony. But there was something more than that. The Toymaker, on this occasion, comes across as some kind of avenging angel; to dish out a punishment for the evil that men do.

Of course, I subsequently got to know the original television story better and revisiting *The Greatest Gamble* today there were clues that the gambling is the point. Had Lefevre played fairly and won, he would have been sent back to the casino on the Mississippi steamer, with his winnings, despite having just committed murder. However, should he have lost, even fairly, he certainly would have suffered the dreadful fate to become one of the Toymaker's playthings. After all, the Toymaker says to Lefevre that he has no use for money... what would be the Toymaker's winnings otherwise?

However, in this story the Roman centurion is brought into the tale as another gambler. This gives the impression that the Toymaker is only looking for gamblers to play against. This was something else that familiarity with the original television story put right for me: the situation was even simpler; it was losing or winning a game – any game – as was the case when the First



Doctor was presented with the Trilogic puzzle.

One last thing occurred to me back in 1981, when I first read *The Greatest Gamble*: were the gamblers who turned to stone killed or had they been placed in some statuesque eternal torment rather like Borusa in *The Five Doctors*?

And finally, a mention regarding the artist, Mick McMahon. McMahon had such a distinctive style and he was probably most famous for his work on *Judge Dredd*. For me, what springs to mind is his characters always have exaggerated shoes and hands, but the art itself has a gritty cartoon feel. I am lucky enough to have an original page from his work on *Judge Dredd: The Cursed Earth*... and, in a strange coincidence to the Toymaker story, it's the page when Dredd discovers the mafia-style judges in Las Vegas.

Don't gamble, kids!



Serendipity

Andrew Hsieh



She approached the blue police box on Bachelor Road, just a few doors down from house number 23, on the snowy afternoon. With four gentle knocks, she waited patiently for a few seconds until the door opened to reveal a tall man in a navy blue trenchcoat with thick brown hair and sideburns.

“Can I help you?”

“You’re him,” she gasped, recognising the face that had aged well after more than a decade. “You’re really him!”

“Oh...” he began to realise, “It’s you! The lady who phoned in from... 2020, wasn’t it? When you were all confined in your homes? Come to think of it, you never mentioned your name.”

“Emily. Freelance journalist. Never thought I’d meet the Doctor in person,” she said, eyes lighting up. “Is Donna Noble around, by any chance?”

“She and the family are on holiday in Davros, Switzerland, for Christmas. Oops, sorry, I mean Davos! Had to use the TARDIS to give them a lift. Cup of tea?”

“Hot chocolate would do.”

“Toasted marshmallows?”

“Yes, please.”

As the Doctor ushered her inside the TARDIS, Emily raised her eyebrows at the sight of the widened interior with roundels flashing red and green on the walls, and ramps leading towards other doors. While the Doctor used the coffee machine to prepare a steaming mug of hot chocolate, she sat down on one of the two armchairs with a table in front; all

facing opposite the main console.

“So, Emily, what brings you here today?”

“Brought along some old files that I recently dug up, with help from Rani Chandra.”

“Rani!” he exclaimed, putting the mugs down on the table. “How is she?”

“She and Clyde send their warmest regards.” Emily sipped her hot chocolate and complimented, “Mmm, very refreshing... and Christmassy.”

“Why, thank you,” he also took a sip. “Might pay them a visit, if they’re still living in Ealing. And what was it you wanted to show me?”

She took a folder out of her bag and opened it to present a neatly arranged pile of documents and newspaper clippings. There was a photo of an old man with plaster on his bruised head, someone that the Doctor knew all too well.

“Mr Copper!”

“Bayldon Copper of the Mr Copper Foundation.”

“He chose well.”

“And so did you.”

The Doctor almost dropped his mug. But he quickly took a sip before asking, “What do you mean?”

Emily took out a printed article she wrote, featuring a photo of her with Mr Copper at an award ceremony. Much to his puzzlement, she looked exactly the same, apart from a different hairstyle.

“You were right to leave him on Earth, with the money he had on that credit card. Oh, he told me all about that! Had he joined you in the TARDIS, the whole of reality would’ve been erased by now. None of us would be here today; only Daleks in existence. That’s why I liaised with the Mr Copper Foundation to help develop the Subwave Network with Harriet Jones, former Prime Minister.”

“Yes, I know who she is... or was. And she brought me home to save reality... my future, and Donna.”

“That’s why I go by the name of Serendipity.”

The Doctor paused again, almost frowning. “Serendipity?”

“I’m not of this universe, Doctor. I’m like you, the last of my kind, wanting to make a difference with the best, possible outcomes. Even for you, your destiny is what really

matters.” She grinned, taking another sip of her hot chocolate.

“You’re not a parallel version of me, the Master, the Monk, or Susan, are you? Or the Rani? Seems like it’s always the Rani...”

“Nope, just another Time Lady. My bedroom, where I phoned UNIT from, is one of the many rooms in my TARDIS. Going undercover as Emily; befriending Sarah Jane Smith and Rani; helping Mr Copper and Harriet Jones; reconvening the DoctorDonna, before Rose found the Meep; transporting Wilfred Mott, in his wheelchair, to Camden; and delivering the Vlinx to UNIT HQ — we’re here right now, because of all this.”

The Doctor was completely awestruck, almost shedding a tear of joy. He extended his arm out for a handshake and said, “I hope my arm isn’t too long, but it’s an honour to meet you, Serendipity.”

“Likewise, my dear Doctor.”

And so, the Doctor and Serendipity continued to exchange stories, especially the time when his Sixth incarnation and Mel encountered the Hodiac. They both had so much to discuss, they spent countless hours reading through the files until the Nobles returned home to celebrate New Year’s inside the TARDIS.

That Time IDW Had to Cut and Paste David Tennant's Face in a Comic Book

Jordan Shortman



David Tennant briefly returned in 2023, this time as the Fourteenth Doctor, but did you know that his Tenth Doctor comic featured the same drawing of him, again and again?

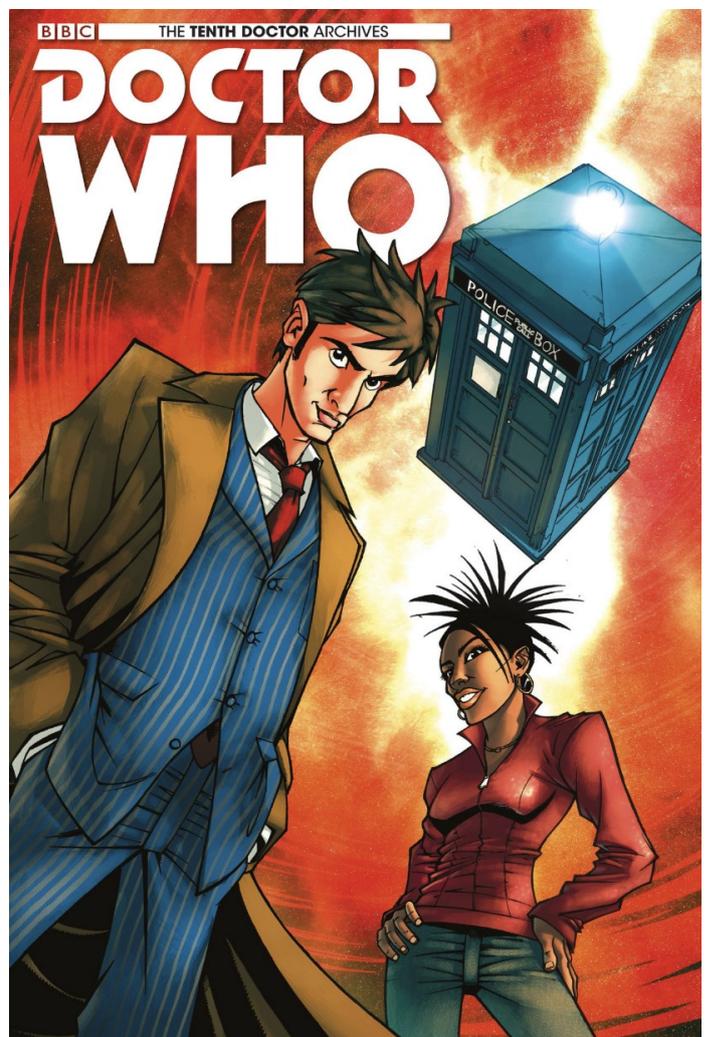
Writer, Tony Lee, has revealed that, with one day until issues of the IDW comics were due to go to print, the BBC put things on hold because they didn't like the way that Tennant's Doctor had been drawn.

The creative team had some connection to the BBC offices with Gary Russell writing the story, and decided that after three issues they didn't like the way that the Tenth Doctor was being depicted. But due to them putting in a complaint on Friday and the issues being printed on the Monday, the team at IDW didn't have a lot of time to sort the issues. They sent back a selection of new images which the BBC approved of and then, likely out of necessity, the team continued to use those same images throughout the rest of the run with IDW with a little digital warping and moving things like eyebrows and mouths.

Of course, I can understand the BBC's point of view: you want your leading man to look like the TV character in spin-off media. But there has to also be room for artist creation. Look at Titan's comic book output: there's a mixture of original looks, and

poses/ faces cut and pasted from the television series; while it can be fun to try and identify which episode certain panels have been copied from, and they do sometimes work as fun Easter eggs, Titan relies a little too heavily on this and not putting enough original poses and artwork into their comics which, when they do, looks really weird; maybe the BBC now has a rule that artists can only use certain looks for their characters?

This wasn't the only problem with the short run though; the team found out that the historic personality of Charlie Chaplin who was due to appear in the third issue was





still under copyright despite the team having been told he wasn't. This meant that the artist had to stay up all night and turn bowler hats into top hats and put large handlebar moustaches on Chaplin and make him look like a completely fictional character.

With some pretty big issues for IDW to sort

out in a two-day turnaround period, when everything had been approved and sent off to the printers, it's a wonder that IDW would continue to have a good relationship with the *Doctor Who* team, creating comics for the Tenth and Eleventh Doctors as well as crossovers with *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, a number of annuals and one-shots, and reprinting a number of old comics from *Doctor Who Magazine*.



It's a bit of a shame that the BBC feel the need to have such a creative control on a show that historically they've never cared for all that much; if I were an artist who was told that I needed to redraw some panels of the Tenth Doctor because the BBC didn't like what I'd done, I would be very insulted. I think you'd be hard pressed to find people who wouldn't be. But then the BBC has to make sure that people look familiar to readers and consumers throughout all their media too. Perhaps there could be more merging between the two so that we don't get another situation where David Tennant appeared through a number of comics in exactly the same position...!

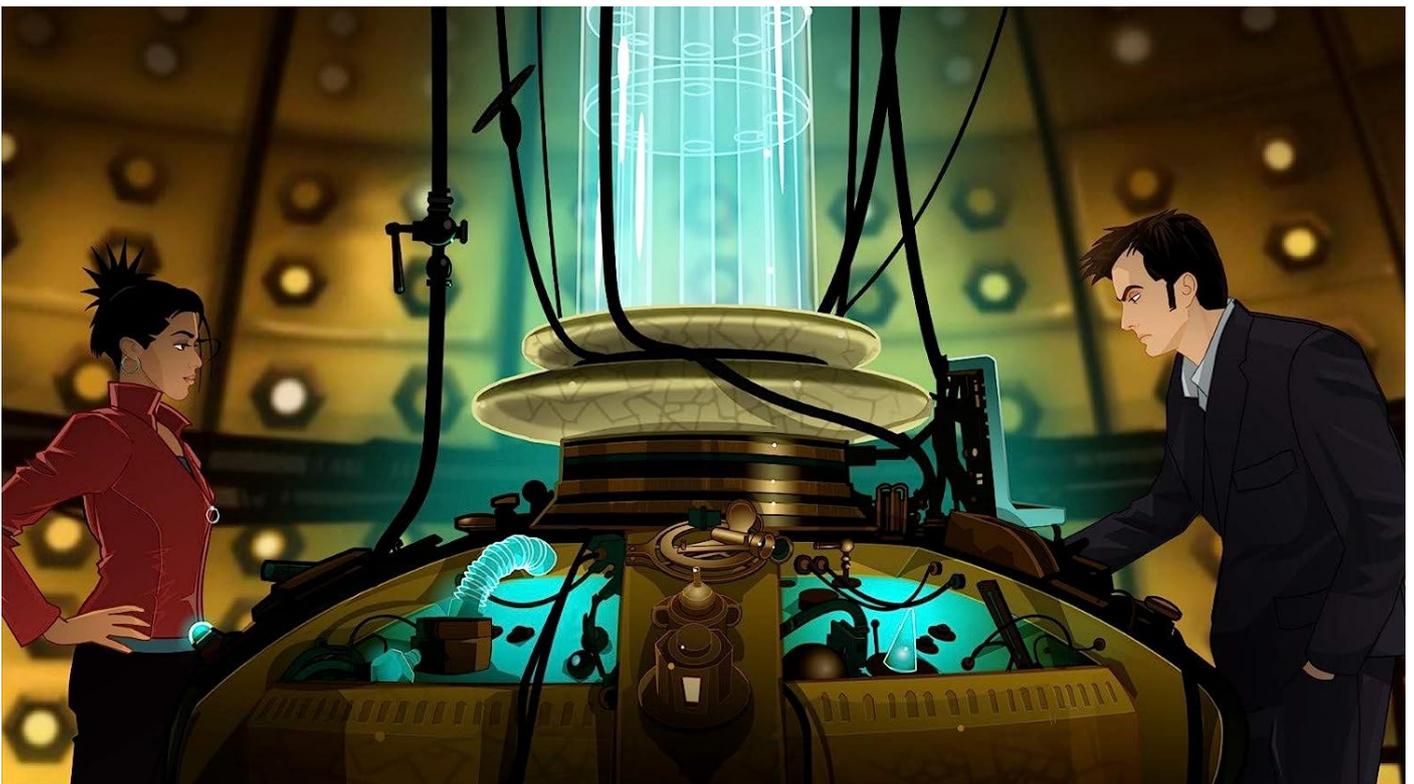
David Toon-ant: The Animated Adventures of the Tenth Doctor

James Baldock

Anyone who's followed David Tennant's career will know that he's done some of his best work inside a recording studio. *Doctor Who* made Tennant an international superstar, but there are advantages to doing a character in Estuary English when you're a native Scot. Tennant's excelled in shows like *Tree-Fu Tom* and *Twenty Twelve* (in which his deadpan narration is an unexpected highlight) and been equally compelling in the likes of *The Pirates! in an Adventure with Scientists* and *How To Train Your Dragon*. He even manages to turn in a decent performance in *Postman Pat*, even though the film itself is woeful. A natural acting ability helps tremendously, but arguably the best thing about all these

performances is that Tennant's accent helps maintain that crucial sense of disbelief – you're never expecting him to sound like the Doctor, which is not something you might say of Tom Baker, for example.

But Tennant's made something of a career out of lending his voice to the Doctor as well as his face, both in the Big Finish productions he's recorded and the animated stories that cropped up throughout his run in the TARDIS – with both actors expressing their love of audio sessions when chatting to *Digital Spy*. "You zip through it," Tate says, "because you haven't got to worry about camera angles, and lighting and makeup, and all these



things – ‘am I on my mark?’. You just use the words and your voice.” Broadly, Tennant agrees, although he acquiesces that “There is no process of learning your lines to get your mouth around it. Part of the process of learning one’s lines for the TV show was attacking the inner tongue twisters of some of those speeches.” The animated stories are something of a curiosity, existing as they did as episodic instalments in the manner of Saturday morning cartoons (with the first, *The Infinite Quest*, being broadcast as part of *Totally Doctor Who* in exactly the manner that Roland Rat used to cut to episodes of *Transformers* while he was rampaging up and down the corridors of Breakfast Television Centre). One utilises two-dimensional animation in a similar manner to *Scream of the Shalka*; the other ventures into the realms of three-dimensional CGI. Both feel, in a strange sort of way, rather like pilots for an animated series that never happened – as if someone had taken a cue from Gene Roddenberry but without the breaks they needed to actually get the project off the ground.

That’s not to say that either story is bad – they’re actually quite reasonable. *The Infinite Quest* (2007) ran parallel to the original broadcast of Series 3, charting the adventures of the Doctor and Martha as they searched the universe for parts of a McGuffin. It was basically an excuse for a variety of set pieces – pirates, fish-like aliens, and a sinister prison all feature –

and if the plot is somewhat inconsequential, the action is as impressive as most of Tennant’s TV run. The voice cast don’t disappoint either: Anthony Head drips menace as Baltazar, while Liza Tarbuck makes the most of her comparatively brief screentime, playing a character who really deserves another shot at redemption. Oh, and Big Finish veteran Lizzie Hopley shows up as the alien queen, while Toby Longworth plays a sentient parrot.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the story is the way it plays on Martha’s feelings for the Doctor: it’s just about the only time it doesn’t grate, given that it’s essential to the narrative. The term ‘narrative’ is used somewhat loosely, of course, given that this is a heavily condensed version of the *Key To Time* arc, but without the interesting bits. The episodic, cliffhanger-driven nature of *Quest* makes itself apparent fairly early: comparatively little time is given for character development, and we’re lucky that we were given the chance to get to know Martha on screen. That said, writer Alan Barnes does a good job at keeping up the pace, with some lovely exchanges between the leads: the Doctor’s quiet “No, no, don’t – don’t do that” when Martha attempts pirate speak is classic Tennant, and his self-righteous fury when facing down Baltazar in the final act is angry but understated. The rendered backgrounds are minimalist, but that does at least give us the chance to focus a little more on



facial expressions, which are usually very good, even if the mouth movement isn't always top-notch.

If *The Infinite Quest* is a series of unfortunate events, *Dreamland* (2009) feels far more like a coherent story, the sort of thing that might have been rejected as a TV episode ("It was too expensive to go on location") but ripe for an animated web series. The companionless Doctor arrives in Nevada in 1958 and swiftly finds himself caught up in a UFO conspiracy plot, in the company of a girl from a diner and a young Native American (half Shoshone,

half Greaser). There are grey aliens that wouldn't look out of place in an episode of *The X-Files*, and a race of giant cockroaches (this is presumably supposed to be a commentary on the nuclear survival myth, although we're never sure). There are also nods to *Indiana Jones*, *Aliens*, and (somewhat improbably) *Metal Gear Solid*, but *Dreamland* wears its cultural references like a badge of honour, the Doctor even going so far as to refer to them directly when he's hatching a plan to escape from the air force base. The thing about CG animation is that it's easy to do but tough to do well. For

every *Monsters Inc.* there's a *Silver Chair* or *Life's A Jungle*. On TV it's much the same: witness the opulence of, for instance, *Kazoops* (CBeebies) and then turn over to *Tiny Pop*; it's enough to make you weep for the future of humanity. There is a sense of expectation that every new release should be up there with the likes of Pixar and Dreamworks, both of whom set the bar – which is something of a shame, as watching Real Madrid take on Barcelona down the pub doesn't prevent you enjoying a Sunday league match at your local football ground. We're willing to forgive the occasionally dodgy effects of *Red Dwarf*; why can we not extend a similar courtesy when evaluating Hollywood?



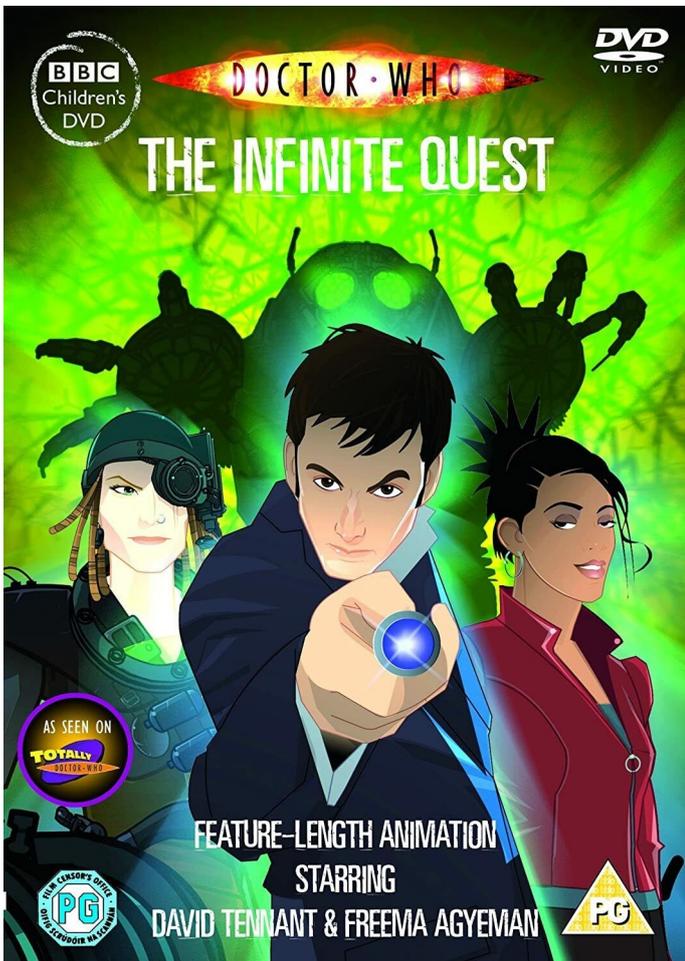
Nonetheless, it's something of a shame that the general appearance of *Dreamland* is so sub-par. The backgrounds are reasonable – if comparatively minimalist, but it's the animation that disappoints, with the Doctor himself somehow seeming more robotic than the androids he encounters in the Nevada desert. This is not a problem with technology (we're talking about a production that post-dates the first *Assassin's Creed*, for example) but rather finance,



with *Dreamland's* shortcomings most likely budget related: Littleloud presumably did the best they could with the resources available. It wouldn't be such an issue had we not become accustomed to the sight of Tennant surrounded by vast, twinkling alien landscapes, and actually *moving* a little bit; had *Dreamland* existed in a vacuum, it would probably be higher regarded. Still, it's hard to take the Doctor seriously when he's strolling across a vast underground chamber, technobabbling like a pro, but walking in a manner that suggests he's wet himself.

Even if the animation is stiff as a board, the voice talent makes up for it. Tennant is on fine form, Georgia Tennant's (then Moffett's) American accent is basically flawless, and Stuart Milligan – who would later portray a slightly clueless Richard Nixon in the *Impossible Astronaut / Day of*



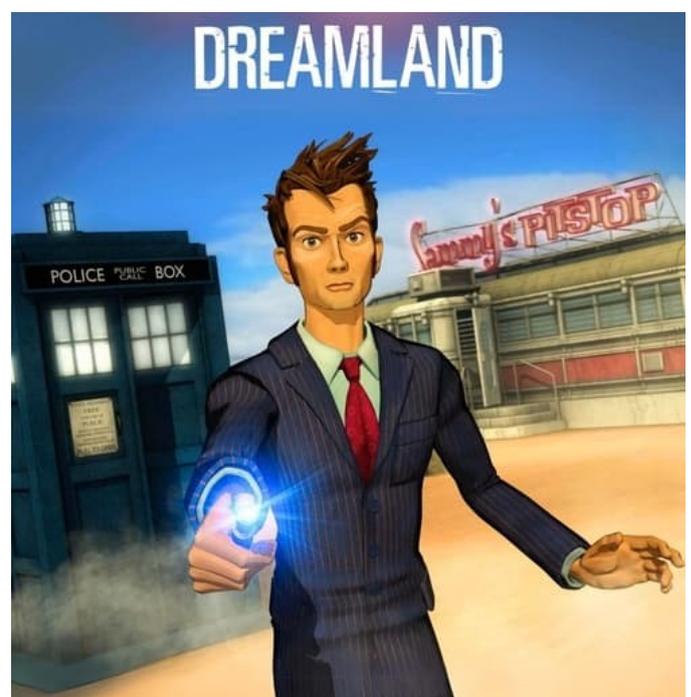


the Moon two-parter – excels as Colonel Stark, a grumpy military sort with a distrust of foreigners. The late, great David Warner also appears in his first on-screen *Who* role (Big Finish aficionados will recall that he played an ‘alternate’ Third Doctor in the *Unbound* series, alongside Nicholas Courtney and – yes, David Tennant); sadly he’s barely recognisable behind the vocoder. And yes, I know ‘on-screen’ is a stretch, but it still counts.

And for all its flaws (and there are a number of them; the action jumps between scenes in a manner that suits an episodic format but which seems clunky and disjointed when stitched into a continuous narrative), *Dreamland* really isn’t the failure that many reviewers make it out to be. The Doctor’s companions are underdeveloped (this is the price you pay

for shoehorning five cliffhangers into a 45-minute story) but the pace never lets up and the climax packs a satisfying, Doctorish punch. But there’s more to it than that: the flaws in the experiment do not in themselves nullify any value gleaned from having gone into the lab. *Dreamland* – like *The Infinite Quest* before it – portrays a familiar Doctor in an unfamiliar way, and it seems churlish to write it off on the grounds that it doesn’t quite work.

When (and it is a question of when, rather than if) the show runs its course, there will be other avenues to pursue – and there’s no reason why a CG Doctor, done well, wouldn’t shine with the same brilliance as the TV show’s finest episodes. It’s telling that in the closing minutes the Doctor refuses point blank to destroy the invading Viperox because they’re ‘an evolving species’. And perhaps it’s best if we not look at *Dreamland* not as a genetic misstep, but rather as a rung on an evolutionary ladder that the Doctor is one day destined to climb.



Why I Love The Girl in the Fireplace

Mike Ranahan



“The clock on the mantle is broken. It is time, Doctor? *Doctor?!!*”

An iconic line eloquently bellowed into a grandiose fireplace amidst a chorus of screams and panic. You could be forgiven for thinking that *The Girl in the Fireplace* is just a filler episode, a standard period piece with something spooky weaving itself into the narrative of our planet’s history, an episode that gives Mickey an adventure outside of a London, something fun and *Who-y* from the wonderful Steven Moffat.

Which it is!

What it also is, however, is one of the best standalone *Doctor Who* episodes of the modern era that doesn’t rely on established narratives, monsters, or conflicts.

The sets, the scoring, the script, and the sass flood this episode with charm and class, successfully juggling seamless squabbling between a squadron of repair droids, two present-day Londoners, several French aristocrats, and the Doctor without breaking stride on the episodes rhythm: the slow path to catastrophe.

The obvious monsters here were the aforementioned repair droids: clockwork contraptions that had mutilated the crew of their own spaceship to use their ‘parts’ for repairs after sustaining heavy damage. Obviously suffering some damage to their context protocols, the droids believe that they need the 37 year old brain of Madame de Pompadour to finish repairs on their ship, therefore they had to ‘punch a hole through the universe’ several times over with time doorways to 18th Century

France. Why? Because they are 'the same' as her.

Side note, this is exactly why we should be terrified of AI logic.

Though misguided in their intentions, the clockwork droids were persistent and efficient. The smashing of the clocks, the hiding in plain sight (despite looking terrifying), and the magnificent Murray Gold score all contribute to what makes the clockwork droids such an iconic and convincing antagonist. Like death itself, their dispassionate presence is just function, impossible to reason with and as patient as needs be. Just ticking over, watching, waiting. They rob the Doctor of his words, his most powerful weapon.

Unable to talk his way through to these monsters then, the Doctor ends up having to ride Arthur the horse through a mirror in order to sever the links for the clockwork droids' time windows and seemingly trap himself in the past with them, essentially robbing them of their function. Great sentence.

Reflecting on his predicament afterwards, we observe a different Doctor. Stranded, resigned to his fate, there is a pace absent from his demeanour now. Throughout the episode, the interactions between Madame de Pompadour and the Doctor have been, for good reason, frantic.



Though still able to get a few flirtatious lines in here and there, their relationship has primarily been about unravelling a mystery, survival and protection, but now he sees kinship. He sees time.

Time turns out to be the less obvious monster.

Boooo, lame answer.

I know, but time robs the Doctor of his heart(s), his most vulnerable point.

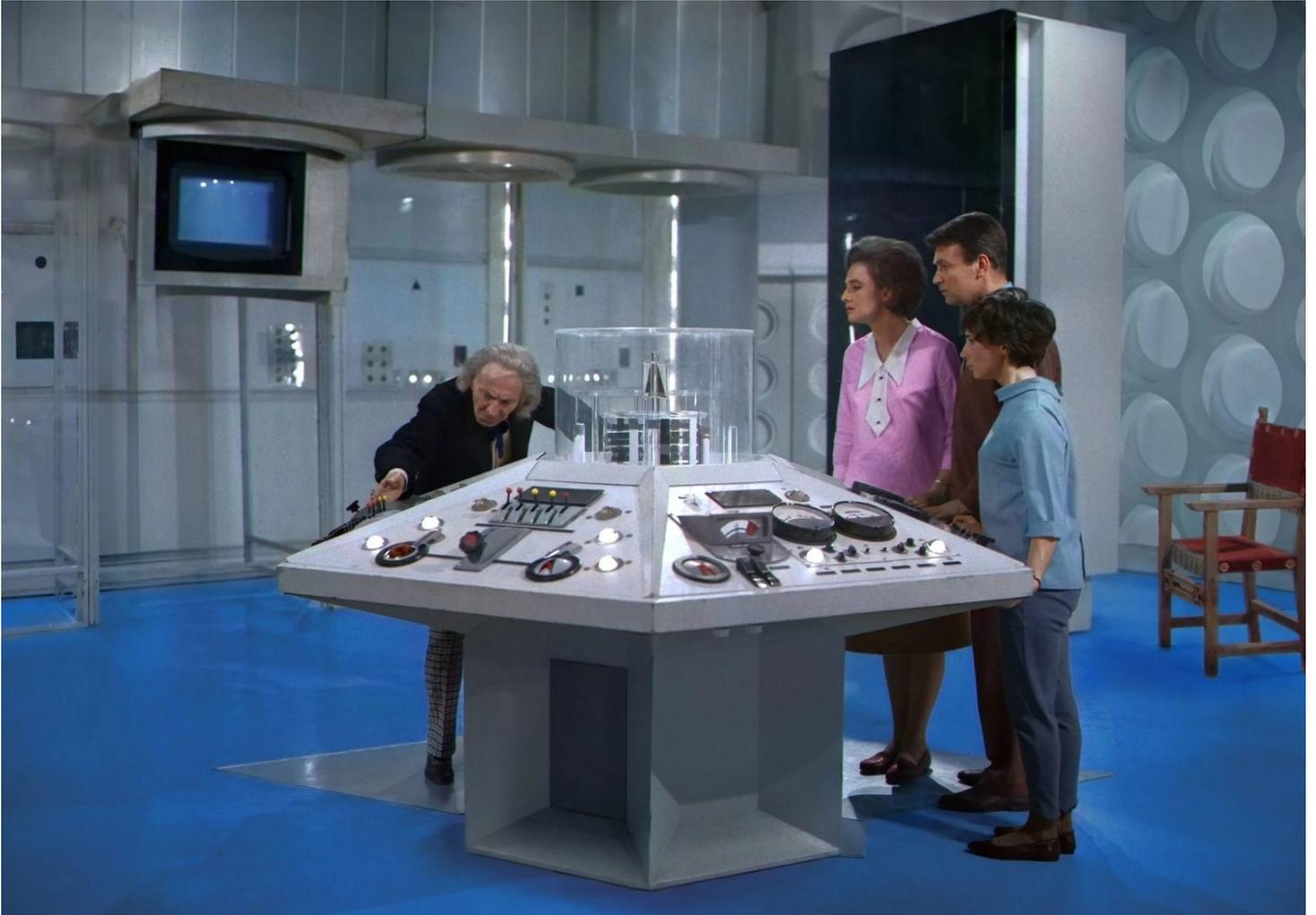
Explored extensively throughout this season, the Doctor's ability to wander in and out of people's lives has lasting effects, ripples that turn to waves left in his wake. 'The oncoming storm' will eventually pass but the devastation they leave is often scarring to those it touches. A phenomena most intimately articulated by Madame de Pompadour when she refuses to wish the Doctor good luck as he leaves. She knows 'you can't have the Doctor without the monsters', and now the monsters are gone and the Doctor won't come back, despite his promises.

I love this episode because not only does it look great, sound great, and feature tremendous performances from everyone involved, but because it leaves you with an emotionally compelling and lasting impression of the Doctor's profound loneliness.

Also there's a horse called Arthur. Neat.

Reviewed: The Daleks in Colour

Jonathan Appleton



It's been a good couple of years for *The Daleks*. We've had a beautifully illustrated edition of David Whitaker's novel, a cinema re-release of the movie version, and (for UK viewers at least) the opportunity to watch the story on BBC iPlayer. And now, on the very day of the programme's 60th anniversary, this brand new colourised omnibus. How wonderful that, all these years after its first broadcast, what is arguably the most important story in *Doctor Who's* long history should still attract this kind of care and attention.

When it was first announced, I wrongly assumed this would be along the lines of those feature-length versions of stories that would be shown, often over Christmas, in the 1970s (and which are

now frequently included on the Blu-ray classic series box sets). It was a huge treat in those pre-home video years to enjoy the likes of *The Green Death* and *Genesis of the Daleks* again. But that was to vastly underestimate the ambition of video editor Benjamin Cook, who didn't so much cut the episodes together as strip them down to their individual parts and reassemble them from a whole new set of plans.

Russell T Davies said in *Doctor Who Magazine* that the editing would prove to be more controversial than the colouring, and he was probably right. The tale now rattles along at a relentless pace, with the swift cutting we're all used to in the modern era but would have been unthinkable when the story was made. I

found myself laughing at the production team's gall in coming up with such a wholesale reimagining, though it surely won't have been to everyone's taste.

It's a shame that there wasn't room for the Magnedon, *Doctor Who's* very first alien creature, and some moments of character and charm that weren't strictly necessary to the story, such as the food machine sequence, were sacrificed. I could have done without retconning touches like the cloister bell and mention of Kaleds, but I will allow that most people watching would have expected to hear 'EXTERMINATE!' a few times, even if viewers of the original didn't. I rather liked some of the more audacious touches, such as the Daleks cunningly writing Susan's note, though I wish there'd been room for a new scene where a Dalek clutches a marker pen as another one criticises its handwriting.

When the Daleks made it on to the big screen in the 1960s, the posters promised it was a chance to see them IN COLOUR. It was a message the team behind this colourisation seemed to have taken to heart, because boy, was this colourful. Barbara's blouse was so vibrant a shade of pink it's a wonder the first Dalek to appear in the series wasn't blinded, and I couldn't take my eyes off those vivid yellow and red dials on the control panels. Colourisation technology has clearly come a long way since those early 1980s efforts, but I don't think it's unfair to say it's not yet at the point where anyone watching this would think it was filmed in colour.

But what an achievement by Rich Tiplle and his team, who slaved for hours using

techniques which, though assisted by software, still largely have to be done manually. We're used to seeing colour photos of 1960s silver and blue Daleks, but it was glorious to see them moving and interacting, and of course exterminating, here.

At the conclusion, we got a tantalising glimpse of *The Keys of Marinus*, *The Web Planet*, and lots of other 1960s stories in colour, including The Beatles' *Top of the Pops* appearance. Can they really be planning to do them all? I'll certainly be watching if they do, as well as looking forward to RTD going on *The One Show* to promote, say, the 68th anniversary armed with the colourised version of *The Gunfighters*.

Although full credit must go to those behind *The Daleks in Colour*, the final tributes have to be paid to the cast and crew of the original, who against all the odds, in the face of low expectations and working in the most unfavourable conditions, came up with a production that caught the public's imagination in a way few programmes ever do.

For all the changes made in this new edit, it's still possible to marvel at what they achieved. That sense of danger, that the travellers are in the most desperate peril, was never quite the same after those early stories. The mystery of just who the Doctor is, and the (wholly justified) feeling that he can't be trusted. And of course the Daleks; menacing, calculating, and malevolent, and about to secure the programme's future. *The Daleks in Colour* was a highlight of this very special month in *Doctor Who* history, and enabled us to enjoy this landmark story all over again.

The Doctor Who Location Tour: Revelation of the Daleks

Jordan Shortman

Following my successful trip to the village of Charlton, used in *Terror of the Zygons*, I've been determined to take in as many *Doctor Who* filming locations as I can recently.

One such location is Lakeside North Harbour – formally the IBM building – although you'll know it as Tranquil Repose from the Sixth Doctor story, *Revelation of the Daleks*.

There were a few locations used to film *Revelation of the Daleks*. The forest scenes were filmed in Queen Elizabeth Country Park, while the wall that the Sixth

Doctor and Peri walk along looking for a way into Tranquil Repose is the back of the Goodwood Estate.

However, the most iconic location for this story is the IBM building in Cosham. Now, it's called Lakeside North Harbour. If you're like me and you have to take public transport, the two best places to stop are Donaldson Road opposite the dodgy St. George Playing Fields or Hilsea Lido. I recommend the Hilsea stop because Google Maps doesn't understand how underpasses work to get you from one side of a giant roundabout to another... Also, if you are at Hilsea, turn to the right and follow that pavement all the way along and



you'll quickly come across the left-hand side of Lakeside. I went a bit around the town first, thanks to Google Maps, so I came out in the gigantic car park!

Once you reach Lakeside, if you walk all the way along the front of the building, the iconic location is pretty easy to spot — it's as far right as the public are allowed to walk, though you might need to be careful as you can only enter the buildings with a lanyard (and I did think a couple of times people or security were possibly keeping an eye on me).

The first thing you'll spot is the great big glass structure, minus the pyramids on top which the building sported in the serial. The pond in the front is home to a couple of swans and ducks that you might not want to get too close to either! Looking at

this section of the building on the left, you can see where the statue of the Doctor was that the Doctor and Peri inspect before it collapses down on the Doctor.

The statue of the Doctor would have been in front of the stairs; the steps might not have been there in the 1980s but given how the rest of it looks exactly the same, it might have been placed there to cover them up!

It goes to show how good director Graeme Harper is because it's only a small part of the building they used to film but, thanks to the close ups and mid shots, it makes it feel like the whole building was used. A good example is a close of up of Nicola Bryant as Peri, which you can match up, thanks to the reflection of the right hand





side building. Nowadays, it has a tree planted pretty much where Peri would have once stood.

I would have taken some more photos are the right-hand side as this is where Clive Swift as Jobel would walk to try and 'comfort' Peri. However, I felt like people were watching me, so wasn't too sure of what was inside the building; I didn't want to push my luck. I may give it a few months and then make my way back to get some more photos with screenshots to help me...

One final picture I took was from Peri calling out to the Doctor about the toppling statue — this is where you might meet the slightly aggressive swans and ducks, so be prepared! But the path is the

same as it was in the 1980s with the odd bit of set pieces around, possibly strategically placed to hide signage and steps and doorways. Peri would have been stood almost in line with the ducks in this photo, while the Doctor is in the distance in front of the steps.

The old IBM building, now Lakeside, is a great place to visit and I think it is open-ish to the public; there is a massive car park and lots of people going around taking photos holding keys to homes. The building houses tax offices — obviously I don't want anyone to go round there and get arrested taking photographs but if you get a chance to visit then definitely visit this iconic location!

How Many Copies of Genesis of the Daleks Do We Actually Need?

Colin Burden

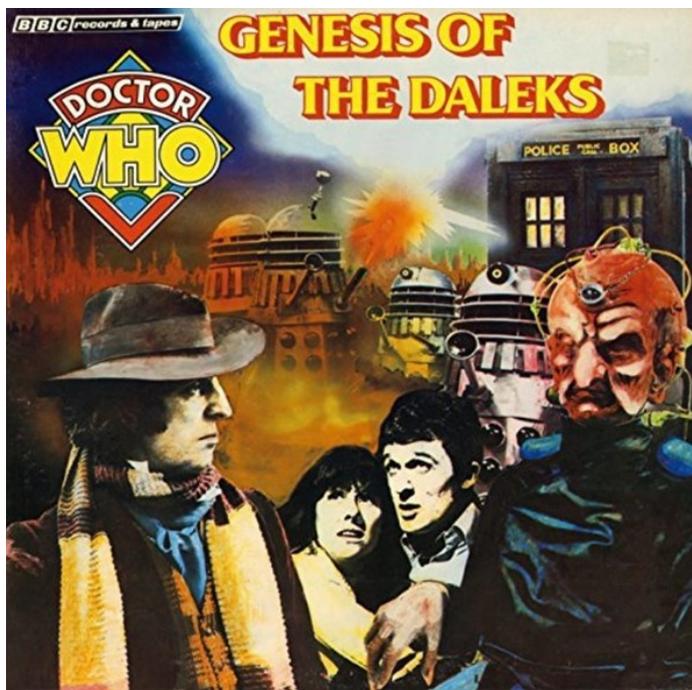
As some of us are apt to do, in this age of computers and smartphones, I was recently ripping my quite sizable audiobook CD collection onto the Apple Books app. Within all the Big Finish, BBC Audios, AudioGo etcetera, I picked up the 2017 release of Jon Culshaw reading Terrance Dicks' Target novelisation of *Genesis of the Daleks*. It's always been one of my favourite stories, but I then wondered if *Genesis* is the story that has had more releases, in varying formats than any other *Doctor Who*. Of course, most Classic *Who* stories have been released in several, but *Genesis* seems to have had more than its fair share.

Generally, a classic *Doctor Who* story would have followed a general set of releases: Target novelisation, VHS, DVD, audiobook, and possibly a soundtrack. Latterly, we can add Blu-ray to that list.

Now, just to be pedantic, I haven't included Target reprints as all Target books were reprinted, but I have included differing versions of audios if there was something different or noteworthy about it...

1. Target Novelisation, 1976

Of course, the first release was Terrance Dicks' Target novelisation. A striking cover by Chris Achilleos and a wonderful read: this was the first book that I ever read from cover to cover in one day (aged about 15). Not having yet seen the television version, my only previous experience was the BBC Records' release. This opened the story



more than what I was familiar with and I just couldn't put it down.

2. BBC Records and Tapes, 1979

Alerted to this release by the cartoon-strip advert in *Doctor Who Weekly* (overleaf), I saved up some of my paper-round money and went to Readings Records in Clapham Junction.

Wonderful; the nearest thing we had to an out-of-date repeat. A couple of years later, I even found the tape cassette version (I'm not counting the tape as an extra release as all BBC records were released as a dual format).

I never understood why BBC Records didn't do any more *Doctor Who* releases of adapted stories at that time. Having said that, I can't think of any other vinyl drama release at all making this quite unique; lots of comedy or theme tune compilations, but

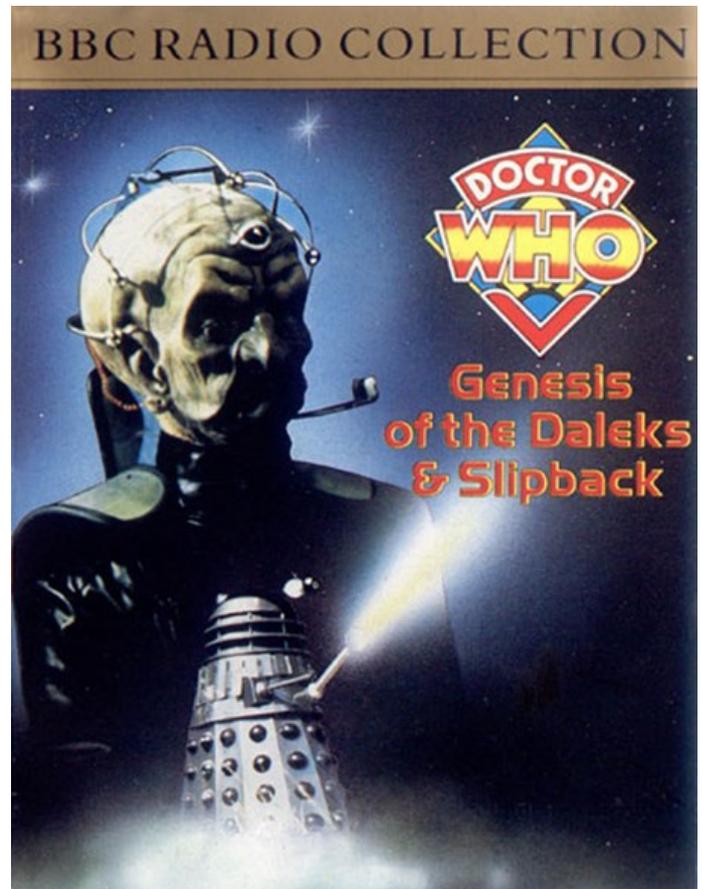
no drama (*The Archers*, maybe?).

Tom Baker and the BBC revisited this narration style in the early 1990s with the Missing Stories range of cassette tapes with the stories *The Power of the Daleks* and *The Evil of the Daleks*.

3. BBC Radio Collection: Slipback, 1988

The 1979 audio edit of *Genesis* was re-released along with the Radio 4 transmitted Sixth Doctor story, *Slipback*. Unlike the old BBC Records and Tapes' days, BBC Radio/Audio Collections were nearly always a double tape package. This leads to suspicion that *Genesis* was added as a filler as *Slipback* wasn't long enough to fill two tapes.

Although *Slipback* was the radio programme and the most recently transmitted, at the time of this release, it

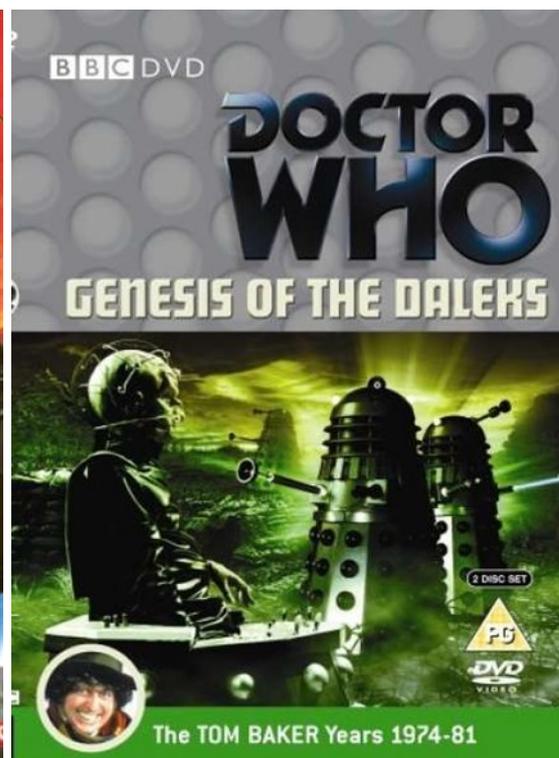
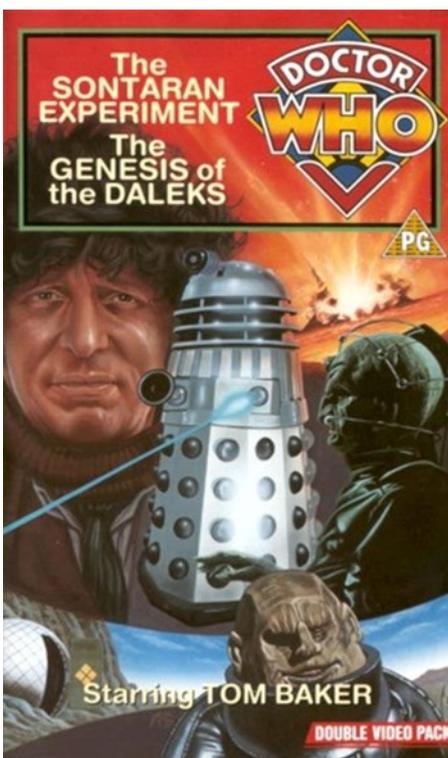


was *Genesis* that hogged the cover. Daleks always sell, but the cover (above) wasn't particularly inspired.

A black and white comic book page for 'Genesis of the Daleks'. The top left panel shows the TARDIS with the text 'ON THE ICY EDGE OF THE GALAXY..' and a large 'DOCTOR WHO' logo. The middle panel shows the Doctor in a hat and coat, looking at a Dalek. A speech bubble from the Doctor says: 'NOW THEN.... I'LL JUST CHECK THE TERRAIN... GRACIOUS! A RECORD SHOP ON GAMMA-URSA 9... GOOD SHOW!'. The Dalek replies: 'AH!.. WELL CHAPS... UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES I'LL PICK UP A COPY ON TERRA INSTEAD.... BYE!'. The bottom left panel shows the Doctor looking shocked, with a speech bubble saying 'GULP'. The bottom right panel shows the Doctor and Dalek with speech bubbles: 'SPLendid! A COPY OF 'GENESIS OF THE DALEKS' CIRCA 1979, WHAT A FIND!... ASSISTANT!!' and 'YES SIR.... DOCTOR!!'. At the bottom, there are two speech bubbles from the Dalek: 'EXTERMINATE HIM, ZORG?' and 'OBLITERATE HIM, ORG!'. The bottom right corner features the 'BBC records & tapes' logo and the text: 'GENESIS OF THE DALEKS', 'DOCTOR WHO', 'ALBUM: REH 364 MONO', 'CASSETTE: ZCR 364'. At the very bottom, it says: ''GENESIS OF THE DALEKS' A COMPLETE DR.WHO ADVENTURE! WITH THE VOICES OF TOM BAKER, ELIZABETH SLADEN, IAN MARTER & MANY OTHERS!'

4. BBC Video VHS, 1991

The Beeb waited eight years, since the first video release of *Revenge of the Cybermen*, to release *Genesis* on video. It was also double packaged with *The Sontaran Experiment*. Not too much of a problem, but the photographs on the spine of the video box did spoil the shelf display a tad.



5. BBC Radio Collection: Exploration Earth, 2001

Another BBC Radio Collection release, this time sharing with the 1976 school's radio drama, *Exploration Earth*. Just like *Slipback*, this version of *Genesis* is the same as the original BBC Records' version.

Collectors would have bought this because it was the first time that *Exploration Earth* was commercially available, but, to be fair, this is noteworthy as this was the first time that the audio edit of *Genesis of the Daleks* was released on CD.

6. BBC DVD, 2006

Genesis on DVD was released 15 years after

the VHS version, minus the Sontarans, but this time packed with extras and much restoration/correction work carried out by Steve Roberts' Restoration Team.

7. Doctor Who DVD Files No. 31, 2010

A second DVD release for *Genesis* was during the run of the *Doctor Who DVD Files* part works magazine. I would say it

was quite ambitious to release a DVD set of *Doctor Who* seeing as most fans would have been collecting the BBC DVDs anyway. I have included this in the list as it wasn't strictly a BBC title.

8. Daily Telegraph/BBC Audio, 2010

The BBC Radio Collection release from 2001 was re-packaged and released on a single CD, as a giveaway from the Daily Telegraph, during a series of *Doctor Who* giveaways which included *Slipback*, *Exploration Earth*, and *Mission to the Unknown*. I did wrestle with the notion that this didn't count as it doesn't offer anything new, but it was the first time that *Genesis* was available on a single CD and not as a support for another story.



9. AudioGo, 2011

Only a year after the Daily Telegraph release, AudioGo re-released the audio version, but this time digitally remastered. At the same time, other '70s BBC albums were re-released; *Doctor Who Sound Effects* included.

What was particularly nice about this version was that it included the original '70s artwork and the CD itself was printed to look like a vinyl record. For anyone that had (or in my case still has) the original vinyl, this was a must.

This was also available as a digital download for the first time.

10. Record Store Day, 2016

Released as part of Record Store Day 2016 – a celebration of independent record shops – this was a vinyl re-release of the 1979 package right down to the original sleeve and record label. On the face of it, this was a simple re-release of the original from 1979, but this was not a BBC issue, this being from Demon Records. Oh, and the vinyl was blue.

11. BBC Audio/Audible, 2017

Here we have an unabridged reading, by Jon Culshaw, of the 1976 novelisation by Terrance Dicks and using the same Chris

Achilleos cover artwork as the original novel. Book to audiobook in 41 years!

12. Season 12 Blu-ray Boxset, 2018

Packaged within the first Blu-ray season box set was an up-scaled version to High Definition. This also contained the omnibus version which has never been released before. All we need at some point is the *Doctor Who and the Monsters* edit from 1982 to complete the set.

13. Tom Baker Vinyl Boxset, 2023

And to bring us bang up to date, Demon records have released *Genesis* as part of a limited-edition vinyl boxset. The inclusion of the Tom Baker-narrated *State of Decay* audiobook is a nice touch as this hasn't seen any kind of release since around 1985.

The only other story that could get near is *The Power of the Daleks*. I think it comes close, due to two versions of the soundtrack (narrations by Tom Baker and Frazer Hines), a black and white DVD and colour Blu-ray of the original animation, and a second animated version, but I believe that *Genesis of the Daleks* still wins the title. However, if the original episodes of *Power* ever turn up, that could contend.

So how many copies of *Genesis of the Daleks* do we actually need...?

The Many Non-Appearances of Tom Baker

Philip Bates



Another anniversary, another time Fourth Doctor actor, Tom Baker, didn't make a surprise cameo. Oh sure, he was in *The Day of the Doctor*, but that was a whole decade ago. What concerns us most is that he didn't appear in *The Star Beast*, *Wild Blue Yonder*, or *The Giggle*. You could argue that no previous Doctors did, so Tom wouldn't be alone in his absence, but that's not the point. The point is, *he wasn't in them*.

Tom Baker has given a vast amount of his life to *Doctor Who*, and that's an admirable thing. His tenure as the Fourth Doctor

spanned seven years, while he's also worked for various audio projects, and spent many a day at conventions, signing that photo of himself with a line of Daleks, regaling tales of how awful the *Robots of Death* script was, and listening to endless anecdotes about hiding behind settees. But we're forced to question whether a decision he made shortly after he left *Doctor Who* was indicative of his relationship with the show...

The decision I'm referring to is, of course, not appearing in *The Five Doctors*, the series' 20th anniversary which invited

previous Doctors back. Only two previous incarnations turned up, however: alongside Peter Davison's then-current Fifth Doctor, Patrick Troughton reprised his role as the Second, and Jon Pertwee as the Third. William Hartnell had passed away in 1975, leaving Richard Hurndall to instead play the First Doctor. And Tom Baker refused the offer to return. *The Five Doctors* became *The Three-Point-Five Doctors*, which didn't quite have the same ring to it. Instead, Tom Baker's part was filled by none other than Tom Baker. Albeit old footage of Tom Baker. Punting on a river. With Romana in tow. This was left over from the never-screened serial, *Shada*, which was only partly filmed due to BBC strike action. We could technically say *The Five Doctors* was co-written by Terrance Dicks and Douglas Adams, but don't ever admit to mulling that notion over. That would be embarrassing and reach Peak Anorak.

Oh, and Tom wasn't even in the publicity shots. Well, he wasn't in *The Five Doctors*, so it'd be pointless showing up for the publicity shoot, wouldn't it? It's the exact same reason Glenn Hoddle, Sylvester Stallone, and Nicola Kidman didn't turn up for the publicity shoot: they weren't in *The Five Doctors*.

Coincidentally, the *Doctor Who* production team did the exact same thing as Hollywood Big-Wigs do when booking Sylvester Stallone. They used a waxwork.

The dummy was dressed in the Fourth Doctor's Season 18 look, so if anyone

thought his grin was forced, his eyes fearful, and his face the picture of pure terror, they could rationally think that he'd just been asked what he thought of *Meglos*. The waxwork was taken from a nearby Madame Tussauds, where it was being used as a double for Cilla Black. The other cast members taking part in the photocall seemed to have fun around the fake Fourth Doctor, but photographers found it difficult to make it look realistic; after all, in every shot, Tom was exactly the same. The cameramen called this "The Mannequin Challenge," which is a term now better associated with *Keeping Up With The Kardashians*. Peter Davison pitched the idea of using the dummy for a future Auton story, but producer, John Nathan-Turner turned it down, noting, "No one would believe that thing could move."

Tom couldn't even be bothered to make an appearance in the 10th anniversary special. He obviously has a thing about multi-Doctor stories. I know what you're going to say: "But the Fourth Doctor didn't even debut until *Robot*, about a year after *The Three Doctors*!" But that didn't stop Peter Capaldi turning up in *The Day of the Doctor*.

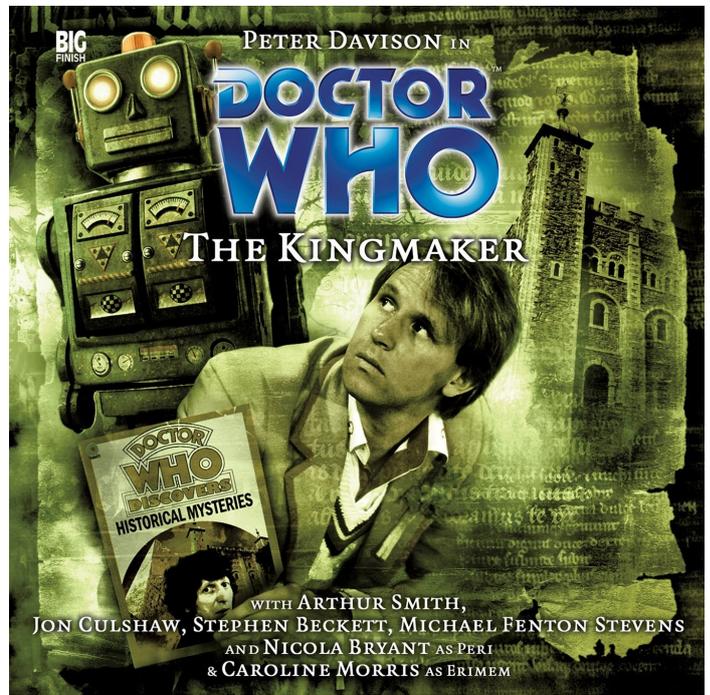
"Ah," you might say. "But Tom wasn't even cast at the time *The Three Doctors* was recorded."

I counter with, shut up.

The Five(Ish) Doctors Reboot is proof, if further were needed, that Tom Baker despises stories with multiple incarnations of the Doctor. Peter Davison learned

that *The Day of the Doctor*, the 50th anniversary episode, wouldn't feature previous incarnations of the Time Lord, apart from David Tennant, who had convinced writer, Steven Moffat to include him using the same skills he employed in *Jessica Jones* (good acting, I mean. He didn't make him eat a phone or anything. To my knowledge.). Davison's obvious reaction was writing a comedy spoof that proved just as enjoyable as the full episode. He gathered together his *Doctor Who* buddies, and created *The Five (Ish) Doctors Reboot*, actually starring six Doctors: himself, Colin Baker, Sylvester McCoy (he's in *The Hobbit*), Paul McGann (work permitting), David Tennant, and Matt Smith (briefly). Peter Cushing even gets a mention!

But where was Tom? Stuck in the sodding time vortex again. Which is one of the many regrets in his life. Davison originally wrote a scene for Baker, but the latter



didn't seem up for it, so instead, good old *Shada* was used again, with added Jon Culshaw.

Speaking of the impressionist and actor... Spoilers if you've not listened to 2006's *The Kingmaker*! Proving he's a dead ringer for a certain curly-haired Time Lord, Culshaw crops up in *The Kingmaker*, a Fifth Doctor story that also features the Fourth. Sort of.



As you might've gathered, Culshaw does his famous Baker impression, reading out notes from *Doctor Who Discovers Historical Mysteries*. In a serial about the death of young princes, an oasis of Tom was quite a surprise, but this Tom was actually not Tom; he just sounded like Tom. This was because Tom wasn't working for Big Finish back then. 81 releases in, and this was our first taste of the Fourth Doctor in the Main Range.

The Nev Fountain-penned story proved too timey-wimey for some, being more divisive than the 2023 political landscape. Or indeed, the 2006 political landscape. Or, yes, the 1485 political landscape.

There was rioting in the streets when Tom Baker dug deep, and became the Fourth Doctor again for Big Finish in 2011. But the good type of rioting. More like a flash-dance than anything. Kevin Bacon was even involved, albeit in a minor capacity, as was Ross Poldark, albeit in a minor capacity. His first Big Finish work was a two-tale boxset that told of *Lost Stories*, namely *The Foe from the Future* (Tom shares his birthday with the inauguration of Donald Trump) and *The Valley of Death*, and in 2012, he started regular *Fourth Doctor Adventures*, which continues today. Before 2011, Big Finish was a barren section of the *Who* universe, filled only with hundreds of stories for Doctors Five, Six, Seven, Eight, and, if we include *The Companion Chronicles*, also Doctors One, Two, Three, and Four.

If you haven't guessed already, this is all

written with tongue firmly in cheek. Try it, but don't blame me if you bite yourself. Tom's synonymous with *Doctor Who*, and he really has given a large chunk of his life to the show – as have all the other Doctors.

Such was his devotion to the series that he even penned a never-to-be-made film, *Doctor Who Meets Scratchman*, alongside Ian Marter (Harry Sullivan) and James Hill (*Worzel Gummidge*). It's sad that *The Five Doctors* remains a dubious part in his legacy, but he has since admitted that he made a mistake: "I turned down *The Five Doctors* because it wasn't long since I'd left – I had left *Doctor Who* because I think I'd run my course. I didn't want to play 20 percent of the part. I didn't fancy being a feed for other Doctors – in fact, it filled me with horror. Now, of course, if someone asked me to do a scene with some other Doctors, I think, if they let me tamper with the script, it would probably be quite droll. I would think about that, yes."

The 20th anniversary special hasn't stopped the Doctors meeting up elsewhere, whether that's at conventions or advertising a Golf Estate.

And of course Tom did return – as the Curator in *The Day of the Doctor*, something which he had to keep secret, even from his peers, hence him not appearing in *The Five(Ish) Doctors Reboot*.

We can laugh at his non-appearance in *The Five Doctors*, but in the end, what really matters is his long tenure as the Fourth Doctor, and not any dubious anniversary episodes.

Goodbye my dears...!

Worth Every Minute

Peter Shaw



The girl crept upstairs to the landing to avoid the dreadful singing. What was this ‘Old Lang Chine’, she wondered. Was it similar to Black Gang Chine? Visiting that amusement park on the Isle of Wight was the best day of her life. She wrote to Father Christmas and asked if he could magic her there on Christmas Day. But he ignored that request and gave her some walnuts and a satsuma instead. And a watch, which was strange. Her dad asked where she’d stolen it from. But she wouldn’t let him take it. The watch was how she knew the grownups were wrong. The grandfather clock downstairs was fast.

She looked at the seconds tick past and started to count down from 10. Nine. Eight. Seven. Six. Five. Four. Three. Two. One.

“Hello young lady,” said the man in the crazy colourful clothes who had just appeared. Then he waved some kind of magic torch at her. Which beeped. “Not yet,” the man muttered under his breath. “What year is it?”

“It’s 1962... No, 1963. Just started,” she replied. “I’m Sia. And I’m six.”

“So am I!” was the unhelpful reply. The man was looking around. He had yellow and black striped trousers, like that clown she saw on the Isle of Wight.

“Are you from Black Gang Chine?” she asked.

“Should I be?”

“I thought Father Christmas must have sent you to take me there. I like it there.”

“Oh, everyone loves Black Gang Chine. But would you really like to be whisked away?”

“Yes.”

“I am not sure your parents would...” The man looked at his magic torch which changed

colour to pink and started buzzing. "I don't have much time. Can you meet me back here in..." He looked back at the torch, his eyes widened. "In ten year's time!"

"I'll... try," she said. The man flickered and was gone. Sia looked at her watch; it was just one minute past twelve. Sixty of the maddest seconds of her life. She heard footsteps on the stairs and her dad calling her down. She should probably be in bed. How many sleeps is ten years?

Three thousand nine hundred, and seventy one. That's according to Sia's ten-year diary. Which was, in fact, two five-year diaries glued together. The clown man better turn up.

He did.

"Sia? Is that you?" He looked exactly the same.

"Yes," she replied, thinking she may as well go with it. However mad. "I'm just a little older."

"I was going to say younger!" The man banged his magic torch which was now glowing orange. "This must be happening out-of-sync. But it's still here!"

"What's here?" she replied.

"The thing I'm detecting. It's always here. How are you anyway?"

"I'm okay. Quite a lot has happened." The man looked up from his torch.

"I like your dress!" Sia was wearing a patchwork frock made from offcuts and scraps: tartan, stripes, and colourful fabrics all stitched immaculately together.

"My father calls it 'totally tasteless'. I told him to get with it. It is 1973!" She didn't know why she was telling him this. But she'd waited so long and had forgotten all she'd planned to say over the last decade. "That's what I'm going to call my fashion house: Totally Tasteless. When I get my degree. Just need to pass my A-Levels."

"No! I've lost the readings! Again!" He threw up his arms and grabbed his temples in frustration. "See you back here in... Ten years time. Sorry."

"Again! Can't you just—"

"I'll explain later. Don't worry about your A-Levels! They don't make you who you are!"

Sia checked her watch as she heard the sound of her boyfriend's footsteps coming up the stairs. Another sixty seconds gone.

For Sia, 1983 was worse than that book, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Much worse. But here she was again. Just in case. In case she weren't mad. She wanted to wear her patchwork dress. But she couldn't face it. Probably wouldn't fit now anyway. He appeared.

"Ah, I assume you *are* Sia? A little older. A lot older!"

"Yes. Just don't ask me about my A-Levels."

"Why would I do that?" The clown man checked the reading on that infernal torch. Which, on closer inspection, was more like a remote control with a light at the end. Glowing green.

"That's what we talked about last time..."

"Did we?"

"You'll be disappointed. Like dad."

"No, I won't." He was only half listening, checking some readings on a what looked like a digital watch display.

"I didn't take them in the end. Life got in the way. I'm twenty six now."

"Ah, that explains everything." He beamed a smile at Sia. "No wonder these readings don't make sense. Twenty years, not ten."

Sia felt the knot in her stomach. The ache that never goes away. Her son will be ten years old this year. All those little life events she will never experience.

"There's something missing!" The man started tapping at the device.

"My son," she replied instinctively.

"Was he here? Did he disappear?" The man flickered. Time was running out.

"No. I gave him away. Dad insisted." She started sobbing.

"I can't leave you like this..." He looked at the device, alarmed. "I'll see you again... in ten years, okay? You need to believe in yourself. There's something special about you. Trust me."

Sia nodded, but, when she opened her eyes, he was gone. In sixty seconds. Again.

She went downstairs, alone this time.

Sia was surprised the patchwork dress still fitted her. Just. Those painful evenings at Weight Watchers had paid off. Sia couldn't wait to tell him the news. But she wasn't entirely sure

why.

This time, the colourful man was hovering about two feet above the floor. Until he gave the device a good whack and dropped suddenly, ending up tumbling onto his back.

“I did it!” Sia smiled at the man.

“Did what?”

“Got my life back on track. Thanks to you.”

The man rose back onto his feet. “*Me?* Are you sure?”

“I think you’re the first person who ever believed in me. You. A magical man who only appears once every ten years for 60 seconds.”

“Interesting,” he said. “Maybe it *is* about you. These readings still don’t make sense.” The device was glowing orange. “What year is this?”

“1993.”

“You said you got your life ‘back on track’. Did you mean a time track?”

“No. What? I went to university as a mature student. Trained in fashion design and I’m about to open my first shop: Totally Tasteless.”

He looked at her quizzically. “Of course you did. Anything else?”

“Well, I am getting married.”

“Not to a Krontep warrior king?”

“No,” she replied, thinking that might be obvious.

“Good. That’s how I lost my last friend. But I’ve got another one coming who seems very nice. I hope I’ll meet her soon. But you never know. Days like crazy pavings.” The man realised he was not paying attention to the business in hand, literally. And sixty seconds was nearly up. Again. “No, it’s not you. It’s not a person. It’s an objec...”

The man flickered away. Without even saying he would be back. But he will. And so would she. Her fiancée may want her to move in with him. But she will never leave this house. It’s hers now and she needs to always come back here. Next time they meet, maybe she’ll have a family of her own?

The Doctor arrived. But there was no one there. He called out Sia’s name but there was no reply. The lights were off. No one seemed to be home, but the house was still occupied.

The Doctor spotted Sia's patchwork dress hung on the bannister. There was a note pinned to it.

The Doctor checked the readings on his temporal transportal. They were blank. Using the white beam as a torch, he read the note:

Dear person who appears every ten years for 60 seconds,

Sorry I can't be with you this time. I haven't gone anywhere. I just couldn't face it. Last time I told you I was about to get married. And I did. We were happy at first. But he insisted we moved to South Africa so he could be with his parents and start a family. I never wanted to leave this place, for obvious reasons. I'm still here. But he's gone. Sorry, I couldn't face you this time. I can't explain any more; you only have 60 seconds.

Sia, 1 January (nearly), 2003

The Doctor dropped the device in shock. But before he could pick it up, he disappeared again. Sia opened the door opposite where she was peering through the crack. She walked onto the landing and picked up the device. It flickered to life again. She noticed a reading on the screen: 3,971.

The device had been counting down daily until it reached one on 31 December 2012. Sia didn't really want to see the man again. Too many memories. But it was his property and it may help him escape his strange 60-second existence.

At the stroke of midnight, as always, he flickered into being. It was 2013 and the countdown stopped. She handed him the device. Sia pointed at her watch, tapped it, and said, "On time. As always. Sorry about last time."

The man looked at her watch. It was glowing and emitting wisps of shimmering smoke.

"Where did you get that?" His eyes were wide and he pointed the device directly at her watch. It flashed like a rainbow.

"I got it from... Father Christmas!"

"No, you didn't. It's a Chameleon Arch. Someone must have hidden it here. Unusual design, a wristwatch. Have you ever opened it?"

"No. The battery seems to go on forever. I've never needed to."

"Good. Now give it here!" She passed the man her watch. He pressed a few buttons on his device and pointed a red beam at it. The watch disappeared. And, in a flash, so did he.

Sia didn't really expect the man to appear again. But she came anyway. It was like a tradition. She was 66 now, retired, and – frankly – not really that busy. Not busy enough not to come, if that makes sense. And it was only the top of the stairs. She can head straight to bed when he doesn't show.

“Hello Sia!”

“Hello.” It was good to see him.

“I didn't know whether you'd come.” He smiled.

“I got a new watch. A smart one. There was an alert already set in it when I bought it. Telling me to come here without fail at midnight. It's 2023 now.”

“Yes, I must remember to do that,” he said. Making no sense, as usual. “I like your dress.”

“I like to keep my hand in. Even if I am retired and a little... broader. I used most of the old patches.”

“Very fetching! Totally tasteless, of course, but I love it!”

“You haven't got that electronic thing with you.”

“No, I came by another means. My usual transport. Would you like to see it?”

“Of course. Do you have my watch? I know it's not worth anything. But it has sentimental value. Got it when I was six.”

“I still am.” He laughed. “But I am afraid I had to return it to... where I come from. If the person trapped in that device had escaped. Well, there wouldn't be a landing for us to meet on. Or this house. This street. *This planet!*” The man put his arms on her shoulders and looked directly in her eyes. “You realise that, by taking care of that watch, you saved the lives of everyone on Earth.”

Sia laughed. Of course she didn't realise.

“Don't upset me. I'm no one special. Haven't made much of my life. Always lived here.”

“You are exceptional! You must have an instinct buried within you. If you hadn't stayed here, the being trapped in that watch would have escaped and wreaked unknown havoc across the universe!”

There was something insistent about the man that made her believe him.

“I don't even know who you are!”

“I am known as the Doctor. And I will explain everything on the way...” He beckoned her to go into the spare bedroom.

“The way where?”

“You are free now. Time for an adventure or two! Behind that door is a space and time machine. Now, you tell me where you want to go!”

His eyes lit up and his smile was so wide that she couldn't say no. If she can be crazy for all those years. She can be crazy just one more time.

Sia thought for a moment then said, “Can we just go somewhere fun?”

“Fun? That sounds familiar. Of course! All right, I'll take you to Black... Gang Chine!”

“You remembered! But I don't need a space machine to get there. We could go by ferry!”

“Ah, but we're going to the opening in 1843! Then we're going to find your son.” The Doctor started to head off into the spare room.

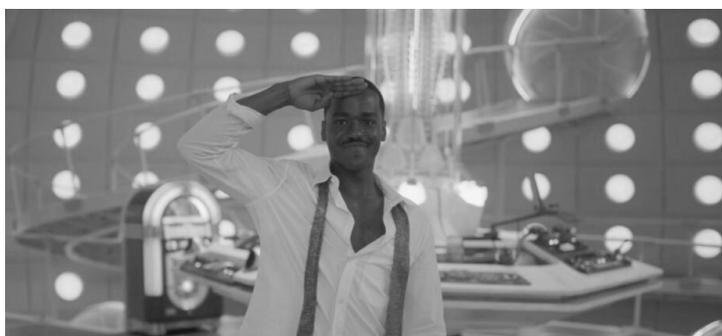
Sia clocked her watch. “Hey, but it's been longer than 60 seconds!”

The Doctor poked his head around the door. “As my dear friend Louis once remarked, we have all the time in the world. Come along!”

And with that, Sia headed towards the first of their many adventures... She sometimes used to think she wasted her life waiting for the Doctor. But it turns out it was worth every minute.



**Merry Christmas to all,
And to all, a good-night... !**





Chris

Proper Dave

Matthew

Pete

Jodie

Other Dave

Ncuti

Please look after this
MEEP THANK YOU