

# SOMETHING MORE THAN A CRICKET BAT

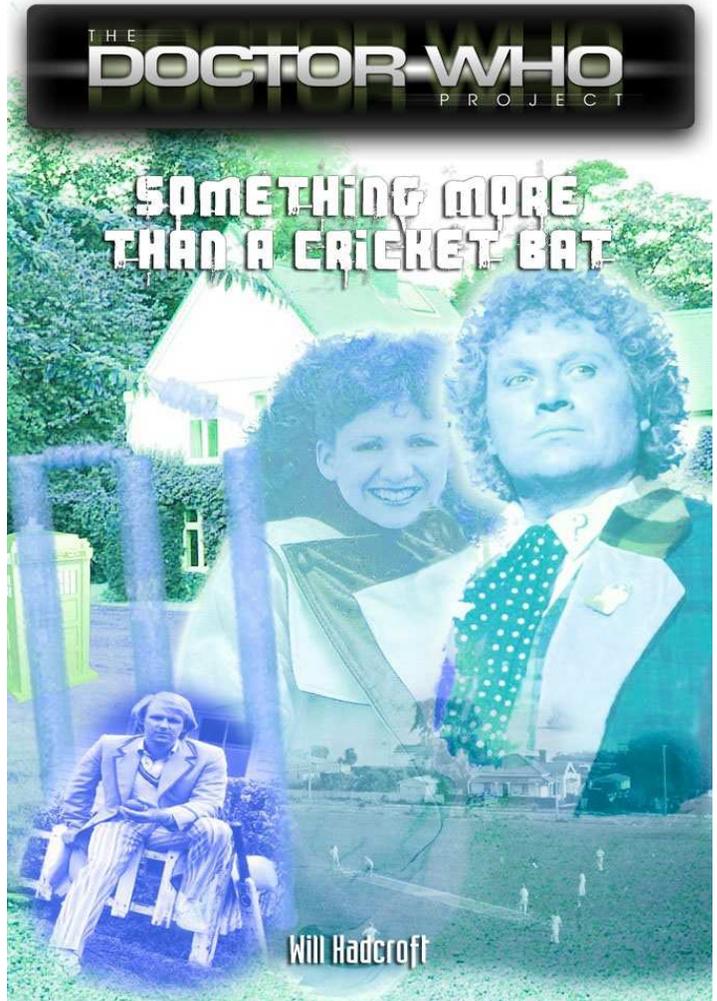
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TDWP Special  
Reviewed by Jez Strickley

For a good many fans, including myself, there can never be enough new stories involving the Sixth Doctor. More, it is all to the good that his brief television run has long since been compensated by a plethora of further outings, both literary and audio. *Something More Than A Cricket Bat* by Will Hadcroft is a smashingly sentimental addition to the former category, which raises a thought or two as to the relationship between Doctors Five and Six, and the emotional dangers of persuading a complete stranger to dance with you.

The adventure sees the Doctor and Mel visiting the wonderfully characterised Mrs. M., a lively centenarian who is in possession of a very important antique cricket bat. What Mrs. M. doesn't realise is that according to established history the bat should be in the Lord's Museum, the official home of cricket. By having it in her safekeeping she is inadvertently threatening the stability of the time lines, creating a dangerous situation which the Doctor is intent on correcting. However, what gives the Doctor's bat-retrieval mission such a bitter sweet taste is the Time Lord's striking connection with Mrs. M. and the aforementioned piece of cricketing paraphernalia. In fact, as it turns out it was the softly spoken Fifth Doctor who unknowingly swept Mrs. M. off her feet during a visit to England in 1920, and who absentmindedly left behind him the all important bat.

Writing for the bombastic Sixth Doctor is a delicate business and Hadcroft pulls off the challenge with great élan. As the story progresses we are introduced to a dash of impatience and a hint of a withering look, mixed with a touch of penitence and the anguish of the tortured poet. Put another way, a perfectly realised Sixth Doctor. In counterpoint to his moodiness we have Mel, who is given the ideal opportunity to shine in the role for which she was so evidently made: mediator extraordinaire for her erratic co-traveller.

The heartfelt remembrances of Mrs. M. and her dance with the Fifth Doctor are achingly well written, and prove capable of penetrating even the Sixth Doctor's initially cynical view of the experience. Still further, such is the effect on him of reawakening these long buried memories that he sends Mrs. M. his fifth persona's cricketing sweater and frock coat, along with his own bright red cravat tie, demon-



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strating the affection in which he still holds this lady, whom he met and enchanted so long before. All in all it's enough to bring a tear to the eye, and if that's not worth top marks I don't know what it is. **10/10**