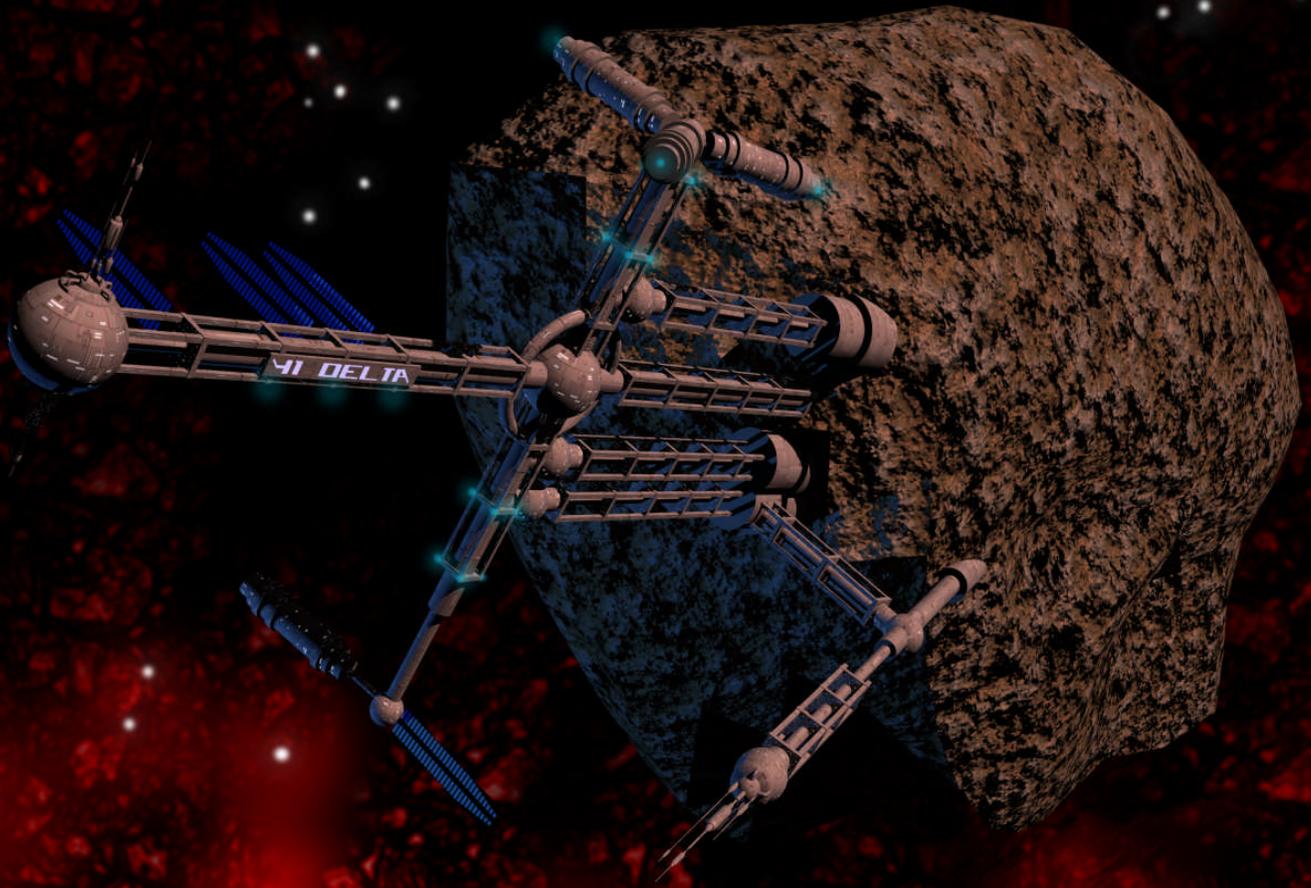


THE  
**DOCTOR WHO**  
PROJECT

**NO REST FOR THE WICKED**



Mark Simpson

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Based on an original storyline by Mark Simpson

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“Incoming craft, this is 41 Delta control. Please transmit authorisation codes immediately.”

*Static.*

“Repeat, incoming craft you must transmit your authorisation codes. This is a high security area and unauthorised access is not permitted.”

*Static.*

“This is your final warning. Transmit authorisation codes now or face the consequences.”

*Static.*

“You leave us no choice. We are now deploying defensive systems against...Damn! Did you see that Gregor? The trace just vanished off the screen!”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Report!” demanded Governor Benjamin Bartholomew.

Doctor Stern looked up from her examination of the body. Her pale green eyes fixed onto Bartholomew’s ice blue ones as she stood, her white coat soaking up a jagged streak of blood as it brushed against the body.

“Multiple stab wounds to the chest and lower abdomen. Massive blood loss, lacerations to most, if not all, major organs. He’s very, very dead Governor.”

Bartholomew cursed under his breath, bringing a snigger from one of the two guards flanking her. Turning that icy stare on the unfortunate guard brought on an embarrassed silence.

“Do we have any suspects, Chief Andersen?” Bartholomew asked the tall, blonde man in a senior guard’s uniform.

Andersen cleared his throat. “We have a whole asteroid full of them.”

“That isn’t funny,” Bartholomew snapped. “We need to find the killer before someone else gets hurt!”

At that moment there was a commotion behind him. Everybody present turned to look, seeing two guards dragging a man along the metal corridor towards them. As they drew closer Bartholomew took in the features of the man the guards held. He had an aristocratic bearing, flowing collar length dark hair and a matching dark beard and moustache, both neatly trimmed. He wore grey, well-cut trousers, a designer label white shirt and a dark blue waistcoat covered in a pattern of stars.

“Who the hell is this?” he wanted to know, as the man was brought before him. “I know the faces and names of all six hundred and twelve prisoners aboard this asteroid and this isn’t one of them.”

“We found him hiding in cargo bay three,” reported the senior of the two guards.

“I was not hiding!” the man protested. “I was merely trying not to advertise my presence.”

Bartholomew stepped forward, bringing his considerable bulk nose to nose with this stranger. He gave the man his best intimidating stare, usually used on young and rebellious prisoners who thought they were king of the hill.

“I don’t care what you were doing. I want to know who you are and how you got here!”

To his credit, the man didn’t flinch. “I arrived aboard your *charming* establishment by accident. As for who I am...” he smiled slightly “...I am the Doctor!”

\* \* \* \* \*

Grae watched from a shadowy corner of the cargo bay as two large men in what appeared to be guard’s uniforms dragged the Doctor away.

Everything had happened so fast. They had arrived in this bay moments ago, and almost as soon as they stepped from the TARDIS the door to the bay had slid open. Expecting trouble it

seemed the Doctor had pushed Grae towards the shadows, giving her a reassuring smile as he did so. He then set about causing a distraction, so she could slip into hiding.

Now he was gone, dragged away to who knew where and she was on her own. It was at times like this that she realised how much she missed Tamara.

But there was no time now to dwell upon their recently departed travelling companion. The Doctor had promised to explain Tamara's sudden departure when the time was right and she would just have to trust her friend and mentor to do that.

First though she would have to rescue that very same friend and mentor. There were times when she wished, just for a little while, that life with the Doctor wasn't always exciting and chaotic.

She needed to reconnoitre the area, discover where they had landed (the Doctor had been his usual vague self about that before they left the TARDIS) then work out a rescue plan. Basic Agency training stuff.

Filled with purpose, Grae left the cargo bay. Pausing on the threshold, she took the left-hand branch of the corridor outside the bay. As she moved carefully along, she had no idea that she was being watched.

\* \* \* \* \*

The monitor on the desk displayed an image of cargo bay three. All appeared as usual, until a tall box with a flashing light on the top materialised, accompanied by a raucous noise.

A hand moved forward, advancing the playback until a tall, bearded man and a young woman with short blonde hair emerged.

A smile curled upwards at the picture on the screen. "Oh dear, Doctor, your nose for trouble has really landed you in it this time!"

The monitor screen was switched off with a deft flick of a switch, to the accompaniment of a light chuckle.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I demand to see the Governor!"

"Prisoners have no right to make demands, Kingston!" snapped Chief Andersen, looking down his nose at the much smaller humanoid before him. "I don't care if you are the official spokesman for the inmates here, you're still as much a prisoner as the latest arrival."

"I think you'll find, under the Charter of 2347, that a spokesman has the right to request an audience with the Governor at any time, where the rights or safety of his or her members are at risk. There's a killer on the loose out there and my members are understandably worried!"

Andersen smiled, not exactly a pleasant sight. Kingston was reminded of an animal from old Earth he had once seen in a zoo on Titan. It was called a wolf and it, like Andersen, had a bad reputation.

"You are quite correct, Kingston, when you use the word *request*. Not demand. Request. You may request anything you like, so long as you don't mind getting a refusal. But you cannot *demand* anything. And anyway, who would notice another killer among the scum you represent?"

Kingston sighed. He decided to ignore Andersen's last remark "Very well, I request an audience with the Governor. Is that better?"

"Much," Andersen replied. "I'll pass along your request. When I have the time."

Scowling, Kingston left the Chief's office, knowing the big man had got one over on him yet again. Rubbing his dark, bald head with frustration, Kingston slouched back to his cell, vowing that when the day of reckoning finally arrived, Lars Andersen would get what was coming to him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Governor Bartholomew let out a sigh. As interrogations went, this wasn't the easiest he had ever conducted.

"Let's start again from the top. Your name is John Smith..."

"Doctor John Smith," the man before him interrupted. "I do so hate it when people get incomplete information, it makes for misunderstandings you see."

"Very well," Bartholomew replied, trying not to grind his teeth. "Doctor John Smith. You cannot account for how you arrived..."

The Doctor held up an admonishing finger. "I think you'll find that I *will* not account for how I arrived. I can do so, but have decided not to."

Bartholomew felt the colour rising in his cheeks and sweat prickling his closely cropped scalp. He attempted to keep his temper in check, but this man really was going out of his way to be obstructive.

Taking a calming breath, the Governor started again. "You are Doctor John Smith. You won't reveal how you arrived here, on a secure prison complex with no habitable planets within five light years. Your arrival coincides with a security alert outside the complex where an unidentified craft disappeared off sensors, and the violent death of a prisoner in our custody, yet you claim no knowledge of the alert and total innocence of the murder. Is that correct so far?"

The Doctor mused for a moment. "So far, yes."

"So we are supposed to believe that your arrival here at the same time as a murder is purely coincidental?"

"Yes," the Doctor said brightly. "Yes, that's it exactly!"

"To be fair," said Doctor Stern, who had remained quiet up to now; "there wasn't any blood on him when he was captured. Whoever killed Jeggerson would have been covered in it."

"Whose side are you on?" demanded Bartholomew.

"The side of truth," Stern responded, running a hand absently through her short red hair.

"As are we all," Doctor Smith said happily.

Bartholomew scowled. "The prisoners on this rock are jumpy enough right now. One of them has been murdered and the other six hundred and eleven are baying for blood. Then we have you, Doctor Smith. You somehow get past some of the most sophisticated security in the system. Now, I need a scapegoat, someone to blame for that murder, and you're in the frame as far as I'm concerned."

For the first time the smile disappeared from the Doctor's face. "But I'm innocent. Your own doctor virtually admitted that much."

Now it was Bartholomew's turn to smile. "You know what, Doctor Smith? I don't care!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Remind me, what are we looking for again, Grash?"

The humanoid reptilian in the ill-fitting guards uniform turned to his human colleague. "Anything unusual. I believe those were Governor Bartholomew's exact words."

"That could cover a multitude of sins."

Grash considered the saying. "Then we shall have to work our way through all of them, Lee."

Lee smothered a snigger at Grash's literal interpretation of the human phrase. Sweeping his palm lamp around, he led the other guard deeper into the cargo bay.

It was a sound that caught their attention first. At least it caught Grash's, who had the more sensitive ears of the two. A slight humming noise led them to a shadowed corner, where they beheld a bizarre object.

"What is it?" Grash inquired.

“I’ve absolutely no idea,” Lee admitted, taking in the tall blue box with its double doors, frosted windows and roof light.

Grash pointed to the lettering above the doors. “That is a human language, isn’t it?”

Lee nodded. “Doesn’t mean its something I’ve ever encountered before, though.”

Reaching out, he touched the box tentatively, and then snatched his fingers away quickly.

“Booby trap?” Grash asked, hand resting on the pacification device strapped to his belt.

“No. There is an odd vibration though, as if there is power flowing through the box.”

Grash placed his own hand against the door. “I see what you mean. Do you think this is unusual enough for the Governor?”

“I would say it qualifies perfectly,” Lee replied, reaching for his communicator to call in their report.

\* \* \* \* \*

Grae hadn’t discovered much since she had left the cargo bay. Metal corridors, walkways and locked doors. And the occasional armed guard, which she had managed to dodge.

One thing she had found was a large locked door. Hardened metal probably pressurised too, with a complex alphanumeric combination lock. She placed her hand against the door, which was cold to the touch.

Then she found something else. A hand clamped over her mouth and harsh breathing on the back of her neck. A man’s voice in her ear. “Don’t…”

Grae never got to discover what the man wanted as she planted her elbow into his stomach. Before he could even exhale, she had pirouetted on her left foot, clasped the wrist of the hand that had moments before covered her mouth and twisted it up the back of her would be assailant.

The man, a shade shorter than Grae with ratty black hair and stubble peppering his chin, gasped in surprise and pain as she forced him up against the door she had been examining.

“Now, why would you be sneaking up on a defenceless young woman?” she asked, jerking his arm for emphasis. Smiling to herself, she thought that Tamara, wherever she was, would be proud of her.

“I… I didn’t mean to hurt you. I just didn’t want to startle you, make you scream.”

“Do I look like the kind of girl who screams?”

“No,” he admitted. “Please, I only wanted to talk to you!”

Grae started feeling a little guilty. She relaxed her grip a little and when the man made no aggressive movements, she relaxed a bit more. Deciding that he could possibly be trusted, she let him go completely.

The man turned to face her, massaging his aching wrist and grinning ruefully. “I guess I picked the wrong person to try not to startle.”

“Who are you?”

“Larsson, Alexander Peter, number 2081964, Block Delta,” he responded instantly, as if it was an answer he had given many times before. “Sorry, it kind of comes automatically.”

“That’s alright,” Grae replied with a slight smile. “My name is Grae, like the colour.”

Larsson suddenly looked left and right along the corridor. He reached out, as if to put his hand on Grae’s arm, then thought better of it and settled for leaning closer to her.

“We need to move from here, before the next patrol.”

“What patrol?”

“No time. I’ll explain everything once we’re safe.”

“And I suppose you know somewhere safe?” she asked, raising an eyebrow at her new acquaintance.

He smiled slightly. “I know lots of safe places. Follow me.”

Larsson set off down the corridor, away from the mysterious door. Sparing it a glance, Grae looked after the retreating figure, then decided that there was little else she could do right now. If she was to rescue the Doctor, help might be required.

Sighing, she hurried after Larsson, hoping she wasn't putting herself into more trouble.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Doctor John Smith?"

The Doctor looked up at the sound of the tentative voice. Peering at him through the bars of his cell was a tall, thin man in a faded grey suit. The man had a thin face too, with sunken eyes and an overly large nose. Dark wisps of hair clung to his almost bald head, as if afraid to leave.

"That's me," the Doctor replied carefully. "And who might you be?"

The man smiled, showing uneven but amazingly white teeth. "I'm Justin Graves, your appointed defender." He paused. "I'm actually the duty solicitor for this entire prison."

"That must be quite a task."

Graves nodded. "At least I'm almost at the end of my twelve month term. I'm due to be relieved when the next transport arrives, in a couple of days."

"So I could very well be your last case here."

"You know, I hadn't considered that!"

"Maybe you should come in," the Doctor said. "Only I'm afraid I can't let you in, I can't seem to find my keys right now." The Doctor made a show of patting his pockets, as if looking for said keys.

"Ah," said Graves. "Guard!" he called down the corridor.

After a bored looking guard had strolled up to the door, unlocked it and then locked it again after Graves, the two of them sat facing each other. Graves took the single hard chair, while the Doctor remained on the bed, where he had been when Graves arrived.

"So, you're innocent of course," Graves commented, consulting an electronic notebook.

The Doctor raised an eyebrow. "You think so? I'm gratified."

"Don't be," Graves replied, looking up. "Everybody here is innocent, if you ask them. I find it saves time if I assume each client is innocent, then worry about whether or not that is true."

"I can help you there," the Doctor told him. "I am innocent of the murder I've been charged with."

Graves considered him for a moment. "Interesting choice of phrase. Does that mean you're guilty of another, different murder?"

The Doctor's face registered momentary surprise, and then he smiled slightly. "You're a very clever man, Mister Graves."

"As you seem to be also, Doctor Smith. Would you like to tell me how you arrived here?"

"No."

A pause. "Very well, we'll move on to the charge. Governor Bartholomew has charged you with the murder by stabbing of Erig Jeggerson on the third day of March 2365 at approximately 10.25 in the morning. How will you plead to that charge?"

"Not guilty."

Graves made a note on his pad. "Right. Do you have any witnesses that would put you somewhere else at the time of the murder?"

The Doctor considered for a moment before replying. "No."

Another note. "Is there anything you would like to ask me, Doctor Smith?"

Now the Doctor sat up from the slightly slumped position he had cultivated since their discussion began. "Yes, there is."

Graves spread his arms wide. "Fire away."

The Doctor leaned forward. "Tell me about this prison."

\* \* \* \* \*

Larsson had lead Grae along corridors, up ladders and across walkways. They had gone up a number of levels through this complex, whatever it was, and Grae just hoped that she was getting closer, not further away, from the Doctor.

Eventually Larsson stopped beside a hatchway. Looking both ways along the walkway they stood upon, he eased open the hatch and slid through. A moment later, his head appeared through the opening.

“Come on, before anybody sees you!”

Grae was about to ask who was around to see either of them, but decided against it. Mentally shrugging to herself, she followed Larsson’s lead.

Inside was a small room, about eight feet square. Almost half of the space was taken up with a sleeping bag, which had seen better days. There was a battered tray with a few personal items and an antiquated, glass fronted chiller unit, which housed a couple of bottles of what Grae guessed was liquor and some ration packs.

Larsson perched on the edge of the chiller unit, smiling at his guest. “Welcome to my home. Please, sit down.”

Grae glanced around, confirming that there was no chair in the cramped space. She settled for sitting cross-legged on the sleeping bag.

“You really live here?” she asked, unable to keep the surprise out of her voice.

Larsson nodded. “It’s better than a prison cell.”

“Prison cell?” Grae echoed.

Her host looked at her oddly. “Don’t you know where you are?”

Grae shrugged. “Not really. Some sort of asteroid complex. We didn’t really have time to ask directions before the Doctor was hauled away by some guards.”

“The Doctor? You are not alone then?”

“Of course not! I need to rescue him before he gets into terrible trouble.”

“If the guards have him, you won’t see him again unless you’re captured and assigned to the same work gang.”

Grae frowned. “You mentioned prison. I think you should tell me everything you know about this place.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“41 Delta was constructed almost fifty years ago as a penal colony for the worst type of prisoners. Multiple murderers, war criminals and worse are sent here. There is virtually nothing for over a parsec in every direction. The inmates, mostly human, mine ore from the interior of the asteroid and it’s shipped to the local systems in return for food and basic supplies. Transporters deliver outgoing ore shipments and incoming goods, including new prisoners, so no ships ever need to land here. Which makes your arrival all the more interesting.”

“I’m sure it does, Mister Graves,” the Doctor replied lounging against the wall of his cell with his thumbs hooked into his waistcoat pockets. “So I would suppose that this is a difficult place to escape from?”

“Impossible,” Graves commented. “Nobody has ever escaped from 41 Delta and there shouldn’t be any possibility of it ever happening. Airless vacuum in all directions.”

“Except for poor Erig Jeggerson, who has managed a permanent and unfortunate escape.”

“Indeed.”

There were a few moments of silence in respect for the dead man, which the Doctor eventually broke.

“So what about the staff? Are they rotated on a twelve month basis like you?”

“The majority are. Bartholomew, Stern and Andersen are all on longer contracts, but the rest come and go on a regular turnaround.”

The Doctor considered what he had been told. “I assume then that those three are going to be the ones that decide my future.”

“I would expect them to be your tribunal team, yes.”

The Doctor looked his defence lawyer straight in the eye. “Then you’ll need to be a very, very clever man to save my neck, Mister Graves.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“So this is a penal colony?” Grae said, more to hear the words from her own mouth than as a question. Larsson answered anyway.

“That’s right. The scum of the galaxy get sent here, terrible people who have committed horrible crimes. You don’t want to run into any of them!”

Grae nodded absently, then realised what her companion had said. She looked at him suspiciously, edging slightly towards the hatchway and possible escape.

Larsson noticed her movement, and then seemed to guess what she was thinking. “Oh, there’s no need to worry about me. I just happened to be on the wrong side in a recent war in this sector. I was sent here for political reasons more than anything, but I managed to escape.”

She looked around, taking in the cramped living conditions of the man before her. “Doesn’t look like much in the way of freedom,” she told him honestly.

He smiled slightly. “It might not be, but it is my choice to live here, I decide when I come and go and where. So it is a kind of freedom. One of these days I’ll work out how to smuggle myself aboard an ore carrier and get away from 41 Delta for good.”

Grae wondered just what she had managed to get herself into. Was she any better off than the Doctor? He had probably managed to talk himself out of custody by now and was more than likely running rings round the authorities, showing them how they should be doing things. And here she was, in a cramped room goodness knew where within the complex, with a strange little man who seemed to have more ambition than ability.

“I need to find my friend,” she said to Larsson. “Where do you think he will be?”

Larsson shrugged. “The authorities will want to question him before he gets sentenced and assigned to a work gang. He’ll more than likely be in a holding cell somewhere in the administration block.”

“Sentenced? But he’s done nothing wrong!”

“He’s here, isn’t he?” Larsson countered. “That will be enough for Governor Bartholomew. He’ll find something to charge your friend with. And you too, if and when they catch you.”

Grae set her jaw. “Then we need to free the Doctor quickly.” She took a breath. “Will you help me?”

Larsson seemed to consider the request for a moment. “If you promise not to do anything stupid to get us captured.”

“Deal.”

“I guess I’ll go with you to keep you away from the patrols.”

“Thank you.” Grae reached forward and kissed the little man lightly on the cheek, then watched him blush.

“Come along, I’ve got some idea of where they might’ve taken your friend,” Larsson said, not looking her in the eye. She followed him out through the hatchway, hoping the Doctor could hold out until the cavalry arrived.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bartholomew banged a gavel down on the desk in front of him. "This tribunal is now called to order!"

The other seven people in the room, none of who were talking anyway, looked at the Governor with various shades of distaste. Bartholomew didn't seem to notice however.

"This is a tribunal to investigate the death of prisoner 29111965 Erig Jeggerson on the third day of March 2365 at approximately 10.25 in the morning," Bartholomew announced. "Members of the tribunal Governor Stephen James Bartholomew, Doctor Josephine Stern and Security Chief Lars Andersen. Also present are 41 Delta Prisoner's Representative Elias Kingston, along with the accused Doctor John Smith and his defence council, Justin Graves." He didn't bother naming the two guards who flanked the Doctor on the official record of the proceedings.

"The prisoner will rise," ordered Chief Andersen. The Doctor stood casually, hands cuffed in front of him.

"Doctor John Smith, this tribunal accuses you of the murder of the afore mentioned Erig Jeggerson. How do you plead?"

The Doctor leaned forward slightly, looking Bartholomew directly in the eye. "Not guilty."

From the corner of his eye, the Doctor thought he saw a smile flit across the usually unreadable face of Doctor Stern. But it was gone before he could focus properly upon her.

Bartholomew had returned to his presentation of the case. "Doctor Smith, you arrived here by means unknown..."

"Objection!"

The Governor was almost beside himself with fury at the interruption. "What are you objecting to, Doctor?"

"Your statement was incorrect. You said I had arrived by means unknown. That's not true. I know exactly how I arrived here. It's just that you do not. Hence your statement is, for the most part, false."

Bartholomew smiled unexpectedly and the Doctor wondered if he had just walked into some kind of trap.

"I would like to draw the prisoner's attention to the screen," the Governor said, indicating a flat glass panel on the wall above and behind Bartholomew, Stern and Andersen.

The screen flickered into life, settling down to show a tall box with doors and a light on top, sitting in a cargo bay with two armed guards flanking it.

"I see from the expression on your face that you recognise this object, Doctor Smith."

The Doctor frowned. He had tried to keep his face from betraying his surprise, but knew that he hadn't been able to mask it completely. He took some comfort from the fact that

Bartholomew couldn't know exactly what the TARDIS was, or the man would surely have come out and said as much.

"I don't know how this box ties in with you being here," the Governor remarked, confirming the Doctor's suspicion, "as the security tapes covering the cargo bay for a three hour period either side of your capture are strangely missing. But once we find where you managed to hide them, we will have a much clearer picture."

This caused the Doctor to laugh out loud. "You think I arrived on your asteroid, 'by means unknown', murdered a prisoner for no good reason, discovered and removed, then hid the security tapes covering the cargo bay where I was found, then got myself captured by your men? You must think me some sort of master criminal!"

Bartholomew's eyes narrowed. "Criminal, yes. Master, no."

The Doctor blew out a breath. "Well, that's a relief! The beard can confuse some people!"

"So, you still deny the charge of murder?" Bartholomew inquired, ignoring the Doctor's odd comment.

“Most assuredly.”

“Does the defence council offer any evidence to prove the prisoner’s innocence?”

Graves cleared his throat. “No, sir.”

“Any witnesses to testify that the accused couldn’t have committed the crime?”

“No, sir.”

Bartholomew smiled. “Then let the tribunal decide the fate of the accused.”

“Objection!”

The Governor sighed. “I do wish you would address objections through your defence council, Doctor.”

The Doctor nodded. “Very well.” He nudged Graves.

“Objection,” Graves said wearily.

“What is the nature of your objection?”

Graves glanced at the Doctor, who took that as his cue.

“There is absolutely no evidence against me. No forensic evidence on my clothes or skin, no fingerprints left at the scene. Nothing. I’m innocent Bartholomew and you know it.”

Bartholomew raised his eyebrows. “I know nothing of the sort, Doctor Smith. Now, if you have no more *objections* then it is time for us decide your fate.”

The Doctor waited, whistling quietly, as Bartholomew, Stern and Andersen whispered together for a couple of minutes. Stern seemed to be shaking her head at something. Eventually, they stopped whispering and faced the Doctor.

“We of the tribunal find Doctor John Smith guilty of the murder of Erig Jeggerson. Sentence is to be life imprisonment at the 41 Delta penal colony.”

Stern piped up. “Let the record show that the vote was not unanimous.”

Bartholomew scowled at her briefly. “Guards, take the prisoner away.”

“I’m innocent and you all know it,” the Doctor said as he was led away knowing that none of them would lift a finger to help him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Grae and Larsson were making their way through the ducting when the fugitive held up his hand. Following him, Grae stopped, waiting to see why he had called a halt.

She heard a familiar voice, muffled by distance and a thickness of metal. The Doctor’s voice.

“I didn’t do it, you know. I’m not guilty.”

Shuffling backwards a couple of feet, she found a grill in the ducting. Pressing her eye to it, she peered down into the corridor below.

After a couple of moments he came into view, handcuffed and walking between two men in guards uniforms.

“Don’t you care that I’m not guilty?” he asked one of the guards.

The guards remained stoically silent and the three of them passed beyond her sight and, a few seconds later, beyond her hearing too.

“That was him! That was the Doctor,” she told Larsson excitedly.

“Please, keep your voice down,” he barked sternly. “They’ll hear you and we’ll both be caught!”

“Sorry,” she whispered back. Her face was alight with renewed enthusiasm though. “He’s close, and in trouble.”

Larsson nodded back. “We’ll help him if we can. Now, come on.”

“Where are we going?” Grae wanted to know. “What’s wrong with getting down from here and following them?”

“It’s not safe. We need to find somewhere safe. Then we can follow your friend. But not here.”

Reluctantly Grae agreed. Resuming their progress, she couldn't help thinking of her brief sight of the Doctor. For an instant, she thought he had looked up. Looked right at her, and winked.

\* \* \* \* \*

Justin Graves stood outside the cell of his latest, probably even last, client on board 41 Delta. The guard beside him unlocked the door and swung it open just enough for the lawyer to squeeze through.

The Doctor looked up from where he was sitting on the edge of his bed. He smiled amicably at his defender.

"Hello, Mister Graves. Have you come to say goodbye?"

"In a way. I came to say I'm sorry."

"What for?" the Doctor inquired.

Graves looked grim. "For not making a better job of defending you in the tribunal."

The Doctor nodded. "I see. And how do you think you could have helped? I didn't really give you much to work with."

"I know," Graves admitted, staring at his feet. "But maybe there was something I could have tried, some trick..."

Standing, the Doctor offered his hand to Graves. "You did your best. Don't worry about me too much, I've escaped from worse places than this."

Graves looked up, seeing the genuine smile on the Doctor's face. He matched it with one of his own.

"You're very kind Doctor. I wish you luck."

"I tend to make my own luck, but thank you anyway. Goodbye, Mister Graves."

"Goodbye, Doctor," Graves said. He walked over to the door, tapped on it then squeezed out through the gap as the guard opened it for him.

As the door closed, the smile disappeared from the Doctor's face, to be replaced by a scowl as he studied the walls of his cell.

\* \* \* \* \*

Doctor Stern studied the console before her, calibrating it to take care of the plan she was formulating. It would need special manipulation if she were to pull off the bluff that she had decided on as she left the tribunal.

Bartholomew was a fool. He had proved that with his treatment of the Doctor. It was obvious to a blind mouse that the Doctor hadn't murdered Jeggerson, but the Governor was determined to have his scapegoat whatever the cost.

She stood back from the console, admiring her handiwork. It would do the job she had programmed it for. Smiling, she moved on to the next section of the plan.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Doctor lay on his thinly padded cot, reading a battered copy of Arthur C. Clarke's 2001, when he heard the scraping of a key in the lock of his cell door. Looking up, he saw that a guard was standing there. The guard inclined his head, indicating that the Doctor should precede him into the corridor.

Leaving his book behind, he leaped off the bed and bowed to the guard. "You're too kind sir."

"Move!" the guard grunted as the Doctor skipped past him into the passage.

“So where are we going?” the Doctor wanted to know as the guard and his colleague led him away from the cell. “The theatre? Seaside perhaps? Or what about a pint of real ale in a good old English pub? Hmm?”

“In here,” said the guard holding open a door and placing his free hand on the stun pistol hanging from his belt.

Smiling sweetly at both guards, the Doctor stepped through the doorway to find himself in the 41 Delta medical bay. Doctor Stern looked up from her computer terminal as he walked in.

“Doctor, please come in and take a seat,” she said, getting to her feet and crossing the room. She grabbed hold of a piece of equipment on wheels and pushed it towards him.

“Is this where you torture me for answers to obvious questions?” he asked mildly.

Stern didn’t crack a smile. “Nothing of the sort. You will need a full medical examination before you can be assigned to a working party. We’re not barbarians, you know.”

“Well, some of you aren’t.”

Ignoring the Doctor’s comment, Stern began attaching electrodes to his forehead. “Could you unbutton your shirt please, Doctor?”

“Of course, Doctor,” he said with a slight smile.

She continued to attach electrodes to the skin of his chest. Then she strapped the Doctor’s wrists to the arms of the chair. When she had finished she looked across at the two guards standing beside the door, as if seeing them for the first time.

“You can wait outside, this won’t take long.”

“But we have our orders.”

“Nevertheless, patients in my care have their rights; and one of those is the right to privacy. Now, will you wait outside please?”

The guards exchanged glances. The senior one shrugged and without another word they left the medical bay.

“Thank you,” the Doctor said when they were gone.

Stern was preparing a hypodermic full of a colourless liquid. She glanced sidelong at him. “Don’t thank me yet, Doctor.” Her task finished, she advanced on the helpless figure strapped into the chair.

\* \* \* \* \*

Larsson and Grae had crawled out of the ducting and dropped into an empty storage cupboard. The former prisoner insisted that they wait before he cautiously checked the corridor beyond.

“All clear,” he whispered back at her. Impatiently, Grae pushed past him and set off in the direction that she had seen the Doctor take.

Running to catch up with her, Larsson put a hand on her arm to stop her. Grae whirled round; ready to tackle the man again if she had to.

He held up his hands defensively. “I just wish you would be more careful,” he hissed at her. “You’ll get us both caught, then no one will be able to help your friend.”

Grae considered for a moment, seeing the logic of his statement. Nodding her head, she indicated that he should take the lead.

For the next ten minutes they made slow but steady progress. On one occasion they had to duck into a side passage as a patrol passed by. When they emerged, Larsson crossed the corridor to look at something low down on the opposite wall. It seemed to be a smear of red paint.

“What is it?” Grae asked, standing beside him.

Larsson looked up at her sadly. “This is where Jeggerson was killed.”

On their journey through the ducting, Larsson had told her that one of the prisoners had been murdered just before she and the Doctor had arrived. From what the former prisoner had heard, the Doctor had been accused of the murder.

Grae placed a sympathetic hand on his shoulder. “Was he a friend of yours?”

Larsson shook his head. "I hardly knew him really. Some people it is best not to get to know, if you follow my meaning."

"I think so."

After a few moments of respectful silence, Larsson looked back at her. "We should keep moving," he decided.

Together, the two of them left the scene of the murder and went on their way, searching out the accused.

\* \* \* \* \*

"What?" Bartholomew exclaimed. "What did you say, Stern?"

The tinny voice of his desk speaker sighed. "I told you that Doctor Smith is dead."

The Governor shook his head. "That's what I thought you said. How? Why?"

He could almost hear the resignation in Stern's voice. "I was doing a standard medical check on him. There was a malfunction in the diagnostic equipment, causing a power surge while he was connected to it. That alone shouldn't have killed him, but when he stopped breathing and couldn't be revived, I checked a little further. He had a heart weakness. The shock, mild as it was, stopped his heart."

He slammed his hand down onto the transmit button and barked, "I'll be right there. I want to see his body."

"Of course," Stern replied, cutting the connection.

Alone in his office, Bartholomew let out a growl, which turned into a blood-curdling yell of pure frustration.

\* \* \* \* \*

A short time later Governor Bartholomew stood over the body of the Doctor, laid out on an examination table in Stern's medical bay. He poked the body in the ribs, pulled back an eyelid to reveal a fixed and staring eyeball, then lifted a cold and clammy hand, which he allowed to drop back to the bed through natural gravity.

"I assure you, he's quite dead," Stern informed her superior, who just grunted in response. "If you don't believe me, try listening to his heart."

Bartholomew glared at her, and then lowered his ear to the chest of the Doctor. Sure enough, there was no sound of a heartbeat from within.

No wait; there was something faint and rhythmic, just at the edge of hearing. He was about to move his head when he noticed something from the corner of his eye. Stern was tapping a stylus against the edge of the bed in frustration. That must be the sound he could hear.

"Well?" she inquired, arching an eyebrow.

"He seems, as you said, to be dead." The Governor frowned. "I'll leave you to dispose of the body."

"I suppose it does, if nothing else, remove one of your problems."

"Yes, I suppose it does," he sighed. "Carry on, doctor," he added, turning to leave.

After the door had closed and Bartholomew's heavy footsteps had retreated down the corridor, Stern stood over the Doctor's inert body. Reaching out, she shook his shoulder gently. When nothing happened, she tried again, with more vigour this time.

Even though she was expecting some kind of movement, she still let out a startled gasp as the Doctor's arm shot up and his hand grasped her by the arm.

"Is it time to get up yet?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Grae recognised where Larsson had brought her. They were in the corridor with the large security door at the end, the one outside where they had first met. The same door where he had crept up on her and she had almost broken his arm.

"It leads through into the prisoners' cells," Larsson told her without having to be asked. "Six foot thick dwarf star alloy, it can only be opened by hydraulic pistons, driven by nuclear generators. It would probably take every prisoner who has ever inhabited this rock pushing with all their strength to move it half an inch."

"Sounds secure enough," Grae decided.

"Come along," Larsson urged. "We don't want to be caught here."

"We don't want to be caught anywhere," she confirmed, following her guide.

Around the corner she allowed Larsson to get a little ahead of her, as he did on occasion, scouting for patrols. She saw him disappear around the next corner, when suddenly something caught her attention. It appeared to be a bundle of rags stuffed behind a waste hatch.

As Grae approached closer she realized that the items weren't actually rags, but a dirty tattered uniform. As Grae pulled the uniform away from the hatch, something metallic-sounding clattered on the floor.

Grae dropped the uniform in surprise when she realized what it was. It was a knife; the blade all stained with a dried red substance.

Grae bent down and peered at the knife, confirming it was blood.

Leaning over from where she was crouching, she picked up the fallen uniform and examined it more closely. Turning it around in her hands, she soon discovered bloodstains covering the front of the uniform. Her hands encountered a flap of loose material. It was a partly torn pocket with a label affixed to it.

Grae turned the label so she could read what was written on it. 2081964 Delta Block it said. Something about that combination of numbers rang a bell in her mind. She was sure she'd seen or heard those numbers somewhere else. If only she could recall exactly where or when.

"What have you got there?" asked a male voice coming from behind where she had been crouching.

Grae stood and turned around to discover Larsson standing over her. He had a somewhat menacing look on his face that unnerved Grae. She stood up to face him.

"I asked you, *what* do you have there?"

It was at this point that Grae realized where she recognized the numbers. A sudden nasty chill ran up her spine.

\* \* \* \* \*

"You never did explain how you knew I had two hearts, and that I would be able to stop one of them to simulate death," the Doctor commented as Stern helped him up off the bed in the medical bay.

"Really Doctor, I thought you were smarter than that. You haven't realised, have you?"

"I'm guessing you have some knowledge of Gallifreyan anatomy, possibly from medical experience."

"Look into my eyes, Doctor. Look deeply, beyond the surface."

The Doctor did as she suggested. As he looked deeper into her eyes, he felt a slight glimmer of recognition. Did he know this person? A stray thought, a memory, or a common shared experience from long ago? A familiar person with a new face, something he knew all too well himself? Or just... Realisation dawned at last and he wondered how he could have missed the obvious. "You're a Time Lord. But we haven't met before, have we?"

"I've met you, but you haven't met me yet. My name is Arna."

"So what are you doing here anyway?"

“Research. “Pure and simple research. I’m doing a study of pacification drugs and their effects on humanoid life forms.”

The Doctor gave a slight chuckle. “Somehow I just don’t believe that’s been sanctioned by the high council.”

“They’re not aware of my activities,” she answered. “They don’t even realize I’ve left Gallifrey. I found I couldn’t really experiment properly in that environment. So I decided on another course.”

“Pacification drugs, and one of the best places to try them out is a prison.”

“Correct. Unfortunately there are side effects in some of the specimens.”

“People,” the Doctor corrected. “They are not specimens. They’re known as people even if they are prisoners.”

“Whatever. Specimens, people, I don’t need a lecture in morality. Anyway, there are still side effects. Some of them pretty nasty I’m afraid.”

“Nasty enough to bring someone to kill a fellow inmate?”

“Possibly. Other side effects have been mood swings, some of which lead to an increased burst of strength. Doesn’t happen in every case, but in around two percent of them.”

The Doctor decided to get straight to the point and not waste anytime with idle chitchat. “So tell me. Did you murder that prisoner?”

“Oh please Doctor. I’m not a cold blooded killer like the Master.”

“Perhaps not. But you are a self-confessed renegade.” A sudden thought struck the Doctor. “The missing security tapes. Was that you?”

“Might have been.”

The Doctor was pacing now. “Do you think one of your two percent could have committed the murder?”

Arna looked embarrassed. “It is a possibility, though one I’ve been trying not to think about too hard.”

“I am glad to see you do care about your mistakes, unlike a certain other renegade Time Lady I could mention.”

She looked up at him, her eyes hard. “We all make mistakes from time to time, Doctor. Even you.”

“Don’t remind me. But we’re talking about you, not me. Do you have a list of this two percent, the ones who react badly?”

“On the computer,” she replied, leading him across to the terminal in the corner of the room. Moving her fingers swiftly across the keypad, she brought up a screen with a list of seven names on it.

The Doctor studied the names on the screen as they flashed by. He noticed something.

“Why is there an ‘X’ next to that name?”

“He escaped.”

“Mister Graves told me nobody had ever escaped from 41 Delta. He said it was impossible.”

“It’s impossible to escape from this prison,” she confirmed. “Apparently he didn’t get off the asteroid, only outside the prison area itself. I was told he was still at large somewhere within the complex.”

“I would say then that we have a prime suspect in this Alexander Peter Larsson, wouldn’t you?”

\* \* \* \* \*

Grae stood up slowly, turning to try and block the view of Larsson from the bundle she had been inspecting.

“I *asked* what you had found?”

“Nothing,” Grae replied trying to sound as innocent as possible. “Just a bundle of old rags and stuff. Nothing important.”

Larsson knew what Grae had found. “So *now* you know my little secret.”

Feeling suddenly scared of this apparently harmless little man, Grae started to back slowly away from him. He turned sharply towards her. A few minutes ago he was this mild and meek little man. Now he could do anything to her.

Larsson lunged at Grae and grabbed her. Grae struggled and in doing so, Larsson raised his hand to slap Grae across her face. She tried to bring her hands up to knock his away but found that they were locked behind her back. Grae struggled more. Larsson was stronger than he looked.

Larsson spun Grae around and slammed her body hard up high against the bulkhead wall. Grae could feel the wind pushed out of her. With his free hand Larsson grabbed at Grae’s throat and began to squeeze harder and harder.

Grae could feel the life sliding out of her. Her vision blurred, quickly growing fuzzy round the edges. The more she struggled the harder Larsson squeezed. The pressure on her neck was unbearable. Her breathing quickly faded to nothing. With one last silent gasp, Grae’s world faded to complete and utter blackness.

\* \* \* \* \*

“So what do you suggest we do?” Arna inquired. “This man disappeared into the ducting two months ago and as far as I know hasn’t been seen since. How do you propose we find him now?”

The Doctor stared off into space, thinking hard. He felt completely useless and dejected. He wasn’t sure what the answer was.

The communicator on Arna’s desk beeped. Cursing silently she turned towards the unit and activated it. “Stern here. What is it?”

“Doctor, we have an emergency medical situation here in corridor H64. We’ve found the body of an unknown female in the corridor.”

“Is she still alive?”

“Just barely. We’re doing all that we can, but your expertise is required right away.”

“I’m on my way.” Stern grabbed her medical emergency bag from the table as she ran towards the exit. The Doctor was at her side as the door slid open.

“I don’t think you should come with me Doctor.”

“Why not. It might be my missing companion Grae. I have to come. I have to make sure it isn’t her.”

“I understand that Doctor. But you can’t. I worked too hard to fake your death and I can’t have you swanning around the prison.”

“But Grae...”

“...will get the best medical attention I can provide her. You forget I’m actually a qualified Doctor. You’ll have to trust me on this. Can you do that?”

“I don’t suppose I have a choice.”

“No not really. Don’t worry. I’ll buzz you as soon as I’m there and have the situation under control. Now stay here.”

“Alright.”

Arna turned to run down the hallway but stopped short.

“And Doctor. Under no circumstance let anyone in here. Don’t answer the communicator. Stay out of sight and find somewhere safe to hide. Clear?”

“Crystal.”

And with that, Stern was gone.

\* \* \* \* \*

Doctor Stern ran down corridor H64. As she approached the scene, she could see a crowd of medics and guards as well as a body on the floor. "What's the situation?"

"Young female. Approximately twenty-five. Severe injuries to her body and strangulation marks along her neck."

The medic stepped aside as Stern bent down and began to examine the body of the prone young woman. She felt along the woman's neck checking for a pulse. She found one. It was extremely faint, but there was something odd about it. Stern could have sworn she felt a double pulse. She felt again. Her suspicions were confirmed.

"Medic!"

"Yes Doctor?"

Get this patient on a stretcher and get her to the medical unit straight away.

The two medics rushed to the young woman's side and put her on the stretcher.

"Hurry up!" barked Stern. "If we get her back quickly enough, there's still a chance I can save her. Now run!"

At this point a crowd of guards had gathered around the scene. Who was this young woman and what was she doing in a men's prison. None of them recognized her. Jenkins, one of the guards who were standing in the crowd grabbed Stern by the arm as she made to run back to the med lab.

"Who is she?"

Stern pushed his arm away. She really didn't have time for questions. She had to get back to save the young woman's life.

"Doctor?"

"I would have thought that was obvious Jenkins. She's must be a friend of the late Doctor Smith."

"Apparently that's what Governor Bartholomew thought too."

"Bartholomew? You've spoken to him?"

"Well yes. I had to report this to him. He did seem very interested in your new patient mind you."

Stern just ignored Jenkins and ran off to aide her patient. She had to admit though. It was odd that Bartholomew was interested in the woman. What did it have to do with him? Now that he knew though, it was going to be hard to keep it from him. Why did her life always get complicated when the Doctor was around?

\* \* \* \* \*

The Doctor was pacing again, only this time it was a combination of frustration and worry. He hoped that it wasn't Grae that had been injured. He always had the utmost faith in his companions, and more often than not his faith was rewarded. But once in a while he lost one.

He was determined though that he wasn't going to lose Grae, not like this. They would need each other more than ever through the trials ahead, especially now Tamara wasn't aboard the TARDIS. She had to survive.

The doors to the medical unit open and from down the hall he could hear Stern's slightly raised voice. Taking the hint, he spotted a curtained off area in the corner and made his way there and hid out of sight.

"Careful with her now. Lift her gently onto the diagnostic table."

The medics deposited the patient's prone body on the examination table.

"Thank you, gentlemen, you may go now. I can handle the situation."

"Bartholomew will be wanting to see her."

Andersen's voice, the Doctor noted.

“He can see as much of her as he likes, once I've stabilised her condition. Now leave me *alone*, you're blocking my light!”

From behind the curtains the Doctor could hear the door open and the medics leave the medical unit. The doors closed and the Doctor rushed out from where he had been hiding.

The Doctor was standing aside Stern and the young woman's body. He looked down at the young woman and instantly knew whom it was. She looked horrible. What had happen to her? He made to speak, but Arna put her finger to her lips signalling not to say anything. The sound of footsteps could be heard outside the doors.

The two waited in silence for what seemed like hours but in reality was only a few seconds. When she was sure it was safe, Arna motioned towards the Doctor.

“How is she?”

“Not good. Not good at all.”

The Doctor shook his head.

“I can save her.”

The Doctor looked towards Arna pleadingly.

“Am I right to assume she's Gallifreyan like you?”

The Doctor was surprised. How had Arna found out?

“Doctor?”

“Yes. Yes she is.”

Stern moved about the table making various examinations, checking various medical monitors and devices.

“Well its lucky for her. If she were a human she wouldn't have survived her attack. I gather this is your companion?”

The Doctor was holding the young woman's hand. “Yes. This is Grae.”

Arna continued to examined Grae.

“There must be something we can do for her?”

Arna looked down at the floor. She didn't know what to say. “All we can do is sit back and hope the regeneration cycle kicks in. Its her only hope.”

The look on the Doctor's face said a thousand words. He dropped Grae's hand and began to pace frantically about the room.

Arna didn't understand.

The room had gone completely silent. Then in a barely audible whisper the Doctor spoke. “She can't.”

“Don't be ridiculous Doctor. All Time Lords can regenerate. Look at her. She can only be on her first, or second, incarnation at the most.”

“First actually. Unfortunately Grae suffers from a rare condition that inhibits the regeneration process. If we don't find a way to save her life, she'll die!”

“HLS?” asked Arna.

The Doctor nodded.

“Poor child. Sadly there is nothing we can do for her. Normally I would have expected her respiratory bypass system to have kicked in by now, but as you know, HLS has a tendency to impair that bodily function in Time Lords. I'm afraid then she really *is* dying.”

“This is so ridiculous. As Time Lords we've come to depend on our bodies ability to repair themselves in cases like this. You must have something in this lab that can help her?”

“I'm afraid not Doctor.”

Suddenly the Doctor's whole demeanour changed. It was as if a light bulb had gone on in his mind.

“That's it!”

“What is?”

“If we can make mental contact with Grae, we should be able to convince her bodies defences that she's getting better and starting to pull through.”

“You mean a three way mental link?”

“Yes!”

“It could work, but it’s extremely dangerous Doctor.”

“No, no. It’s quite safe. I remember old Cardinal Thraxinel lecturing about this back at the Academy.”

“I don’t know about this, Doctor. Besides Thraxinel was a senile old kook.”

“For Grae’s sake, I hope you’re wrong. It will take both of us to pull this off and you know it.”

“Alright then. What do you want me to do?”

“Thank you Arna. I knew you would do the right thing.”

The two Time lords stood over Grae and placed their hands flatly on the bed surrounding her head.

“Alright. Just relax. Concentrate. Clear your mind of everything.”

“I can’t with you talking Doctor.”

“Sorry.”

The room went quiet.

“Ready?”

“Ready.”

“Contact.”

“Contact.”

Their minds joined together as one. Their thoughts became one. Together they reached out for Grae’s mind. On the bed before them Grae’s body twitched ever so slightly. Her lips began to move as if mouthing a single word. Contact.

\* \* \* \* \*

“She said what?” demanded Bartholomew.

Andersen sighed to himself. “Doctor Stern *requested* that you give her time to stabilise the patient before you go and question her.”

“Who does she think she is giving me orders indeed? I’m in charge round here, not some quack with ideas above her station. Well, it’s about time I brought her down a peg or two.”

Bartholomew march out of his office, determined to deal with Doctor Stern especially after her mistake had killed his scapegoat for the Jeggerson murder. Andersen stared after him thoughtfully.

\* \* \* \* \*

It felt like she was sinking slowly through water, though the consistency was thicker than normal H<sub>2</sub>O. She knew that she was deteriorating and had made peace with the fact that it wouldn’t be long before the grey smudges at the edges of her vision would soon enough become an all-engulfing blackness.

Grey. Grae. If it hadn’t been so sad, it would almost be funny.

She had written a letter to her sister, even though she wouldn’t get chance to send it. Unfortunately, she hadn’t been able to say goodbye to the Doctor either, or Tamara. She hoped that they wouldn’t be too sad about her death, and that the Doctor wouldn’t risk his life to try and find her once he escaped his captors.

Funny, thinking of the Doctor had brought about the illusion that she could see him. It looked like he was swimming through the thicker-than-water towards her, in the company of a woman she had never seen before.

The Doctor smiled as he reached her, while the woman looked worried. They each grasped Grae under one arm and pushed against the strange liquid, slowly pulling her up and away from her descent into darkness, towards a faint glow.

Feeling oddly comforted by this mirage, she smiled to herself. Maybe death wouldn't be so bad after all.

\* \* \* \* \*

Arna let out a gasp as she broke contact, a shudder running down her spine. The Doctor had moaned as he too let go, slumping back into the chair.

It took both of them a few moments to recover their mental balance. The Doctor was first, getting up and bending over Grae, his face still etched with concern.

"How is she?" Arna asked softly.

"Her breathing seems stronger," the Doctor admitted.

"That wouldn't be difficult, it was virtually non-existent before."

Grae decided at that moment to take a long, shuddering breath. She coughed, and then drew in another one, almost trying to drag the air into her lungs.

The Doctor burst into relieved laughter. "Take it easy," he told his friend, taking her hand in his. "Save some for later."

Her eyes flickered open and tried to focus. Eventually they must have managed it, as her face creased into a weak smile.

"Doctor," she rasped. Then her face fell again. "Are you dead too?"

"You're not dead," he told her, ruffling her hair playfully. "And neither am I."

"So I see, Doctor Smith," said Governor Bartholomew from just inside the doorway.

\* \* \* \* \*

Governor Bartholomew wasn't sure what he had expected when he used his security over-ride to open the locked door of the medical bay, but it wasn't a dead man performing medicine.

"You're a very clever man, Doctor Smith. Just how you managed to get Doctor Stern on your side I don't know, maybe some sort of medical old boys club I'm not aware of. But I've been suspicious about Doctor Stern for a while. Looks like my timing's perfect.

He waved forward the four guards who were flanking him just inside the doorway. They advanced, hands ready on the butts of their weapons.

"Wait!" the Doctor said, coming around the diagnostic bed towards them, his palms out in front of him. "Don't you want to capture the man who killed Erig Jeggerson?"

"That's just what I'm about to do."

"No. I mean the *real* murderer. I'm talking about the man who really did the deed. Or do you want to leave him at large, ready and able to kill again? How foolish will you look when I'm safely locked away and the next body turns up? Who are you going to blame then?"

Bartholomew paused, staring hard at the Doctor. After nearly a minute, he waved his hand vague in the air.

"Talk, Doctor. But make it quick. You have exactly one minute."

And talk the Doctor did. He told them of Grae and how she had remained free when he was captured. How she had fallen into the company of their missing prisoner, Larsson. Of how she had discovered the blood stained clothes and knife, Larsson's attack on her and most important of all, exact directions to his bolthole within the complex.

When his minute was up, the Doctor paused for breath, a grin spreading across his face as he saw the Governor taking in all this new information. Eventually the man turned to the guard beside him.

“Inform Chief Andersen of this and tell him to dispatch a squad.” Then the Governor turned to the Doctor, Grae and Arna. “You three will remain in here, locked away and under guard until we have corroborated your story.” And with that he left the room, taking the four guards with him.

Raising herself onto one elbow, Grae had a question for the Doctor. “How did you know all that? About what I had been doing while you were locked away?”

The Doctor smiled gently down at his friend. “I was all uppermost in your mind when we went in to try and save you. All I had to do was repeat it for Bartholomew.”

“Do you think they’ll catch Larsson?”

“I’m sure of it,” he replied. “Now, I think it’s time we found a way out of here, don’t you?”

\* \* \* \* \*

Larsson sat on the tangle of sheets that made up his bed, shivering. He didn’t mean to kill the girl; she had found something she shouldn’t, that was all. He just needed to silence her, to keep himself free.

He hadn’t meant to kill Jeggerson either. He had just been unlucky that the big man had spotted him as he was trying to raid the galley. Had threatened to take him in, shop him to the authorities. Larsson wouldn’t allow that, couldn’t allow it. He had only been protecting himself.

There was no way he would go back to a cell within the prison. He would rather die first.

So he gripped the knife hard in his hand as he saw the hatch covering his hiding place slowly ease open.

\* \* \* \* \*

Back in his office, Bartholomew stabbed the answer button as his communicator beeped. “Report,” he demanded.

“We have Larsson in custody sir,” Andersen’s voice came back from the speaker. “He tried to put up a fight, then attempted to take his own life, but my men managed to overpower him.”

“Good work,” the Governor replied. “Any casualties?”

“Larsson himself has some minor cuts and bruises, but nothing that won’t heal.”

“In that case, meet me at the medical bay. We have unfinished business with a couple of doctors.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Have you erased all your files?” the Doctor inquired.

Arna nodded from her position, bending over the computer terminal. “There’s nothing left on this piece of antiquated junk that wasn’t there when I arrived.”

“Good.” He turned his attention to Grae, who had been sitting on the edge of the bed, gathering her strength. “How are you feeling now?”

“Better,” she replied. “Still some way short of 100%, but getting stronger all the time.”

Excellent,” he said with a smile. “Right, I think it is time the two of you *disappeared*.”

“What about you?” Grae wanted to know.

“Somebody needs to stay to make sure Larsson is caught. Hopefully I won’t be far behind you both.”

“Good luck,” Arna told him, sounding like she meant it too.

He acknowledged with a nod. “Now go, both of you.”

The pair headed for Arna’s TARDIS.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Did you hear something, Grash?”

Grash shrugged. “I’ve heard a lot of things since we arrived on duty. Anything in particular?”

Lee frowned at his partner. “There was a grating noise, somewhere towards the back of the bay. Didn’t you hear it?”

“If I did, it doesn’t concern us,” Grash replied. “We were told to guard that, and that is exactly what I’m going to guard.”

Staring at the tall blue box, Lee wished they had never found the cursed thing. They had spent every hour since on guard duty with the thing, rotating with others of course. It was even more boring than night shift in the cellblocks.

“I’m sure I heard something,” he muttered, leaving his post and heading off between the crates to investigate.

Grash sighed. He liked Lee, they worked well together. But his partner had an impulsive streak that would get him into nothing but trouble.

As if to underline his point there was a muffled thump from the direction Lee had taken. The fool had probably tripped over a loading hook in the dim lighting.

“Lee?” Grash called. “What have you done now? Lee?”

When there was no reply, Grash had to make a choice. Keep guarding the box, despite the fact there was nobody around who was going to steal it, or go and see what fate had befallen his friend. In the end it was no choice at all.

“If we get hauled up before the Governor for deserting our post, I’ll have your ears for ornaments,” Grash muttered, following the path Lee had taken between the crates. It only took him a minute to find his friend, struggling to his feet in an aisle between two lines of crates.

As Grash went to his friend’s aid, he heard a noise from back where they had been guarding the box. He reflected on how it sounded like the noise Lee had been describing, the one he had set out to investigate in the first place.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bartholomew punched in the over-ride code again and waited while it was recognised. Then the door of Larson’s cell swept open.

He looked around the interior with a scowl, before noticing the huddled figure in the corner of the cell, drawing a threadbare prison-issue blanket around his shivering form.

“My dear Larsson,” began Bartholomew. “It’s such a shame that things got so out of hand, isn’t it.”

“I didn’t mean to kill the girl, she found something she shouldn’t, that’s all.”

“They tell me that’s all you’ve been saying since you were caught. It sounds to me like you’re mind’s snapped.”

“You did this to me,” said Larsson.

“Now that is interesting,” said Bartholomew, walking towards Larsson. “In the past, you simply obeyed my commands, and then forgot all about them. Now that your conditioning has asserted itself so cripplingly that you can only repeat your programming, your subconscious has managed to retrieve the memory of my brainwashing you. I wish I could study the phenomenon in you more closely, but with you liable to give the game away, I’m afraid you will have to be dealt with.”

Bartholomew pulled a syringe from his pocket and removed the cap. “This won’t hurt any more than all the other times,” said Bartholomew soothingly. “After that, everything will be all right.”

He knelt down and pulled the blanket of Larsson. To his surprise, it was Smith huddled in the corner, with a smug expression on his bearded face.

“That sounds like a confession,” said Smith.

“Where’s Larsson,” demanded Bartholomew.

“Oh, he’s safe. When I came to visit him, he kept repeating the same phrases over and over. I recognized it as mental conditioning immediately, of course. With the aid of Doctor Stern’s pacifism drug, no doubt.”

“It has some advantageous side effects.”

“Had,” said the Doctor. “She’s gone for good.”

Bartholomew lifted the syringe menacingly.

“I wouldn’t do that if I were you,” said Andersen. Bartholomew turned to see the man standing in the doorway with two armed guards. Bartholomew dropped the syringe and stumbled back to his feet.

Bartholomew raised his hands and walked to the door, where the guards handcuffed him and took him out of the cell.

“Thanks for believing me,” said the Doctor.

“I’ve had my suspicions about Bartholomew for a while,” confirmed Andersen.

“Make sure Larsson gets medical treatment,” said the Doctor. “It’s about time I joined Grae and Doctor Stern.”

“Not so fast, Doctor Smith. We still need to discuss your arrival here, your unauthorised presence aboard this asteroid and anything else I wish to charge you with. You could still be here for quite some time.”

“Sorry, no can do. I need to be off saving the universe from oppression, though I would love to stay and chat. Goodbye.”

Before Andersen’s astonished eyes, the Doctor manipulated a device in his hand and the tall blue cabinet shimmered into view in the corner of the cell. The Doctor pushed against the side of the cabinet and it swung open. He ducked inside and moments after the side slipped back into place, the cabinet vanished from sight to the accompaniment of a raucous grinding noise.

“So that’s how he got into a locked cell,” said Andersen to himself.

\* \* \* \* \*

Arna was fussing over her console, a black tubular affair with three concentric circles rotating in the place where the time rotor was in the Doctor’s craft.

“I hate these short hops,” she told him as he stepped through the main doors.

“Well, unless you want a couple of passengers for the duration...”

“I know, I know,” she replied with bad grace.

Grae was looking around with keen interest. “This is a Type 70, isn’t it?” she asked as the Doctor joined her.

“I see somebody remembers their Vintage and Veteran Vehicles lectures,” he remarked with a grin.

“We’re about to arrive,” Arna called, alerting them from the console.

“Ready when you are,” the Doctor replied as he and Grae moved to the doors. “And thank you, for everything.”

“Don’t mention it,” she replied with a scowl, which softened slightly. “And please try to keep out of my way in future. You bring nothing but trouble.”

Laughing lightly, the Doctor took Grae’s hand, ready to exit as soon as they landed.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Will that poor guard be alright?” Grae asked.

“He’ll be fine,” the Doctor replied, massaging his right hand slightly. “I didn’t hit him that hard.”

She changed the subject. “So that was Arna. She was quite impressive really.”

The Doctor raised a quizzical eyebrow. “Are all renegades the subjects of hero worship among you young Time Lords?”

Grae laughed. “No, only you Doctor. But we’ve all heard the stories about the Lord President’s cat!”

“Ah yes, misspent youth.” He returned to monitoring their flight through the space/time vortex with a smile on his face.

“Doctor, about Tamara...”

But he silenced her with a look, one of deep sadness that spoke volumes about how he was feeling. He shook his head.

“We’ll talk about it when the time is right,” he promised, going back to his work.

Grae accepted his words. But she couldn’t help feeling that she was being excluded from some terrible secret, that he thought he was protecting her. How could she tell him that she didn’t appreciate his concern, which she wanted to know, whatever the cost.

Leaving him standing over the console, she headed for her room. She needed to think about the future as well as the past.

### **Coming Next**

#### ***The Soul Men***

by Arnold Blumberg

## About The Authors

### MARK SIMPSON



*"No Rest For The Wicked"* is Mark Simpson's second story for The Doctor Who Project, after the Season 31 tale *"Split Infinities"*. He still lives in Yorkshire and has now been writing Doctor Who stories for more than 30 years (he's approaching 40 far too rapidly for his own liking, by the way). While he still works in the same laboratory, the site of that has moved recently. He would still love to be a full time writer. He's not enjoying football (soccer) as much right now, as his team are not playing well, though his family tree research is progressing during his far too small amount of spare time.

### BOB FURNELL



Bob is the Range Editor, Publisher, Founder, and all round Jack-of-All-Trades for The Doctor Who Project. He has had three stories published with TDWP; Season 27's *"The Doctor's New Clothes"*, Season 31's *"The Death of A Brigadier"* and Season 27's *"The Final Sunset"*, which he co-wrote with John Gordon and Misha Lauenstein. He devised the character of Tamara Scott and the evil Section 13 cult. He worked alongside Mark Gatiss and Andy Bell on the BBV video-diary-documentary *"Bidding Adieu"* and is the editor and publisher of the Doctor Who fan magazine *"Whotopia"* among the man projects he has been involved in. Bob has been a part of Doctor Who fandom for close to 25 years – far longer than he ever imagined.

### MISHA LAUENSTEIN

Misha has been involved in The Doctor Who Project since its very beginning; to date he has been the series most prolific writer penning 8 stories. His favourite characters to write for have been the Daleks, Davros and the Master. When not writing stories for TDWP, Misha can be found spending time with his wife Dianne and arranging his vast collection of Doctor Who collectables.