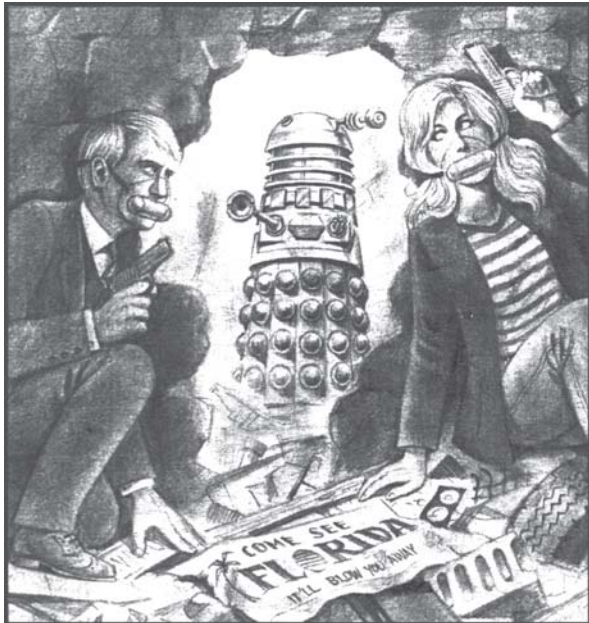


SUNDAY TV

9 February



Something old and something new... The Doctor's latest companions do battle with his oldest enemies.  
Doctor Who, BBC1 7:30pm



### 7.30pm Doctor Who

Starring Edward Peel-Smith

In *Twilight's Last Gleaming*

Part one of a three-part adventure by

JAMES BOW

The Earth is a burnt out husk of a planet after war in 1984. But Sue, Ryan and the Doctor know this is wrong. The Daleks have altered history. Can the Doctor put things to rights? And at what cost?

The Doctor .... EDWARD PEEL-SMITH  
Sue Novak ..... CATHEEN TURNER  
Ryan Pamel ..... JON RITTER  
The General ..... ROBERT VAUGHN  
General Frasier ..... JOE DON BAKER  
Woman Agent ..... GILLIAN ANDERSON  
The Daleks ... JOHN SCOTT-MARTIN,  
JOHN LEESON, JOHN LEVENE

Production Manager

RAY WILLIAM NEIL

Incidental Music DOMINIC GLEN

Special Sound YORK MILLS

Costume Designer KEN TRUE

Script Editor PATRICIA SMITH \*

Designer MARTIN F. PROCTOR \*

Producer NATHAN TURNER-JOHN

Director GRAEME HARPER

\* true credit

\* FEATURE page 10

\* CEEFAX SUBTITLES

### 8.20pm Satire and Steal

Starring Joanna Lumley and David McCallum

In *The VIA Rail Station* (parts 5-8)

The Ghosts at Peterborough's train station have been promised new train service, but the dark force they serve

has different plans for them.

(Mike Harris stars as the dark force that feeds on people's feelings of resentment towards politicians)

### 10.00pm The New K9 and Company Adventures

Starring John Leeson

In *The Mystery of Mandragora*

Part one of a four part adventure by

KEVIN PARKER

Sarah Jane came to San Martino on a routine assignment. Instead, she encountered crazed mystics, political assassins, and nuclear terrorists. Then the real excitement began...

(Winner: Best Who Fanzine of 1993)

Sarah Jane Smith ELISABETH SLADEN  
Victor Nevis ..... PAUL ANDREWS  
Voice of K-9 ..... JOHN LEESON  
Karla Frost ..... DIANA RIGG  
Princess Francesca FELICITY KENDAL  
Enrico Malatesta ..... JULIAN GLOVER  
Mike Yates ..... RICHARD FRANKLIN  
Mary Taylor ..... BEATRIX LEHMANN  
Speranza Tana .. JULIE GUADAGNOLI  
Saied Fadah ..... SIDDIG EL-FADIL  
Paolo ..... JOHN SCOTT-MARTIN  
Mandragora Voice PETER TUDDENHAM  
Colonel Crichton ..... DAVID SAVILE

Designer MARTIN F. PROCTOR \*

Producer JOHN NATHAN TURNER

Director RODNEY BENNETT

Filmed on location in Portmerion, Gwynedd, Wales

### 10.30pm Who in Review

Replays *Revelation*

By PAUL CORNELL

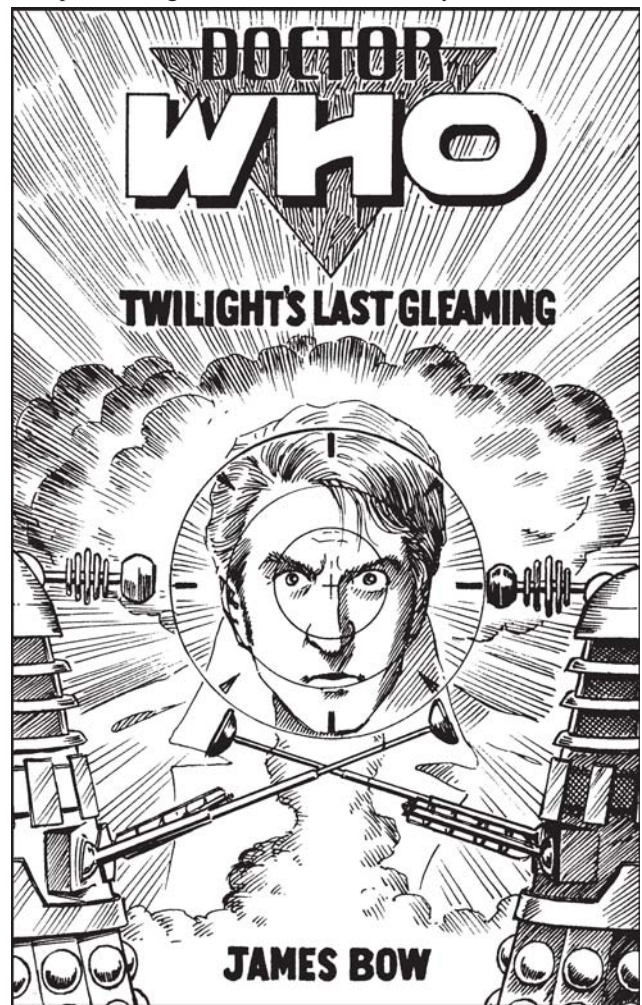
Starring Sylvester McCoy

The Doctor's fight with the Timewyrm heats up. The site of the final battle has been chosen and it is inside the Doctor's own mind.

# SERIAL 9E

This production was done primarily in studio, and was decidedly low key. There wasn't much time to publicize the filming of the eighth Doctor's regeneration story as the production crew were very busy looking for a replacement. However, the star hunt didn't prevent the crew from holding a farewell party for Edward Peel-Smith. Both the producers and Winona Rider found time to attend. *Twilight's Last Gleaming* was filmed in under five weeks, on budget. Ironically, the eighth Doctor's regeneration story was shot on December 31, 1996, near the beginning of the new year.

The story debuted on BBC1 on February 9, 1997. An average of 8.8 million viewers tuned in to watch. On February 23, 1997, at 8:15 p.m., the eighth Doctor era was officially over.





# TWILIGHT'S LAST GLEAMING

Written by James Bow

(thanks to Joe Keeping, Andrew Flint and Martin Proctor for their kind assistance on this project)

An armoured truck pulled off to the side of the road. Miles ahead stood concrete highrises and brick houses, silhouettes against the setting sun. Fields of dry and wilted grain bridged the remaining distance from the city. The shoulder was covered with rusted litter.

In the back of the truck, machinery lined the wall. Primitive monochrome computer displays illuminated the large switches and battered keyboards with a greenish glow. One man donned a set of earphones while another read instructions from a screen. They wore military uniforms and spoke to each other in Russian.

"Control confirms unidentified object approaching Leningrad," the younger man reported. He brushed his dark hair from his furrowed brow.

"Alert status?" asked the greying officer.

"Switched to yellow," the young man replied. "The object still hasn't been identified. The Rumanians report they have no idea what came out of the Carpathians. Our air force is sending flyers to intercept."

"We have the object on radar." The older officer nodded at new information scrolling across the screen. "It is approaching Leningrad." He shot his comrade a worried look. "You don't think?"

"It couldn't be that." The young man spoke calmly, but his knuckles whitened against the console. "It wasn't fired from America. The Rumanians are having their own problems with counter revolutionaries, but none of them could get a hold of a—"

"You're right," the officer cut in. "It couldn't be. This has been a bad year, but it couldn't come to this."

The young man turned back to the controls. "The object is still approaching Leningrad. The flyers are closing in."

The driver, a young woman, stepped out of the cab and prepared to go to the back of the truck. Something against the setting sun caught her eye. She looked, and the next moment she was blind.

"Oh, my God!" the officer breathed. He caught a bare glimpse of alarming information on the computer displays before the screens flared and blacked out. The young man looked out the back window. The darkening east was now as bright as midday. He stood up in horror.

"Natalia!" he shouted. "Get in here! Get in here quickly!"

The woman stood staring in horror, though she couldn't see anything more than a blinding whiteness. A hot breeze touched her cheeks, and became a furnace wind. A distant rumbling rose. The ground began to shake.

The young man kicked open the back door of the truck. "Natalia!" he screamed.

A tsunami of flame rolled across the fields, picked up the truck, and tossed it like a toy into the air. A mushroom cloud rose into the burning atmosphere. The wind roared like a tornado.

???

Alarm klaxons wailed and people scurried about. The level of tension in the darkened chamber deep beneath the Rockies was unbearable, but nobody dared break.

General Frazier stood in the enclosed command center overlooking the cavern. The place had been hewn from solid rock and its walls had been reinforced with metal and concrete. The only light came from the many computer screens which stretched in every direction. Overlooking everything, three gigantic wall mounted screens displayed the world: the continents outlined in fluorescent green against a black background. Numbers and symbols overran the continents, frightening everyone who could understand them.

To everyone in the room, however, the centerpiece was a special narrow display set between two of the giant screens. Five plates of glass had been mounted in a vertical row. These lit up in a slow - a very slow, everybody hoped - countdown. The number five was inscribed on the topmost plate and the number one was at the bottom.

The General looked at it grimly. This was the clock that counted down to the end of the world. When the number five was lit up, the world was enjoying normal relations. Three meant armed forces were on alert; two meant the forces were ready for combat. One meant World War III.

Today, number 2 was shining in the display.

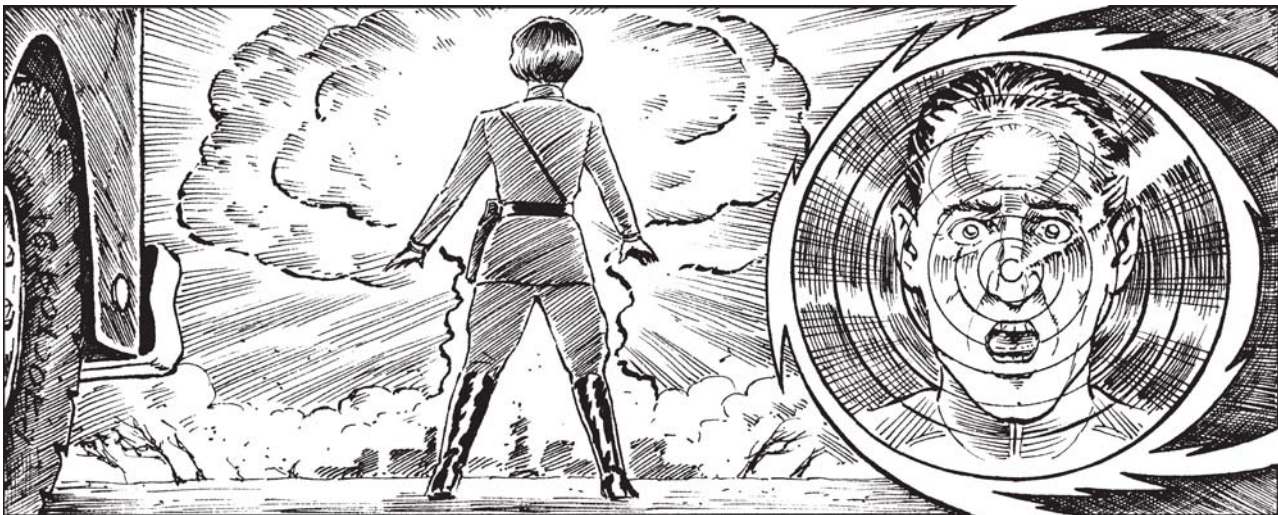
His advisor turned from a computer screen. His face was drawn. Frazier braced himself. "More bad news?"

The Lieutenant's voice was calm. He didn't seem to notice that he was clenching the armrests of his chair. "Satellite reports confirm a million troops are heading toward the East German border. Submarines are moving down from Iceland and the Bering Sea, assuming attack positions. It's made the news that Soviet cities are being evacuated."

The General winced. He tried not to think of what it must be like up there on the surface. The panic must be spreading like wildfire. He laughed tersely to ease his nerves. "I hope you like vodka, Glenn."

The Lieutenant grinned sardonically. "I don't mind that, sir, it's those fish eggs I can't stand."

The phone beeped, and the General stared at it, his stomach knotting. He pulled himself together and picked up the secured line. "Yes? Yes, Mr President. Yes, we are well aware of the situation. We're all ready. You are? You're certain that all attempts to contact them have failed?"



## Season 32: Twilight's Last Gleaming

He drew himself up, reprimanding himself before the President had said a word. It wasn't his place to question. The situation was very clear.

On the cavern floor, a duty officer looked on in horror as her computer flashed a warning. A curve had appeared from central Siberia and was moving towards Europe. More lines were appearing from the submarines, all arching slowly towards the U.S. Alarm klaxons renewed their automatic wailing. Another officer hit the intercom to the General. "Sir, they've launched!"

The Lieutenant rounded on his screen. "Confirmed, sir. Five hundred ICBM's have been launched from bases in Siberia and from subs in the Atlantic and Pacific. First points of impact: New York, Portland and Hanover in five minutes. Others will follow, on average, five minutes later.

General Frazier's throat was dry. He coughed hard and returned to the phone. "You heard all that, Mr President? Yes, I understand. We've no choice now." He placed the phone on a modem cradle. A computer screen next to it lit up. There was a pause, then a line of numbers appeared.

The General watched bleakly. This was the President's authorization code.

Another line appeared: the Vice-President's code.

Frazier's stomach knotted tighter. Now it was his turn. He leaned over to a microphone. His voice echoed across the cavern. "This is General Frazier. Take us to DEFCOM One."

The narrow display flickered, and changed from number two to number one. Alarm klaxons rang again, but people continued their hectic work smoothly. They were concentrating so hard that no distraction, not even thoughts of home or doomed families or the fate of the world itself, tugged at their minds.

"Input codes Three, Zero, Alpha, Sierra, Charlie," Frazier said clearly. "Prepare first round missile silos for retaliatory strike." He waited a few seconds while the confirmations rolled across his screen. He took a deep breath and continued. "Input codes Seven, Four, Sierra, Bravo, Zero. Prepare for launch."

Confirmations of readiness scrolled across his screen. He glanced at the giant computerized world map. The trajectories of missiles reached out like tentacles to grab and throttle the Western World.

Three men inserted three keys into the firing computer at the same time. They waited for the final order.

The General opened his mouth but nothing came out. He stared down at his desk to stifle his conscience. He spotted his calendar. January 12, 1985 is the day this world destroys itself, he thought, and I am one of those responsible for the tragedy.

He heard himself say, "Fire all missiles."

Three keys twisted in their locks.

Across the continent, a thousand missiles soared into the sky.

???

The sun beamed down pleasantly from a clear sky, reflecting off the snow-covered lawns and streets. Air raid sirens sang out over the people's screams and the sound of running feet. Church bells were ringing wildly. The city trembled.

On the highways, cars crashed into each other as they raced to escape, trapping more and more people. In a playground, a child

screamed for his parents, but no-one came.

With a thunderclap, a second sun bloomed in the sky. The clangor of the bells rang out one last time as the explosion tore them from their steeples.

The Doctor woke with a gasp. A cool breeze gently blew the sweat from his cheeks and the sound of twittering birds soothed his soul. He got up from his cramped position against the blue-leaved tree and stretched, trying to put the images of his dream behind him. Must have dozed off, he reflected. When will the nightmares end?

He straightened his trenchcoat, composed his mind and began walking through the forest, looking for his companions.

???

The last bomb had exploded an hour before. The Dalek turned away from its console and reported to its superior. "Timelines reassembling! Contact with home planet reestablished! Emperor Davros awaits report!"

The Dalek leader pressed a switch on its console, and spoke into the air. "Phase three complete! We have succeeded! We are the destroyers of Earth!"

???

Ryan stood staring at a sunset. He watched the familiar looking yellow orb settle beneath the horizon, followed by a smaller blue-green star above and to the left of the first sun. Moments after both settled behind a ridge of mountains, twilight deepened. Ryan leaned against a tree with star-shaped leaves.

Sue ran her fingers through her thick blond hair. She stood a little to the left of her superior, staring over his shoulder. Her jaw had been left agape so long, it had begun to ache. Finally she looked at Ryan. "Brainwashing?" she asked.

"I don't think so," he muttered after a moment.

Sue shook her head at two moons poking up above the opposite horizon to the sunset. "It would be easier to deal with if this was just brainwashing."

"Enjoying yourselves?" The voice behind them made them jump. Sue and Ryan stared uncertainly at the Doctor, who emerged from the forest with a handful of strangely shaped berries. He popped one in his mouth as he stopped before the dazed couple. He held out a handful to them. "Go on, try one. You'll find them very tasty. They're nutritious too."

Sue stared at the berries and reached out tentatively. Then she decided against it. The Doctor shrugged and popped another in his mouth. "Your loss," he said as he chewed.

Ryan rubbed his forehead wearily. "What is this place again?" "Sirius IV," the Doctor replied, beaming. "An excellent place to camp out. The call of the wolves is a pleasant thing to fall asleep to. Sometimes they'll come to your campsite and eat from your hand. Do you fancy putting out the tents?"

Sue took a deep breath. "Doctor, I... no. No, I don't fancy putting out the tents."

"That's fine. You're tired, I understand. Ryan, will you -"

"Doctor, please!" Sue cut in. She drew closer to Ryan, the only familiar object in this alien landscape. "Ryan and I don't want to stay here any longer than we have to. Nor did we want to visit those other places you took us to. This is just too much; I've never seen anything like this before. I'm sorry we gave you so





## Trenchcoat

much trouble back in America, but don't punish us like this." She looked at him pleadingly.

The Doctor looked hurt. "I wouldn't call this punishment. Haven't you always wanted to broaden your horizons?"

"Not this far," Ryan said.

The Doctor nodded sympathetically. "I understand. So, you promise not to try and wheedle out more information about me for your files?"

"You don't leave us much choice," said Sue.

"And who would believe us?" asked Ryan. "I'm not sure if I believe it myself. All this while we thought you were a British agent. I knew you were out of the ordinary when you helped us fight those aliens who wanted to kidnap the Vice-President, but no way did I think you were an alien yourself."

The Doctor shrugged. "Well, not all us aliens are that human-hostile. I assure you I have no green skin; nor am I under five foot ten."

Despite herself, Sue grinned. "All right, I promise I'll stop saying 'Little Green Men from outer space'." Then her smile disappeared. "Please, can we go home now?"

The Doctor sighed. "Fine, back to my ship."

He turned and tossed the berries over his shoulder. One bounced off Sue's jacket and into her hand. As she followed the two men back to the bizarrely familiar blue box in a grove of alien trees, she examined the little pink berry.

Odd shape, a grooved lozenge... like nothing on earth, she thought with a wry smile. She sniffed it tentatively: it smelled odd too, but not bad. Curiosity got the better of her at last and she bit into the fruit. She chewed it slowly at first, then more quickly as the taste filled her mouth. A look of pleased surprise widened her eyes. No, not bad at all.

Within minutes, they were inside the physical anomaly the Doctor traveled through space in. Ryan stood beside Sue, across the mushroom shaped, hexagonal console from the Doctor. The white walls, with their glowing roundels, still disconcerted them. Familiar things like the hatstand, a leather wing chair, and a ticking Edwardian wall clock only accentuated the outlandish look of the room. Sue touched Ryan's hand for reassurance. He squeezed back gently.

"Doctor," Sue began. "Just how—"

He cut her off. "How is it bigger on the inside than on the outside? I already told you; the TARDIS is dimensionally transcendental."

She scowled. "That's not good enough."

Ryan nodded. "I agree."

The Doctor frowned at them across the console. "All right. Try this: the outer shell of this ship is not located around the interior of this ship, where you are now. The two are separated by vast distances of time and space, but are connected in such a way that if you were to step in through the doors of the outer shell, you would be transported to this room. This ship travels by having the outer shell of the ship move from planet to planet. Where we are doesn't move."

"I don't understand," Ryan muttered.

"How are the outer and the inner parts of the ship linked?" asked Sue.

## Season 32: Twilight's Last Gleaming

The Doctor cast his eyes at the ceiling. "Don't ask me to explain fourth dimensional engineering. Fayette had a remarkably sensible attitude compared to you. If she couldn't understand the answers she received, she fell back on the obvious. The facts are, this console room does exist and it does these things."

Sue frowned. "Was Fayette—"

The Doctor gritted his teeth. "No, she wasn't alien like me. She was just a girl from France." He stopped short of telling them that she had come from Paris, in 1789, for fear of more questions. "I adopted her." He flashed them a winsome smile. "Now you're sure all this stuff isn't going into your reports?"

Ryan grinned. "Count on it. Who'd believe us?"

"If you promise to get us back to America," Sue added.

"Of course," the Doctor replied. "I'll have you back at Flint's Cove, Maine any moment now." He pressed a few switches, and the floor shuddered slightly. The central column of the console began to rise and fall. Sue frowned, thinking she may have heard the Doctor mutter something else under his breath. It sounded almost like, "I hope."

"What did you mean by that?" she asked suspiciously.

The Doctor had paused over a computer keyboard, frowning slightly and scratching his head in a way that made Ryan nervous. The Time Lord composed his face and faced Sue innocently. "Mean by what?"

"You will get us back home?" She stressed the word home.

The Doctor snorted. "You're just like Fayette! Let me guess, you have little faith in classic cars as well? I've been piloting this ship for a good portion of my life, and I know exactly how to operate it. Nothing could go wrong!"

He regretted the words as soon as they left his lips. A red light on a panel lit up and began to blink. He frowned and examined a display. Sue darted around the console nervously. "What is it? What's the matter?"

A series of loud beeps erupted from another panel. The Doctor brushed past Ryan to stare at this display. Frown lines deepened on his face.

"Doctor, what's going on?" Ryan demanded.

The Doctor looked at them both seriously. "Hang on."

The Edwardian clock mounted on the wall struck twelve.

Then, from deep within the ship, a distant bell tolled. There was something menacing in the sound. Sue saw the Doctor's knuckles whiten against the edge of the console, and she had a premonition of disaster.

The floor shuddered again, but the ship wasn't landing. The shuddering grew to a violent shaking. Sue lost her grip on the console and fell to the floor. Ryan didn't notice, he was too concerned with keeping his own balance. The floor tilted and Sue rolled into his legs, sending him sprawling.

A display overheated and exploded with a shower of sparks. The lights brightened and dimmed erratically. Through it all, the distant bell tolled incessantly.

With one hand, Ryan gripped a TARDIS roundel. With the other, he managed to hold Sue by one arm. Though he couldn't tell which way was up, he could still see the Doctor pressed against the console,



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## Trenchcoat

manipulating controls like a man possessed. The TARDIS engines protested the assault, and the rumble grew to a deafening roar. An panel exploded in the Doctor's face, but still he held on.

Finally the shaking ebbed. The floor righted itself, the distant knell faded, and a silence fell upon the console room. The central column had stopped its rise and fall. The Doctor stood over the controls, frowning. Ryan stood up shakily and helped Sue to her feet. Sue was about to say something critical and sarcastic, but she stopped short at the sight before them.

Half of the white panels on the console were charred black. The lights hadn't regained their full brightness. The hiss of the ventilators was quieter than usual. The Doctor's face was grim, and he was bleeding from a cut over his left eye. Without thinking, she wobbled to his side and pressed at the wound with a kleenex. The Doctor winced but accepted her gesture. Holding the tissue over the cut with one hand, he surveyed the controls.

"What happened?" she gasped.

The Doctor shook his head. "I don't know."

"Did we hit something?" asked Ryan.

"Again, I don't know. It wasn't an entropy field, but its effects were almost as bad. It felt like turbulence in the time vortex, but something like that is rare." His frown deepened.

Sue brushed away charred debris from a panel. "How much damage?"

"Nothing unfixable, but this will take a while. Right now, we're blind. The locational circuits have fused, and so have most of the outside environment monitors." He peered at a flickering screen. "At least whatever's outside seems to have a breathable atmosphere." He flicked a switch and looked expectantly at the scanner screen. The panels didn't part. "Trust that to be damaged too."

It made Ryan very nervous to see the Doctor so unsure of his own ship. "So, what do we do, now?"

"I don't know about you, but I'm going to have to go out there and see for myself where we are. You stay here."

Sue frowned. "Why should we stay?"

The Doctor scowled. "Because I want you to, that's why."

Ryan snorted. "Doctor, do you think we couldn't handle the risks? We're professionals. We're going out with you. We have to make sure you stay safe. You're the only way Sue and I can get home!"

The Doctor opened his mouth to argue, but was confronted by two firm stares. He remembered that the TARDIS instruments indicated a breathable atmosphere. He should be able to find out very quickly if there was any danger to his two human companions.

"Fine, but stay behind me. And don't argue if I send you back. Understood?" He waited till he had a nod of assent from each, then opened the doors of his ship.

???

A dead sea lapped against blackened shores. A poison wind moaned across a mangled wasteland, under black clouds that stretched from horizon to horizon. Angular shapes jutted up, suggestions of structures not formed by nature. Not a living soul moved to greet the blue box which had appeared at the bottom of a barren ridge.

The door opened, and the Doctor stepped out. He stopped short at the sight which confronted him and Ryan and Sue bumped into his back. They stared over his shoulder and their jaws dropped. The Doctor yanked a small hand held device out of his pocket and swept it across the ruins. It buzzed madly.

"Inside!" he shouted, turning and shoving them back. "Both of you, for your health, get back inside!"

Back in the console room, Sue and Ryan stood staring as the Doctor shut the outer doors. He darted around the console, flipping switches and peering at displays. "What was that out there?" Sue gasped.

"I don't know," the Doctor muttered. "Still think you can handle all the risks?"

Ryan ignored the comment. The sight of that hideous landscape was seared on his mind. "Can't these instruments tell you?" he asked.

"The locational circuits are undergoing repair," the Doctor snapped back. "The TARDIS wasn't designed to endure such a force without sustaining some form of damage."

"But what happened out there?" asked Sue. "Did it have anything to do with what hit this ship?"

"Most likely not. Turbulence in the vortex doesn't occur because

of a nuclear blast. That's why I ordered you back: the place is still radioactive. The radiation level has dropped, but..." He frowned.

"A nuclear blast?" Ryan repeated. "A bomb?"

"Most likely," the Doctor muttered, poring over the controls.

"But how?" Sue gasped. "Where was that place?"

The Doctor gritted his teeth. "I told you I don't know!" He winced, and gave Sue an apologetic look. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to snap. I'm just as shocked as you are. No one gets over that sight. No one sane, anyway. I'll try to find out the location of this hell-hole, and then we'll get away from here as soon as the ship repairs itself."

"Um..." Ryan blinked. "Did you say, repairs itself?"

The Doctor ignored him. He glared at a screen and thumped it in frustration. "The location circuits are still not operational! Damn it, I'm going to have to get the clues elsewhere." He pinched the bridge of his nose. "I should have been there to stop that holocaust," he muttered under his breath.

Sue frowned. "Clues from elsewhere? You mean, out there?"

"No other way," the Doctor muttered. "Considering the shape the TARDIS is in, I don't want to leave this planet, blind. The ship would rather know where it's leaving to help it find where it wants to go. In its damaged condition, I don't want to push things too hard."

"But the radiation levels..." Ryan began.

"Thanks for reminding me," said the Doctor dryly. He darted around the console to a wooden chest and rummaged inside. He clucked in irritation. "I'm low on anti-radiation suits. Fortunately, the levels aren't high enough to be deadly; they can be coped with by using these." He held up a vial of pills.

"Drugs?" Sue looked wary. "Just a minute!"

"Anti-radiation drugs," he said with exaggerated patience.

"You should be familiar with them: your planet started producing some about ten years before your time. These work on a similar principle." He pocketed the vial. "Let's hope the replicator can still dispense a glass of water."

Sue grimaced at the thought of the Doctor going out into that terrifying ruin. "You don't have to do this. We can wait until everything is fixed, can't we, and leave then? You did say your ship was repairing itself - whatever that means."

The Doctor gave her a penetrating look that made her shiver. The sight of the outside had affected him as it had her and Ryan. "Would you want to stay here three hours or more knowing that was outside? However, on all accounts, you're both to stay here."

Sue looked at Ryan and found him staring back. They nodded gravely at each other. Then both looked at the Doctor. "No," they said in unison.

The Doctor blew through his teeth. "You're both just like Fayette." He looked them up and down; both stared back with steel in their eyes. They weren't about to let him out of their sight.

"All right! All right! I'll show you where the water is so you can down these." He led them from the console room.

???

In a cavern, Daleks glided about, staring dispassionately at maps and displays showing more and more cities falling into ruin. Even this deep beneath the surface, they could hear the distant rumble of a gigantic explosion venting its fury on the surface.

On one panel on the other side of the room, a red light began to flash, and information scrolled across the screen. Klaxons wailed. The Dalek manning the station turned to its superior. "Sensors indicate arrival of time ship! It is located ten years in the alternate future! Further reports indicate the time ship is a TARDIS; preliminary analysis suggests this TARDIS belongs to Time Lord Doctor!"

The Dalek superior calculated the new factor in the equation and came to a conclusion within seconds. "The trap failed! The Doctor remains a threat and must be eliminated! Suggest sending Dalek patrol to seek, locate and exterminate!" It turned to one of its underlings manning another station. "Analyze risk of activating time corridor!"

The grey and black Dalek turned to face its white and gold superior. "Loss of contact with Dalek forces remains steady at 3000 years in all futures! Time Lord Doctor exists only ten years ahead of current time location! A Dalek patrol faces little risk from time distortion effects!"

The superior turned back to the first Dalek. "Prepare a patrol!"



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Activate time corridor! Exterminate the Doctor!"

The ground rumbled as, somewhere above, another bomb exploded.

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The door to the TARDIS opened. Ryan peered out onto the bleak landscape, his mouth and nose masked by a respirator. The ruins looked disturbingly similar to pictures he'd seen of cities bombed out on Earth in the Second World War. He shivered, and not because of the cold breeze. Sue and the Doctor followed him from the ship, wearing similar respirators. Sue had changed out of her skirt and into a pair of jeans, worn under a sweater and jacket. Her pumps were changed for sneakers.

"It's hard to breathe in these things." Her voice sounded hollow, as though it came from inside a box.

"It's your choice," the Doctor replied. "You can wear that and be safe, not sorry, or you can go without. Alternately, you could go back into the TARDIS and smoke a pack of cigarettes at once. The effect would be about the same."

"You said the radiation level was higher than normal, but still fairly acceptable," said Ryan. "But you said this place was hit by a nuclear bomb. How much have the levels dropped since the attack? How long ago did this occur?"

The Doctor glanced around quickly. His attention was focused on the small hand held device he was panning before him. "Good question. By the amount of radioactive decay, I'd say the bomb exploded just over 10 years ago."

Sue shivered. "Doctor, I'd have to say I much preferred the last planet you showed us to this."

The Doctor chuckled tersely. "I concur. The galaxy is filled with all types, I'm afraid. Let's try this way." He pointed.

The landscape had probably been flat, Sue decided, before the nuclear storm had formed these ridges of broken stone and steel. They walked along a gully that might have once been a street, slipping and sliding among concrete debris. Then climbed a ridge made of rubble, careful to avoid outcrops of twisted, rusty metal. The wind blew swirls of black dust around them, and the sky was a dark grey, lightening slightly where the sun tried to pierce through.

"Any idea at all where this is?" Ryan asked.

"It's hard to tell. The effects of nuclear winter are still around us. I doubt we'll be seeing any stars in this sky for a while. Perhaps it would have been better to just wait in the TARDIS: I really didn't want to subject you to this."

"Well, if it gets us off this planet faster, I don't mind looking around." Ryan pointed. "Let's check as far as that ridge there. If you find nothing, then we'll go back and wait." He shivered again.

"Sometimes I can tell what planet I'm on just by sensing the feel of the wind against my face, or the light of the sun against my back," the Doctor muttered. "Each planet has its own unique signature imbued in everything on the ground or above it. This planet is giving me very strange signals."

They topped the ridge, and the sight which confronted Ryan tore at his heart.

The city which spread out before them was vast. It must have been home to a million or more. Now nothing moved. Immediately before them, the ruined structures mingled with dead trees and grey mud: possibly a park, Ryan thought. A maze of canals snaked away towards the hazy distance, where a grey ocean lapped at ashen shores. Midway

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between their vantage point and the ocean, where the center of town should have been, only a deep crater remained.



Sue gasped. Ryan turned sharply, staring in concern. She was backing away from the sight in horror. "Sue?" Ryan rushed forward as she stumbled over a tangle of metal. She clutched at him in shock and gibbered. Ryan stared in astonishment. He'd never seen her like this. "Sue, calm down. We're all a little upset -"

"No! I recognize this place. This is Fort Lauderdale. We've landed in Fort Lauderdale! They've bombed Fort Lauderdale!"

The Doctor whirled around to face the city in astonishment. His eyes picked out the signs of Earth architecture that he'd missed before; or had he seen them all along but refused to believe? "My God."

Ryan clutched Sue by the shoulders. "No," he said firmly, more to himself than to her. "You're imagining things. The Doctor said the bomb went off more than ten years ago."

"I was posted here in 1987," Sue shouted, breaking away. "I know this place." She cast a glance over the desolation, then turned her head away. "I recognize the canals: they have a distinctive pattern. The buildings may be gone, but the shape of the land hasn't changed."

"She's right," the Doctor replied. "This planet is Earth. I was feeling it all along."

"No!" Ryan shouted. "It wasn't this way when we left it!"

"Ryan, I told you the TARDIS is a time machine," the Doctor snapped back. "Of course things weren't this way when you left it. This could be your future." His eyes had a haunted look. Ryan knew he was telling the truth, as he knew it.

Ryan's shoulders sagged. "When did this happen?"

The Doctor looked away. "I can't tell you."

"Doctor," Ryan snapped. "Please. You show us this; you torment us like this; we have a right to know!"

The Doctor frowned in thought. Then he sighed deeply. "Fine." He looked out across the ruined city, picking out signs and symbols that gave away the year they were made. Even in this bombed out wasteland, they existed: the design of a fragment of cornice lying on the ground, the presence and style of certain near-demolished structures. He pieced the clues together; the answer came slowly. "Early nineteen eighties."

"What?" gasped Sue.

"Nineteen eighties?" repeated Ryan. "We left Flint's Cove in 1996!"

Then Sue disappeared, without a sound. Ryan felt the sudden lack of her presence behind him and he whirled around. "Sue? Doctor!"

"Hey!" The voice came from below. Sue stood at the bottom of the ridge, staring up at them in astonishment. "How did you-"

"You just disappeared!" Ryan ran down and gripped her by the arm, as though to prevent her from disappearing again. He stared hard at the Doctor. "How?"

The Doctor brushed past them, walking briskly back to the TARDIS, ignoring the debris which conspired to trip him. Sue and Ryan followed as quickly as they could; the Doctor didn't seem to realize they were falling further behind. He strode up to the TARDIS door, producing his key.

Ryan feared being left behind. "Doctor, wait!"

The Doctor looked back at them sharply and beckoned them to hurry. Then with a sigh of frustration, he strode back and took Sue's



other arm to hurry them along. "Come on," he hissed. "We haven't got time to waste."

"We're going as fast as we can," Sue snapped back. "We're not mountain goats!"

Ryan's mind was in turmoil. "You can't be right," he muttered. "Fort Lauderdale wasn't hit by a bomb in 1980! And how did Sue disappear and reappear like that?"

"No, it was you and the Doctor who disappeared," Sue growled.

"Fort Lauderdale wasn't hit by a bomb in 1980," the Doctor replied. "The world didn't go to war that year either. The reason both of you saw the other disappear was because we were caught in a weak, unstable time eddy. Someone has been messing around. They've altered Earth's history in a truly criminal fashion."

Sue's mind reeled. "I can't take much more of this." She grimaced as a twisted shard of metal snagged her shin.

"Someone changed history?" Ryan repeated. "Consciously? If this is Earth, and all Earth is like this, how can we be here, and alive? We came from."

"I know." The Doctor grinned wryly. "Welcome to the complicated world of alternate futures. Let me try to put it in this overly simplistic way: you're in a parallel universe. It was created when someone went back to the early nineteen eighties and altered history. Presumably the Sue and Ryan who lived in this universe are..." He paused delicately.

"I'm not going to like this," Sue said.

"Well, since you're from another universe, you do still exist. Does that reassure you?"

"No."

"Then try to forget it. The important thing is I have to find out who did this, and how to put things back to normal. We've got to get back to the TARDIS to do that, so come on." He quickened his steps.

A bolt of radiation sizzled behind his head and vaporized a pile of charred rubble. Sue and Ryan reacted immediately, jumping for cover, with the Doctor close behind them. They pressed themselves against the remains of a brick wall. "Survivors?" Ryan asked, breathing heavily through his respirator.

"Armed with what?" said Sue pointedly. "That didn't sound like a percussion weapon to me." She looked a question at the Doctor.

"They're the ones who created this future, no doubt," the Doctor muttered, peering carefully out of cover. "I should have known. Look."

Sue carefully peered over the Doctor's shoulder and saw three robot tanks gliding effortlessly over the ruined terrain. Their appearance struck her as comical and menacing at the same time. They were white, with gold half spheres fixed to the lower part of their structures. On top was a rounded dome bearing a single projection ending in what looked like a camera eye. Two arms protruded from the middle section, one ending in a sucker. The other arm, however, bore a strong resemblance to a gun.

The question of whether or not it was in fact a gun grew vital as the strange tanks advanced on the watchers' position.

"What are they?" asked Ryan.

"Daleks!"

"Daleks?" Sue peered at them. "What on -"

"No more questions," the Doctor hissed. "They're out to kill us, that's all you need to know!" A gun swivelled at them and the three ducked back. An explosion sent stone shards in all directions, cutting back their cover. The Dalek guns aimed again.

"Run!" the Doctor shouted. They darted back, ducking behind the remains of a brick wall. They watched as the Daleks glided towards their previous position.

"They're between us and your ship," Ryan muttered.

"I know. Here, take your guns back." The Doctor pulled two revolvers from the pockets of his trenchcoat and handed them over.

Sue blinked. She didn't remember the Doctor confiscating her weapon. "How did you-"

"I said no questions!" He pointed at the advancing Daleks. "Their most vulnerable point is the eyestalk; the projection at the top of the creature. Blind it."

Ryan frowned. "There's no reasoning with them?" The Doctor just gave him a despairing look, and Ryan got the message. "Fine. Sue, fan out, then fire with me on the count of ten."

Keeping low, Sue crept along the brick wall until she reached the far corner. She peered out into the open and saw the three creatures slowly advancing on Ryan and the Doctor's position. Damn, she thought, can't get a clear shot at the eyestalk. Maybe if I can get it to look this way... She aimed carefully, and counted the remaining seconds. Then she pulled the trigger.

The crack echoed across the wasteland. The bullet dented the casing of the closest Dalek. The creature veered, and its eyestalk focused on her position. Ryan fired twice, denting two other Daleks. For a second the creatures held back, reassessing their strategy.

Sue got a clear line of sight, and fired. The Dalek iris exploded. She blew through her teeth in triumph. Then her smile faded. Though the creature was blind, its gun still pointed in her direction. It took a second longer to aim; barely enough time for Sue to lunge out of harm's way.

"Sue, careful!" the Doctor shouted. "They can focus on sound!"

"Now he tells me," she hissed. She stumbled along the wall, ducking and covering her head as Dalek gunfire blew the top bricks to pieces.

Ryan fired twice, and the other Daleks' eyestalks shattered. They hesitated, but after regaining their bearings, they resumed their advance.

"Retreat," the Doctor whispered. "Next cover, and quietly. If we lie low, we can confuse them." Ryan signaled to Sue. They stumbled over the rubble as fast and as quietly as they could. A ridge of debris rose before them. They darted over it and crouched down behind, catching their breath.

The Doctor carefully peered over top, then signalled the other two to look. Out in the open the Daleks were swivelling about, blind but alert for any noise.

The Doctor picked up a stone. Signalling the others to watch, he hurled it over the ridge. It sailed past the Daleks and clattered against the ground. The Daleks swung around and blasted it. When the smoke cleared, only a small crater remained. The Daleks hesitated; analyzing the data, then resumed their wait.

Sue and Ryan already understood the Doctor's plan. As quietly as they could, they each moved along the ridge in opposite directions. They took positions on either side of the Dalek patrol and waited for the signal. The Doctor nodded.

Sue fired at the Dalek furthest from her. The creatures veered towards the crack of her gun. Ryan shot the Dalek furthest from him, and two of them turned back, so that they faced the third. Sue fired again, and Ryan fired again. The isolated Dalek fired, and one of its two compatriots exploded. The other Dalek fired, and the third exploded. "Yes!" hissed Ryan.

The surviving Dalek veered from side to side, agitated. Sue bit her lip. How to defeat this enemy? These creatures did not seem to mind bullets, and she was running out of ammunition anyway. She could see Ryan across the hollow; the look on his face told the same story.

She ducked back as the Dalek fired. The explosion showered her with



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stone shrapnel. She waited for the second shot, but none came. Curious, she looked up, and saw the Dalek veering away. The Doctor had jumped out of cover and was hefting a rock over his head at the creature. The Dalek blew it out of the air.

Ryan jumped up and fired two shots at the creature's gun. Sue joined in and emptied her weapon. The gun was dented. The Dalek fired, but its shot went wide. Its weapon began to glow an ominous red.

Then Sue and Ryan heard a yell. They saw the Doctor running forward, with a twisted metal bar raised as a weapon. With inhuman strength, he brought it down on the Dalek gun, breaking it in two. He battered the Dalek casing with all his might, scratching and denting it. Sue and Ryan looked on in astonishment.

The Dalek started to veer towards the Doctor. Then it stopped and stood still, allowing the pummelling to continue. The Doctor stopped and stepped back. He eyed the creature warily and began backing away, muttering a countdown under his breath. As he neared zero, he started to run. Sue and Ryan ducked back under cover.

The explosion shook the ground. Sue and Ryan waited for the smoke to clear before looking up. The top half of the last Dalek was missing; and its bottom half was a twisted mass of plastic and metal. They saw the Doctor leaving his cover, approaching the creature with a grim smile on his face.

"Predictable as ever," he said. "It thought it could catch me off guard by self-destructing. It must have thought I was in too much of a murderous rage to notice when it shut itself down in preparation for the explosion." He snorted. "Stupid, evil creatures."

Sue stared at the Doctor's grim expression, and remembered his violent rage. She could never have imagined such acts of hatred could come from such a man. She shivered.

Ryan approached the smoking remains. "Well, what now?"

"Back to the TARDIS before they send reinforcements," the Doctor replied in a matter-of-fact way. "But first, let's see if there's anything useful to be found in these things. Unlikely, but worth a try." He poked inside the least damaged creature. Its dome was missing and the top three quarters of its casing ended in a jagged edge covered in a green slime.

Sue grimaced and reached out to touch. The substance was sticky and despite the colour it reminded her of blood. She'd seen death many times, but for some reason, now she wanted to be sick.

"Were there living things in there?" she gasped.

"Yes." The Doctor was rummaging busily. "They're the mutated remains of creatures called Kaleds, who changed after fighting a very long and bitter war against a race called the Thals. In that war, a very evil man named Chief Scientist Davros took advantage of the mutation, altering it to breed out those elements in the Kaled psyche which would interfere with the development of the perfect soldier. He built these travel machines to house the new creatures; which promptly turned against him and the rest of the Kaled race."

"You don't like them, do you, Doctor?" Sue was curious. Despite his objective tone now, she suspected his attitude was far from impersonal.

"Who could? There's no reasoning with them; they hate all lifeforms unlike their own on any planet they find. They're only controlled in the future when Humanity and another Galactic power, the Draconians, unite against them. Ah!"

He pulled out a round steel ball, covered in green slime. Ryan had to look away. "What is it?" Sue asked.

"It's a positronic brain," the Doctor replied distractedly. "It provides the Dalek creature with all the information it needs, and it reinforces those emotions in the creature to ensure the perfect soldier follows all orders perfectly. Now, back to the TARDIS."

Sue and Ryan followed the Doctor across the now silent terrain. Ryan thought of those destroyed creatures, and of his surroundings. He opened his mouth but the Doctor cut him off. "Yes, they went back in time and altered Earth's history to prevent Humanity from uniting with other powers to control the Dalek race." He looked at Ryan with a haunted expression. "Now do you understand why I called them evil?"

They reached the TARDIS doors and the Doctor hesitated. He had the Dalek computer core in both hands. He tried to hand it to Sue who simply backed away from it, as did Ryan. Finally the Doctor shrugged, set the sphere on the ground and pulled out his key. Unlocking the door, he picked up the sphere and pushed his way inside. Sue and Ryan followed. The door slammed, and then the only sound was the keening of the wind among the ruins.

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Inside, the ship looked cleaner than Sue and Ryan remembered leaving it. Sue looked around in wonder. The burn marks had disappeared from the console and, when the Doctor tried a switch, the scanner panels parted and the screen revealed a picture of the desolation outside. With a sigh, the Doctor pushed the button again, and the panels closed. He set the metal sphere aside, knelt beneath the console and removed a panel.

"The locational circuits have repaired themselves," he said as he worked. "Sue's right: we're in Fort Lauderdale. The date is December 1, 1996: two days after we left Flint's Cove, Maine."

Sue collapsed into the leather wing chair. Ryan had to lean against the wall. He pulled off his respirator and drew deep breaths of fresh air into his lungs.

The Doctor pulled his head from beneath the console. "I'd advise you two to change your clothes right now, and shower. Those pills protect very well against latent radiation effects, but it's best not to tempt fate. Shower rooms are down the corridor, first left, fifth door on your right. Go on!"

Sue got up and left the console room. A good hot shower would at least help her mood. She wished it could also erase the memory of what she'd seen outside. About to follow, Ryan hesitated, then looked back at the Doctor. "What do we do now?"

The Doctor stopped his work again and looked at him seriously. "I don't know. All I do know is that I will think of something. I owe it to you, and to all of humanity. I've been complacent for too long." He nodded at the door. "Go and get changed."

He was wiring the Dalek sphere into the console as Ryan left the room.

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Three quarters of an hour later, Sue reentered the console room. She had changed back into her knee-length black skirt, white shirt and tailored burgundy vest. She felt a little better after a warm shower. She saw the Doctor with his head stuck beneath the console and wondered if this was his favourite position. When he replaced the panel and sat up, however, his face was grim.

"You've changed then?" he asked distractedly. "Good."

"I felt the ship shake," she said. "Did we take off?"

"Yes. I've put the TARDIS in orbit around the planet." He couldn't bring himself to call that world he'd seen the Earth. "And I've connected the Dalek computer core to the TARDIS data banks. Earth's history has been changed; that much is certain. With the Dalek core, I should be able to find out how it happened."

"Good. As soon as Ryan gets here we can start."

He looked at her seriously. "It won't be entertaining. You don't have to watch if you don't want to."

Ryan strode into the console room, wearing dark pants and a white shirt. "Don't have to watch what?" he asked.

"We must know what happened, Doctor." Sue crossed her arms and gave him a determined stare.

The Doctor blew through his teeth. "Such morbid fascination in such innocent creatures," he muttered under his breath. At Sue's puzzled glance, he added, "Yes, innocent, especially when compared to Daleks. Fine." He operated a switch, and the scanner panels parted. "This is your planet now."

Ryan looked at the scanner and he couldn't help feeling sick to his stomach. The planet was Earth. He could barely make out the familiar shape of the continents. Instead of the blue green jewel he remembered, he saw a sphere covered in a dark grey shroud.

Sue gasped, then cursed under her breath. "Doctor, you don't have to shock us. We want to see what happened! Let's get on with it."

The Doctor sighed. "Fine. Here we go."

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The underground control room smelt of freshly set concrete; every panel shone like new. A grey Dalek trundled up to its white and gold superior to report. "Base construction finished; key personnel installed! Phase one complete! All units awaiting instructions."

Another Dalek turned from a console to address the superior. "Message from home planet! Emperor Davros gives permission to proceed!"

The white and gold Dalek examined every corner of the massive control room from its pedestal near the center. Everything was in order. "Proceed with phase two!"

A grey Dalek activated a switch. Key machinery came alive;



screens and panels lit up, and other Daleks rushed forward to monitor them. The Dalek manning the communications station pressed a switch and spoke into an intercom. "Phase two commences; begin operation!"

The Dalek which had spoken with the Emperor turned back to the white and gold Dalek on the raised dais. "Contact with all forces in far future severed. As expected, loss of contact stabilizing at 3000 years ahead of current time position."

The white and gold Dalek simply turned away without acknowledging the report. Recognition was not expected by either unit. Efficient performance was not rewarded, it was required, and every Dalek was doing its duty.

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The man turned away from the video monitor. He nodded to himself, satisfied, and leaned toward an intercom. "Phase one complete," he said. His voice was firm and powerful. "All personnel begin phase two." He turned the intercom off.

He flipped more switches, and the scenes on the monitor screens changed, from soldiers in the tunnels installing equipment, soldiers in caverns putting the finishing touches to a complex of metal pillars and metal doors, to soldiers in a deep cavern open to the sky, unloading supplies and raising scaffolding. He stared at the images with steel grey, unblinking eyes, and he smiled.

He turned off the monitors and stood up, brushing off his already fastidiously clean uniform. A General's insignia gleamed on his chest. His place was with his men, he decided, and he left the dim room. In the stone-walled tunnel outside, a soldier drove by on a supply cart, saluting as he passed.

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The bells were ringing through Moscow. The government newspapers proclaimed the 1984 May Day celebrations, and people took this rare opportunity for a day off work to attend the parade through the central streets. Attendance was expected, after all, and the government always put on an excellent show. Thousands of soldiers marched in formation, accompanied by tanks, missiles and other weapons of war. As they passed through Red Square, everyone was on their best behaviour. Chernenko was watching from the balcony. In the climate of celebration, it was easier to pretend to be happy.

That night, a new spectacle competed with the fireworks. Roughly every ten minutes, a fiery streak cut across the skies throughout the country. The people were impressed. Despite government assurances that the meteor shower was natural, the public joked that the Supreme Soviet had planned the whole thing. The meteors did leave red streaks across the sky!

Yuri, a farmer in Ukraine, laughed at the joke with his friends. If he remembered the strange whistling sound that accompanied some of the meteors, he didn't mention it. He had dismissed the few sounds of distant explosions as soldiers at a nearby military base firing off salutes.

Two months later, Yuri thought nothing of the meteor shower as he watched his crops wither from drought.

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The bright sun beat down relentlessly on a street paved only with dust, packed firm by hundreds of passers by. Dusty, rusted cars blared their horns and nosed among people shuffling along on foot, carrying large bundles of goods, or leading camels laden with supplies. The buildings were made of bricks the same pale colour as

the sand. Their windows were small and dark.

A tall woman stepped through the stream of people and looked around uncertainly. She wore flowing robes like everyone else, and carried a heavy canvas bag for her shopping at the market. But the skin around her eyes and the part of her nose which showed over the veil was lighter than average. Her eyes were blue, not brown, and for the most part she kept them modestly lowered.

She spotted a bearded, dark skinned man loitering in a doorway. She eyed him for a moment, then walked slowly along a route that would take her past him. When she was in front of him, she dropped her bag. Oranges and grapes spilled out; a paper package of rice split open on the ground. As she knelt to gather up the mess, she whispered in Arabic, "The sky promises no rain today."

The man looked down at her appraisingly. "Things may change tomorrow," he replied.

She stood up and looked him in the eye. "Perhaps. Maybe I'll be in Istanbul tomorrow."

He over his shoulder. "Come." The woman followed him into the building. He locked and bolted the front door behind them.

The woman yanked off her veil and burnous. She had short blond hair and a high cheekboned face. She and the dark skinned bearded man stared at each other disdainfully. Finally, the woman said in English, "Is everything prepared?"

The man nodded tersely. "It is. Up here." He led her up a flight of stairs and along a dim narrow hallway to a rickety wooden door. Still carrying her market bag, the woman shoved it open and strode into the room.

The only light came from the small window facing the street. The noise of the nearby marketplace could only just be heard. At the centre of the room was a table, at the head of which sat a pepper haired, dark skinned man wearing army fatigues and a scruffy beard. He was flanked by two taller, more robust men with guns in holsters.

The blond woman focused her full attention on the seated man, and leaned forward against the table. "Are we ready to deal?" she asked.

A hint of a smile bent the seated man's lips. "What if I were to say, 'deal in what?'"

The woman smiled, but her eyes were cold. "You know what. According to the publicly released statistics, over 9600 kilograms of plutonium or high grade uranium are missing from current American inventories. This stuff can be very dangerous... and very valuable."

The man chuckled. "People speculate that Israel holds a third of this missing inventory. Why don't you check with them?"

"I said publicly released records," the woman purred. "And besides, very little of that amount is required to make a bomb. In fact, all you need is eight kilograms in each palm and a willingness to die. Now, you and I know enough about each other not to beat around the bush. Our people have everything arranged. Have you got the stuff you promised?"

"Have you got the stuff you promised?" the seated man returned evenly.

She placed her canvas bag on the table and unloaded the fruits and rice bought from the market. From beneath them she pulled a leather case a foot long by a foot wide and an inch deep. Undoing the catches, she lifted the lid. Something glittered in the dim light. She slid the case along the table. "A million dollars in diamonds by way of down payment, and a promise of a hundred such cases more within the week. Now, your part of the bargain?"





The seated man snapped his fingers. His right hand bodyguard knelt and picked up a lead case. He set it on the table and slid it to the woman. The seated man chuckled. "Do you wish to inspect the merchandise?"

His laughter died and his jaw dropped open in astonishment as the woman took the case, undid the catch, and peered under the lid. The stolid bodyguards' arms fell to their sides as they looked on in shock, and one of them took a nervous step back. A faint blue glow from the lead box lit the high planes of the woman's face. She nodded briskly and closed the lid.

"That's one of them," she said. "But three were promised. Where are the other two?"

Wide eyed, the seated man snapped his fingers and two more lead cases were set on the table. He stared in shock as the woman opened each one and examined the contents before closing the lids again.

"Excellent," she said. "This will do for a start."

The seated man found his voice with difficulty. "You have enough to arm a warhead," he stammered. "We will supply you with as much as you need, for so long as you are faithful to your side of the bargain."

"Don't you believe that we'll be faithful to our side of the bargain?" The woman fixed her cold stare on him.

"I believe you're willing to do anything to get back your missing plutonium. At least, I do now," he replied in awe.

She nodded. "The American army will appreciate getting back some of its lost inventory. It's worth the regular payments. Of course, we don't need to go about publicizing this."

"Would you like an escort?" the man stammered. "A guard? We can be very discrete."

"My own people are watching me." She smiled again in a way he didn't like. He had never seen such icy eyes. "You won't have seen them: they are even more discrete than yours." She packed the lead cases into the canvas bag, and placed the groceries on top of them. "I'll be leaving now. You will be hearing from me again before the day is out. Don't worry, I can find my own way out."

She lifted the bag from the table as easily as if it contained merely oranges, grapes and rice. As she left the room, the seated man watched her go, his mouth still agape.

Downstairs, the bearded doorman watched as she wrapped herself again in the veil and burnous of the Arab woman, and quietly left the house. She walked back up the dusty street toward the market place and disappeared among the crowd.

Just then, he heard a commotion. People scattered out of the way of a column of army trucks which drove up the street and surrounded the front entrance to the building. Dark soldiers jumped out, machine guns at the ready. One of them fired, and the doorman fell back, clutching his shoulder. The soldiers streamed into the building.

The woman smiled at the sudden uproar: the shouts of alarm and sounds of gunfire. She stepped to a pay phone next to a carpet seller's stall. Inserting a coin and keying in a long number, she waited for the other end of the line to be picked up.

"I have received the 'groceries'," she said in Arabic.

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The General leaned back from the intercom. He chuckled. "I'm sorry, Uncle Sam. I know the plutonium belongs to you, but I have a much better use for it right now."

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The crowd surged to their feet and cheered, momentarily forgetting that, just outside the building walls, soldiers and KGB informers patrolled the streets. The crowd stood by the aisles, their fists clenched with excitement, entranced with emotion. Even with the strictest secrecy, there was always a possibility of an informer getting in, but nobody seemed to be worrying about that at the moment. They hurt their lungs cheering the speaker's strong words.

His booming voice echoed across the hall. "For sixty years, the communists of Moscow have sat on the back of Ukraine! They've tried to take away our culture, our language, and our religion! They've killed millions of our people already, and there is no reason why they might not kill millions more in the future! Do you think they will look out for our interests when we can't supply them with grain? Will they care that we can no longer feed our own children so long as their quotas are filled? We have been docile long enough! It is time for the communists' destruction. It is time to overthrow Chernenko and all the other old men! It is time for the people of Ukraine to be free!"

The cheers grew louder. The speaker stood glowing with satisfaction, and then returned to his seat on the stage to let a fervent young woman take the floor. After she began to speak and the audience's attention was on her, he quietly slipped away.

As he stepped down the stairs into the wings, he passed a young member of the organization who had charge of setting up the hall. The younger man nodded. "Good speech, Mikhail."

Mikhail smiled. "Receptive audience, Evgeny. Hunger can open minds."

But the other man looked nervous. "Still, are you sure it was smart to speak as forcefully as you did? If there was a single informer in that crowd--"

Mikhail patted him on the shoulder reassuringly. "Nothing is accomplished without risks. Lenin beat the Czar's forces; we can beat the forces of Lenin's successors."

Evgeny smiled weakly. "You wouldn't have said that two months ago."

Mikhail's smile remained, but it wasn't a warm smile. "The audiences weren't so large two months ago." He brushed past the young stagehand and into the back rooms.

Evgeny watched him go, and shivered. Was it his imagination, or had Mikhail, in the three minutes he'd spoken with him, only blinked twice? But that was impossible; so it was his imagination, but still...

A loud cheer from the audience brought his attention round. He peered out at the stage as a third speaker took the podium.

???

The woman with short blond hair stood before the General's desk, her face in shadow. The General stood up and shook her hand. "I'm proud of you, ma'am. You've done your country proud."

"I am always pleased to serve the Daleks," the woman replied.



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## Trenchcoat

The General frowned. "And your country, the United States of America."

The woman nodded without apparent emotion. "And my country."

The General shifted uncomfortably. "Look, you've done your duty. Report to the infirmary, and they'll make you more comfortable."

The woman turned away. Her face came into the light and the General couldn't help but grimace. Her once smooth cheeks were pocked with scabs and her hair was thinning. But her eyes still gleamed with a cold intelligence. As the door closed behind her, he shivered. The woman would be dead within hours.

"They'll pay for that," he muttered. "Once this operation is over, they will have to pay for that."

???

The white and gold Dalek superior accepted all the reports given to it by its underlings, and logged them with expected efficiency. The computer portion allowed the living part of the creature a moment of delight and anticipation: everything was going according to plan.

Another Dalek turned to report. "All material gathered; construction of primary weapon proceeding as scheduled."

A third Dalek made its report. "Contacts report growing political instability. Regional movements beginning to operate openly. Impacts of drought on Russian harvest affecting economies of nations outside of target; but competing nations remain mostly unaware of target nation's problems."

A fourth Dalek turned to its superior. "Shift in time instability barrier! Loss of contact with far future now 2000 years ahead of current time position and holding steady!"

The Dalek superior turned sharply on the fourth Dalek. This Dalek wasn't supposed to report during the operation. This was a troubling breach of the schedule. "Reason for shift?"

"Unknown," the grey Dalek replied. "Comparison of current operation with previous time alteration experiments suggests this may be result of size of current operation! Time alteration of this magnitude has not been attempted before!"

"Threat of contact with time instability barrier?" the white Dalek demanded.

"Instability barrier holding steady at 2000 years ahead of current position," the grey Dalek replied. "Threat remains minimal."

"Keep monitoring," the white Dalek ordered, then it turned away. Other reports came in of other parts of the operation going according to plan, but the Dalek's satisfaction was spoiled. Despite the fact that there was still no threat, the shift in the time barrier was disturbing.

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The reporter faced his audience seriously. "Today is August 31, 1984, and this is the news. Our top story: world prices for grain and dairy products reacted sharply to reports out of the Soviet Union that the drought has destroyed that country's entire harvest. The Russian government has rebuffed all offers of help and is quietly purchasing goods from its neighbours to fill the shortage. The Russian Foreign Minister hotly denied reports of a possible famine, and criticized the United States for spreading rumours, and artificially forcing world prices for food higher..."

The General watched the newscast on his monitor. He chuckled.

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Yuri trudged wearily back from the local office of the Agriculture Ministry, through the streets of Kiev. He was shivering with the cold, and his cheeks were pale. "No compensation," he muttered. "And I have a family to feed."

He remembered the manager's cold response. "We have thousands

of people in the same position as you; it's been a hard winter. The government is doing what it can, so why do you expect special treatment?"

Yuri thought of the overcrowded train ride home that awaited him, and the hopeful faces of his family, and he couldn't take another step. He had to stop and lean against a wall for support.

He flinched when he was gripped roughly by the shoulder. "Move along," barked a policeman. "You know the municipal edict! No loitering!" The policeman shoved Yuri forward, and something in the farmer snapped.

With strength bolstered by rage and frustration, he whirled around and punched the policeman. His blow caught the officer off guard and sent him stumbling back. The policeman's partner rushed forward, baton at the ready. Yuri didn't see the blow coming. The next thing he knew, he was sprawled on the ground, the second policeman standing over him, arm raised to strike again.

Then the policeman was knocked back. A group of men, their clothes rough and shabby like Yuri's, rushed forward with their fists swinging. The two policemen knew they were outnumbered, so they ran. The group chased them past a couple of doorways, then stopped and stared after the retreating men, satisfied. Two men helped Yuri to his feet. "Are you all right?"

"Yes, yes, thank you," Yuri gasped. "I don't know what got into me, I shouldn't have hit the officer like that."

"Don't worry, I wanted to do that too."

"Thank you - but we'd better go. They're bound to come back."

The other man hesitated; then he grinned. "Why?"

Yuri gaped in astonishment. "You want to face those thugs again?"

"Why not? They'll keep on pushing us around until we push back."

The man was talking treason. Danger signals flashed in Yuri's mind; yet at the same time he found he was warming to the idea.

The man called his friends over. "Listen. Our friend has had trouble getting what he wants from the authorities. I think we should help him. Let's get our friends to help him too." There was a murmur of agreement. The man turned back to Yuri. "Don't worry," he said seriously. "I am here to help you. My name is Mikhail."

A half hour later, five policemen returned and scoured the square, but they couldn't find the troublemakers. Finally, they gave up and returned to their station. An hour afterwards, they were called back, to break up a disturbance that had started outside the office of the Agriculture Ministry. When they arrived, however, they knew they would be needing reinforcements.

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Three Russian tanks charged through the Kreshchatik, the main street of Kiev, towards the central square. No cars got in their way, and the pedestrians that saw them, immediately left the scene at a run. The tanks slowed down as they neared a turn, and came to a street which ran beneath an overpass. It was barricaded by buses and a swarming crowd of people. In the distance, the bells of St. Vladimir Cathedral could just be heard over the roar of a hundred thousand demonstrators.

The tanks eased into position beside another two tanks already posted. The hatches were open, and soldiers stared grimly at the angry crowd.

The Russian tank commander stood up in the turret of his tank. He brought a loudspeaker to his lips and addressed the crowd. "You have violated the municipal edicts of peace and order

## Trenchcoat

with this illegal gathering; by order of the Supreme Soviet—"At that name, the crowd's cries of derision rose, overpowering the commander's voice on the loudspeaker. A shower of rocks and bricks hit the front line of soldiers. The commander continued defiantly. "You are to cease your insubordinate activity, and you will leave the square immediately and return to your residences quietly. We are authorized to respond severely to anybody in your country who fail to obey this order!"

A soldier flinched and brought up his riot shield as a heavy stone sailed at him. He looked at the hundred people facing him, and the thousand people beyond, and he went cold with fear. Another soldier stared awestruck from his position at the gun turret.

A single voice shouted out from the crowd. Instinctively, others grew silent to let him speak. Mikhail faced the soldiers defiantly. "Yes, *our* country, but how can you call it that, when *you* rule it; plunder it to feed your insatiable war machine? Ukraine demands independence! Independence now! Independence now!"

Yuri quailed at the soldiers facing them. This, he thought, had gone way too far, but there was no going back. "Dear God!" he gasped.

The others in the crowd took up the chant. Soon, the entire square reverberated with the words, in time with the tolling of the cathedral bells. "Independence now! Independence now! Independence now!" The people surged forward. A Molotov cocktail was thrown, bursting at a soldier's feet in a fiery explosion.

The commander faced the advancing crowd grimly. "You were warned!" he shouted. And he signalled his men to fire.

Tank shells struck the overpass, cracking it and sending stone shrapnel everywhere. Rifle-men targeted people in the crowd and tens of people fell. A scream went up, a mixture of fury, fear and agony. More Molotov cocktails were thrown, and a machine gun was fired in retaliation.

A soldier in one tank hesitated. "Come on, shoot!" his commander shouted, grabbing his shoulder. Reacting instinctively, the soldier turned and knocked his commander out of his turret. He looked for support from the other men in the tank, and he got it. They rushed to their positions, slamming the hatches closed behind them. The gun barrel turned and fired, and another tank exploded.

The crowd cheered, and redoubled their attacks; a second tank was coated in gasoline and caught fire. The soldiers stumbled in disarray, not knowing who their friends or their enemies were. Seeing this, the tank commander gave the order to retreat. Two tanks managed to escape, one of them still on fire. Three tanks remained: one burnt out, and two with soldiers staring after the retreating men. The crowd mobbed them as heroes.

???

The Dalek turned from its console. "The Soviet Union is now in prime instability; republican armies disobeying commands from central authority; some armies in combat with Russian troops! Russian reinforcements traveling to battle sites. Civil war is looming!"

Another Dalek turned to its superior. "Meeting held in the Kremlin! Officials arguing; resignations being demanded! Prime conditions confirmed!"

The Dalek superior turned to its intercom. "Phase two complete! Begin phase three!"

In another room deep beneath the surface, the General stood

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up and nodded, satisfied. He pressed a button next to a speaker. "Attention all personnel; begin phase three." A computer screen next to the intercom scrolled acknowledgements, and the General smiled. He left the room and entered dim corridors hewn from solid rock. After walking past several dark rooms, and rounding several corners in the tunnel, natural light began to appear. He turned one more corner, and came out into a wide cavern.

People scurried about, dressed in overalls or well kept uniforms. Some people recognized him as he hurried by, and they took the time to salute briefly before moving on. The General reflected this was against orders. There were too many important things to do for them to stand on formality here, but if they wanted to show him due respect, he wasn't going to stop them.

The centrepiece of the cavern was a rocket, a hundred feet tall and twenty feet in diameter. Its nose cone was almost level with the lip of the crater. Its bottom could not be seen: it was several feet below the

ground, in its silo. People worked on top of scaffolding surrounding the missile, adjusting components in the nose cone. A robotic arm delicately placed three special components into place.

Finally, the last worker slammed the last inspection hatch shut and locked it. He climbed down the scaffolding as it was pulled away, allowing the missile to stand on its own. An alarm buzzer rang across the crater. People began to scurry away from the site.

A soldier stopped beside the General and gripped his arm urgently. "Sir, you should clear the area."

The General was staring at the rocket, a smile playing across his lips. Then he registered the soldier's presence. He smiled broadly. "I don't think that's necessary."

The soldier frowned. "Sir, you'd be putting yourself in danger."

The General decided to humour the young man. "All right, son. Let's go." They left the crater at a jog. Turning a corner in the tunnel, they entered a small room. One wall, made of thick glass, had been designed to give a view of the crater and the rocket.

"Thirty seconds," announced a technician, monitoring a screen.

"This is it, people," the General said. "The beginning of a new era." He frowned momentarily and turned to another soldier monitoring another readout. "How are our attackers doing?"

The soldier looked back seriously. "They outgun us, sir, but we're holding them off. It will be ten minutes before they get here."

The General smiled. "Then we've all but won."

"Four seconds," the technician called out. "Three, two, one."

There was a flare from the crater, blinding in its intensity even through the shaded glass. The ground shook, and a muted roar could just be heard. The watchers could barely make out the shape of the missile as it rose from the ground, slowly at first, then more quickly as it gained altitude. At last it cleared the crater and soared up into the sky. The General stepped up to the glass and stared up after it. The rocket dwindled to a tiny speck.

Distant gunfire rattled deep within the caves. The General came back to reality. He turned to the soldier standing beside the readout. "Tell our men to surrender. Let our attackers in here. I want to talk with them." The soldier nodded and darted from the room.

The sound of gunfire grew closer, and then it halted suddenly, replaced by the sound of running feet. Soldiers in khaki uniforms, with blue UNIT badges on their berets, marched in, herding prisoners before them.

"Who is in charge here?" the UNIT commander demanded.





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The General stepped forward. "I am," he said calmly.

"You are to stop your operation immediately," the Commander snapped. "You will turn over your soldiers to me, and they are to dismantle everything in this base."

The General smiled. "I'm afraid you're too late."

"Too late?"

The General nodded. "Much too late. The missile is flying."

The Commander's eyes widened. "Then abort it, immediately!"

The General just smiled. "And if I refuse?"

"I'll kill you," the Commander growled.

"Then I'll die," the General replied.

"You think you've won? We can warn the outside—" The commander stopped short. Again came the sound of distant gunfire, and running feet, coming closer.

"Certainly," said the General. "But first, you have to get by my reinforcements. You did a good job fighting your way into this base, Commander, but you arrived too late. Now you have to fight your way out again. Can you do that in under fifteen minutes? That's how long it will take for that missile to hit Leningrad."

The Commander felt the colour draining from his cheeks.

???

Cities erupted in flame, and people screamed. The Doctor turned off the scanner and pinched the bridge of his nose. He looked at his two companions. Sue was slumped against the wall, drawn and pale. Ryan stood beside her, rubbing his forehead.

The Doctor shook his head. They were stronger than he'd given them credit for: few people could stand to watch their own planet dying. Still, he hated himself for subjecting them to this torture.

The three stood silent for many moments, coming to terms with the images they'd seen. Finally, Sue took a deep breath and pushed herself away from the wall. "What do we do now?"

The Doctor tapped a few controls as he gathered his thoughts. Finally, he said, "Go back and put things right."

"How?" Ryan murmured. "How can you go back and change the actions of millions of people? I know the Daleks did it, but they had tremendous resources; there are only three of us here."

The Doctor thought about this. He typed in queries on a keyboard and examined a monitor beside it. He drew himself up. "I think we may have an advantage; a small one, I grant you, but an advantage nonetheless. For all of the Daleks' efforts, only one event changed Earth's history irreparably: the missile that hit Leningrad. Stop that missile, and Earth's history is almost put back on track."

"Almost?" Sue exclaimed. "Not completely?!"

"Yes, the Daleks would still have affected history; the Ukrainian independence riots, and Russia's famine, but it is the missile strike on Leningrad which created that alternative future we saw in Fort Lauderdale." The Doctor stared at her with a determined look in his eyes, and she felt a little hope rise up in her. "Without that missile strike to seal Earth's fate," he went on, "things would eventually sort themselves out. The U.S. would come to Russia's aid with grain shipments; the riots would also sort themselves out, perhaps forcing democratic changes to the Soviet Union a couple of years too early, but Earth would still survive into the third millennium. Believe it or

not, that level of time alteration is acceptable; all you two would need to do before you get back to your jobs would be to brush up on your recent history." He flashed them a grin that made Ryan chuckle, but the grim mood remained.

"Well, how do we put a stop to the missile?" asked Ryan. "Go to Jordan and warn the authorities about the sale of the plutonium?" He frowned when the Doctor shook his head. "Why not?"

"Why would they believe us?" the Doctor replied. "They might if we contacted them through UNIT, but what's to prevent this group from taking their plutonium from another source? We would delay the missile strike, true, but we wouldn't stop it. We have to stop the missile itself, and stop this group's operations completely."

"That missile would be in a heavily guarded base," said Sue.

"A group of UNIT soldiers had their hands full fighting their way in," Ryan added.

"But I wasn't there," said the Doctor emphatically. "I have the TARDIS, and can fight the Daleks on their own terms. The Dalek computer core has given me the exact location of the base where the missile was launched. I might make a difference."

Sue didn't think this an adequate response, but the look on the Doctor's face stopped her arguments. He'd already made up his mind. Something about him made her want to trust his judgment.

He deftly manipulated controls on the console. The floor shuddered, and the central column began its regular rise and fall. He didn't look at them as he worked, so concentrated was he on the controls that Sue and Ryan might not have existed at all.

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The grey Dalek veered away from its console. "Second shift in time-distortion barrier! Loss of contact with all forces in the future now reduced to 1500 years ahead of current time position and holding stable!"

The white and gold Dalek rounded on its underling. "Reason for second shift?" it shrielled.

"Unknown," the grey Dalek replied.

"Suggest method to stabilize barrier!"

"None are known!"

"Risk to current operation?" the Dalek superior demanded.

"Still minimal," the underling intoned.

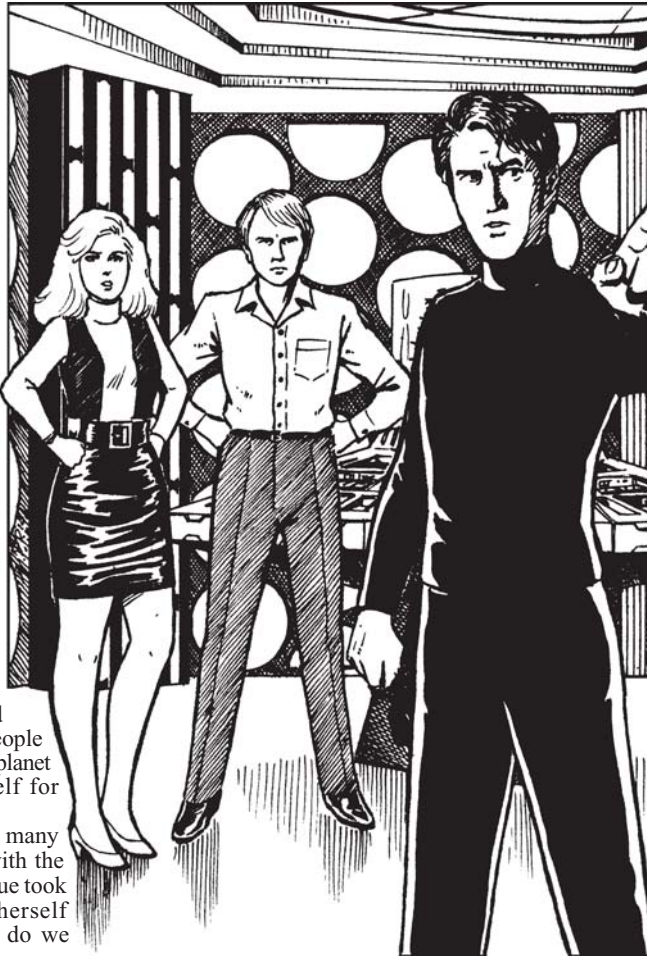
The white and gold Dalek turned away without another word, but its eyestalk still twitched. The two bulbs at the top of its dome flickered as the creature considered the ramifications of this change. It could hardly hope to control a time barrier, it reflected; only the Time Lords knew all of the secrets of time. It didn't like something it couldn't control.

Another Dalek turned from its monitor. "We have lost contact with Dalek Patrol sent to exterminate the Doctor. Analysis suggests the patrol was destroyed. The TARDIS belonging to Time Lord Doctor has departed alternate Earth, ten years from current time position, and is heading to current location."

The superior Dalek's nervous twitching ebbed. This was a situation it could control. "Warn all units in the base: arrival of Time Lord Doctor imminent! He is to be exterminated on sight!"

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Sue was frowning. She stood at the door to the console room, staring into the interior corridor. The Doctor hadn't said a word to them since the ship left alternate Fort Lauderdale.



## Trenchcoat

When there was nothing more to do at the controls, he had occupied himself by rooting around in a storage locker. Finally he straightened up, gathering several pieces of electronic gadgetry in his arms, and strode back to the console room. Sue had to jump out of his way.

The Doctor tossed the electronic components on the floor; he didn't react when several of these shattered upon impact. He sat in the middle of the mess, and pulled open a panel beneath the console. He began to piece the components together in a pattern that seemed to Sue and Ryan to be random. He connected these electronic amalgamations into the wiring protruding from the open panel.

He muttered to himself, as though there was no one else to speak to. Sue shot a glance at Ryan; he was frowning too.

???

There was no light. Except for the sound of water dripping nearby, and more drops echoing from a distance, all was silent. Then, with a cacophony of engine noise, the TARDIS materialized in the cave. For a few seconds the flashing beacon on its roof sent the shadows flying. When the materialization was complete the sounds stopped, and the beacon switched off. Darkness returned.

???

The floor shuddered. The Doctor took a deep breath, forgot about his work with the electronic gadgets, and hauled himself to his feet. "Good," he muttered to himself. "The ship's landed."

Sue and Ryan were still frowning. It is as though he is deliberately ignoring us, she thought. She remembered their discussion before they left the ship and entered bombed out Fort Lauderdale. The Doctor's isolated attitude could only mean one thing. To test the waters she said simply, "Now what do we do?"

The Doctor drew himself up at this, but he didn't say anything for a moment. Ryan could sense him thinking carefully, choosing his next words with care, as though gearing up for an argument.

Finally, the Doctor turned back to the console without answering. He punched instructions into the keyboard, and the scanner panels parted. A computer image filled the screen. It was a map, with certain areas highlighted in yellow. The Doctor stared at it, saying nothing.

Sue glanced at Ryan, who nodded. He turned to the Doctor. "Doctor, what are you looking at?"

The Doctor glanced at them again, frowning. Finally, he said, "A map of the base."

Sue peered at it. "Good! Where are we in it?"

"This base is an isolated section of the Carpathian mountains in Rumania," the Doctor replied distractedly. "Don't ask me how it got there, but from the configuration, I'd hazard a guess it was built from the remains of an abandoned coal mine. I've landed the ship well away from any personnel areas and I believe I've found the target area. If I could just..."

He adjusted a control, and a section of the map was highlighted in blue. He nodded, satisfied, and punched a button on the console. A piece of paper spat from a slot with the map printed on it.

Sue reached for the paper, but the Doctor snatched it away. He stuffed it inside his jacket. "This will be very useful when I go out there." He glared at them. "Alone."

Unfazed by the Doctor's scowl, Sue glared back at him just as fiercely. "No!"

He blew through his teeth. "You're being unreasonable."

She cut in sharply. "No, you're the one who's being unreasonable, Doctor! It's bad enough that it will be just the three of us against the entire resources those Dalek creatures have, but if you go alone, you might as well commit suicide and let Earth's future remain altered as it is. You can't do this alone!"

"Doctor," Ryan added firmly, "you're the only hope we have of getting back home, and making sure our home planet remains safe. It's our duty to protect you. And we will protect you."

The Doctor pointed at the blue area on the screen. "Do you see that? That's medium level radiation. Only one thing can have caused that: those bars of plutonium. Even shielded, they pack enough punch to take months off somebody's life. If you get exposed to that radiation, particularly if I have to remove it from its protective shielding, you might as well commit suicide yourselves."

"Those anti-radiation pills, then," Sue began.

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"Not effective enough for those conditions," the Doctor snapped.

"Then full radiation suits!" Ryan shot back. "You must have some; you weren't intending to go out unprotected, surely!" Ryan grinned fiercely when the Doctor looked away in frustration. "You do have some! So we can come with you!"

When the Doctor looked back at them, there was a hint of desperation in his eyes. "Please," he begged. "Don't do this. I practically kidnapped you; I don't want to be responsible should anything happen to you."

Sue's expression softened but her gaze remained firm. "You won't be responsible," she said. "We will."

He drooped, defeated. "All right." He motioned them to follow him out the console room. "The radiation suits are this way. There should be enough for the three of us." Sue and Ryan glanced at each other triumphantly and followed the Doctor through the interior door.

???

Alarm klaxons rang across the Dalek control room. A grey Dalek veered from its controls. "Sensors indicate arrival of Time Ship; it is the Doctor's TARDIS!"

The white-gold Dalek superior did not twitch. "Condition red! Notify all base personnel. Assess TARDIS location, search for the Doctor, and exterminate him!"

"Sensors report shortages in personnel and resources," another white Dalek reported. "Not enough humans available to mount full scale search. Enemy patrol nearing entrance to base; human forces have already been dispatched to monitor and fight if necessary."

"Access likely locations where Doctor would attempt interference," the Dalek superior ordered. "Guard those areas." It paused for a second, accessing information, then continued. "Correction: assemble near those areas and prepare ambush!"

"Computer analysis suggests Doctor's primary target is the plutonium stores!" the white Dalek reported. "These stores are unguarded due to heavy radioactivity. They are located well away from the rest of the base. Analysis suggests human patrol would not arrive within twenty minutes."

The white and gold Dalek superior began to twitch. "Use time corridor. Send a Dalek patrol!"

A grey Dalek monitoring the time controls veered towards its commander. "Another shift in the time instability barrier! Now down to 500 years ahead of current time position! Further warning: time point of barrier continues to shift erratically!"

A silence fell upon the control room as the Dalek superior pondered its options. Its appendages twitched nervously. "Risk of using time corridor?"

"Now beyond lower safety limits!" the grey Dalek replied.

The Dalek superior stopped twitching, but it remained silent for several more seconds. Finally, it made its decision, but it spoke it reluctantly. "Do not use time corridor! Send a human patrol!"

"The Doctor will reach the plutonium stores first!" the white Dalek replied.

"That is my order!" the Dalek superior shrieked. "The human patrol shall catch the Doctor in the plutonium store! Relay my orders immediately!"

The other Daleks turned back to their controls. The Dalek superior watched over them all. Its eyestalk began to twitch again.

???

The door to the TARDIS opened, and the Doctor stepped out, followed by Sue and Ryan. All wore white radiation suits, including gloves and helmets. Their respirators amplified the sound of their breathing; it echoed and reechoed off the cave walls. The Doctor said nothing as he locked the door. Sue and Ryan didn't need to look at his face to feel his grim mood.

He turned to them. "Here," he said, offering something which glinted off his gloved palm. "Extra keys to the TARDIS, one each. If any of us get separated, head straight back to the TARDIS and get yourself inside." As Sue and Ryan took the keys, he pulled something else from a pouch in his suit. "These will help you find the TARDIS should you get lost."

Sue frowned as she took the unfamiliar looking blue crystals. There were only two. "What about you?"

"My homing beacon is in here," the Doctor replied, tapping his forehead. "Now, we're wasting time, so let's go." He led the way down the tunnel. The floor sloped down in a gentle incline. They



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walked in silence, carefully, alert for guards or security cameras. Ryan was surprised to find none. The only sound in the caves, other than their footfalls, was the steady rhythm tapped out by the water dripping from the ceiling.

"Are you sure we landed in the right place?" He kept his voice low, just in case.

The Doctor didn't look back. "Certainly. This is the remains of an old mine, last worked over fifty years ago. However, people have been here, less than twenty-four hours ago. We're in the right place." He shivered. "I can feel it."

Despite himself, Ryan also shivered. Still, he pressed on. "But Doctor, surely we would have encountered somebody by now."

"Only if our enemies applied brute force," the Doctor cut in. "Deception can be just as effective a weapon if used right. Keep quiet, and you won't need as many guards tramping around, attracting more attention. This is an illegal American base in Rumania, Ryan. I ran into something similar in Canada a long while ago; drawing attention to themselves is the last thing these people want. It's the last thing we want as well, so hush!"

Now it was Sue's turn to shiver. She was walking beside the Doctor, not behind him like Ryan. She could see the Doctor's face, and all its warmth had gone. Instead it wore a look of bleak determination. He'd been wearing the same look since they left Fort Lauderdale, she thought.

The Doctor rounded a bend in the cave, and the walls began to widen out. Sensing something about to happen, Sue and Ryan kept their hands near their guns. The Doctor just strode on grimly.

They topped a short rise, and the ground dropped away into a wide cavern. Sue and Ryan stopped short.

Floodlights gleamed on the metal complex beneath them. A steel platform covered half the floor and appeared to grow out of the rock face on the opposite side. Oil barrels five feet tall were stacked here and there on the platform; metal beams thrust upward, bearing lights and other equipment. On the far side, metal doors led into the cavern wall.

Closer to where they stood, in the part of the cavern not built upon, other tunnels bored into the rock. The air hummed with electricity, but otherwise all was quiet.

The silence was eerie, thought Ryan. He'd have expected at least some personnel here, but the place echoed with emptiness. Putting himself in the place of their enemies, he realized one way of defeating intruders was to let them in without resistance, and then snap the trap closed when least expected. Here was one such open invitation.

The Doctor pulled an electronic device from the pouch in his radiation suit. He aimed it at the metal mini-complex. It emitted a few clicks. He nodded grimly and pocketed the device. "We're here. Yes, it was too easy. They're probably waiting. Then again, perhaps they're badly underfinanced. Isn't that the normal complaint of the defence department?"

It was a rare joke, so Sue couldn't help but chuckle. But the Doctor's face grew serious again. "Come on," he said. "Let's walk into the parlour. There's nothing else to do." The slope down to the cavern floor was steep but manageable; the three slithered down in half a minute. They crossed the floor and the Doctor led the way onto the metal platform.

Their soft footfalls on the metal floor echoed across the cavern. The Doctor looked around, panning his clicking device.

"Much too easy," Sue said, and Ryan nodded.

"Definitely. They must be at least watching us. If I were them,

## Trenchcoat

I'd put security cameras all over this -" He froze, staring at a metal pillar at the edge of the platform. He grabbed Sue's wrist as she passed him and motioned with his head.

"Doctor," said Sue quietly, but the Time Lord was distracted. "Doctor!" she hissed. He turned around. Ryan nodded to a security camera mounted on the metal pillar. It slowly and quietly panned between the three of them.

"Now we've walked into it," the Doctor muttered. "No excuse for them not coming now." He turned away with a snort. "I can't be bothered by this, there's work to be done. You take care of it. They know we're here, but I don't want them to know our every move." He approached the wall, aiming his device at the doors.

Sue and Ryan glanced at each other and Ryan nodded. He pulled his gun from the pouch in his radiation suit and took careful aim. An ear splitting crack burst through the cavern, and the camera shattered. Ryan pocketed his pistol, satisfied.

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The General watched Sue and Ryan on the monitor screen, as they stared at the mangled security camera. He chuckled. "Still one step ahead of you, you commie bastards." He pressed a button on the console and the scene changed to that of soldiers running down the tunnels.

???

The Doctor stood before a metal door at the back of the complex. The device in his hand crackled as he pointed it. Gathering his courage, he tried the door handle; it was locked. There was a small control panel beside the door. The Doctor paused for only a second before producing a pocket knife and attacking the screws.

Behind him he heard Sue and Ryan shifting the metal barrels as they set up their defences. They worked quickly and quietly, alert for the sound of approaching attackers. A twinge of guilt hit him, but he continued to unscrew the panel.

He yanked a wire from the control mechanism, and connected two others together. There was a click, and the metal door shuddered, then swung open. The soft clicks from the Doctor's Geiger counter intensified. Sparing a glance at Sue and Ryan as they continued their work, the Doctor stepped into the room.

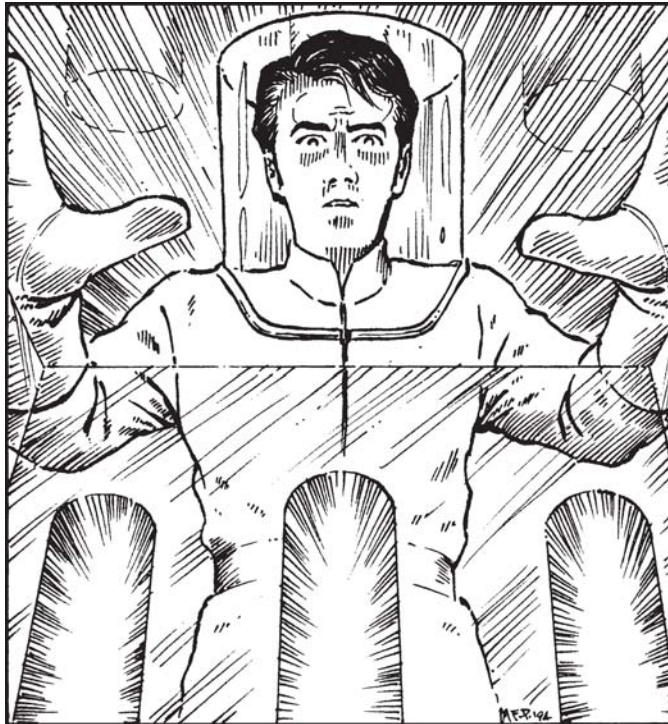
It was lit by blue-white lamps that cast a dim, sickly glow across everything. Crates were stacked to one side, their lids ajar. The Doctor peered into one and found only maintenance supplies, hammers, nails and screwdrivers. "Nothing for Sue and Ryan here," he muttered.

Other crates were stacked haphazardly, some with tarpaulins draped over them, others bare. At the end of the room, shrouded in shadows and partly screened by other crates, was another metal door. There was a small control panel beside it. The Doctor stepped over and peered at it appraisingly.

Then something caught his eye to his left, and he looked. Standing in an alcove was a glass case. The Doctor was uncertain whether the unnatural blue glow came from some strange light source within, or from the three metal bars which sat on the shelves, each well separated from the others.

He pointed his device at the glass case. It emitted a barrage of clicks, and he nodded. "Special glass; it still manages to shield most of the plutonium's radiation. Now what do I need?"

He peered at the glass case and found the control panel beneath it. Behind the glass, near the top, he could see a metal arm. There was a metal panel above the case, much wider than the three bars of plutonium.



## Trenchcoat

"So they have taken precautions," he muttered. "All I need are container cases. The robotic arm can handle the packing for me." He stood up and darted from crate to crate. On his fourth try, he found what he was looking for. He propped up the lid, reached in and took out a heavy lead box.

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The grey Dalek veered from the controls. The white and gold Dalek superior was already facing it. "Again?" it shrielled.

The grey Dalek paused only for a moment. "Yes! The barrier has shifted again! Now down to 100 years! It is still closing! Safety levels close to being compromised!"

The white and gold Dalek veered away. "Abort this operation! Abort it immediately!"

???

The General stared at the monitor in disbelief. "Call off my soldiers? Let the Doctor take the plutonium? Surrender my forces to UNIT? Are you crazy? Never!"

"You must obey the will of the Daleks!" the intercom shrielled.

"Obey a bunch of cowards?" the General growled. "No damn way!" Suddenly he gripped his temples and grunted in pain.

"You will obey!" the Dalek shrieked. "You must obey!"

"No!" the General grunted. With great effort, he brought his hands to his lap and forced his teeth to unclench. He glared at the Dalek on the video screen. "Do you think you can control me like your other duplicates? I've been around longer than any of them, and I know what's right!"

"You do not know!" The Dalek's voice rose to a squeal. "You do not think! That is not your function! You obey!"

"The only reason I agreed to work with you was because you promised to help me blow the commies off the planet! If you want to chicken out, feel free, but I won't! And my soldiers are not duplicates, they're loyal to me, not you!" With a snarl, he flipped a switch, and the shrieking Dalek disappeared from the monitor.

"Tin plated idiots," he muttered.

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The Dalek monitoring the intercom whirled towards its superior. "The General has broken his conditioning! His soldiers are still proceeding to attack the Doctor and his companions!"

The grey Dalek veered from its controls. "Time instability barrier now at seventy-five years and falling!"

The white Dalek's eyestalk twitched. "Send a patrol to exterminate the soldiers! The missile must not be fired! This operation must be aborted at once!"

Another Dalek turned away from a computer. "Analysis suggests insufficient numbers of Dalek units to stop the soldiers in ti—"

"Do it!" the Dalek superior shrielled.

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Sue and Ryan grunted as they heaved the last metal barrel into place. They had created four enclosures, protecting them and the Doctor from any attack from the caves. They viewed their handiwork proudly.

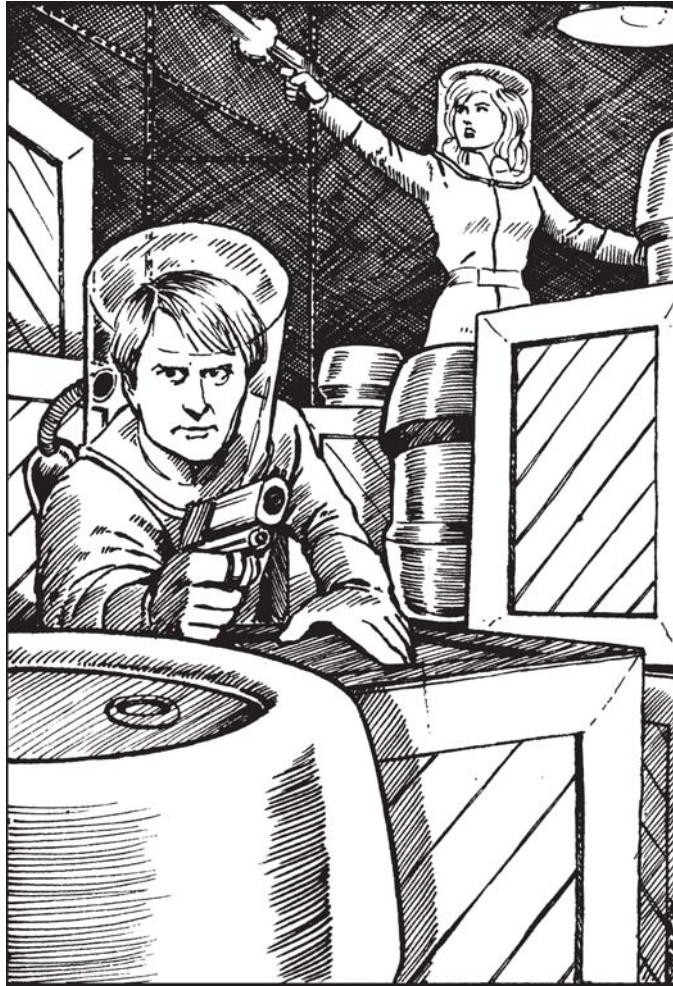
"That should give us some time," Ryan muttered.

Sue frowned. "What if they attack us with a bazooka?"

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Ryan glared at her. Sue turned away. "Sorry."

They whirled around at a sudden noise. They saw nothing in the cave mouths and the cavern was quiet, but a distant click and a brief echo told them that trouble was on its way.



They glanced at each other and snapped into action. Choosing separate enclosures they crouched behind them, guns at the ready. The distant clicks became more and more frequent, and the echoes came closer. A column of soldiers ran out of the tunnel and into the cavern.

Sue blinked in astonishment. These men were wearing American uniforms! They were in Rumania, and yet they weren't even being subtle about it!

The soldiers advanced on the metal complex. Sue's finger tightened on the trigger of her pistol. The crack of the weapon cut across the cavern. The soldiers ducked behind cover, and fired back a deafening barrage with rifles. Sue crouched down as bullets whanged and zinged off her enclosure. Ryan fired another shot. The noise in the enclosed space was ear wracking.

Then silence fell. Sue and Ryan peered over their enclosures carefully. The soldiers were keeping behind the cover of metal pillars, as well as in the cave mouths. Not a clear shot among them, Sue thought.

Outgunned and outnumbered, Ryan thought bitterly. Not a hope. He squared his shoulders. We don't have to survive, he told himself. All

we need to do is give the Doctor time.

Sue looked up as a soldier called to them. "You down there!" he shouted. "We've got you surrounded! Surrender!"

Ryan glanced at Sue across the complex. She shook her head and sent him a brief thumbs-up. Ryan turned back. "Not on your life!" he shouted.

"Look, be reasonable," the soldier called. "You know how bad the odds are for you! Why not make it easier on yourself? Greenpeace doesn't need another pair of martyrs!"

Sue blinked. "Greenpeace?" What had the officers told these men?

Ryan chuckled tersely. Making it easy on themselves meant making it much harder for the entire world. He toyed with the idea of telling them this, then dismissed it. If these men were as well indoctrinated as he suspected they were, facts weren't going to count for much with them.

He shouted back, "If you want to make it easier on us, why not just leave us alone?"

"We can't do that!"

"I didn't think so," muttered Sue. Movement caught her eye and she swung around, firing. A soldier fell back, dropping his weapon, and scrambled for cover with his hand clutching the other shoulder. Sue stretched to get the rifle, but gunfire sent her scrambling back.

Sue and Ryan cringed in their enclosures as bullets ricocheted off the metal barrels. They looked for clear shots, but found none.

"Come on, Doctor, hurry!" Ryan hissed.



???

The Doctor pulled the first lead box from the slot. Making sure the lid was on tightly, he set it aside. He glanced out the door when he heard the gunshots, but he couldn't see things properly from his vantage point. He frowned nervously, then turned back to the glass case. Snatching the second lead box, he inserted it into the slot. Jabbing a complex sequence into the controls, he watched as the robot arm reached down with agonizing slowness and gently picked up a plutonium bar.

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Sue grimaced in frustration as she slid her last cartridge of ammo into her revolver. One glance at Ryan told her the same story. She peered over her enclosure and instinctively ducked back before the volley of gunfire.

"Sue!" shouted Ryan. He gestured at the metal door. Sue nodded and tensed. Ryan paused, then jumped up and fired several shots. As he ducked back under the hail of returning fire, Sue scrambled up and ran for the door, picking up the discarded rifle on her way. Once there, she crouched in the door frame and fired several rounds. Ryan dove in beside her.

"You timed that perfectly," the Doctor called. He waved them deeper into the room and handed Ryan a lead box from the top of the glass case. "Mind yourself," he said. "This is heavier than you think."

Ryan grunted as he took the case. He fumbled it and almost dropped it. Sue lunged forward to steady it.

Ryan nodded at the outer door. "It won't be long before our friends come calling."

"Leave that to me." The Doctor picked up the other two lead boxes, with no effort at all. "You two, go to the back of the room, right now. I'll meet you at the back door."

As they scrambled to the back of the room, the Doctor stepped forward. Movement outside the door caught his eye and he called out, "I wouldn't do that! I see you aren't wearing any radiation suits! I don't blame you; too cumbersome and all that. Big mistake, though. Stepping through this door could be hazardous to your health."

The approaching footsteps slowed, but the soldiers still came closer. One peered through the door and paled. What he saw was the Doctor setting one of the lead cases on the floor and raising its lid. The metal ingot within was glowing. The soldier scrambled back, falling over his comrades in his haste to get away from the door.

The Doctor smiled grimly. Leaving the open box on the floor, he took the second box and strode to the end of the room, where Sue and Ryan were waiting. He punched the control panel, and the metal door swung open.

The room on the other side was no larger than a closet. It was bare save for a single control panel. Its floor, ceiling and walls were separated from the main room by a small gap.

"An elevator?" Sue gasped.

"Our escape route," the Doctor replied. "In."

They scrambled inside. The Doctor slammed the door shut, then jabbed a sequence into the control panel. The floor shuddered; the elevator began to rise.

"They'll still be after us," said Ryan. "What's to stop them ambushing us wherever this lets us off?"

"Let me handle that," the Doctor muttered as he took the other lead case from Ryan's arms.

???

The white and gold Dalek monitoring operations veered towards its superior. "The Doctor has taken the plutonium, but time alteration has still not been fully corrected!"

"Time barrier still in place, now at sixty years and falling," the grey Dalek shrieked.

The operations Dalek continued, "Analysis suggests time alteration will remain until plutonium bars are in the TARDIS, or under full Dalek control. There must be a 100% probability they will not be used.

The Dalek superior thought for a moment. It turned back to its underling. "Reroute patrol! Advance on the Doctor! The plutonium bars must be safely in Dalek possession so they will not be used!"

The other Daleks rushed to comply.

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The lift shuddered and came to a halt. The Doctor pushed open the door. An empty cave confronted them. "Right," he said. "You take your homing beacons and continue to the next level. Get back to the TARDIS as fast as you can."

Ryan reached for the lead cases, but the Doctor held them away. Ryan frowned. "You're going with the plutonium? Are you nuts?"

"If I have the plutonium, it will be me they want," the Doctor explained. "This will give you the chance to get back to the TARDIS in one piece."

"But if they catch you, then they'll have the plutonium!" Sue exclaimed. "Your efforts to put history back will be worthless."

"You're forgetting about the UNIT patrol," said the Doctor. "All I need to do is delay those soldiers long enough. Once the UNIT troops take control, I'll have succeeded. Don't worry, I'll give the soldiers a good chase." Abruptly, he kissed Sue on the cheek.

Ryan gripped the Doctor's arm. "No way, Doctor. We're coming with you." He brandished his gun. "We're still here to protect you."

The Doctor sighed and smiled. "Fair enough. Follow me." He turned to leave the lift. Then he suddenly whirled around and kicked Sue in the shin. She gasped in pain and shock, and fell against Ryan. In the confusion, the Doctor jumped out of the elevator and slammed the door shut. He nodded grimly as he heard his companions banging their fists angrily at the door from within.

"Don't waste your time, my friends," he muttered. "I rewired the controls so they couldn't be manipulated by our soldier friends, and also to make sure you go exactly where you're supposed to." He pressed the control panel. Engines whined and the elevator rose. The sound of angry shouts and thumps faded into the distance.

The Doctor looked up guiltily. "Sorry," he added. Shifting his grip on the lead cases, he turned and ran along the cave.

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The General watched the Doctor's progress on the security monitors. He pressed a button and leaned towards an intercom. "Ignore the two in the elevator. It's the one holding the plutonium we want. Go to level two immediately!"

He turned back to the monitor. Flipping more switches, he watched his soldiers in pitched battle with UNIT troops, near the cave entrance. He tapped his fingers on the table nervously.

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The elevator glided to a stop and the door swung open. Sue stared bleakly at the empty cave. "We lost him."

Ryan gripped her shoulder. "We don't know that. Remember how often he's given us the slip? I'm afraid it's out of our hands, though."

Sue grimaced. She felt something hard in her pocket, almost the size of a small stone. Without stopping to look, she snatched it from her pouch and made to hurl it against the stone wall.

Ryan caught her wrist. "Careful!" he hissed.

Sue realized she was holding the blue crystal that was her homing beacon to the TARDIS. She calmed herself with an effort. "Sorry. I wasn't thinking."

"I know you're frustrated, Sue," said Ryan firmly. "But we need to keep a level head. We also need both the homing beacons in case we get separated." He pulled his beacon from the pocket of his radiation suit and fumbled with it. Without knowing quite how, he turned it on. It glowed and emitted a soft beep. The beeping intensified as he pointed it into the cave.

"Come on, he said. "The sooner we're back at the TARDIS, the sooner we'll find him." He stepped forward, his homing beacon held out in front. Sue sighed deeply and trailed behind him.

???

The Doctor ran through the tunnels for a good ten minutes without meeting anyone. He paused at a junction of three tunnels to catch his breath and reassess his options. Another ten minutes, and he'd be back in the TARDIS. If he got there, Earth's future would be secure. But this had been too easy, so

## Trenchcoat

far. A band of soldiers must be somewhere on his route, waiting in an ambush.

If he had to give them a chase, how much time would he have to delay them? He calculated. "Thirty minutes," he muttered. Somehow, he didn't think they were going to allow him to waste their time, especially if UNIT was knocking on their door.

He looked up sharply as he heard the echo of a distant footfall. Others followed. People were approaching down the tunnel that led him to the TARDIS. It was going to be a chase, then.

Adjusting his hold on the two lead boxes, he picked the right hand corridor and ran. When he saw the security camera, it was already too late.

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The General smiled triumphantly. "Got him!" He leaned towards the intercom. "He's in tunnel 74, heading south. Follow him. Send another patrol to cut him off at junction 45. Hurry, we don't have much time. I will be joining you shortly."

He flipped a switch and the scene on the monitor switched to that of the battle with UNIT troops. I'm not beaten yet, you bastards!" he growled.

???

The Dalek turned away from the computer screen. "The Doctor is in tunnel 74! Soldiers in pursuit!"

The white and gold Dalek replied immediately. "Reroute patrol to tunnel 74. Exterminate the Doctor and bring the plutonium under Dalek control. Exterminate all who interfere! Hurry!"

The Daleks rushed to relay the orders.

???

The Doctor panted as he ran for his life. The lead cases grew heavy in his arms. Still, he could hear the footfalls of soldiers in pursuit. He tripped once on the uneven ground, but was on his feet in the next step, without breaking stride. "Thirty minutes," he gasped. "They've been chasing me for fifteen minutes. Another fifteen minutes to go."

He turned a corner and stopped short. He made to dive back under cover, but it was too late. A barricade stretched across the tunnel, and it was manned. The soldiers had seen him and were raising their weapons. The soldiers behind him were quickly catching up. The Doctor groaned. "That's torn it!"

"Don't move," said a voice from behind the barricade. The officer who stepped forward radiated authority: so much so that he evidently felt no need to raise his voice. He reached out and deftly unhooked the radiation helmet from the neck of the Doctor's suit, then carefully lifted it off. The Doctor made no move to stop him. Instead, he looked over his adversary carefully.

He was a middle-aged man, tall and bulky, with dark hair. His uniform, with its General's insignia, was fastidiously clean. He was smiling, but his dark eyes carried no hint of emotion.

"The Doctor, I presume?" His smile widened: like a wolf's grin before its cornered prey, the Doctor thought. "Good to finally meet you. I've heard so much about you.

"From the Daleks, I take it? I wonder what they said."

"Don't worry." The General chuckled. "I take everything those tinpots say with a grain of salt."

The Doctor glared. "Then why are you working for them?"

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"Because it suits me."

"No, because you're a duplicate," the Doctor snapped. "I should have known. I can see it in your eyes. Don't you realize what you're doing? Don't take orders from them! You've been conditioned! Brainwashed! Break free!"

"I already have," the General replied, and the Doctor stopped short. "You will recall that the old Imperial Daleks left many duplicates on Earth the last time they were in contact with

1984. You were right, Doctor, most were unstable, and many reverted back to their original characters, or went insane. I, however, remained stable until recently."

"Yet you still work for the Daleks?" asked the Doctor incredulously.

"The Daleks, when they returned, came to an agreement with me. We both wanted the same thing, you see; to wipe the Reds off this planet, and to save the free world. I'm afraid the Daleks got cold feet and decided to pull out, so I'm going to have to continue on my own."

"And your soldiers?" asked the Doctor.

"They've been loyal to me since before the Daleks came. I can count on each and every one of them."

"Still?" The Doctor stared past the General, at the men on the barricade. "And you think they'll still support you, after hearing you say these things?"

"For all they know, Doctor, these words of mine could just be something to humour a

madman." The General smiled briefly.

"Listen to me!" the Doctor shouted. "You mustn't continue! You'll destroy the whole world!"

"The Communists will destroy us if we don't act!"

"You're wrong! They'll no longer be a threat in five years' time. You saw how easily the Daleks destabilized them; this would have happened naturally had no one intervened!"

The General frowned. Seeing a glimmer of hope, the Doctor ploughed on. "Don't you see how wrong this is? Do you have any idea how many people will die in a nuclear war - and afterwards? Think of what you're doing, man! Civilization will come to a grinding halt because of you!"

For a moment, the General said nothing. His gaze went inward, as though he were mulling over the Doctor's words. Then the steel returned to his glare. "I believe you're lying. You're a pacifist who's too cowardly to make the strong decisions. I believe you're just trying to make me uncertain. Well, it won't work!"

"And I believe you haven't overthrown your conditioning, no matter what you may think!"

"I'm not willing to gamble that the commies will fall apart on their own," said the General. "If you wait for the first strike, you get it in the face." He held out his hands. "Give me those cases, Doctor."

The Doctor took a step back. The soldiers in front and behind him cocked their weapons. The sound reminded him of the clicking of stones in dead Fort Lauderdale, as they scattered underfoot.

"Doctor." The General put on a mild tone. "Be reasonable. You can hand us the cases now, or we can take them from your dead body. It's your choice, but why not make it easier on yourself?"

The Doctor remembered Sue's horror at recognizing the ruined





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city. He glared at the General and the armed soldiers around him. Then his shoulders sagged in defeat. "Very well." He set the cases on the ground.

The General stepped forward and snatched them up. He handed one to an officer and held the other for a moment, staring at it in delight. Then he frowned and hefted it in his hands. Recklessly, he fumbled for the catch and yanked open the lid. The box was empty.

He glared at the Doctor, then his face paled. The Time Lord was standing there with two plutonium ingots in his gloved hands.

"Six kilograms of plutonium in each palm," said the Doctor. "Not enough for an explosion, fortunately, but touch them together and the radioactive flash will be quite toxic. I'd advise everybody to run while they still can."

The air was suddenly filled with cries of panic as the soldiers scattered.

"You lunatic," said the General quietly. But he held his ground.

"I'm sorry," The Doctor was at his most serious. "Truly I am. But for the sake of this planet and others, I can't let you continue." He held the two ingots out, inches apart. He began to move them towards each other.

"Don't do it! You'll kill yourself!"

"So be it." The Doctor moved his hands and touched the two plutonium ingots together.

???

New turbulence shuddered across the timestreams.

In the cavern deep beneath the Rockies, General Frazier looked on in mounting despair as Glenn read out the names of fallen cities like a death knell.

"Boston, Philadelphia, Paris, Halifax, Los Angeles, San Diego, London, Washington, Oakland, Rome, Pittsburgh, Montreal, Ottawa." Glenn grimaced as the next name scrolled across the screen. He thought of his wife. "Fort Lauderdale..."

Frazier frowned as Glenn continued to read out names. He felt strange, and this was more than just stress. He looked at his hands and thought he could see his desk top through them. Everything was becoming translucent. The trajectory lines streaking across the global map began to fade. Glenn's voice started to sound as though it were coming from a greater and greater distance.

Even as Frazier disappeared with the rest of the people in the complex, he felt a little hope rising in him.

The mushroom cloud bloomed over the city. The church bells rang for one last time as the explosion blew them from their steeples. Children screamed. Everyone was blinded as the air glowed white hot.

The deafening roar suddenly faded to nothingness. The white mist disappeared. The buildings stood tall, gleaming in the bright winter sunlight. In the schoolyards, the children laughed.

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There was a flash, and the air temperature in the cave rose ten degrees. The General clutched his eyes, cursing his blindness. He stumbled, then sank to his knees, grunting as the pain increased.

The Doctor forced himself to watch. His face was flushed an unnatural red. "I'm sorry," he gasped.

He heard gunfire in the distance, and the sound of running feet.

## Trenchcoat

The soldiers hiding in the cave turned to meet a column of UNIT troops. Rifles blazed, but the Doctor only heard a few of them. There was a ringing in his ears.

He sensed rather than saw movement behind him and he dove away just as the Dalek fired.

The bolt of radiation seared into the cave and American soldiers screamed. To the Doctor's surprise, the three white and gold Daleks behind their white and gold leader fired more shots at the Americans.

"I don't believe it," he gasped. "They really are aborting the operation, leaving nothing behind!" He grabbed the fallen lead canisters and shoved the ingots inside. He tossed the heavy box at a Dalek just as it fired, knocking its weapon askew. The Dalek exploded as UNIT soldiers rushed in and fired a bazooka.

He lobbed the other case; it battered the Dalek's eyestalk. As it took time to refocus, it was destroyed as the bazooka, which had been reloaded, was fired again. The two remaining Daleks glided slowly back towards the cave where they had come from.

The Doctor staggered back as a wave of dizziness hit him. "The TARDIS," he muttered. "I must get to the TARDIS. Sue and Ryan will be worried." He turned

and ran into an empty tunnel, leaving the battle behind.

???

The Daleks in their control room were in a frenzy, monitoring readings as they arrived.

"Earth history returned to within 80% of original timeline," a Dalek shrilled. "Time alteration project officially closed!"

The grey Dalek veered from its console. "Contact with home planet not re-established! Time instability barrier remains! Twenty years ahead of current time position and closing!"

The Dalek superior recoiled. "How is this possible? Time lines should have re-established when operation ceased!"

"Unknown," the grey Dalek shrieked. "Situation approaching critical!"

???

The Doctor stumbled through the corridors. He was disoriented, which for him was rare. He paused at a junction and struggled to focus his vision and fix his bearings. He picked the corridor on the right and ran up a sloping tunnel. His vision blurred again, and he could hardly hear a thing through the ringing in his ears.

He stumbled into a metal door. Unconsciously, he manipulated the controls to open it and stagger through. The railing saved him from a twenty-foot drop. For a moment he just stood, gripping the railing, and staring down from the ledge as he tried to quell his lurching stomach.

Twenty feet below, ten Daleks stared back at him.

The Doctor's mind cleared when he heard the metal door swinging shut behind him. Turn to run, and they'd shoot him in the back. Stay, and they'd shoot him where he stood. Play for time, then.

The Daleks were manning computers, control stations and monitors. He recalled the frenzied activity he'd heard as he entered the room; now there was a stunned silence.

Most importantly, of the ten Daleks at the controls, five were grey with black half-spheres on the lower part of their casings, while the others were white with gold half-spheres.



The Doctor gasped. "Renegades and Imperials in the same room, working together?" Then he composed himself. "So, you've finally reunited, have you? A fat lot of good that will do you."

"The Dalek factions settled their differences after you destroyed our home planet," the Dalek superior retorted. "Your atrocity galvanized the empire! We fight together to ensure our survival!"

The Doctor frowned. "I'm sorry. You have every right to be angry, but I wasn't completely in control of my faculties at the time—"

"Do not deny it!" the superior shrielled. "It was you!"

A grey Dalek turned from its controls and shrielled, "Time barrier down to fifteen years and falling! Analysis suggests outside influence! Situation critical!"

The Dalek superior turned back to the Doctor. "Is this your doing? Is this your people's doing? We have fought so hard against the evils surrounding us, but we will soon be overwhelmed! You must be punished for the suffering you have caused!"

The Doctor sensed movement behind him, and he whirled around, too late. The blast from the grey Dalek's weapon struck him full in the chest and pitched him back. He toppled over the railing and fell twenty feet, landing on a console that exploded in a shower of sparks.

The Doctor picked himself off the floor. He tried to stand, but doubled over and fell to his knees. He glared at the Dalek superior. "That was barely enough to kill a human," he gasped. "Why?"

"You will pay for your crimes!" the superior cried, and it fired a bolt of radiation. The charge pitched the Doctor into the stone wall below the ledge. Other Daleks joined in, pummeling the Doctor with low grade bolts. He writhed in agony.

The grey Dalek veered from its console. "Time instability barrier down to five years and still falling! Contact is imminent!"

Then the ground began to shake. The Daleks stopped their attack on the Doctor, who had stopped moving. They looked around desperately. The shaking intensified until it became more than a normal earthquake. The air itself was quivering. The Doctor's eyes snapped open, then he covered his ears against a sound that no one else could hear.

He could only watch in a daze as the Daleks began to scream. Their appendages flailed as their casings slowly became transparent. Their equipment was fading with them.

"No!" the Dalek superior shrieked. "No, please! Have mercy! Help us! Help us!" The screams filled the room before they too began to disappear. The lights dimmed to darkness and, before the Doctor's eyes, the Daleks and everything they owned disappeared. The shaking stopped. The Doctor let his hands fall from his ears. He was alone, in the silence, in the dark.

He felt time barrier rolling back under him, history in free-fall. "Oh, God," he whispered. He tried to move and his sight blazed from black to white. Nausea broke over him in a cold wave. He could still hear the Daleks screaming. "I'm sorry," he told them. "I'm sorry."

???

Sue paced the console room, wearing dark slacks and a red shirt. Ryan entered from the interior door. "Well, I stored the radiation suits in a safe place," he said.

"Easy to get to if we need them again?" asked Sue.

Ryan frowned. "You're not thinking of going back out there?"

"You're thinking the same thing," she growled. "I'm not going to just abandon him."

"I'm not thinking the same thing. We'll never find him out there," said Ryan. "Sue, it would be suicide."

She blew through her teeth, then thumped the console in frustration. "Damn! I feel so useless!"

They froze as they heard a distant bell toll from deep within the ship. Seconds later it tolled again, reminding Ryan of a death knell.

"What's going on?" gasped Sue. Then they had to clutch the console as the air around them shuddered. The hum of TARDIS operations intensified. Ryan closed his eyes as his vision blurred, and through it all the cloister bell tolled.

Finally the shuddering stopped. The distant bell ceased to toll.

Sue and Ryan whirled around as the TARDIS doors abruptly closed. The switches started to move of their own accord and the central column started its rhythmic rise and fall.

"Did you touch anything?" said Sue.

"You think I'd touch something!" said Ryan

"Where is it taking us?" asked Sue.

???

The Doctor lay on his back in the dark, at the bottom of the pit which used to have been Dalek central control. His eyelids fluttered as he teetered on the edge of unconsciousness.

He slowly became aware of the sound of grating engines and he pulled himself back from the blackness enveloping his mind. He opened his eyes.

The TARDIS was above him. The light from its beacon shone in his face.

"You came," he breathed.

The TARDIS beacon flashed once. The door opened.

With tremendous effort, the Doctor rolled over, and regretted it. He crouched on his hands and knees, retching. Finally, he gathered his strength, and used the exterior of the TARDIS to pull himself to his feet.

"Thank you," he gasped, and he staggered inside.

???

Sue and Ryan backed away as the doors opened and the white figured stumbled out of the darkness.

"Doctor!" said Sue. His white radiation suit was charred black and his face was as red as though it had been sunburned. Blood trickled from the corner of his mouth. His eyes told a story of agony.

The Doctor clutched the console and tried to catch his breath. He couldn't. Sue and Ryan hovered at either side of him, ready to catch him should he fall, but afraid to touch him lest he snap in two



The Doctor stared at the controls, his eyes straining to focus. He reached out to touch a switch, stopped. He leaned close to his machine.

"Gallifrey," he breathed. "Take us to Gallifrey."

The doors closed. Switches started moving of their own accord, and the central column began its rise and fall. The Doctor slid to his knees.

"Lie down," said Sue. The Doctor fell against her and she lowered him to the floor. His breath came in short, sharp gasps.

"Doctor," said Ryan, kneeling beside him. "What happened out there? Where are we going?"

"Time Lords," he said, feverishly. "They've erased the Dalek meddling, erased the Daleks from history."

"Thank God," said Sue.

"No," he said. "No, I have to put it right. I have to save them." Sue was amazed to hear him chuckle. "Me," he said. "Save the Daleks." He laughed, blood coming to his lips. "Imagine that," he said.

"Doctor?" said Sue, taking his hand. "What can we do?"

He lifted her hand to his lips and kissed her fingers. "Nothing," he said.

Sue choked back tears. "Doctor—" But he didn't hear.

The pain spread through his body, but he felt it less. A numbness developed, blocking all feeling and all sound. He felt himself floating upward. Either that, he thought, or the ceiling of the console room was descending to crush him.

His vision hazed over and his ears rang, but he was past caring. Then he realized he wasn't in the console room. The people kneeling over him weren't Sue and Ryan. The ringing in his ears was actually derisive laughter, cat calls, and loud cheers at his suffering.

The brown haired woman glared down at him. She wore black jeans, a red shirt and a black leather jacket covered with badges. "You failed!" she cried. "You damn well failed, Professor! How could you? You lost to them!" She jabbed her finger at the audience. "Listen to them!"

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw all the people and aliens he'd ever fought in his life. They rejoiced in their final victory, taunting him as he died. He saw everything he least wanted to remember: the grisly death of the terrorist leader on the train; the Daleks destroying Morland Abbey; the fearsome power of the Cybermen as they stood poised to convert all of humanity to their race; and the Autons, infiltrating, plotting, waiting. He saw his real daughter, Fennar, unable to regenerate, lying bleeding to death in a Gallifreyan corridor.

He saw, but he didn't have the strength to care. "I'm sorry, Ace," he gasped.

"Sorry isn't good enough!" she screamed. "You can't go now! The Daleks are gone! The Time Lords have altered history worse than those pepper pots could have done, and you're the only one who can do anything about it! But what did you do instead? You gave up! You died! You didn't let me give up when I didn't care

anymore, and I'm not going to let you give up now!"

But still the Doctor couldn't move. "Ace, I'm sorry, I can't—"

She screamed in frustration and anger. "You're pathetic!" she hissed, and turned her back on him. The laughter of his enemies rang in his ears.

His eyes focused on the second figure, which had kept silent all this time. She had long, black hair, dark eyes and wore a white muslin gown sashed with red. The Doctor gasped back a sob. "Fayette!"

She looked down on him sadly. "You promised to be at my eldest son's graduation ceremony, remember, Papa? Little Eamon will be so disappointed."

The Doctor flinched as though struck. He wanted to cry, but Fayette didn't turn her back on him. She reached for his hand. Feeling reentered his arm and he squeezed her fingers. She smiled, and the Doctor's spirits rose.

Then the numbness disappeared. His body was racked with the agonies of mortal injuries, but a thousand times worse. It was unendurable. He struggled to get away: to escape forever, from everything. But to do that he had to release Fayette's hand, and her grip clamped down harder than ever.

"Hold on," she begged. "Hold on!"

The Doctor screamed. His enemies screamed with him, in frustration. He had beaten them yet again.

The air became charged with electricity. The sky was a blinding white.

The Doctor lay on the floor, his eyes fixed in a glassy stare at nothing. Ryan heaved a shaky sigh and gripped Sue's shoulder. "Sue. He's gone."

Sue stared at the Doctor's still form and she began to tremble. She bit her lip to stifle the tears, but they came anyway. She gasped in sorrow and choked back a sob. "No! He can't! It's not fair!"

Ryan wrapped his arms around her and she clutched him, giving in to her tears for a moment. But this was not enough. She pushed him away angrily, and stumbled out of the room, crying.

He rubbed his forehead wearily, and wiped a tear from his eye. As he stared down at the Doctor's dead body, he muttered a prayer. Then he reached out to close the dead, staring eyes.

Ryan yelped and yanked back his hand. He rubbed the numbness from his fingers and stared at the Doctor in disbelief. He'd received an electric shock. How could a corpse deliver an electric shock? He stood up to call for Sue, but as he looked down at the Doctor, the words caught in his throat.

At first he thought it was some trick of the light or other optical illusion, but as he watched, he saw the Doctor's skin begin to glow. The light intensified until Ryan had to cover his eyes or risk blindness. A cry of astonishment and alarm broke from him.

As he peered from behind an upraised hand, the Doctor's features began to change.

*To be continued...*

