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ESCAPE POD

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Episode One

“So if you have a granddaughter, then you must have kids too,” said Tamara as she came out of the TARDIS door. The blue police-box shaped time machine had just materialized in a corridor of unpolished metal: possibly aluminium.

“I think we’ve landed on a space ship,” said the Doctor as he stepped out into the overly lit corridor. He suspected that the lights had come on when motion sensors had detected movement in the corridor. Otherwise, it would be awfully wasteful to have lights on in a spaceship when there was no one around.

“Which way?” asked Tamara, looking left and right and seeing no difference between the two directions.

“We could split up,” said the Doctor.

“Is that wise?”

“I shouldn’t think so.”

“How about left,” suggested Tamara.

“All right,” said the Doctor and took the lead.

The corridor they were in appeared to run around the outer hull of the ship. Every few metres they passed a door with a little glass window set into it. They peered into the ones that didn’t have the shade drawn. Most of them appeared to be laboratories at first, and then a few that looked like sleeping quarters. Finally they came upon something that looked more interesting.

They arrived at a junction, and in the centre of the junction stood a silver cylinder with computer displays and controls around it.

“This looks like it’s capable of intra-ship communication,” speculated the Doctor. “Maybe we can overhear something interesting.”

He started to fiddle with some dials and buttons while Tamara examined the cylinder.

“It doesn’t look too far advanced,” she said.

“Oh, you’d be surprised,” said the Doctor. “We could be three or four hundred years past your time.”

"This side has a logo: MMC," said Tamara. "Mean anything to you?"

"MMC," said the Doctor. "Why does that sound familiar?"

"Mercury Mining Corporation," said Tamara, reading the small print on the thin metal placard.

"Could be," said the Doctor, still thinking about it.

"No," said Tamara. "It IS the Mercury Mining Corporation."

"If I've learned one thing in this business," said the Doctor, "it's, 'don't jump to conclusions'."

"It says Mercury Mining Corporation in twelve languages."

"Ah," said the Doctor.

Suddenly, an elevator door opened and twelve Cybermen came out. They immediately turned towards the kiosk and raised their guns.

"Run!" shouted the Doctor as he turned and raced back towards the TARDIS. Being on the other side of the Kiosk, Tamara had run in the opposite direction. Half of the Cybermen followed her and half pursued the Doctor.

The Doctor got to the TARDIS, slammed the key in the lock, forced his way through the door and waited for Tamara to follow him in. He peeked outside and found that nobody was in the corridor except a half-dozen advancing Cybermen.

One of them fired at the Doctor and he instinctively ducked back in and slammed the door shut. On the scanner screen, the Doctor could see that the Cybermen formed a semi-circle around the TARDIS and began firing at it.

"They must know that's not going to do any good," said the Doctor to the TARDIS.

The TARDIS started to judder and shake.

"That's odd," said the Doctor. "I don't think those are ordinary Cyber-weapons."

The TARDIS began to vibrate and hum, and before the Doctor could even get to the controls, the TARDIS' Hostile Action Displacement System had kicked in and the TARDIS dematerialised from Time and Space.

The H.A.D.S. would not take the TARDIS very far away. It would scan space-time for a place to land and make a short hop to safety.

When the TARDIS re-materialized a few seconds later, the Doctor took a quick look at the scanner. It was another ship. Or perhaps it was the same ship in a different time. He opened the door and stepped out. The corridors looked the same, but there were humans in the corridors. Within seconds he was surrounded by security forces and other crew members who came to investigate the commotion.

"There are Cybermen in the area," warned the Doctor. "I've just seen a ship crawling with them."

"How did you get in here?" asked one of the guards.

"My ship can materialize and de-materialize," explained the Doctor. "I'm sorry for landing on your ship without permission, but my ship's emergency navigation systems sort of picked this place to land without asking me."

"Come with us," they said and surrounded him. They kept their weapons pointed half-way between the floor and the Doctor. "The Leader will want to see you."

"Leader," asked the Doctor with a bit of alarm, thinking for a second that they were referring to a Cyber- Leader.

"Leader Cyba," said the security head.

"Not Ryszard Cyba," said the Doctor with a delighted tone in his voice. "It's been positively ages. I can't wait to catch up on old times."

A couple of the security people exchanged looks and raised their eyebrows at each other.

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"Doctor," said Leader Ryszard Cyba when the former was brought onto the bridge. "I thought I'd seen the last of you."

"I'm not the one who was last seen being blown up by an experimental Time Cannon," said the Doctor.

Cyba rose and the Doctor gulped. Cyba was more metal than flesh.

"Sixty-five percent of my body was destroyed in the blast, Doctor," Cyba explained, flexing his cybernetic right hand. The whole right side had to be replaced.

The Doctor marvelled at the reconstruction of Cyba's face. The right side was metallic, as was the entire nose. Between the metal on the right and the flesh on the left, there was a small seam, which ran down the chin and over the neck, disappearing into Cyba's shirt.

"I'm glad you survived," said the Doctor.

"Yes," said Cyba.

"And you've got a new job."

Cyba frowned. "I was demoted after the fiasco with the Mercury 237 project."

"Good," said the Doctor. "Wouldn't want you to have gone completely unpunished for trying to destroy the Earth."

Cyba's face showed no emotion.

The Doctor grinned, hoping to get some reaction from him.

"Yes, well, why are you here?"

"Cybermen."

Cyba frowned again. "Cybermen?"

"Yes. They come from the planet Mondas. Over the millennia they replaced their human forms with cybernetic components. All that's left are a few minor bits of bio-

matter and the human brain, although that has been seriously modified: the complete repression of emotion springs to mind."

"I know what Cybermen are," said Cyba with some annoyance. "What about them?"

"I just came off of a ship that was crawling with them. An MMC ship, I should add."

"An MMC ship in this sector," said Cyba with some surprise. "I don't think so."

"We are in the vicinity of Roratua, aren't we?"

"Yes, but our sensors show no ship within days, and there certainly are no MMC ships in the area, other than the one we're after."

"The one you're after?"

"Yes. A salvage operation. An MMC ship crashed on Roratua over two months ago."

"Two months ago. Could it be that my ship transported me into the future?"

Cyba raised his eyebrows. "Your ship travels through time?"

"Well, forward," said the Doctor. "As does yours. I'm just thinking that maybe it kept me in suspended animation for a couple of months."

"Your ship sounds intriguing," said Cyba. "I'd like to have a look at it some time."

"Certainly," said the Doctor. "Any time."

"How about now?"

"Now is not good for me," said the Doctor. "I'm a little worried about the Cybermen."

"Oh, yes. The Cybermen."

"Leader," said the helmsman. "We are approaching Roratua."

"My tour of your ship will have to wait," said Cyba.

"Too bad," said the Doctor.

* * * * *

The MMC ship landed near the wreckage of the other ship, which looked identical. A team was assembled, and the Doctor managed to get himself on the team.

"I suppose it's better to have you where I can keep an eye on you," said Cyba as he and the Doctor put on containment suits. "Locking you in the brig has proven to be an exercise in futility."

The Doctor grinned politely. "I was travelling with a companion. Tamara Scott. Thirty-two. Medium brown skin. Dark brown hair. London accent. If you see her..."

Cyba realized that the Doctor's companion was probably dead if she had been aboard that ship. He swallowed and nodded at the Doctor, hoping that the Doctor would not have to be the one who found Ms. Scott's body.

The team found nothing on the ship until they reached the bridge. There, lying in neat piles, were the disassembled bodies of three dozen Cybermen.

"Some of their components have been salvaged," said the Doctor. He turned to Cyba. "Since when did MMC start employing Cybermen?"

Cyba laughed as if the Doctor had made a hilarious joke. "We received a distress call from this ship two months ago. The Captain said that an unidentified ship had attacked them and that they were being boarded. That was the last communiqué we received from this vessel."

"So you think the Cybermen took over the ship and then crashed it into this planet?"

"I think it's fairly obvious that the Cybermen hijacked this ship," answered Cyba. "But I have no idea why they crashed into this planet."

He paused.

"Perhaps your friend Tamara Scott had something to do with the ship's crashing?"

The Doctor smiled. "If she is dead, at least she took out a ship full of Cybermen."

"Yes," said Cyba. "Quite an accomplishment."

"Attention trespassers," announced an amplified voice from outside the space craft. "Please come out of the ship immediately with your hands above your heads."

"Didn't you get permission from the locals," asked the Doctor.

Cyba pursed his lips. "I don't think we need it," he said simply and marched out of the ship. The ship was surrounded by an armed unit of what looked like police officers. Cyba headed straight for the woman with the megaphone.

"I'm Ryszard Cyba," he said, holding out his hand to be shaken. "This is an MMC ship and I'm in charge of the MMC recovery team."

The woman with the megaphone shook Cyba's hand. "Tania Peña," said the woman. "I'm the mayor of Roratua City. I'm afraid you have no authority here."

"MMC has a contract with Roratua," said Cyba.

"MMC has a mining contract with Roratua," corrected Peña, "As per the contract, that does not extend to any other kinds of rights. At any rate, the land in this area doesn't even fall within the boundaries specified by the contract."

"There were guard units on that ship: Octobots, which are a copyrighted genetically engineered cyber-organism. The copyright laws supersede the salvage laws in all parts of Federation space."

"Ah," said the Mayor with some discomfort. "I don't know about any Octobots, but the salvage operation was overseen by Doctor Ross. I'm sure he'll be able to tell you what happened to your creatures."

The Doctor could see that Cyba was extremely agitated, but was trying hard not to show any emotion. The MMC salvage team and the Doctor followed the Mayor into the city.

“Doctor Ross is our chief scientist,” explained Mayor Peña. “He’s done wonders for the colony since his arrival. When he heard that a ship had crashed he volunteered to lead the investigation. I believe he has co-opted a number of components from your vessel into his experiments, but I’ve heard nothing about robots. Except for the Cybermen, of course.”

The group arrived at a large building that stood in the centre of the city. It appeared to be a combination of city hall, police station, prison and scientific research centre. The Mayor invited Cyba alone to see Doctor Ross, but somehow when the elevator door closed, the Doctor was with them.

The elevator opened to reveal a laboratory with a small plastic placard beside the door that read, “Dr. David Ross”

The trio entered the lab and saw a man in a white lab coat working away at the far end. The lab coat appeared to be hooded, and when the man turned, the Doctor saw that it was indeed a hood that obscured Dr. Ross’ face.

“Dave Ross,” said the Mayor. This is Controller Ryszard Cyba, he’s an MMC employee, and this is Doctor, uh, I didn’t get your name...”

“Doctor will do,” said the Doctor extending his hand to Dr. Ross. Ross extended a metallic hand.

“Cybernetics everywhere,” commented the Doctor.

“When Doctor Ross arrived here, he had been badly injured,” said Mayor Peña. “He was in a wheelchair and unable even to care for himself. As we nursed him back to health, it became apparent that he was a scientist, and we offered him a government position. Doctor Ross created a remarkable weather control device for us. We had been having horrible droughts for years, and the colony was in danger of being wiped out. In exchange for his marvellous work, Dr. Ross has used the facilities for his own experiments. One of those projects was to construct a new body for himself.”

“Some of those parts look like they came from Cybermen,” said the Doctor.

“They did,” said Ross. His voice sounded odd, as if it came from a speaker. The Doctor realized that Ross was talking into a microphone, which distorted his voice and made it sound almost robotic, which was ironic, since his body was robotic.

“Oh,” said the Mayor, as a woman came through a door at the far end of the lab. “Here comes Dr. Ross’ fiancée, Tamara Scott.”

“Doctor,” shouted Tamara when she saw his face. She ran up to him and gave him a hug. “I was getting worried that you wouldn’t find me.”

“So was I,” said the Doctor. “How did you end up here?”

Tamara explained to the Doctor what had happened to her when the Cybermen had attacked them on the space ship.

She had run in the opposite direction of the Doctor, and had been captured by Cybermen almost immediately.

* * * * *

"What do you want from me," Tamara had asked while trying to wrench her arms free from the two powerful Cybermen holding her.

"You_will_be_turned_into_a_Cyberman," replied the gruesome metallic-voiced response. She had been put into a cylinder-shaped cubicle and a switch had been pulled. Tamara had found that she couldn't move at all.

"Do_not_struggle," one of the Cybermen had commanded. "You_are_being_held_in_a_gravitational_field. Force_will_only_injure_your_tissues." And with that the Cybermen had left her.

* * * * *

Dr. Ross took up the tale, telling about his salvage expedition to the crashed spaceship.

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"Now be careful," Dr. Ross had said. "That thing might still be hot."

"Forty-four degrees," said the man in the front of the salvage team. "Our gear should protect us from that."

The twelve-person salvage team, lead by Dr. Ross used a laser torch to burn their way into the crashed space ship. The first team members on board found the mechanism to lower the ramp that most space ships possessed. Dr. Ross zipped up the ramp in his motorized wheelchair.

"Be on the lookout for hostiles," warned Ross. "Just because they didn't answer our hails doesn't mean there isn't someone or something alive."

The crew mumbled words of agreement into their microphones.

The team found the bridge immediately inside the door. Upon entering, almost everyone on the team let out a gasp.

"Cybermen!" said several people.

Indeed, the bridge was littered with the dead bodies of Cybermen, smashed to pieces by the force of the crash.

"I didn't think anyone could have survived this," said Dr. Ross.

The team checked each body for signs of life. They found none. As they searched the rest of the ship they found several other Cybermen, all dead and no other species.

Except for one person.

Tamara Scott.

Tamara's heart leaped when she saw the first member of the salvage team enter the Cybernization chamber. After a few attempts, someone managed to disengage the gravity field.

"Oh, thank God," she said when she suddenly regained control over her muscles. "I've been stuck in that thing for hours."

"You're lucky you were in there," said Dr. Ross. "Being held in a gravity field saved your life."

"The ship crashed, didn't it," said Tamara, who had experienced the crash but in a strange dreamlike way.

"Yes. Within the containment field, your body would not have been subject to inertia," explained Ross. "Everyone else on the ship is dead."

"Do you mean people," asked Tamara, "Or just those Cybermen."

Tamara explained to her rescuers how she had been stranded on the ship by the Doctor. The salvage crew found the tale of the dematerialising ship a little difficult to believe, but her story was accepted as true and she was brought in to see the Mayor.

"They tell me you have no family or friends," said Mayor Peña sympathetically.

"I know it sounds a little odd," said Tamara. "But I've been travelling for a while and I don't really have a home any more. I mean, I'm from Earth, but I haven't been there in ages. There's not really anything there for me."

"I'm sure you can stay here until your friend The Doctor locates you. You'll be on all the newscasts tonight, so if your Doctor friend has a television, he'll know where you are."

"I suppose. Thank you," said Tamara.

"Now," began the Mayor, opening up a drawer in her desk and pulling out a sheet of paper. "I need you to sign this."

"What's this," asked Tamara.

"It's a statement saying that you are not a member of the crew of the crashed vessel, nor are you the owner or employed by the owner in any way."

"Why do you need this," asked Tamara.

"It's a requirement for the salvage operation. We can't claim the ship unless it's abandoned."

"Well, it wasn't really abandoned," said Tamara. "The crew were killed."

"True," said the Mayor, "but be that as it may, we're entitled to salvage the vessel under Federation law. As long as you don't have a rightful claim to it." The Mayor said this last bit in an accusing tone, as if challenging Tamara to make a claim to the ship.

"Oh, no," said Tamara. She didn't want to get on the bad side of anyone on her first day here. She had no idea how long it might take for the Doctor to find her. She signed the paper.

"Thank you, Ms. Scott," said the Mayor, hastily returning the paper to her drawer. "Now as I understand it, Dr. Ross has expressed an interest in you. He says he wouldn't mind having you work as his assistant until your friend arrives."

"But I'm not a scientist," said Tamara.

"I don't think you'll be required to know anything about science," said the Mayor. "And we are putting you up in quite a fancy hotel suite, so you'd be earning your keep."

"I guess," said Tamara. "Sure. Why not?"

The Mayor smiled and rose from her chair. "Excellent."

* * * * *

"So tell me about your accident," Tamara asked Dr. Ross as he used his mouth to push a metal wand against a computer touch-screen.

"There's not a lot to tell," said Ross. "I was a prisoner on an alien ship. The ship was damaged in a battle and I managed to escape in one of their escape pods. It landed here."

"Were you injured before?" asked Tamara.

"I've been in a wheelchair for many years," said Ross, "but while I was their captive, the aliens performed experiments on me, and eventually I lost the use of my arms as well. My original wheelchair had the capability of voice controls, however, which is how I was able to get into the escape pod."

"Wow," said Tamara. "You were very lucky, Dr. Ross."

"Yes," said Ross. "And please, call me Dave."

"Dave," said Tamara. "Can I ask why your face is covered?"

"Because the aliens' experiments left me so disfigured that I can't bear to have anyone see me looking like this."

"Oh," said Tamara with sadness in her heart.

* * * * *

A few days later, with Tamara's help, Ross had managed to build an artificial arm for himself out of a Cyberman's arm. When Tamara came in the next morning, Ross had finished his other arm and was working on a torso and legs.

"How are you going to incorporate those into your body," asked Tamara.

"I'm not," said Ross. "I'm going to replace my own body with these components, like I did with the arm."

"But that means... I mean... Just your head will be human."

"My head contains my brain, Tamara. That is what makes me human. The rest is simply a body, and I was let down by my body a long time ago. Don't be sad for me. I won't feel like I've lost anything. I won't feel any less human."

* * * * *

As the days went by, Tamara and Dr. Ross worked side by side. She became more and more intrigued by this brilliant man who had the body of a machine. She wondered if he missed being able to feel the touch of another person. She sometimes laid her hands on his metal shoulders and wondered if he felt anything at all. He never asked her to remove her hands. Perhaps he didn't even know they were there.

* * * * *

"What's this?" asked Tamara one morning.

"I've found these creatures in the space ship. Half robotic, half animal."

"It looks like an octopus," said Tamara.

"I believe that these were on board the ship to act like guard dogs," said Ross. "I think I can use them as the main component in my new invention."

"What is it," she asked.

"He stepped out of the way to reveal a little metal cylinder that looked like an overturned bucket. The top had a hatch which opened on a single hinge. Ross picked up the Octobot and placed it into the bucket.

"In honour of the planet that rescued me," said Ross, "I call them Ror-bots."

"Can they do anything," asked Tamara.

"So far, all they can do is roll around," said Ross. "But they can be installed with weapons or tools that would make them a far superior security force than these eight-armed robots ever could have been.

"What do you need the octopuses for," asked Tamara.

"The octopuses, as you call them, were controlled by the original creatures' brains. I have been able to re-activate the brains and connect them to my Ror-bot units."

"So they're alive," asked Tamara.

"Yes," said Ross.

"But then you've made them into slaves," said Tamara.

"No," said Dave, placing his hand on Tamara's. "Their brains died in the crash. I am simply using the dead brain as a ready-built storage facility for the controlling programming that I've designed. The original creatures are long gone. "

"Well it's gruesome," said Tamara with disgust.

"What is more gruesome?" asked Ross. "Using a dead animal as I am or using a living creature, like the creators of these robotic guard dogs."

* * * * *

After a week, Ross had converted all of the Octobots into Ror-bots. He now had nearly fifty of the little units skittering around the lab floor. He fiddled with control mechanisms

to get them to obey radio commands. He attached numerous weapons and tools to them to see if he could control them by remote control as well.

* * * * *

One day while the two of them were working together on a new control unit, Tamara suddenly put down her tools and placed her hands on the metal hands of David Ross.

“May I see your face, David?” she asked.

“No,” said Ross. “It’s too hideous.”

“Oh, please,” said Tamara. “You told me weeks ago that your body means nothing because the real you is inside your head. Well, your face means nothing either, because it’s your brain that I... that is...that defines you. Please, Dave. Let me see what you look like!”

He didn’t stop her when she raised her hands to his hood and pushed it back over the top of his head. She swallowed. The face was repulsive. His eyes were almost swollen shut. His skin was grey and his lips and eyes were blackened. The face was wrinkly and decrepit. This was the most hideous face she had ever seen.

And of course, Tamara Scott could not know this, but she was staring into the face of Davros, the most evil man in the history of the universe.

Episode Two

Tamara Scott had been living on Roratua for two months now, and she had started to wonder what would happen if the Doctor never found her. What if he had been killed trying to escape from the ship? She didn't really know how the TARDIS worked: perhaps it wasn't designed for quick getaways. So Tamara had thought about what she might do. It made sense for her to try to make her way back to Earth somehow, but when she had made some enquiries, she had realized that she would not be accepted as a citizen of Earth, and would have to apply for a tourist visa.

Then she would have to come back to Roratua if she wanted to apply for an immigration permit. Being on an Earth colony didn't help her. In fact, it was considered quite inappropriate for colonists to want to return to Earth. After all, the Earth had spent a lot of money in colonizing this planet, and the last thing they needed was for the colonists to come trickling back.

So it had seemed likely that she would spend the rest of her life on Roratua, or at least the next several years as she tried to earn enough money to travel towards Earth. Roratua was a planet with only one city, as so many of Earth's colonies tended to be, so opportunities were indeed limited. In that respect, she was grateful to Dave Ross for having given her a job so quickly. And while the work offered its own challenges and learning opportunities, Tamara would rather have been working in her own field. She was trained as a spy. She had made some enquiries with the Police Force, where she felt she could at least put some of her training to good use. Early indications were good and she had put in an application and was waiting to hear from the police chief, Lenora Eldridge.

Meanwhile, she worked with Dr. Ross, and as she spent more and more time with him, she couldn't help but be impressed by the amazing mind that this man possessed. The way he deciphered the cyber-technology was incredible. When he was building his

own limbs, he would hit a snag, or some piece of technology would be incompatible with another, but in a matter of minutes, Ross would come up with a solution and build an interface out of odds and ends lying around the lab.

An addition to his immense scientific knowledge, Dave Ross was an aficionado of history, geography (which in the space-faring 26th century was a considerably larger field than it had been in her time) and numerous other fields. He had an amazing knowledge of other cultures, as if he had studied planet after planet in scrupulous detail.

So after working with the man for over two months, it didn't come as a surprise even to Tamara that she was starting to develop feelings for this brilliant man. But what kind of future could they have? Dave was almost completely a machine. They could never have children. Did he even feel anything when she touched him? She could never tell. Did he feel anything when he touched her?

And then there was his face. Truly, Dave Ross had the most hideous face Tamara Scott had ever seen. Her face betrayed nothing as she gazed into that repugnant visage for the first time. She took in the image of a withered, sickly, horribly aged face without so much as a flicker of an eyelid, but Ross must have realized immediately how repulsive he was to her, because he pulled the hood back over his head. She did not stop him.

* * * * *

And now, just scant days later, Tamara came into the lab only to find Dr. Ross chatting with the Doctor. The mayor was there too, and it was she who spotted Tamara entering the room.

"Here's Dr. Ross' fiancée, Tamara Scott," the Mayor had said.

* * * * *

After relating her long story to the Doctor, Tamara added, "And I think you're mistaken, Your Worship. Dr. Ross and I aren't engaged."

The mayor blushed red. She realized that she had heard this information through gossip. Dr. Ross and Ms. Scott had been the subject of much talk and whispering in the two months that they had been working together, and the Mayor was embarrassed to realize that she had repeated a rumour that had been going around the office for several days.

"I'm so sorry," she stammered. "I guess I was misinformed."

"I'm glad that you've been reunited with your friend," said Cyba. "But can we discuss the topic we came here to discuss?"

"Oh, of course," said the Mayor. "Dr. Ross. MMC are wondering if you, by chance, happened upon any robotic octopus-like creatures?"

Ross raised his head slightly. "Creatures?"

"About this size," said Cyba, indicating with his hands. "They were eight-legged creatures with robotic enhancements made to them."

Tamara did not give anything away as Ross said, "No. Not at all. The only biological specimens we discovered were the Cybermen. And Ms. Scott, here," he indicated Tamara and he gave a laugh as did Tamara and the Mayor.

"Perhaps they escaped into the wilderness," said Ross.

"They were programmed to stay with the ship," said Cyba. "They wouldn't have done that."

"I can't think of any other explanation, Mr. Cyba," said Ross.

"Anyway," said Cyba, not believing Ross for a moment, "we would appreciate the return of any of our property that you may have appropriated."

"Ah," said Ross. "That may be a bit difficult. You see," he said, raising his hands. "I'm wearing it."

Cyba was silent.

"Although most of the components in my body were harvested from the dead Cybermen, I did use some of your technology for the interfaces. Quite compatible, I was happy to discover."

"Any technology on that ship is MMC property," said Cyba.

The Mayor cleared her throat.

"And even if Roratua does have salvage rights," said Cyba with his jaw clenched tightly, "the intellectual property does not fall under those rights. All technology developed by MMC is subject to copyright and patent laws, and you have no legal right to use any of it in any way."

"Are you telling me that you're going to tear off my arms and legs," said Ross mockingly.

"If it comes to that," said Cyba.

"I don't think we need to do anything violent just yet," interjected the Doctor. "I think we should call in an Adjudicator from Earth. An Earth colony and an Earth company in a dispute: I should think this isn't the first time.

"But what if the Adjudicator rules in MMC's favour?" protested Tamara. "They'll have the right to take Dave apart."

"As you can see by my own body, Dr. Ross," began Cyba. "MMC have some very advanced bio-replacement technologies. I'm sure we would be happy to offer an exchange."

"I think I'd like to hear what the Adjudicator has to say," said Ross and turned away from the group. He walked to his office door, entered and shut the door behind him, ending the meeting.

"All right," said the Doctor. "Let's call in that Adjudicator and find a nice cup of tea. I'd like to know more about how those Cybermen got on the MMC ship."

* * * * *

The janitor was putting chairs onto the tables of the cafeteria in the city hall building. The Doctor, Tamara, Mayor Peña and Ryszard Cyba had finished their tea hours ago. It was nearly 2:00 in the morning when the group went their separate ways.

"Shall we sleep in the TARDIS tonight," asked the Doctor.

"I've got an apartment near here," said Tamara. "The sofa pulls out."

"Perfect," said the Doctor. "I don't feel like walking all the way back to the landing site, and I strongly suspect getting back onto the MMC ship won't be particularly easy, considering the circumstances. I'll have to talk with Cyba in the morning about moving the TARDIS somewhere more convenient."

"Do you think he'll let you?"

"I'm not certain. But I think I might have misjudged Cyba," said the Doctor. "He seems like a fairly decent person. He just seems to be working for a company with no morals whatsoever."

"Didn't you tell me that he and his company tried to destroy the Earth last year," Tamara reminded him.

"Yes," said the Doctor. "But maybe he's changed."

"Probably because he was blown to smithereens and then demoted," said Tamara somewhat sarcastically.

"Still," said the Doctor. "Whatever the reason for the change, it's a step in the right direction."

* * * * *

Cyba was communicating with MMC's headquarters on Earth. He wore an earphone and microphone unit on his head, while watching his superior's face on a monitor screen set into his desk. Cyba was arguing with his Controller about the course of action to be taken. The Controller tried to convince him to take a certain course of action but Cyba refused. The Controller's hand moved slightly, unseen by the camera and turned a dial. Cyba did not notice anything had happened, but as the Controller re-iterated MMC's preferred course of action, Cyba began to realize that the Controller was right. This was really the only way to do things. There was no need to wait for the Adjudicator from Earth. Immediate action was necessary. The communiqué ended, and Cyba had no idea that he had been manipulated hypnotically by his employers.

* * * * *

Cyba's forces swarmed the City Hall and forced their way in with little effort. Guards were immobilized with stun rays that Cyba's forces had been issued. MMC Control

hadn't specified that stun guns should be used, but Cyba figured they must have intended that, otherwise Cyba and his crew would be responsible for murder, and how would that help Cyba's career?

Within forty minutes, Ross' lab had been stripped bare of MMC property and the MMC crew, each carrying backpacks filled with equipment, began the trip back to their space ship.

As they exited the City Hall, however, they found themselves surrounded by the Roratuan Police Force.

A couple of Cyba's team fired shots and were killed instantly by returning gunfire. The rest of the team retreated into the City Hall.

Faced with the possibility of the MMC equipment falling back into Roratuan hands, Cyba fired a shot at the two dead women and vaporized them and their backpacks.

This prompted another barrage of gunfire from the police.

Cyba made the decision to destroy all of the MMC equipment. The men and women on his team each switched their guns to the vaporization setting and destroyed their own backpacks.

"Now let's get out of here without getting killed," said Cyba. "Escape Plan F."

Most of the team were quite excited at the prospect of utilizing Escape Plan F. They had all been trained in this procedure, and it was by far the most fun thing that any of them had experienced in their time with MMC. Single file, the team raced up the stairs to the roof. Cyba was quite pleased, when he got to the roof, that he wasn't even winded. The one cybernetic leg had done most of the work. Excellent.

When on the roof, the team scouted its edges. The building was surrounded on three sides by police. The back alley was empty, mainly because if they exited through one of the rear doors, they would be channelled one way or the other out of the alley onto one of the side streets. Little did the Roratuan Police Force realize that MMC had an emergency escape plan.

The MMC team lined up on the edge of the roof and in unison the members pulled an emergency cord on their belts. This caused a rare and expensive gas to mix with an equally rare and even more expensive metal sewn into the fabric of their belts. As the gas molecules began to mix with the metal, the team members began to feel themselves getting lighter as the anti-gravitational abilities of the metal started to take effect. They launched themselves off of the roof and floated across the rooftops of several other buildings before the effects of the gas began to diminish. As the belts lost their charge, the team slowly floated downwards, and moments later the team landed silently and softly on a street five blocks away from City Hall. While the police were occupied at City Hall, the MMC team simply walked back to their spacecraft and sealed themselves in.

* * * * *

The Doctor had risen early and made his way out towards the MMC ship crash site. He wasn't interested in the MMC ship, however. He was looking for the escape pod that Dave Ross had crash-landed in. He thought it was strange that the escape pod and the MMC ship had crashed so near each other. As he passed near the MMC ship, he saw that it was guarded by Roratuan security forces. He was careful not to be seen by them and kept going until he nearly fell into the trench that had been dug into the ground by the crash-landing escape pod. The Doctor followed the gouge in the earth until he came upon a spherical craft no more than two metres in height. The metal ship was covered in a thick layer of black carbon from the heat of entering Roratua's atmosphere.

The Doctor examined the surface for a short time, and then set about trying to open the pod. Eventually he discovered the external opening mechanism and triggered it.

"I don't like the look of this," he'd said, upon discovering the nature of the mechanism.

As he entered the escape pod his fears were realized.

"A Dalek escape pod," he whispered, looking at the controls. "Dave Ross, you are one lucky man to have escaped the Daleks."

It took the Doctor a few minutes to find the backup operator's key. This key resembled a Dalek sucker arm, and was required to work the Dalek-friendly controls. The Doctor manipulated the key into the control panel and was soon scanning the pod's computer records.

Apparently the pod had homed in on this planet. It looked to the Doctor like it had received a signal from the planet and landed here on purpose. In that case, it seemed unlikely that the MMC ship, full of Cybermen, would have followed the same signal. The MMC ship must have crashed for a different reason.

* * * * *

Tamara had awakened to find a note from the Doctor, telling her he had gone out and that he would meet up with her at Ross' lab later in the day.

When she arrived at work, she found the place in utter chaos. Dr. Ross was ranting like a madman, shouting at the Mayor and any of the investigating police officers that came into his line of sight.

"What happened?" asked Tamara.

"Those MMC cretins broke in here last night and took everything," shouted Ross. "They're so worried about their little secrets. I've improved on their pathetic designs tenfold."

Tamara had never seen Ross raving like this.

"Please, Dr. Ross," said the Mayor. "Calm down. We'll get your equipment back."

"You fool," said Ross. "Didn't you see the security video? They destroyed the equipment before escaping right under your noses."

"Well, not under," began the Mayor before stopping when she realized that Ross would be in no mood for semantic levity.

"I want those maggots destroyed," shouted Ross.

"We'll try to arrest them, certainly," said the Mayor. "But we can't just kill them."

"Then I will see to it myself," Ross shouted at the top of his lungs, the volume of his voice causing a heavy distortion to come through the speaker. Dave Ross activated one of the many new buttons that had appeared on his belt overnight.

Suddenly, a series of hidden panels slid open in three of the walls of Ross' lab and out poured his Ror-bots. First a dozen. Then another dozen. Then another. They raced out of the door and into the hallway.

"What are you doing," demanded the Mayor.

"I will send my Ror-bots to do the job that they were designed to do," shouted Ross.

* * * * *

"Hello!" said the Doctor to the first Roratuan guard that he encountered. "I'm the Doctor. I wonder if I might have a little look around inside that crashed spaceship?"

"I don't think so, sir," said the guard with extreme politeness.

"Ah," said the Doctor, wondering which of his many tried and true tactics to use to get into the ship.

"You see," he began. "I've been helping with the investigation and..."

"Sir," said the young woman. "I've been told to keep any and all people away from the ship."

"Well, can you at least tell me what you've found out," asked the Doctor. "I'm very good at helping, you know."

"Sir," began the woman in a tone that was beginning to border on exasperation. "I can give you the number of Sergeant Adams. She's in charge of the investigation and I'm sure she'll be happy to answer any questions you might have."

The Doctor thanked the woman and headed towards Cyba's ship. Perhaps he could get enough information from Cyba. When he arrived he found the ship surrounded by heavily-armed MMC troops. He had to endure several minutes at gunpoint before Cyba came out to see him.

"Doctor," began Cyba. "You've come for your ship, I assume."

"Oh, that," said the Doctor. "No, I usually don't worry about it until the last minute. It's about the crashed MMC ship. They won't let me look around, so I wonder if you were able to get any readings from the computer on board."

"As a matter of fact, we were able to download the entire log. Why?"

"I wonder if I might have a look at it. You see, I've been investigating another crashed vessel, and I wonder if there are any similarities."

"Another crashed vessel," asked Cyba. He motioned for the Doctor to follow him inside.

"Yes," said the Doctor. "It's a little disturbing, actually. It seems that a Dalek escape pod landed here some time ago."

"Daleks!" said Cyba with horror. "You don't think there are Daleks in this sector of space, do you?"

"I don't know," said the Doctor. "I'll have to talk to Ross. Remember Tamara told us that he'd escaped from some aliens in one of their escape pods. Well, it appears they were Daleks."

"And you've found the pod?"

"Yes," said the Doctor as they arrived on the bridge of Cyba's ship. "And it looks like it came here on purpose due to a homing signal of some kind."

"I don't like the sound of that," said Cyba as he called up the log files of the crashed vessel.

"Nothing that looks like a homing signal here, Doctor," said Cyba. "It appears that the navigational computer had its circuits completely scrambled just as the ship was trying to enter a parking orbit around Roratua."

"Was it guided in somehow, or did it just happen to fall down right next to that Dalek pod?"

"Guidance system remained non-functional during the entire descent. I don't think the ship was guided in. It just fell straight to the ground."

"Then I'm going to guess that it wasn't an accident," said the Doctor. "I would say that someone purposely scrambled that ship's guidance computer when it was in exactly the right spot to crash within walking distance of Roratua."

"That's an incredible theory, Doctor," said Cyba. "But I must say I agree with it."

The Doctor saw a blip out of the corner of his eye. He did not let on, but, while pretending to concentrate on the figures in front of him, he let his focus fall on the radar monitor off to one side. It showed five ships heading rapidly towards Roratua. The Doctor knew they were MMC ships. Cyba had called for backup.

"I think I'd better question this Dr. Dave Ross a little more," said the Doctor as he rose. "If there are Daleks in this sector, I'd like to know about it."

"So would I," said Cyba. Cyba gave the Doctor a communications device. "Call me immediately if you find out anything. If there are Daleks here we're all liable to wind up dead."

The Doctor could see that Cyba was genuinely worried. "Good," thought the Doctor. "He's smart enough to realize that the Daleks are a danger."

The Doctor thanked Cyba and made his way out. He hurried a little, because he feared that at any second Cyba might realize that the Doctor might have seen the radar

screen and detain the Doctor. He kept talking about Daleks, hoping that this would distract Cyba. Apparently it did, because twenty minutes later the Doctor was entering the outskirts of the city. He had walked a lot recently and decided to take a taxi to the City Hall.

* * * * *

“Re-enforcements,” shouted Ross as he spotted the five MMC ships on his own radar scanner.

“MMC?” asked Tamara, looking over his shoulder.

“Yes,” said Ross.

“We need the Mayor to mobilize the Police Force,” said Tamara.

“Agreed,” said Ross. “The weapons I designed should be able to match anything that MMC has. I’ll go to the weather control tower. I can mobilize my Davbots from there. Tell the Mayor I’m going after the main MMC ship. Have the Police Force ready to fend off an attack from the ships that are arriving. With luck, my Davbots will be behind their lines when they land and we’ll have them boxed in.”

“Dave?” said Tamara.

“What,” asked Dave Ross.

“Do you mean the Ror-bots?”

“What? Yes, of course. Why?”

“You said Davbots.”

“Did I?” said Dave Ross. “Perhaps that’s a better name for them.”

Tamara raised her eyebrows and went to see the Mayor.

* * * * *

When the Doctor arrived at Ross’ lab, it was empty.

“Where is everybody?” shouted the Doctor in frustration. “We need to mobilize.”

He rushed out and headed for Mayor Peña’s office. He ran headlong into Tamara and the Mayor

“MMC are sending five ships,” said the Doctor breathlessly.

“We know,” said Tamara. “Dave saw them on his radar scanner. We’re already mobilizing the Police Force. We think they’ll likely land in the same clearing as Cyba’s ship.”

“Good thinking,” said the Doctor.

A Davbot came zipping past him.

“What’s that?” he asked with surprise. “It looks like a mini-Dalek.” He laughed.

“It’s a Davbot,” said Tamara. “Dr. Ross invented them. He’s got several dozen of them and he’s planning to launch his own assault on the MMC ships.”

"What?" exclaimed the Doctor. "He's just going to make things worse. We want to try to avoid bloodshed. Where is he?"

"He's up at the weather control tower now," said Tamara. The Doctor took off before she could say another word.

As the Doctor approached the tower, he could see the five large shapes in the sky, looming closer and closer to the city. Suddenly, one of them fell from the sky and landed with an amazing crash a few kilometres from the city limits. The other four ships continued to approach. As the Doctor entered the tower he heard another crash. Then another. When he entered the weather control room he saw Dr. Ross working the controls of the giant radio dish. He saw a radar screen with the two remaining ships on it. Over a set of loudspeakers, the Doctor could hear the inter-ship communications between the two MMC vessels.

"It's hit us, now," the Controller of one of the ships was saying. "Our controls are scrambled. We can't do anything." Then there were screams and outside, a terrific crash was heard.

It was clear to the Doctor that Ross was somehow scrambling the ships navigational instruments with his weather control device.

"Scrambled instruments," said the Doctor. "That's what caused the first MMC ship to crash."

Ross whirled around. "Doctor," said Dave Ross. "Just in time to witness the destruction of the final ship. I'm going to try to bring it down right on top of Cyba's ship."

"You'll do no such thing," said the Doctor. He ran forward and grabbed Ross by the shoulders and tried to pull him away from the controls. The huge robotic body didn't shift an inch.

The Doctor began turning dials and pulling levers on the control panel. Ross lashed out at him with his powerful robotic hand. The Doctor pulled his hand out of the way and Ross' hand went through the control panel, setting off a shower of sparks.

"Doctor," growled Ross. "If I don't destroy that ship, they'll destroy us."

"There has to be another way," said the Doctor.

"Always looking for a peaceful solution, Doctor," said the electronically modulated voice of Dave Ross. "Always trying to keep everyone alive."

"Yes, actually," said the Doctor, his eyes narrowing.

"Did it ever occur to you that sometimes, everyone has to die?"

The Doctor didn't know what to say. Dave Ross turned towards him and removed his hood.

"Davros!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Now do you see that you won't be able to talk me out of anything?" asked Davros.

The Doctor reached behind his back and pulled a small flashlight from inside his belt.

“I have a gift for you from my fifth incarnation,” he said flatly, almost as if he were hypnotized.

The Doctor aimed the flashlight at Davros and flicked the switch. Instantly, millions upon millions of volts of electricity shot through the air and entered Davros’ metal body. Davros was frozen, his muscles constricting from the voltage. He didn’t even have time to register a look of surprise on his face.

The metal body had already started to melt when Davros’ head burst into flames. It quickly turned into a charred lump, which was consumed even further when it fell into the puddle of molten metal on the floor. The Doctor kept firing the device and the metal boiled on the floor, a molten puddle of silver.

The carpeting began to catch fire and the metal began to melt through the stone underneath.

The beam stopped only when the device’s power was completely exhausted.

Davros was finally dead.

Episode Three

INT. DALEK SPACE STATION. SPACE.

The year is 4590.

DAVROS

I have waited many years for this meeting.

THE FIFTH DOCTOR

I'm sorry to have detained you.

DAVROS

It was but a pleasure deferred. Now you are here, you will pay tenfold for the mental agony I've suffered.

THE FIFTH DOCTOR

I'll say one thing for you Davros: You're conversation is fully predictable. You're like a deranged child. Always talking about killing, revenge and destruction.

DAVROS

It is the only path to ultimate power.

THE FIFTH DOCTOR

But to what end? Just more suffering for those unlucky enough to survive?

DAVROS

Only for those who resist my will.

The Doctor turns and takes a Dalek gun from one of his supposed captors.

DAVROS

What are you doing?

THE FIFTH DOCTOR

Until I walked through that door, I'd foolishly hoped you'd changed enough for me not to have to do this.

DAVROS

Stein, kill him.

THE FIFTH DOCTOR

I'm not here as your prisoner, Davros, but your executioner.

(The Doctor raises the gun.)

INT. DALEK SPACE STATION. SPACE. A FEW MINUTES LATER

DAVROS

Join me. You will have total power at the head of a new Dalek army.

THE FIFTH DOCTOR

To be honest, I wouldn't know what to do with an army.

(The Doctor steps forward and raises the gun to Davros' head.)

INT. TARDIS. VORTEX. LATER THAT SAME DAY

The Doctor wondered if somehow Davros could have escaped the exploding Dalek space station. Would he be able to execute Davros the next time he saw him? Of course! He had already made up his mind to do so earlier. He could do it. He was working on a device which would help him destroy Davros. It was a miniature blaster, the size of a small pen-light. He would keep it on his person at all times, and if he ever saw Davros again he would not hesitate to discharge the entire contents of the battery pack into Davros' body. But what if he regenerated before ever meeting Davros again? Could he count on a future Doctor being as certain as he that killing Davros would be the right thing? The Doctor clipped the mini-blaster onto his trousers in the small of his back and began to set up some equipment. He put the telepathic control helmet onto his head and initiated a feedback loop, thus amplifying his own telepathic abilities. He closed his eyes and began

the process of hypnotizing himself. He put himself into a deep state of hypnosis. He initiated a series of commands that he would follow daily until the day he killed Davros. A hypnotic suggestion to keep the blaster with him at all times. Future Doctors would find themselves carrying the blaster without even realizing why they had it. They would never be tempted to use it for any other purpose than the one for which it was intended. No matter how dire the circumstances, the blaster was not to be used. And on that fateful day when the Doctor next faced Davros, the post-hypnotic command to kill Davros would be so strong and so unexpected that even the most strong-minded of future Doctors would have no choice but to follow the command immediately and execute Davros.

THE FIFTH DOCTOR

(Coming out of his trance.)

There. That should do it.

INT. WEATHER CONTROL ROOM. RORATUA. DAY.

The year is 2545, but it is years later for both men, the Doctor having travelled through time for hundreds of years, and Davros having travelled back in time to 1963 when he took part in the adventure that ended up with him in the escape pod.

THE EIGHTH DOCTOR

Davros

DAVROS

Now do you see that you won't be able to talk me out of anything?

The Doctor reaches behind his back and pulls what looks like a small thing flashlight from inside his belt.

THE EIGHTH DOCTOR

(As if hypnotized)

I have a gift for you from my fifth incarnation.

The Doctor aims the flashlight at Davros and flicks the switch. Millions of volts of electricity shoot through the air. Davros is unable to move. He catches fire and his metal body melts. The beam stops when the device's power is exhausted. Davros is dead.

* * * * *

Cyba and his crew charged at the few Roratuan police officers that were guarding his spaceship. They took out most of them with a few blasts.

Two of the Roratuan officers had wedged themselves in the entryway to the ship, and were letting off volleys of blaster fire towards Cyba and his team of twelve. Cyba cursed and ordered his crew to take shelter behind anything they could find. Most of them ended up face down in the grass, with only a slightly raised mound between them and the officers.

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Meanwhile, Tamara had joined the phalanx of Roratuan police officers that was advancing on the other MMC space ship: the one that Davros had failed to crash. She had reluctantly picked up a blaster and a re-enforced shield and made her way through the sparse forest towards the crash site. No sooner had they spotted the clearing when blaster fire rocketed through the forest, setting trees aflame with its unexpected force.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, the Eighth Doctor stared in amazement at what he had just done. He suddenly remembered the Fifth Doctor's hypnotizing himself. He wondered whether or not he could have done something like that without having been conditioned by the Fifth Doctor. The FIFTH Doctor! Of all people!

"Well," he said, turning away from the cooling puddle of metal. "What's done is done."

The Doctor went to the observation window and saw to his horror that two wars were in progress.

In the forest to the North of the building, the Doctor could see that the Police Force was advancing on the second MMC space ship, while the ship's heavily-armed MMC assault force was preparing for an ambush.

To the Northeast, a little further from the city, Cyba's ship was being surrounded by hundreds of Davros' Davbots. Cyba's forces were trapped between the MMC officers guarding his ship and the approaching Davbots. Any minute now the respective armies would meet and the Doctor would have two battles on his hands.

The Doctor didn't know whom to help first. He activated the radio that Cyba had given him and contacted the MMC Leader.

"Cyba," answered the man.

"Cyba," said the Doctor. "You're about to be ambushed. There are hundreds of Davros' robots coming up behind your people."

"Davros?" asked Cyba.

"Yes, Davros. Creator of the Daleks. It was him masquerading as Dave Ross the entire time."

"Oh great," said Cyba. "Just what I needed."

"Don't worry about him," said the Doctor. "Davros is dead. But if his little robots are anything like the Daleks, retreating might be the wiser choice."

"Retreat where, Doctor?" asked Cyba. "My ship's being guarded by a couple of Roratuan police officers."

"Have you tried talking to them?" inquired the Doctor.

Cyba was silent.

"Right, you talk to them, while I try and avert the other war."

The Doctor switched off his walkie-talkie and went over to Davros' equipment. He had been able to hear the inter-ship communications on this device. Perhaps he would be able to contact the other MMC ship or even the Roratuan forces. He saw a switch with the letters T.S. written in pencil on a piece of tape next to it.

"Maybe," he said, flicking the switch. "Hello," he said into the microphone.

"Dave?" Tamara asked.

"No, it's the Doctor. Listen Tamara, you've got to stop the Roratuan forces."

"Why?" asked Tamara. "The MMC people have no rights here."

"Agreed, but you've got to realize that we've all been used by a man called Davros, an evil scientist wanted on a thousand different worlds."

"What mad scientist?" asked Tamara.

"Dave Ross," said the Doctor.

"What?" exclaimed Tamara incredulously as another ball of flame whooshed over her head.

"It's true, Tamara. Your friend was Davros in disguise."

"Let me talk to Dave!" said Tamara, getting anxious.

"He's dead, Tamara. I executed him for crimes against the universe."

"You bastard!" said Tamara.

"From someone in your line of work," said the Doctor, "I'm a little surprised to hear your reaction."

"He was my friend!" she shouted.

"He was using you. He knew that I'd come for you sooner or later. He wanted to keep tabs on you so that he could keep tabs on me."

"That doesn't change what MMC are doing," said Tamara.

"I agree," said the Doctor, "but doesn't it give both sides a reason for a cease-fire?"

"They're the ones firing, Doctor," said Tamara.

"If I could get in touch with them, I could tell them about the far greater threat."

"That being?"

"Davros' little robots."

"The Davbots?" asked Tamara. "They're harmless."

"Somehow, I doubt that," said the Doctor. "Hang on."

* * * * *

"Uh, please don't kill me," said Cyba as he stood up from behind his mound of dirt with his arms rose above his head."

He took a few steps towards his ship. When he got close enough that he started getting worried about being shot, he stopped. "I've just been in contact with the Doctor, uh, Ms. Scott's friend."

He could tell by the blank stares on their faces that the two officers had no idea who the Doctor or Ms. Scott were.

"Anyway," continued Cyba. "They're working with the Mayor and Dave Ross. Well, they were working with Dave Ross until they found out that he was actually some genocidal maniac named Davros."

Cyba could see the two officer's exchange glances.

"Now, here's the important bit," he said. "Apparently, we are at this very moment being surrounded by deadly robots that will kill us all. So, it is the Doctor's opinion that we should work together to avoid being completely killed by them."

"I don't know," said one of the officers.

"Well how about this," said Cyba. "You can stay there and guard the doorway, but just promise you won't kill us while we fend off the attack of the killer robots."

The two officers thought about this and agreed.

So Cyba ordered his crew to turn around 180 degrees and keep their eyes peeled for little robots.

While they waited, Cyba's walkie-talkie bleeped again.

"Cyba," said the Doctor. "Can you get in touch with the other MMC ship?"

"I might," he said.

* * * * *

"Please stop!" shouted Tamara, coming dangerously close to the edge of the forest. "We've both been used by a man called Davros, who's apparently some famous criminal in this time period."

The MMC crew stopped firing.

"I've been told that he's sent robots into the forest. I know he's sent them to kill you, and when they're finished, they'll probably kill us, so we need to work together or we'll all end up dead."

There was silence from the other side, and then abruptly, the firing began again.

"Damn," said Tamara. "Don't shoot back," she shouted at the police officers around her. Some of them looked at her as if she were mad.

* * * * *

The first of the Davbots began to attack. Where their blasts struck the earth, dirt flew into the air and left huge indentations in the ground.

"I need that frequency," shouted the Doctor.

"803.522," shouted Cyba into his walkie-talkie. "Now shut up! I'm about to be killed."

He fired at the nearest Davbot, his weapon doing little more than to push the robot back a metre before it continued its onslaught.

"We're not even scratching them, Leader," said the young MMC crewmember beside Cyba. Cyba looked at the woman. She was maybe twenty-five and had had maybe five months training overall, of which combat would have been only a small portion. Her name was Darla, and she had wanted to be an astronaut, but the government of Earth wouldn't let her because she wore glasses. So she had joined MMC in the hopes of being able to go into space. Cyba swallowed. He decided to make sure that she stayed alive long enough to regret ever having joined the MMC.

"What if we blast a huge hole behind them and then knock them all into it like in a fairground shooting gallery," suggested Darla.

Cyba looked at her and smiled. "They don't look like they can climb very well," he said. He gave the order for one of the cannons to be loaded and fired into the air. The bomb came down behind the line of Davbots and blew many of them forward with the force. It also left a large crater in the ground. Cyba gave the orders via walkie-talkie for his crew to keep firing at the Davbots until they had been knocked back into the pit. One by one Davros' creatures were knocked over the edge. It was only when it was all over that Cyba realized that the two MMC officers had come up beside him and had been firing at the Davbots as well.

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"Can't you hear that?" shouted the Doctor at the Leader of the other MMC ship. "Leader Ullu," he pleaded. "That is the sound of Leader Cyba's crew being destroyed by the next generation of Daleks. And you're next."

The Doctor had raced out of the weather control building and taken another taxi to the edge of the city. Now he was running pell-mell into the woods. He did not like having to be out of contact with Tamara for so long, but short of taking Davros' entire console with him, he didn't have much choice.

"One of your Roratuan friends has already tried to tell us that story, Doctor," said Ullu. "But I didn't believe it from her, and I don't believe it from you."

"How about from me?"

It was Cyba's voice, coming over the radio. "We've just knocked off about two dozen of the little footstools. From what I hear, there are dozens more in these woods. Now stop being an ass and make friends with the Roratuans and go hunt some robots."

"Yes, Sir!" came the reply from Ullu. Even though Cyba had been demoted to Leader, Ullu had respected him greatly when he was a Controller, and he trusted the man.

"Cease firing," he ordered.

He called for a truce and he met up with Chief Eldridge and together they agreed to make their way towards the other space ship, hunting robots along the way.

As the combined troops ran through the forest, the Doctor came running alongside them. He found Tamara and ran alongside her.

"It seems you were able to talk them into joining against a common enemy," said the Doctor.

"I don't think I had anything to do with it," said Tamara. She handed her blaster to the Doctor.

"Here," she said. "I don't care much for guns."

"Neither do I," he said, but she had already sped ahead of him.

When they got to the clearing with Cyba's ship in it, they saw the huge pit into which the Davbots had been blasted.

"Keep well back of that hole," warned Cyba. "They've been firing up at us from time to time, but it seems like they can't climb the walls."

"What are we going to do about them," asked Ullu. "Bury them?"

"That might work," said the Doctor as he and the rest of the people came around the hole and clustered near the space ship. "But those weapons they have might be powerful enough to burn through the dirt. They could still be a hazard."

"Until their batteries wear down," said Cyba.

"Or they starve," said Tamara.

"What do you mean?" asked the Doctor.

"They've got your octopus robots inside them," she answered.

"Tamara," scorned the Doctor. "You knew what happened to the missing Octobots the entire time?"

"Well, yes," said Tamara. "But at the time, I didn't realize that my boss was a homicidal maniac."

"It could happen to anyone," said Cyba, surprising everyone.

"What's that sound?" asked Ullu.

The group became quiet when they became aware of a hissing sound all around them. After a few moments smoke began to rise out of the earth in a circle around them. The hissing got louder. The smoke got thicker, and suddenly the Davbots, which had burned their way through the earth in a set of radiating spokes, encircled the group.

"Quick, into the ship," ordered Cyba.

The Davbots started firing on them. The police officers used their shields to try to protect the crowd as they pushed their way into the small doorway of the space ship. A couple of people were hit and went down in agony. While Ullu sealed the doors Cyba went to activate the ships shields. The various MMC personnel instinctively took their normal positions aboard the bridge.

"The shields are holding," said Cyba.

"But for how long?" queried the Doctor.

"Do you have any method of controlling the Octobots?" asked Tamara.

"Yes," answered Cyba, jumping up and running to another control panel. "We might be able to command them." He flicked on the transmitter and entered some codes into the computer. One of his crew had turned on several monitors so they could see the Davbots' attack.

"I'm getting a signal," said Cyba. "They're all responding to the Ping I sent out. I'm going to try to bring one of them forward."

As the crew watched breathlessly, one of the Davbots propelled itself forward and came to a stop directly in front of the space ship's door.

"It worked," said Cyba.

The Davbot fired.

"It won't stop firing," said Cyba. "It's obeying my other commands, but it won't stop firing."

The rest of the Davbots fired simultaneously.

"Maybe we can get them to just go away," said Tamara.

"For how long," said the Doctor. "Wherever we send them, they'll be a danger to people."

"We could send them into the forest until they die," suggested Tamara.

"Or we could lure them in here and set the ship on self-destruct," suggested Cyba.

"How will we get out," asked Tamara.

"The escape pod bay," said Cyba. "It won't be any problem."

"I think we'd better contact MMC," said Ullu. "This is an expensive piece of MMC property."

"We don't have time," shouted the Doctor as he found the self-destruct mechanism and began arming it. "Are you sure that's all of them? I thought there were hundreds."

"Every one's accounted for," said Cyba, checking the readouts.

"Authorization code?" the Doctor asked suddenly when the computer prompted for it.

"I'll do it," said Cyba taking over the terminal.

"Perkins," he said to one of his crew. "Order the Octobots to congregate in front of the door. Walji, prepare the Escape Pod Bay for our escape."

Tamara watched as the Davbots clustered around the front door of the space ship. She was worried that their concerted fire-power would be enough to melt through the shielding and the doors.

"Escape Pod released," said Walji as he came back into the room.

"Everybody out through the Pod Bay!" ordered Cyba. "That means you Doctor!"

The Doctor and Tamara made their way out the back of the ship with the others. They ran towards the forest as far from the ship as they could, making sure that they kept it between themselves and the still firing Davbots.

Inside, Cyba ordered the Octobots within the Davbot casings to come into the ship. When they started to move he activated the self-destruct countdown, opened the main doors and ran off the bridge, sealing the safety door behind him. As he activated its shields, he could already hear Davbots firing at the door. Before the shield came up, one blast made it through the door, melting a basketball-sized hole into it and setting the room on fire.

Cyba ran through the flames, out the escape pod hatch and as fast as his legs could carry him, he raced after the others. Seconds later, the ship exploded.

"Made it," said Cyba as he joined the others who were looking back at the smoke and flames emanating from the wreckage.

"That's the loudest explosion I've ever heard," said Tamara.

"I've heard louder," said Cyba. They all knew they were referring to the exploding laser-cannon that had cost Cyba his limbs.

"Well," said Cyba. "Since all of MMC's property has been destroyed, we won't be needing that Adjudicator."

"Now wait just a minute," said Chief Eldridge.

"Look," said Cyba. "Why do you want trouble? We'll just leave quietly and if you still want to take it up with the Adjudicator when he gets here, he can get in touch with MMC headquarters back on Earth."

"Earth?" thought the Doctor. "That's strange. Weren't they trying to destroy Earth just last year?"

The MMC crews started to run towards the Ullu's ship.

"Let them go!" said the Doctor. "They were just following orders. Tell the Mayor to talk to the Adjudicator about MMC. He'll see to it that they get reprimanded."

"Uh, Doctor?" said Tamara. "You make it sound as if we're leaving."

"Aren't we?"

"You just blew up the TARDIS."

"Oh that," said the Doctor. "It'll be fine."

"In that case, it'll be standing in the middle of a raging inferno."

"Oh," said the Doctor. "In that case I think we've got a few hours to kill. Never mind, young man. I'll talk to the Mayor myself."

The fifty year old police chief wrinkled his brow.

* * * * *

"Well, Tamara," said the Doctor as they approached the TARDIS the next morning. "You've been travelling with me for a year now."

"Has it been that long," she asked feigning surprise, although she had been secretly keeping track.

"It certainly has," said the Doctor. "Do you want to go home or do you want to stick around a while longer?"

"I'm in no hurry to leave," answered Tamara.

The Doctor smiled. "Good," he said and put his arm around her shoulders.

As they stepped over the charred pieces of the MMC ship, the TARDIS was suddenly surrounded by a blue light. It began to rise from the ground.

"Someone's got my TARDIS," said the Doctor. They looked up, but the blue beam went up into the clouds.

"Perhaps it's that Adjudicator's ship," suggested Tamara. "Maybe they thought the TARDIS had destroyed the MMC ship."

"Perhaps you're right," said the Doctor.

"Perhaps you're wrong," said Davros.

The Doctor and Tamara spun round to see the head of Davros inside the casing of the Emperor Dalek, the form in which the previous Doctor had last battled with him.

"You're alive!" said both the Doctor and Tamara at the same time.

"I am invincible," shouted Davros. "Did you think that a little man such as the Doctor could destroy me?"

The Doctor reached for the spent mini-blaster, wondering if this incarnation could kill Davros the way the Fifth Doctor had.

"You're a clone," said the Doctor.

"Of course he's a clone," said the other Davros. The Doctor looked to his left and saw another Davros wheeling towards him, this one in the more familiar wheelchair-like life support unit. This Davros had one arm, and it was missing its hand.

"And so is he," said the third Davros. The pair turned again to see another Davros and another and another arrive until they were surrounded by at least a dozen Davros', all looking slightly different. One might have a face that looked a bit different. One might have a hand. There was even a Davros in the back with two arms.

"I thought you had been disfigured in an accident," said Tamara, her throat parched. "Or from old age. But if these are your clones: they all look as hideous as you..."

"That's right," said Davros. "I was born this way. Do you still want to marry me?"

"All right, Davros," said the Doctor. "That's enough. You've got us surrounded. You've got my TARDIS. Tell us what you want."

“Oh, I don’t have your TARDIS, Doctor,” said Davros, looking up into the sky. “They’ve got your TARDIS.”

The Doctor and Tamara looked up to see that the space ship that was the source of the tractor beam was hovering only a few hundred metres from the ground. And it was not alone. There were hundreds of identical ships in the sky, with more approaching from above.

“Oh, good,” the Doctor said dejectedly, still looking up into the sky. “Daleks!”

TO BE CONTINUED

Escape Pod will be continued next season in part two
Plan 8 of The Daleks



A crashed alien spaceship has piqued the Doctor's interest,
but he is not the only one who wants a look inside.
The planet's inhabitants have found the alien bodies to contain
technology that they want to incorporate into their own society.
But, just as the Doctor manages to get himself involved,
The Mercury Mining Corporation claims ownership of the stolen vessel,
and orders the salvage operation stopped.
Who has the valid claim on the ship?
And will the question be meaningless if the aliens who stole the ship
arrive to get it back.

This is another in a series of original fan authored
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featuring the eighth Doctor as played by Jeremy Banks-Walker

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