

Doctor
WHO

DIMENSIONS IN TIME

BASED ON A DOCTOR WHO
ADVENTURE FIRST BROADCAST IN 1993



JIM SANGSTER

DOCTOR WHO

DIMENSIONS IN TIME

**Based on the BBC television serial by
John Nathan Turner and David Rodan**

JIM SANGSTER

The producer of Dimensions in Time was John Nathan Turner

The director was Stuart McDonald

**The Doctors were played by Tom Baker, Sylvester McCoy, Colin
Baker, Jon Pertwee and Peter Davison**

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1

Escape to Danger

Through the shadows of the city stretched the shadow of a man. Tall and gaunt, he had the look of a hunted fox evading a pack of blood-thirsty hounds. Hiding in a darkened alleyway, he ran his fingers through his tangle of curly brown hair - and sighed. Where his familiar locks should have been, his hand touched a close crop. He looked into a puddle on the floor and gasped as a stranger looked back at him with wide, staring eyes.

Though the man was timeless, most days he had the outward appearance of someone in his mid-forties, but not today. The loose-fitting, vaguely Bohemian clothes were all in place, including his infamously long scarf that seemed to engulf him. But the man in the reflection looked *ancient*. He stroked his face and the skin of his cheeks felt rough and hard. He looked at his hands. The fingers were gnarled and twisted, like oak twigs. The skin on the back of his hands was blotched with brown spots. He was old. Even for a timeless Time Lord - he looked every day of his seven hundred and fifty years. Time spillage - something nearby was affecting him, pulling him through time.

Something... or someone...

He closed his eyes and tried to focus.

Focus.

At last, he knew where he was and what he needed to do. He pulled a short and slim metallic rod from his pocket and turned it slowly at its middle. His trusty sonic screwdriver, a tool of many varied and amazing abilities - and his link to his other selves.

The man was the traveller in time and space known as the Doctor. Thanks to an amazing machine called the TARDIS, he was able to visit all of the universe, everywhere and anywhen. On the outside, it bore a resemblance to a Twentieth-Century police public call box, a tall cabinet with blue panels and a light on top. Inside, it was an impossibly large, dimensionally improbable space and time machine. But he was a long way away from the TARDIS. He would have to find another way to escape. He fumbled with the latch on a nearby gate and silently slipped into the yard at the rear of a house.

Once a member of the mysterious race known as the Time Lords, the man possessed a gift - in times of crisis, he could cheat death and completely replace every cell in his body, turning him literally into a new man. Through his life, he'd had many forms. Despite his rather chaotic and dangerous lifestyle, he dearly hoped he'd have many more and that all of them would be blessed with the one, constant companion - the sonic screwdriver! He twisted the device, finely tuning it until he found the precise setting that he needed. He cleared his throat - and found himself inside a vortex of colourful lights, a back door into the astral plane. Holding his sonic screwdriver

tightly in front of him, he pushed his mind outwards, like fingers splayed on glass, reaching out to his other selves.

‘Mayday, mayday!’ he began. ‘This is an urgent message for all the Doctors. It’s vitally important that you listen to *me* for once. Our whole existence is being threatened by that renegade known only as the *Rani*!’ He paused, trying to remember what had happened.

‘She wants to put us out of action. Lock us away in a dreary backwater of London’s East End. Trapped in a time-loop in perpetuity and her evil is all around us. I can hear the heartbeats of a *killer*. She’s out there somewhere. We must be on our guard and we must stop her before she destroys all of our other selves.’ A sudden jolt of pain made the Doctor grimace. He could feel something pulling him back to reality.

‘Good luck, my dears,’ he sighed, as the lights of the astral plane faded and he slumped into unconsciousness.

Mark Fowler stood at the threshold of his house, staring at the old man asleep in his yard. He might not have spotted him, but for his snoring. At first, Mark thought the old man might have been a bag of washing from his Mum’s laundrette, but he was much too big. Mark went inside the house and returned from the kitchen with a long-handled brush. Stretching out, he prodded the old man with the end of the handle.

Nothing.

Mark edged closer. The old man was still breathing, so he wasn’t dead. And he didn’t smell of beer, so he probably wasn’t drunk either. Standing out of the light from the kitchen

door, Mark could see that the old man was well dressed, a long brown coat, nice boots like a pirate and a big, long woolly scarf. He didn't look like a tramp.

'Good luck, my dears,' muttered the man, drowsily. Somehow, Mark felt safe. His Mummy and Daddy always warned him not to talk to strangers, but he was very nearly six years old and he knew that he was in no danger.

'Mark, are you outside?'

His Mummy was calling him. He knew that if she saw the man, she'd try to throw him out. Carefully, Mark pulled one of the bins across the yard to obscure the stranger from view. Maybe when the man woke up in the morning, he'd be able to let himself out. Until then, Mark decided to let him rest. He'd clearly come a long way and was very tired. Mark went back into the kitchen, brushed his feet on the mat and closed the door.

Just as he was about to switch the kitchen light off, he noticed that nobody had changed the date on the calendar that hung on the wall. Mark's Mummy was probably too busy looking after his baby sister, Michelle. Mark stepped up onto a chair, stretched up to the calendar and tore away the date. He crumpled the piece of paper and was about to throw it into the bin, but then he changed his mind. He decided to keep the page, so that he would never forget the night he found a strange old man in his yard. Carefully, he smoothed out the paper and in a whisper he read to himself: 'The twenty second of November, Nineteen Seventy Three.'

Folding the sheet in half, he popped it into the pocket of his shorts and ran off to find his Mummy.

In the yard outside, the old man slowly faded from view as if he had never existed. If the dreaded Rani got her way, he never would!

2

Pickled in Time

The Doctor was not the only Time Lord to possess a TARDIS. Indeed, it had been a standard issue for many centuries when the Time Lords had been the self-appointed guardians of all the tributaries and backwaters of the time vortex. After a catastrophic incident that had seen an entire race almost completely wiped out, the Time Lords had retreated to their citadel on Gallifrey and introduced a policy of isolationism and strict non-intervention. Through the ensuing millennia, very few Time Lords had ever dared to break these rules. The Doctor was one.

Initially, he had simply wanted to explore the universe. He applied for leave from the High Council to continue his studies away from the dusty cloisters of the Capitol. His request was denied. He applied again, stressing the great value in observing other civilisations as a disinterested observer. Once more, his request was refused. Then the Doctor discovered something that shocked him to his core.

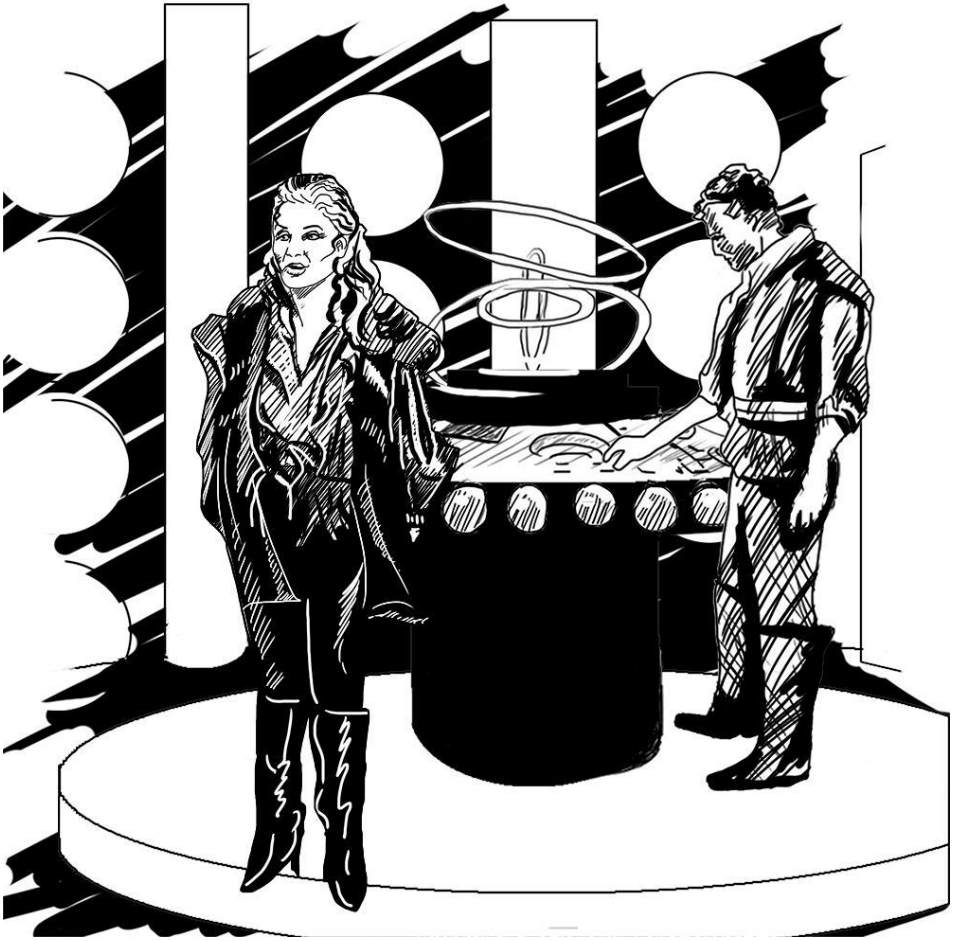
One of his fellow graduates from the Academy had already caused some consternation when one of her experiments, a rather feral feline, escaped from her laboratory and somehow managed to devour the leg of the Time Lord president. Rather than face the consequences, she simply absconded, leaving Gallifrey without permission!

So incensed was the Doctor by the Rani's cold disregard for fair play, he decided to follow her lead. But he had waited so long for official sanction from his masters that he was now an old man near the end of his first incarnation. Accompanied by his young granddaughter, Susan, he stole a TARDIS from the repair bay and escaped the confines of the Capitol. Though the Time Lords eventually caught up with him and put him on trial, they let him loose on a very long lead; he was a useful idiot to have around the universe and could undertake little tasks for them under the guise of total deniability should anything go wrong.

The Rani however managed to continue her amoral activities entirely free from Time Lord interference.

Unlike the Doctor's TARDIS, which was stuck in its police-box form, the Rani's time/space vessel had a fully working chameleon device, which enabled it to disguise its exterior to remain undetected from prying eyes. At this very moment, hovering on the cusp of the time-space vortex, the Rani's TARDIS had taken the form of a commercial mining freighter. On the outside, it was a squat cluster of tubes and rivets of the kind seen on industrial vehicles across the galaxy. Inside, it reflected the personality of the Rani: Elegant and stylish, but cold and sparse.

Flat, grey circles were embossed around the cool, grey walls of the main chamber. Evidence of experiments in various stages of progress lay in glass tubes mounted on sturdy grey stands. Dominating the middle of the control chamber was a



She was a vision in purple and black, like a theatrical buccaneer.

smooth, circular console like a grey, stone mushroom. Subtle lights flickered in unison and in the centre of the console, metallic rings rotated, flashing under the sharp pin-lights in the ceiling, punctuating the dull, sterile atmosphere.

The Rani stood in command of her ship. She was a vision in purple and black, like a theatrical buccaneer. Tight trews hugged svelte hips before tapering into knee-length boots. There was still something of the Time Lord about her silhouette - the wide epaulettes came to a severe point and her shimmering violet blouse was belted into a slender waist that flared into a peplum, creating a proud 'V' shape. Her long, brunette tresses framed her exquisitely sculptured face. In many civilisations across the universe, the Rani would be considered beautiful, were it not for her expression of utter disdain, effected by one arched eyebrow and tightly pursed lips. Even the Doctor acknowledged her brilliance, but he would always concede regretfully that she was devoid of compassion and her zealous pursuit of scientific knowledge came at the cost of any being who might stand in her way.

She flicked a switch on the console and instantaneously two objects began spinning around the chamber. They were heads. One was that of an old man, with flowing white hair and a proud, imperious face; the other was a little younger - yet somehow older - with a gentle, rather comical face and a shock of untidy black hair. Only someone as callous as the Rani could have devised such unpleasant avatars, as the disembodied heads represented the forms of the first and second Doctors, who lay frozen in suspended animation, locked in capsules

hidden away in the depths of the Rani's TARDIS. The Rani permitted herself a smile.

‘Pickled in time like gherkins in a jar.’

A hidden door slid open to reveal a corridor, home to those other capsules that contained a menagerie of alien forms, every one of whom had at one time or another crossed swords with the Doctor - and lost. A Cyberman, a Wirrn, the last surviving Vervoid in the universe - even a representative of the Time Lords, with an expression of sheer contempt frozen onto his face. Now, they were all captives of the Rani - including the first two Doctors!

From behind a row of capsules stepped a young man. Of medium build, with short fair hair cropped tightly at the sides, the Rani's assistant, Cyrian, checked the readings on each capsule meticulously. Confident that every detail was perfect, he entered the control chamber.

‘Mistress Rani, the Time Tunnel is ready to receive its first guests.’

‘Then proceed.’ The Rani flicked another switch and the avatars of the Doctor's heads span off down the corridor before merging with the sleeping bodies of the real Doctors.

‘Fated to wander a dismal corner of the universe for twenty years; helpless, paralysed.’ She smirked. ‘It'll drive them insane.’

Cyrian cleared his throat. ‘The menagerie is almost complete. Only one more specimen is needed, Mistress. An Earthling.’

‘Time is literally of the essence. The Doctor’s remaining incarnations are teetering on the edge of a precipice.’

Though his Mistress’s dedication to her cause bordered on obsession, Cyrian could not fail to be impressed by her ambition. ‘You asked me to remind you not to forget what we came here for,’ he said with a modicum of pride.

‘Earthlings pose no threat to my technology. It’s the Doctor I want out of the way.’

The image on the scanner screen shivered slightly as it displayed a familiar sight - a police box spinning cheerfully through the time vortex. The Rani strode across the chamber and picked up a device that looked like some kind of futuristic harpoon. Raising the device to her shoulder, she pointed it at the police box on the screen, her finger poised on the trigger.

‘Interception in five seconds, Rani,’ said Cyrian. ‘Three... two... One!’

‘Activate!’ cried the Rani as light from the harpoon filled the room before soaring through the screen, engulfing the police box and drawing it down... down... down through the vortex to...

3

A Dangerous Arrival

The *Cutty Sark* was once one of the fastest clipper ships in the British fleet. Built in 1869, the same year that the Suez Canal was opened, she (for ships are always ‘she’) had broken records for the fastest journey from Australia to Britain, had briefly spent time in the employ of a Portuguese company under the name *Ferreira*, before she spent her final active years as a training ship. In 1954, she was moved to a dry dock in Greenwich, London, where she resides to this day. The ship’s name came from a Scottish phrase, meaning a short night-dress, which was used as a nickname for a witch in Robert Burns’ poem *Tam O’Shanter*. Its role in the Rani’s trap for the Doctor was, however, entirely coincidental, acting merely as an anchorpoint to draw the TARDIS off course.

On the quay beside the *Cutty Sark*, about eight feet from the ground, a light appeared and flashed. The air seemed to shimmer, accompanied by a wheezing, groaning sound, and the TARDIS - the Doctor’s TARDIS - faded slowly into existence. The double doors of the police box opened inwards, releasing two figures, coughing and spluttering through a cloud of murky smoke. One was a smallish dark-haired man. He wore shabby brown checked trousers, with a Paisley scarf hanging loosely over a brown sports jacket that failed to cover up a garish fair-isle pullover. In one hand, he clutched a red-handled umbrella, in the other, he fanned away

the smoke with a battered straw hat. He popped the hat back on his head and peered around him with keen grey eyes. ‘Oh, to be in China now that November’s here,’ he said hopefully.

The other figure was a brown-haired, round-faced girl in a badge-covered bomber jacket. She too looked around, though with considerably less enthusiasm. ‘Great Wall of China? Looks more like the *Cutty Sark* to me!’ She closed the TARDIS doors behind her. ‘When was the last time you had that junk heap in for an MOT, professor?’

‘Don’t be cynical, Ace. The instruments are just a little erratic, that’s all.’

The Doctor was used to the TARDIS behaving erratically, so had no reason to suspect any outside influences. He spied a newspaper in a nearby bin, picked it up and flicked away some leftover chips. The front page of the paper declared ‘JUST MARRIED!’ with a black-and-white photo of a woman in a voluminous, high-necked wedding dress and a man in formal military uniform. The Doctor checked the date: ‘15 November... 1973?’ It was just possible that he’d set the coordinates incorrectly, but... might some unknown power have drawn them off course? Only one way to know for sure - back to the TARDIS!

Impulsive as ever, Ace was already clambering over the barrier to explore the clipper ship. ‘Anybody home?’ she shouted.

At that precise moment, the Doctor heard a sound - a voice!

‘*Mayday, mayday...*’ it began.

‘Ace, come down from there - we have to lea-’

A white flash engulfed the duo and they disappeared. A few seconds later, an opportunistic seagull swooped down and began to chomp on the chips from the discarded newspaper.

Just short of three miles north of the site of the *Cutty Sark* was a small suburban square. It was bordered on three sides by houses, while the fourth side boasted an old Victorian-style pub and an access road that ran through a market.

A flash of light and the Doctor and his companion popped into position. Ace was momentarily distracted by a rack of clothes on one of the stalls and was about to ask the Doctor for some time-appropriate money - but the Doctor was gone! In his place was a tall, thick-set man with a mop of light-brown curls. Gone too were the Doctor’s tasteful mishmash of muted browns and Paisley patterns. The newcomer’s yellow-and-black striped trousers, vivid enough in themselves, were positively sober compared to a patchwork multi-coloured coat that would have made Joseph’s technicolor garb look drab by comparison. Slashes and patches of reds, yellows, greens, purples and pinks, all in varying shades and hues, fought savagely for predominance. This horrific ensemble was finished off with a flowing cravat, a bright red affair with large white spots.

‘Here, you’re not the Doctor!, said Ace. The man smiled patiently.

‘Yes I am, Ace.’ As improbable as it seemed, Ace believed him. She’d learned long ago that the Doctor was just

the kind of person to do something weird like this. ‘We seem to have slipped a groove in time,’ this new Doctor purred. ‘But where are we? And, more pertinently - when?’

Ace looked around. The architecture was definitely English, not some alien world or anything like that. The pub on the corner looked normal enough - ‘The Queen Vic’ according to the faded sign hanging above the door. In the centre of the square was a small stretch of green and on the surrounding railings was a sign: ‘ALBERT SQUARE, E20’. They’d jumped across the Thames to East London! That answered one of the Doctor’s questions. But what about the when?

The market stall holder hadn’t seen them arrive. Indeed nobody seemed to have noticed the time travellers materialise, or if they had they were far too busy with their own affairs to say anything. But as a young woman in a bomber jacket searched frantically through his clothes racks, he could spot a potential customer. He stepped forward and began his well-practiced patter.

‘All right, darling. Special discount for you seeing as it’s nearly Christmas.’

‘Wicked!’ said Ace, as she continued to search for clues. Before she had become an adventurer in time and space, she’d lived in Perivale on the opposite side of London. She’d loved sneaking onto the Central Line with her friends and looking for bargains in the market in Shepherd’s Bush. Sometimes she heard boys shouting racial abuse at the stall holders - sometimes she



Slashes and patches of reds, yellows, greens, purples and pinks...

shouted back and had to be restrained by her friends - but here, she heard passers-by say hello to the man and his wife. ‘Morning, Sanjay! Hiya Gita!’ They were clearly well liked, even if Gita, his wife, was looking at Ace with a frown. She elbowed her husband with consternation.

‘What do you mean, "discount"? This year’s been bad enough as it is without you giving things away.’

‘Don’t worry about it, all right?’ said Sanjay through a forced grin. ‘She’s in a rush - more likely to buy something!’ Gita took the hint and instantly became welcoming and helpful. She could see the young woman was clearly looking for something for her friend, who for some reason was dressed like a clown.

‘Hey, do you like that, love?’ asked Gita.

‘It clashes!’ said the clown. But Gita could smell a sale here.

‘Try it on, it’ll suit you. I tell you, they’re going to be all the rage in 1994.’

The Doctor frowned. ‘Did you say nineteen ninety-f-’

There was a flash of light. Gita looked up, expecting to see a sky streaked with lightning, but there was just the usual, slate-grey November sky. When she looked down, the strange couple had disappeared - and that nice jacket was on the floor. So much for a quick sale! Well, at least they hadn’t stolen the jacket. Gita picked up the garment, brushed it down and then popped it over a coat hanger and returned it to the rack.

Another change of location, but this time it was just a few feet as the Doctor opened his eyes to find himself standing in the small garden in the centre of the square. He looked down at the ground to find well-polished shoes at the end of very long legs. The carnival coat had become a sophisticated midnight-blue velvet smoking jacket and an opera cape. The cuffs of his shirt were frilled. Ah! He must have changed again! He was now in his third persona, the one who the Time Lords had exiled to Earth. It was turning out to be a very strange day indeed if he could jump from his shortest incarnation to his tallest in just a matter of minutes. He was grateful that his clothing seemed to match whichever body he ended up in.

The tall Time Lord looked around for Ace. Instead, a diminutive woman with a mane of red hair and an inquisitive glint in her eye looked up hopefully at him. ‘Mel?’

Mel had never met this particular form of the Doctor, having travelled with the short Scottish one just before Ace came aboard the TARDIS. This one was very tall and slim, with a young-old face and a mane of prematurely white hair. He was a bit of a dandy, Mel thought, but she knew it was the same old Doctor. When they first met, he had been the colourful clown that Ace had encountered only seconds ago. Mel had a particular talent for rushing in where fools would fear to tread, but she also had a quick mind and an amazing memory. ‘Memory like an elephant’, the Doctor often joked, as if comparing a huge, wrinkly pachyderm to this petite, porcelain doll of a girl was remotely appropriate.

Only momentarily phased, Mel quickly got to work with pertinent questions. For some reason, she had a vague awareness of what was happening, as if Ace's recent memories were her own. This could prove confusing - or very useful indeed!

'What's changed?' She looked around. 'There are more cars now. Oh - and most of the houses have small white dishes on the sides!'

'Satellite dishes, yes. It's how people receive their television pictures in... well, a few years after your time.' Mel had joined the Doctor back in 1986.

'So we started in 1973, jumped forward to 1993 and now we're...' Mel sighed impatiently. 'What's happening, Doctor?'

'Change. You, me, everything. It's as though someone is rooting through my personal time stream.'

'But why? What do they want with us?'

'What indeed?' The Doctor led Mel back towards the market. Opposite where the clothing stall had been was a barrow selling fruit and vegetables. Two women of maturing years were standing gossiping and failed to spy a young boy stealing an orange until he pushed past them and ran between the Doctor and Mel. The Doctor approached the stall.

'Excuse me, my good woman, but er... what year is this?' The older woman ignored him, turning to her companion in fury.

'The brass neck of 'im. Kids today!' The other woman smiled sympathetically.

‘Forget him, Pauline, he’s not worth it. Anyway, shouldn’t your Martin be looking after the stall?’ The older woman rolled her eyes.

‘That lad’s never ‘ere when you want him, Kathy. I wish my Arthur was still alive.’ Pauline was about to start reminiscing. She’d lived in the square all her life. Got married, had three kids. But now her husband was dead. Her eldest son, Mark died too, ten years ago next April. Her daughter Michelle had moved to America soon after her own daughter - Pauline’s granddaughter - had been born. And now Pauline was left with the fruit-and-veg stall, which had been part of the family for generations, and a teenage son who had no interest in becoming a grocer... and then she noticed the tall man with the white hair and the fancy clothes. He picked up an apple from the barrow, looked at the barcode sticker and chuckled to himself. His familiarity with all forms of computer language enabled him to deduce the price from the pattern of vertical lines on the sticker.

There was something about this man, with his frills and cape, that really annoyed Pauline. She was not a tall woman by any means, but she puffed up her bosom and stood her full height.

‘What do you think you’re doing? Stop messing the goods about. Do you want to buy something or not?’

The Doctor, never one to respect authority, couldn’t resist undermining her affrontery. ‘Well considering the quality of everything you have, madam, I would say that your prices are rather expensive.’

Mel had stepped over to the clothes stall, which was now managed by Pauline's sister-in-law, Kathy. She pulled a pair of women's trousers from the rack and tried to check the price tag.

'Doctor, look - flares are back in fashion.' Just as Sanjay had done before with Ace, Kathy sidled over in hope of a sale.

'Yeah, everything from the last century seems to be having a comeback.' This news startled Mel.

'This is going to sound odd, but... what year is this?' Her bizarre question was loud enough for Pauline to hear - and she'd already run out of patience for one day.

'Oh, don't you start. There's enough oddballs around here as it is!' But the tall stranger with the shock of white hair turned to her with a look of intensity.

'Madam - what *year* is this?'

Without further question, the two women chimed together: 'Two thousand and *thirteen!*'

And then there was a flash of white light. The women both blinked and then found they were alone together. The strange couple had disappeared!

Under Attack

Pauline and Kathy were at their stalls, but they were clearly much younger women - by at least forty years. Kathy was still a teenager, just, despite being a mum to three-year-old Ian, but she still kept up with the latest fashions. She'd met her husband Pete when she was still at school, but she had always shown a maturity beyond her years - thanks in part to a very rough childhood. Pete was a few years older, in fact, he was Pauline's twin brother, and he had been married once before, though he was now divorced. Coming from a large family, Kathy took on a number of jobs when she left school, simply to put food on the table. A Saturday job helping Pete with his fruit-and-veg stall eventually led to marriage and the arrival of baby Ian soon after. At first, Pauline's family had been cool with Pete's new girlfriend, but her level head and clear devotion to him soon changed their minds, with Pauline becoming her best friend.

Most days, Kathy would look after Ian during the day, before heading to the Queen Vic to do a shift behind the bar. Today was the day Pete went to the wholesalers to fetch more stock, leaving Kathy to run the stall - and wrangle Ian, who could be a handful.

'I can remember exactly where I was when Kennedy was assassinated,' Pauline said, 'but don't tell Arthur!' The two women laughed.

'How long ago was that, then?' asked Kathy.

‘Well, it’ll be about ten years - in fact, it was ten years exactly, yesterday!’.

‘No, really? I was only a kid then. And speaking of kids...’ Kathy lifted up a flap of faded green display grass that covered her stall. There was Ian, playing away happily with a toy cash register. He particularly liked the ‘ping’ sound the register made when he pressed the ‘Sale’ button. The boy looked up at his mummy, then past her into the square, where he could see a man in a colourful coat striding around. Ian gave a giggle before returning to his business.

The woman called Susan Campbell, who had once been known as Susan Foreman, walked through the streets of Albert Square on the way to market. Unlike Mel, she was disoriented and afraid. Like Mel, she was not in her own time. In fact, Susan had come from a time two-hundred and twenty years in the future, where she had a family of her own. Thirty years before, she had spent her childhood travelling in space and time with her elderly grandfather - except for those five months living in a similar part of London, when she’d registered as a student at Coal Hill School. When her grandfather had kidnapped two of her school teachers. When all of their lives had changed forever. And though she, like the Doctor, had originally come from the planet Gallifrey, she had few memories of the Time Lords. Though she understood the basic premise of regeneration, it still seemed impossible to her that her own grandfather would ever change - and especially not into this ridiculous man with his silly coat of many colours.

‘You’re nothing like my grandfather,’ she said coldly. The Doctor tried to empathise with his granddaughter, who he’d effectively abandoned on a future Earth, albeit in the care of a loving and brave man. Now, she was a grown woman, middle-aged in human terms. As a former wanderer in the fourth dimension, Susan more than any other companion should understand their predicament.

‘I feel as though I’m being pulled backwards through time, Susan, and my companions are being drawn back with me.’ The mention of other companions gave Susan a rush of emotion.

‘Ian? Barbara? Are they here too?’

‘Who knows, my dear. Someone is trying to separate us from the TARDIS, someone who knows of my affinity for this planet. The inrush of time zones seems designed to seal us all together, I should say, hmm?’

The Doctor stopped still. He could feel something, a presence in his mind linking to his other selves. A connection through the time vortex. But what was it? Before he could investigate further, he and Susan were consumed by another flash of white light.

Intrepid journalist Sarah Jane Smith was an attractive woman with a bob of dark hair and a distinctive fashion sense. Today, she had selected an old favourite, a roomy and comfortable pair of red-and-white dungarees that gave her a slight resemblance to Andy Pandy. Like Mel, Sarah was beginning to draw upon the recent experiences of the Doctor’s other

companions. She recognised that she was in the timezone of 2013 - a suspicion confirmed when a London Transport monorail train zoomed silently over the viaduct that crossed the market on Bridge Street.

Sarah's directness and her overall likeability had come up trumps once again as she had struck up an instant rapport with one of the locals, a blonde businesswoman called Sharon Watts. Like everyone else that the time travellers had encountered that day, Sharon had grown up in the Square, the adopted daughter of Den and Angie Watts, erstwhile proprietors of the Queen Victoria Public House. Her parents were both dead now, and the pub had changed hands many times. Sharon had even moved away for a time, but somehow, she always found herself returning home, often for the strangest of reasons, as if she was incapable of ever really escaping for good.

Sharon found it easy to talk to her new friend, Sarah Jane, and within no time at all, she had furnished the journalist with a potted history of the square - and its residents - spanning the forty years that Sharon had lived there. As fascinating as this local history was though, Sarah caught sight of the Doctor and made her excuses.

This Doctor was her first Doctor - the tall one with the white hair and the love of frilly shirts - although she'd known his replacement for longer, an equally tall fellow with curly brown hair and a comically long woollen scarf. She'd even met some of the others - a stern elderly gentleman with long white hair, a short, dark one who dressed like Charlie Chaplin, a

rather breathless younger one who appeared to be an Edwardian cricketer - but that all happened long after she and the TARDIS had parted company. Then there was the one she'd met only recently, rake thin with a shock of unruly brown hair and a pinstripe suit...

'Wotcha!' Sarah grinned, taking the madness in her stride. The Doctor reacted as if they'd only been parted for a few seconds, rather than decades, and began to summarise their predicament as if delivering a lecture.

'What we're seeing here, Sarah, is the work of a genius. An expert in time distortion. A time traveller, maybe, and an ingenious operator.'

'Well then,' Sarah observed, 'we must get back to the TARDIS!'

'It's the other side of the river. You know, we seem to be flitting around in some sort of twenty-year time loop.'

'Yes, we're bouncing from 1973 to 1993 and here, to 2013.'

'Very good, Sarah Jane. Those are the exact parameters. But time distortion of this nature requires an exact localised focus.' Sarah looked around.

'So - why are we here in this street market in London?' The Doctor smiled, knowingly.

'This isn't the focus, Sarah. It's -'

And once again, they found themselves swallowed up by the blinding white light.

In the Albert Square of 1993, a slight, fair-haired young man with a pleasant, open face stood on one corner of the square with an air of mild curiosity. He wore the stylised dress of an Edwardian cricketer - striped trousers, fawn coat with red piping, a white cricketing sweater and an open-necked shirt. The whole ensemble was completed for reasons best known to himself by a sprig of celery in the lapel. Although each of the time zones were separated by twenty years - with 1993 at the centre - each of the zones was on the same date, the grocer woman in 1973 had said that it was ten years since Kennedy's assassination, the clothes seller in 1993 had been from around that time of year too - and there was every reason to suspect that the 2013 zone was as well. All on or around the twenty-third of November.

What was so significant about that date? The writers CS Lewis and Aldous Huxley had both died - no, they both died the same day as Kennedy. As he searched his memories, trying to remember, he noticed something strange at the far end of Bridge Street. Fog was beginning to roll in, despite it being a rather unseasonally bright day for November.

And out of the fog ran two young women. Two women who were very familiar to this particular Doctor..

‘Interesting,’ said the Doctor to nobody in particular.

In the control chamber of the Rani's TARDIS, something was going wrong. Cyrian checked and rechecked the monitoring displays and the Rani's trap was still holding in place in both

the location and the time loop. But something was interfering with the Doctor and his companion...

Wait - his *companions*! Plural?

The Rani too had noticed something was awry, though it was not that the Doctor's associates appeared to have doubled in number. The Doctors had discovered that they were in a time loop - and he had already calculated its span.

'Blundering fools,' she snarled with atypical emotion. 'They're getting too near the truth. Cyrian - release the specimens!'

The two women headed straight for the Doctor.

'I knew it,' said one, an attractive American whose piquant features were framed by a neat dark bob.

'As soon as I arrived here, I knew I'd find you,' said the other, also dark-haired but with an aristocratic, haughty air.

'Peri! Nyssa! It's not safe here - the time loop feels unstable, like it's-'

But the Doctor was interrupted by a laser bolt narrowly missing the brim of his hat. The trio turned to see huge figures emerging from the fog. All three of them gasped.

First came a creature somewhere between gorilla and man, it had bowed legs, a massive chest and long powerful arms that hung almost to the ground. Its face was a terrifying distortion of a human, with a flat ape-like nose, small eyes glinting with cruelty, and a massive jaw with long yellow teeth.



Out of the fog ran two young women. Two women who were very familiar to this particular Doctor.

‘Feeding time at the zoo?’ Nyssa asked, her feeble joke barely masking her fear.

‘And the companions went in two by two,’ replied the Doctor, suddenly realising that he now had two friends instead of one. Stranger and stranger.

Behind the ape creature emerged a figure in bronze armour that looked like a stylised skeleton in a cloak - Nyssa recognised him as a Vanir, one of the guardians of the Terminus space-station. The figure raised his spear-like weapon and fired at them again.

‘This isn’t Noah’s Ark, Doctor,’ Peri sighed.

‘When I say run, run like a rabbit,’ the Doctor whispered. And then he froze as another figure separated from the fog.

At least seven feet tall, it was a terrifying blend of metal and plastic tubes. It held a laser rifle close to the grill on its chest. Its face was a blank parody of a human with small circles for eyes and a thin letterbox-like slit for a mouth. Two strange handle-like tubes grew from its head in place of ears.

‘A Cyberman!’ Nyssa and Peri exclaimed in unison. The metal giant fired its gun, sending sparks bouncing from the iron supports of the viaduct.

‘Run!’ shouted the Doctor and the three friends raced through the market. As they reached the square, they collided with a stout blonde woman wearing too much make-up and large pendulous ear-rings.

‘What’s your game!’ she cried and Peri helped her to her feet.

‘Look, you’ve got to clear the streets. You’re in terrible danger!’

‘You’ve got to get away from here!’ Nyssa added. But the woman seemed oblivious to the approaching menace.

‘Who says? If you start shoving me around, you’ll soon know about it.’ The woman yanked her arm free of Peri’s grip and trotted off through the market, passing the aliens without acknowledging their presence.

‘It’s no good,’ said the Doctor, catching his breath. ‘They’re in different time zones. To her, we’re the only strangers here.’

‘Have you any idea where we’re going?’, cried Peri as Nyssa pushed through the oblivious crowds to catch up.

‘Doctor, where’s the TARDIS?’

‘Twenty years back and three miles away. Come on!’ The Doctor’s long legs propelled him across the square and into the gardens, his two young friends in tow.

Around them, more of the Rani’s specimens began to appear. A large woodlouse-like creature tried to use its own gravity to pull them in towards it; a giant bat with four eyes dripped saliva down on them from the upper window of the pub. A vicious rat-dog hybrid snarled at them from the clothes stall; a slug giggled and leered at them from a rubbish bin; a walking cadaver staggered forward, his brain exposed and pulsating from his open skull; a pink-faced man-shaped plant fired thorns at them; more and more alien beings assembled, pushing the three former travelling companions closer and closer to the Queen Vic pub. A beautiful Kaldor robot, a turtle-

headed Sea Devil, even a Time Lord, advancing in his long, ceremonial robes, like an animated chess piece sliding into position. At the far end of the garden, the Doctor reached the gates - and was dismayed to find them chained up. He might have been able to vault over them, but his companions would still have been trapped.

The trio turned to face the advancing monsters. Within seconds, they were surrounded. The aliens jostled and pushed as they closed in. Peri gagged at the foul stench of their breath.

Behind them, the double doors of the Queen Vic opened. The Doctor turned to face his enemy. His eyes narrowed as the Rani stood triumphantly, one hand on her hip, the other gripped tightly around the handle of a nasty-looking harpoon-like device.

‘You can’t escape, Doctor,’ she crowed. ‘Say "goodbye", Doctors. You’re all going on a long journey... A very long journey!’

A Rescue of Sorts

Cyrian watched as his mistress gloated over the defeated Doctor. He admired her brilliant mind, the precision of her plan - but he was afraid too. Not just of the Mistress, who he served so ably. Something was still troubling him. How had the Doctor been able to acquire another companion? For this particular experiment, the Rani had chosen this specific point in the Doctor's life when he had only one human being to assist him - yet his granddaughter wasn't human and now there were two individuals by his side. For the project to work, it was necessary for the companions to remain confused and unable to help the Doctor until he was completely in the Rani's thrall.

Cyrian began to work his way methodically through each of the settings in hope of finding a solution.

Meanwhile, down the corridor that housed all of the specimens, the body of the first Doctor lay in suspended animation. If Cyrian had cared to check through the viewing port, he might have seen a smile frozen on the face of the old man...

The Doctor and his friends stood surrounded by the Rani's monstrous menagerie. It struck Nyssa that such an assembly of different races could be used for such good across the universe. The woman who brought them all together, whoever she was, clearly had no sense of decency. As Peri reviewed each

advancing menace, her eyes landed upon a repulsive hybrid of reptile and slug - a Mentor perched upon a hovering travel-dais. The sight of the creature turned Peri's blood cold at the distant memory of so very nearly becoming one of them by order of the Mentor leader, Kiv, and his sadistic lackey, Sil. If a Mentor could be part of this beastly brood, then surely each and every one of them also had some connection to the Doctor. Which meant that each one of them would gladly see the Time Lord dead, probably by their own hands.

But what of the woman who stood before them so proudly? Peri knew her, but to Nyssa, she was a stranger.

'Doctor, what's going on,' Nyssa asked. 'Who is she?' The Doctor cleared his throat and replied with a stage whisper clearly meant for the woman to hear.

'I take back what I said about an ingenious operator being behind these time jumps.'

'Who else could master such a difficult operation?' the Rani cheered. Then she did something the Doctor hadn't expected. She pressed a button on the control bracelet attached to her wrist. A low burbling tone rang out across the square. Each of the aliens jerked to attention and slowly began to walk towards the locked gate. The Cyberman snapped the chains effortlessly, the gate swung open and the monsters paraded past the Rani and through the Queen Vic's double doors.

'Good luck getting served at lunchtime,' Peri joked nervously.

‘At least we’re not on the menu,’ Nyssa observed and, realising she was much more terrified than she’d ever have admitted, she hugged the startled American.

The Doctor watched the Rani gloating. So she’d assembled an unlikely band of allies to help her. But still the question was why? What was it all for? Perhaps if he could connect to his other selves, he could find the answers. He placed his hands on his temples and thought really hard. Almost instantly, images of his past and future lives flashed before his eyes: The tall, white-haired one with the frilly shirt; the burly one in the loud coat; the small one with the secrets; .. but there were gaps! Where was the stern older one? And the tramp? And the Bohemian with the scarf? Something was blocking the connection... and his concentration was broken by the sound of the Rani’s chilly laughter.

‘Why bother trying to summon up your remaining selves, Doctor? I’ve weakened you. You cannot escape now!’

There was a flash. The third Doctor stood proudly in his opera cloak and velvet jacket. By his side, just one companion, Liz. Doctor Elizabeth Shaw, a brilliant scientist! The Doctor smiled.

‘I’ve got a few tricks up my sleeve yet, madam. It’s time for you to start losing.’

The Rani was no longer smiling. Was that panic on her face? She clutched her control bracelet.

‘You, Earth female - come here!’ Liz moved forward towards the swinging garden gates. The Doctor tried to hold her back.



'Leave this to me, Doctor. I'll take my chances.'

‘No Liz, you mustn’t!’ But Liz was determined.

‘Leave this to me, Doctor. I’ll take my chances.’

Inside the Rani’s TARDIS, Cyrian was flicking switches and dials almost at random. He must serve the Rani well, he must stop the Doctor and his companions from spoiling the experiment. Suddenly, a sound filled the control chamber. It was the sound of ... chuckling. Simultaneously, a dull light began to flash on the control console. Cyrian gasped.

‘The time dimensions are coming undone!’

In a whirr, the boy scanned the crowd in the scene - someone who he could remote-control to help his mistress. And then he saw him - a mountain of a man. Perfect!

As Liz marched towards the imperious villainess, she became aware of a commotion in the market as a huge giant of a man began to advance towards her, padding forward like a ferocious polar bear. His face was blank and Liz realised that the man must be under the control of the Rani. But this wasn’t one of the monsters, this was a human being and while she would need to make sure she didn’t hurt him, she could also tell instantly that the man could inflict serious damage upon herself if she wasn’t careful.

Then the man appeared to flicker, as if he was winking out of existence. In his place was a small, wiry-looking girl, just as fierce as the man, but clearly easier to handle if she attacked. And then back to the man... and back to the girl. It

was like the two eventualities were overlaid, fighting for supremacy as a switch was being flicked back and forth.

Cyrian checked and rechecked the dimensional readings. The first set of digits were consistent: 0891-1144... but the last two digits were switching back and forth from two repeated integers: 55 and 66. And still the sound of mocking laughter flooded his mind, the high-pitched chuckle of self-amusement of... the Doctor! Somehow, he was using his mind to influence events within the dimensional bubble.

As the two figures tried to cling onto the Rani's unstable dimension, Liz saw her chance. She grabbed the Rani's arm and tried to wrestle the gun away. The attacking humans shimmered - leaving just the small girl remaining. She threw herself at Liz, screaming 'Leave her alone!' But the Rani had no idea that this was part of Cyrian's attempt to rescue her. She pushed Liz aside and directed her weapon at the girl who froze to the spot in sudden fear and confusion.

The roar of an engine echoed around the square and a voice shouted, 'Liz! Doctor! This way!' A man in military uniform stood up from the driver's seat of a bright yellow Edwardian car. As Liz scrambled to her feet, the man aimed his revolver and shot the Rani's futuristic gun from her hands. It hit the ground and shattered into pieces. The wiry girl ran away to safety and the Rani, realising she had lost control of the situation, bid a hasty retreat into the Queen Vic.

The Doctor shook the newcomer by the hand. ‘Liz, you remember Captain Yates?’ Liz smiled with relief.

‘Yes, you were seconded to UNIT after that business with the Autons. How are you, Mike?’ Before the captain could reply, the Doctor interrupted.

‘Can you get me to Greenwich? I need my TARDIS!’ Leaving Mike to drive, the Doctor clambered into the passenger seat and helped Liz up too. The bright yellow car zoomed off, forcing the bewildered patrons of the market to leap back out of the road.

The Doctor was expecting Mike Yates to head towards the Blackwall Tunnel, then south under the Thames and onto the Greenwich peninsula, but instead, Mike steered Bessie east. Ordinarily, the Doctor would have been the very worst of back-seat drivers, especially in a vehicle that he had effectively rebuilt three times over when he’d added certain enhancements that gave Bessie a top speed that would leave racing cars standing. However, the route that Mike was taking was in a built-up area with no clear stretches and many signs warning of the speed limits.

Besides, the Doctor was somewhat distracted as he scrutinised the back of the former Captain’s head for tell-tale signs that he might be an Auton or some other alien duplicate. Satisfied that his old friend seemed real enough, the Doctor sat back to enjoy the ride. Eventually, they crossed the River Lea and stopped next to a field. In the grassy clearing stood a

helicopter emblazoned with the circular grid logo of the United Nations Intelligence Taskforce.

‘Your carriage awaits,’ Mike joked and the Doctor and Liz made their way to the helicopter. A door slid back and a leather-gloved hand reached out to help first Liz and then the Doctor up into the cockpit. They took their seats and fastened their safety belts. Within seconds they were in the air and they had their first chance to look at their rescuer. Back on the ground, Bessie stood parked on the grass, alone. Mike Yates had disappeared.

Tall, mature and handsome with a slight middle-aged paunch and a neat, clipped moustache, Brigadier Alistair Lethbridge-Stewart smirked as his old colleagues caught their breath. Dr Shaw had joined UNIT rather unwillingly many years before, when the Brigadier commandeered her to be his scientific adviser. There had been two recent and large-scale assaults on London by alien beings back then and Lethbridge-Stewart had been central to their defeat. He was the natural appointment to head up the new regiment, but by his own admission, he possessed only the most basic of scientific knowledge from his schooldays. Liz had only been in post for a few hours when the Doctor arrived, as if from nowhere. With his vast knowledge of alien and other-worldly affairs, he swiftly supplanted Liz as the Brigadier’s adviser, leaving Liz free to return to her studies with a significantly more open mind on all things extra-terrestrial.

‘Nice to see you both!’ the Brigadier boomed. ‘Don’t get comfortable, this is a short trip.’

The helicopter followed the flow of the Thames before turning slightly and effecting a smooth landing on the lawn of the Greenwich Naval College. Just as the Brigadier unbuckled his safety belt, there was a flash of light. The old soldier instinctively threw himself over his friends to protect them from whatever alien menace was shooting at them. From beneath him, a strange voice bellowed ‘Not now, Brigadier!’

Lethbridge-Stewart sat up to see a burly chap with light-brown curly hair and the most ridiculous coat he’d ever seen. Liz Shaw had completely vanished.

‘Ah - Brigadier. How nice to see you again.’ He needed no introduction - this could only be the Doctor. Another Doctor.

‘Liz was just there,’ the Brigadier said.

‘Don’t worry, she’s safe. For now!’ Relieved, the Brigadier helped the Doctor down from the helicopter.

‘I’m finding it difficult to keep up with all of you these days, Doctor. How many of you are there now?’

‘Some other time eh, Brigadier? Alas there’s no time for pleasantries. I must find my young friend.’ Some things never change - this one was as characteristically rude as all the others Lethbridge-Stewart had met.

‘Well, this is where you wanted dropping off, Doctor. We’ll speak soon, old chap. To all of you, I hope.’

The old friends shook hands as the Doctor dashed off in search of his companion. Or whichever one of them he could find.

6

Captured by the Rani

Despite her set-back in Albert Square, the Rani seemed as confident as ever.

‘My menagerie is almost complete. I now have everything I want - apart from one Earthling. Find the Doctor’s companion. Any of them!’

Cyrian allowed himself a moment to be thankful that she hadn’t blamed him for the error, but he still hadn’t told her of his suspicions, that the captured Doctors were somehow disrupting events. Nevertheless, the scanners showed one companion was straying very close indeed.

Romana was not used to hiding. When she first travelled with the Doctor, she had been fresh out of the academy, barely past her hundredth birthday. After many years exploring the galaxy with him to hide behind, she’d finally branched off on her own and found she was just as good as he was at getting in and out of trouble, saving the day and righting wrongs. Far-flung worlds in long-forgotten galaxies were child’s play to her - especially with the assistance of her robot dog, the super-computer called K9. But she had surprisingly little experience of Earth in the Twentieth Century. Now, she was lost and alone - K9 had vanished - and for the first time in centuries, she found herself wishing the Doctor was there.

In this incarnation, she was a little on the small side, aristocratically attractive, with long fair hair above a high forehead. When she'd materialised in this time zone, she's found herself in a dark room made of bricks and the workbenches were littered with pieces of dark metallic machinery. A vehicle was raised up above a pit in the floor, presumably to make it easier for functionaries to conduct maintenance. The air was oily and stale.

The only light smeared in from the edges of a set of wooden double doors. As she tried to make her escape, she heard voices immediately outside. She ducked down behind the vehicle and hid.

The door opened and two figures entered. At first, Romana thought they were Sontarans, with their bald heads and broad, squat bodies. She heard the new arrivals speak, in low wheezing, groaning tones. Concerned that her hearts were both beating too loudly, she stopped one of them and held her breath.

'I thought you said you'd locked it?' said the older man.

'I did,' replied the other. 'Someone must have broken in. What's going on here? The Square is madness today.' They were not Sontarans. Though the two men were not identical, there was a strong family resemblance. Brothers, perhaps. As Romana adjusted her position to get a clearer view, she knocked over a sweeping brush, which fell to the ground with a clatter. Romana stood up with a guilty smirk on her face.

‘Oi, you! What’s your game?’ the older man said. Romana realised she needed to rely on an old trick of the Doctor’s - pretend you own the place. She walked over to the men and looked them up and down dismissively.

‘I was looking for the Doctor, if it’s really any of your business.’

‘Well you won’t find him here,’ said the younger, taller man. ‘He lives at number one Albert Square, over there. I suggest you leave.’ The Time Lady was momentarily thrown by this.

‘You know the Doctor?’ The older one with the wheezing voice looked at her with a furrowed brow that made him look even more like a neanderthal, if that were even possible.

‘Yeah, Doctor Legg. He’s the only doctor round here, love.’

‘Doctor *who*?’ said, Romana, brushing between them and making her exit.

Frank Butcher was the king who lost it all. At one time, he owned a bed-and-breakfast and a car lot in Albert Square. For a time, he was even the joint landlord, with his wife, Pat, of the Queen Vic. But 1993 had not been a good year. After being stung with a huge tax bill, Frank was already struggling, but when Pat was arrested and sent to prison for accidentally killing a woman while driving, his businesses suffered and he was facing financial ruin. Many times, he’d thought about leaving Albert Square and starting again, but



'I was looking for the Doctor, if it's really any of your business.'

he couldn't do it. This wasn't some deep-rooted work ethic or even a strength of character. He literally wasn't able to leave without something pulling him back.

And this was why the Rani had selected this specific spot for her trap. Because Frank was not alone. Generations of families had been born here, lived out their lives and died within the same quarter mile. They spoke in hushed tones about jobs 'up west' or 'south of the river' while Albert Square's unique gravitational pull stopped them from ever leaving for good. His wife, Pat - née Pat Hills - had grown up nearby and married Pauline's brother, Pete. Even years later, after they had divorced and Pete had married Kathy, Pat found herself returning to the square - and drawing Frank in with her.

It was the same for all of them - every single resident of Albert Square. Their complex family trees were horrifically interwoven. It was not unknown for individuals to discover that their sister was also their mother, or parents who'd been buried and mourned long ago were still alive and longing to return. Albert Square was a chronological, genealogical impossibility. And the perfect location for the Rani's trap.

Frank crossed the Square deep in thought. He barely registered the aristocratic woman with the long blonde hair and the furtive expression until unseen hands seized her by the shoulders and dragged her through the doors of the Queen Vic.

‘Well,’ said Frank to himself, ‘I’ve seen them thrown out of the Vic, but never dragged in!’ He chuckled to himself and realised with some sadness that it was the first time in months that he’d had anything to laugh about.

As he passed the Queen Vic, the entire building seemed to shimmer slightly as a faint wheezing, groaning sound hung in the air.

Inside the Rani’s TARDIS, which was no longer disguised as the Queen Vic pub, Romana struggled in vain to free herself from the strong arms of the Rani’s assistant. Cyrian held her in an efficient armlock as he marched her across the control chamber and into a corridor full of capsules. Through the circular port-holes on each capsule, Romana saw the faces of the Rani’s menagerie, frozen in time. They approached an open capsule and Cyrian pushed her inside with a hefty shove. The capsule door closed around her and Romana had time merely to turn around before the stasis field flooded over her and fixed her into position.

‘Human sample acquired, Mistress,’ Cyrian cheered, unaware that his captive was not in the least bit human.

‘Excellent! Prepare to rematerialise at the centre of the Earth time meridian, Greenwich!’

As Cyrian adjusted the dials on his mistress’s console, lights danced across the Rani’s impassive face. He suddenly thought she had the look of the devil about her.

But back in the capsule corridor, the old Doctor was making plans of his own. He managed to make a connection

with his replacement, the short scruffy one. They knew what needed to be done. They focused upon the capsule that contained the form of their future companion, Romana. Inside the capsule, the Time Lady's second heart began to beat again. There was a blinding flash - and the capsule door sprung open!

The End of the Beginning

The gaps between the sudden transformations for the Doctor and his companions were getting smaller and smaller. This could mean only one thing - the Rani's plans, whatever they were, were nearing fruition. Racing through Greenwich, he found himself tripping over himself - literally - each time the long legs of three of his selves suddenly shrunk down into those of the short Scottish one, or running out of breath as the burly one in the colourful coat. As he reached the *Cutty Sark*, he became the white haired one with the frilly shirt. He stumbled and Victoria, the young Nineteenth-century orphan who had travelled with him when he was the short tramp, took his arm and helped him up.

'I should be taking it easy, not bounding around like some megaluthian slime skimmer.'

'Who *was* that *terrible* woman?' asked the petrified Victoria.

'The Rani. One of my own people. Her handiwork is behind all this confusion in time and now her control is beginning to break down.' They turned a corner and there it was - the TARDIS, just where he had left it back in 1973. Pulling the key from a chain around his neck, the Doctor opened the door to the police box and ushered Victoria in before stepping inside wearily and closing the door.

The TARDIS dematerialised from beside the *Cutty Sark*, then simultaneously materialised half a mile away at the Greenwich Observatory. It seemed the Doctor had finally got the hang of those short hops. The short Scottish Doctor stepped from the TARDIS, looked behind him and said ‘stay!’ to a companion hidden inside.

Just a few metres away, he saw a strange stone obelisk materialise with the customary grinding sound that accompanied all TARDISES. A woman emerged from behind the obelisk. She was tall with brown hair and piercing blue eyes. Her arms and legs, exposed by her brief costume of animal skins, were brown and smoothly muscular. Her pose was that of a captured wild animal preparing for a final fight.

‘Leela!’ the Doctor cried. Leela stared at the short man with the wise but comical face. Though he looked nothing like the Doctor she had known, who was very tall with curly hair and a long scarf, she knew that they were one and the same. Even so, she approached the man with caution.

‘Doctor?’

‘The Rani let you go?’

‘I escaped, but not before she copied me. She has a zoo of animals in there, Doctor, trapped by teshnology.’ Leela had been raised as a savage on an alien jungle planet. She had long ago left behind many of her old ways, though her experiences with the Tesh tribe on her homeworld still left her suspicious of all machinery.



‘She has a zoo of animals in there, Doctor...’

‘So long as you’re safe.’

‘But Doctor, the Rani is attempting to transfer a massive time tunnel through the Greenwich Meridian. She has a computer in there with genetic codes and brain prints of every living creature in the entire cosmos.’

‘And with it evolution is hers to control,’ said the Doctor. But something troubled him. Leela’s words were not those of a savage. ‘This is important, Leela. Whose form were you in when the Rani cloned you?’

Leela replied, ‘Romana. Doctor, I think the Rani thought that Romana was human’.

‘Ah! That means there are *two* time brains from our side embedded in the Rani’s computer. Quick - into the TARDIS! There’s an old friend waiting for you.’

As Leela stepped into the TARDIS, she was greeted by a high mechanical voice: ‘MISTRESS!’

The lights in the Rani’s TARDIS were a deep vermilion as the walls throbbed with a heavy bass note. Cyrian clung to the central console. ‘Thirty seconds to full power status, Mistress.’

But the Rani was lost in thought, drunk on the results of her genius.

Finally, victory was hers!

Swamped in cables, the Doctor frantically issued orders to his friends. As Leela unravelled the wires and laid them out around the outside of the Rani’s TARDIS, the robot dog K9 welded them into position.

‘Twenty-five seconds, Master,’ chirped K9 helpfully. Leela suddenly flashed from existence - and Ace took her place.

‘What- where are we, Professor?’

‘No time to explain, Ace. Hold this!’ He threw a detonation box to his young friend, who recognised its purpose instantly.

‘Wicked!’

‘I’m trying to overload the Rani’s computer, enhance the power of the time tunnel to pull her TARDIS in and not me.’

‘I assume it’s not as easy as it sounds?’

‘Of course not,’ the Doctor grinned.

‘Twenty seconds...’ said K9.

The Doctor was good at improvising, but even he knew that twenty seconds just wasn’t enough. They needed more time.

And then he realised - entirely by accident, more time is exactly what the Rani had given him.

‘I must free my other incarnations. Join me!’ He held his fists to his temples - and made contact.

‘We must pull free,’ said the tall one with the shock of white hair and the frilly shirt.

‘Together, we can succeed,’ said the cricketer.

‘Precisely,’ the colourful clown encouraged.

‘Good luck!’ came the voice of the Bohemian, his woollen scarf billowing in his own dark dimension.

‘Five seconds...’ said K9.

‘Ace, activate the converter!’ the Doctor said. And Ace realised his voice was inside her head.

‘Three... two...’

Ace pulled the switch on the detonator. The air filled with the sound of the Rani’s TARDIS dematerialising...

But instead of disappearing, the stone obelisk shuddered in position. Slowly, a whirling light appeared around it - the Time Vortex!

The pressures of the vortex flooded into the Rani’s TARDIS. Cyrian lost his grip on the TARDIS console. He flew into the air and found himself pinned to the ceiling, unable to move. The Rani tried desperately to reach the console, but the time winds pushed her back, lifting her up against the curved wall of the chamber. Huge electrical charges filled the air. The capsules of the menagerie shattered open and all of her captors awoke, blinking in shock (at least, those captors who had eyes that could blink; it was difficult to tell what the Cyberman’s reaction was).

The elderly Doctor fell from his capsule, his fall broken by the supine form of the already released second Doctor. The two men, who were the same man, helped each other up, shook each other by the hand - and promptly disappeared. All around the chamber, the aliens were fading away as they were returned to their own proper places in time and space.

The ape-like creature appeared in the sprawling grounds of an English stately home. The confused Ogron had just enough time to recognise that he was back where he had been taken from before he felt a thud against his chest. In the distance, a tall human with white hair and a frilly shirt was pointing a gun at him. The Ogron clutched his chest - and disappeared.

The Cyberman scanned its surroundings. It was deep in the ice catacombs of Telos. As it began to pull in data from Cyber control's central computer, a nearby doorway exploded, knocking him from the gantry and into an abyss.

The mutant with the exposed brain was back in the laboratory of his ship, strapped into a machine, surrounded by his brothers. A tall human male with a pleasant, open face stood frozen in fear next to an older man with a military aspect. Suddenly another man entered the room - yet he was also a younger version of the military man. The two forms of the same man stared at each other in bewilderment and reached out to each other. With a blinding flash, the time differential shuddered through the machinery and at last the mutant embraced the finality of death that he had longed for through the centuries.

The plant creature fell by its fellow Vervoids as they withered and died together from exposure to vionesium charges, detonated by a tall, curly haired human in a colourful coat and a petite woman with a mane of red hair. The plant's leaves

became dry and they crumbled in the breeze of the air conditioning of a space liner hundreds of years into the future.

The Time Lord, still in his ceremonial robes, looked out defiantly across the courtroom. The court prosecutor, dressed all in black, handed a scroll to the Inquisitor. He heard the words of the Inquisitor: ‘Morbius, you have been sentenced to death by disintegration...’ but the Time Lord knew that this was not the end. In the gallery, high above the witnesses, he spied one of his most loyal followers. Doctor Solon had promised him a way to cheat his impending execution. The man was holding a glass jar, an expression of cold ambition on his face...

One by one, all of the Rani’s captives returned home - and instantly wished they hadn’t... and out in the time vortex, the Rani’s TARDIS spun helplessly out of control...

Ace patted herself down. She was herself again. At least for the time being. The Doctor was buried under a mass of cables and wires. She untangled him and brushed the dust off his face.

‘Hoisted by her own peTARDIS.’ he coughed. Still the same old Doctor.

‘What did you do to her?’

‘Well, thanks to Romana, there was an additional rogue time-brain in the Rani’s computer and I used that to rocket the Rani into the trap that she set for me,’ he said, rolling each ‘r’ with a flourish.

‘So now your other selves are all free?’

‘Certainly I - I mean we - are difficult to get rid of.’ Ace looked over at the mess they had made. From beneath the frayed cables, there was a glowing red rectangular light.

‘Master!’ it said. ‘Mistress!’

‘K9! Doctor, you forgot K9! Shouldn’t he have gone back with one of the other lot?’

The Doctor shot Ace a guilty look. ‘Yes. Ah well, we can drop him off on the way.’ Ace looked up with excitement.

‘Where next, Professor?’

The Doctor just gave her a look and smiled. She knew better than to ask questions that he had no way of knowing the answers to. He filled Ace’s arms with all his broken equipment, held the TARDIS door open for her and then waited patiently as his old robot dog trundled over the threshold. Just like old times.

The colonnades of the Greenwich Observatory echoed with the sound of timeless engines grinding into action. With a pleasant wheezing and groaning sound, the Doctor’s TARDIS disappeared.

Dimensions in Time - Author Notes

Starting in July 2020, I began the quest to read every single Target Doctor Who novelisation from the classic series. Some 160-odd books later (plus additional spin-offs also published by Target), I thought it was about time I had a go at novelising the one televised story we're unlikely to ever see in Target form. It also has the distinction of being the only TV story we're unlikely to see with an official home video / DVD release, due to various contractual nightmares, so this would serve the same function as those original Target books of telling a story you might not have seen on broadcast. While there are some jokes slipped in, I set myself the challenge of treating it seriously, as if it were a 'proper' TV adventure.

The first line is a tribute to Terrance Dicks' opener for Doctor Who and the Dalek Invasion of Earth (1977). The first chapter depicts new events leading up to and out of the Doctor's warning to his other selves. The reference to the Rani hating children has been omitted (sorry!). The boy who discovers the Doctor in his yard was going to be Ian Beale, until I realised that the Ian as seen on TV was actually the wrong age. Pauline's elder son Mark was a better fit, so he was swapped in.

Chapter 2 references a few stories: The backstory to Underworld and the near-eradication of the Minyans; the

Doctor's departure from Gallifrey as shown in Name of the Doctor; and the Doctor's trial in The War Games and subsequent exile to Earth. The Rani's TARDIS control room is the one seen in Mark of the Rani, with the addition of a separate corridor where the menagerie is kept. The disembodied heads of the Doctors are avatars, not the actual heads (explaining why they look like rubber heads on telly). The descriptions of the first two Doctors are inspired by similar lines in The Five Doctors (1983), again by Terrance. A Wirrn is added to the Rani's collection. Although not given on screen, the name of the Rani's companion Cyrian appears in the scripts. For many years, fandom had another name for him - 'Shagg' - something actor Samuel West recently acknowledged he was aware of on Twitter!

Chapter 3 sees the TARDIS arrive with the 'wheezing, groaning' noise introduced by Terrance Dicks in Doctor Who and the Auton Invasion (1974). The description of the Seventh Doctor and Ace is inspired by similar lines in Terrance Dicks' original New Adventures novel, Timewyrm: Exodus. The 'JUST MARRIED' headline from the TV episodes is expanded upon - as the wedding of Princess Anne and Captain Mark Philips took place a couple of weeks before that sequence was set. The Sixth Doctor's description cribs from Terrance Dicks' The Mysterious Planet (1988), while Mel's 'inquisitive glint' comes from Pip and Jane Baker's The Ultimate Foe (1988).

Chapter 4 provides some of Kathy Hills-Beale's backstory, to introduce some of the contrivances inherent in soap opera plotting (and to foreshadow the revelation later in the story). As seen on TV, Kathy's son Ian was too old for 1973, so he's shown as a quiet three-year-old here. The description of Susan comes from *The Five Doctors*, while her back story includes details from *An Unearthly Child* and Nigel Robinson's adaptation of *Edge of Destruction*. The Fifth Doctor is said to have a 'pleasant, open face', a description first used by Terrance Dicks in *Four to Doomsday* (1983). As the Doctor searches his memories, he sees fog, a tenuous reference to the very first shot of *An Unearthly Child*. The Ogron description comes from *Doctor Who and the Day of the Daleks* (1974), while the Cyberman is from *The Wheel in Space* (1988)

Chapter 5 introduces a new idea, that the first Doctor is influencing events in the favour of his other selves (which also explains how the Doctor suddenly acquires multiple companions!). The alternative dimensions that flick from the big man to the sleight girl refer to the TV viewers' vote as to which *EastEnders* character would be involved in episode 2 - Big Ron or Mandy (and the dimension readings are, of course, the phone numbers for the voting). Bessie's description is another steal from *The Five Doctors*. The Doctor checks to see if Mike is an Auton, referring back to a similar rescue by car in *The Terror of the Autons*, while the backstory for Liz and the Brigadier is from *Spearhead* from

Space. The joke about the Mitchell brothers speaking in ‘wheezing, groaning’ voices was suggested by author Will Maclean - cheers Will!

Chapter 6 provides Frank Butcher’s backstory and the explanation for exactly why Albert Square is the perfect setting for the Rani’s trap.

Chapter 7 includes a reference to ‘teshnology’ and Leela’s introduction, The Face of Evil, which also provides her description. The chapter includes new scenes showing some of the aliens from the Rani’s menagerie returned to their proper times, along with suitably nasty resolutions. Just this once, everyone dies! And finally, the presence of K9 at the end is explained away. Almost.

I hope you’ve enjoyed this daft bit of fun. I’ve never monetised this blog or added adverts, but I’d really appreciate it if you could donate to BBC Children in Need, the charity appeal that first gave us Dimensions in Time.

<https://donate.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/>

Goodbye, my dears...

Jim Sangster

23 November, 2022