

THE
DOCTOR WHO
PROJECT

SECOND LIFE



Kyle Bastian

Published by Jigsaw Publications/The Doctor Who Project
Vancouver, BC, Canada

First Published October 2012

Second Life

© 2012 by Kyle Bastian

The moral right of the author has been asserted.

Doctor Who © 1963, 2012 by BBC Worldwide

The Doctor Who Project © & ™ 2012 by Jigsaw Publications

A TDWP/Jigsaw Publications E-Book

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced
by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

All characters in this publication is fictitious and any resemblance
to real persons, living or dead, is purely co-incidental.

Typeset in Palatino Linotype

Logo © 2005 The Doctor Who Project

Cover © 2012 Philip Boyes

For Nicholas Courtney & Elisabeth Sladen

1 - REUNION

The planet was oval in shape, like a bean floating upright. Mountains of opalescent pinkish rock twinkled in the distant light of its sun. Perched in a carved out section of opal, rested a series of windowless grey buildings. Once considered lost in time, mere mention of the planet's name struck terror into the hearts of most intelligent life forms:

Shada – the prison planet of the Time Lords.

It was a place that hung in the cobwebs and dust at back of every Time Lords' mind. From the time they were children they were told of its existence and made to fear it. Be good or you'll be sent to Shada...

In the Dark Times, Shada held prisoners of war along with home-grown criminals. But in recent centuries it had sunk into disrepair. As Lord Presidents came and went, they each chose to discontinue its use as they felt it stained the reputation of Gallifrey and her noble civilization. So the planet and its facilities lay disused, tucked away inside a containment field, shielded from detection. The previous Lord President, however, in her penultimate act of power, reopened the facility and had one cell and the security systems remodeled and brought back to proper working order. They only needed containment for one prisoner, and Shada was the only place that prisoner could be contained.

Tomek was a young Celestial Intervention Agency operative, fresh out of the Academy. An Arcalian by rank but an artist by desire. He sat on his stool at the controls near the cell, sketching the prisoner, looking rather nonplussed as he tried unsuccessfully to capture the arc of her back.

"If you keep that up, you'll waste the rest of your ink supplies." Barna, his partner on duty, warned nonchalantly. "You won't be able to get more until you head back to headquarters next week."

"Look," Tomek explained, "is it my fault they have her blinking in and out of existence so frequently I can't get it right?"

"Why do you even indulge in such a primitive, pointless activity?" Barna took his seat at the guard console next to Tomek, intentionally bumping the sketch pad as he passed. "A computer can draw a more accurate picture than you ever could."

"But where's the challenge in that?" Tomek looked his colleague over. "Besides, there's a reason why Patraxis aren't known for their artistic abilities."

Barna turned sharply. "Look, there's no reason to get all huffy about it. I was only making a joke. I mean, we're only guarding the most ruthless criminal Gallifrey has ever known while she's being held in stasis at the point of dematerialization. You have to find something to laugh about."

"I don't know why they don't execute her already?" Tomek said, dropping his pen onto the desk. "I lost a lot of friends during her attempted coup. My cousin was on the Chancellery Guard assigned to protect Lord President Quelladvortrelundar and –"

"Former Lord President Quelladvortrelundar," Barna corrected.

"Right," Tomek paused, "I'm still not used to saying that."

"Do you think her replacement will do any better?"

"I don't think Lady Quella did that poor of a job," Tomek scratched at his temple, "Though I don't understand why she stepped down like she did during the trial."

"Some of the guys in the quarters said it was because she didn't like the Inquisitor." Barna laughed, "Fancied she could have done better herself, like she used to do."

"Well, I don't know about that."

"What I do know," Barna said as he rose from his seat and stretched, "is that if it wasn't for that little protégée of hers getting into trouble, she would..." His voice trailed off, distracted as he glanced at the cell.

"Oh, leave Graekatziasa'asterus out of it too."

"Tomek..."

"Look, I happen to think what she did was well-intentioned and rather sweet."

"Tomek," Barna attempted once again to grab his daydreaming partner's attention.

"Plus," Tomek continued, oblivious, "There's just something about her I find really attractive."

Barna grabbed Tomek's chair and swiveled it swiftly in his direction. "You can wax lyrical about your crush on Graekatziasa'asterus all you like later – look!" Barna pointed emphatically at the empty cell that stood before them. "Did you press something? Anything?"

"No! Why would I?" Tomek checked the control console. "I show the stasis field still holding steady – only central control at headquarters can order it broken, and no order's been sent!"

"Where did she go, then?"

"It doesn't matter – sound the alarm."

Barna slammed his palm down on the scanner and the communication's channel opened.

"This is Shada Station 1, Barnaseventalis reporting: the prisoner has vanished, I repeat, the prisoner has vanished! We have an emergency situation, I repeat, an emergency situation!"

A rush of cold air filled the chamber and a figure materialized behind them. Tomek and Barna turned and came face to face with the woman who moments before had been frozen behind the energy barrier they had been guarding for the past seventeen hours.

"Stop talking about me like I'm not in the room," she said with a wicked snarl, "My name isn't *the prisoner*, it's Bramahl."

With a wave of her hand, the two young Time Lords were thrown back into the energy barrier, which instantly disintegrated them. There was a faint sigh of air, and their molecules dispersed into the ventilation system.

Then, in the blinking of an eye, Bramahl was gone and Shada stood empty once more.

* * * * *

"Ma'am, scanners indicate that we're being approached by an unregistered craft."

"Thank you, Lieutenant Parker." Admiral Kathryn Poole shifted in her seat at the center of the bridge. "Christof, put it on the main screen. Banks, open all hailing frequencies."

"Ma'am!" Lieutenant Christof answered obediently and flicked a switch on her console.

"Communications channels open." Banks informed Poole.

Poole cleared her throat and smoothed down the front of her crimson uniform. "This is Admiral Kathryn Poole of the Terran Colony Alliance Vessel *Cheyenne II*. Please state your name and intent."

"Nothing coming through," Banks listened intently, "Not yet anyway."

"How come I can't see it yet?" Poole asked. "Christof, please magnify the source sector."

A section of the screen enlarged, and within, a tiny silver, metallic object could be seen manoeuvring towards the *Cheyenne II* with skilled precision. Then it vanished.

"Damn it, Christof! Where did it go?"

A commlink chirped on Poole's armrest.

"Admiral," the voice from the other end shouted. "It's Dorton – a large silver object just appeared in the hold and the pilot's asking to see you."

"Right," Poole responded. "Escort him to the bridge. Make sure your men are armed."

"But Admiral, it's a w-"

"Lieutenant Dorton," Poole interrupted, "I don't care if it's Ralvac Welles' ghost itself. Bring the pilot to me. No one boards my ship without permission."

"Right, Ma'am!" Dorton responded, breaking off communications.

Banks turned to face Poole's chair. "Admiral, the only ship capable of simply 'appearing' within a moving TCA vessel is a TARDIS."

"I know, I know," she responded, annoyed. "Damn the Time Lords. Why is it when they show up, it always means trouble?"

A tone chimed the arrival of the lift at the rear of the bridge, the doors opening slowly. Standing in the lift, under armed escort, stood a young short woman wearing a knee-length grey overcoat and a pair of small, wire-framed, rose-tinted glasses behind which were the greenest eyes Poole had ever seen. A strand of shoulder length red hair fell across the young woman's freckled face as she smiled.

"Well I never thought I'd say this," Poole smiled back, "but at least it's a Time Lord I like!"

"Hello Kathryn, it's nice to be back." Grae said cheerfully, "By the way, I'm commandeering your vessel."

* * * * *

With a sickening lurch, Val snapped awake.

"Lights!"

She leapt to her feet and grabbed her pink silk robe off the bedpost. She tried the lights a second time, but to her surprise, nothing happened. Even when she wanted to sleep, the TARDIS roundels maintained a warm glow. But this, this wasn't right at all. In her time onboard the TARDIS she had never seen it completely dark, or completely quiet. The comforting humming was gone. Funny, she had become so accustomed to it she hardly noticed it anymore. But now it was conspicuous by its absence. Groping her way to her bedroom door, she opened it to find that it was just as dark outside her room as inside.

"What the heck is going on?"

Stepping back into her room, she opened the top drawer in the bureau standing next to the door. After a few seconds spent rummaging, she produced a flashlight. Smacking it against the palm of her hand a couple times produced a beam of light. Then she heard a sound that sent a chill down her spine, the sound of another person shouting in distress.

"Tom!" Goosebumps rose all over her arms and legs and Val realized for the first time how cold it was. She saw her breath dancing in the air in front of her. It was cold, like a morgue. Quickly she tucked that idea back under the bed with the monsters and terrors from her childhood.- Something was wrong.

Rushing down the hall to Tom's room, she opened it to find him snoring away peacefully, completely oblivious to the change in the atmosphere inside the Ship. Then something occurred to her. If it wasn't Tom shouting...

"Tom! Tom, wake up!"

"Val!" Tom awoke with a start, nearly falling from his bed. "Jeez, give me a heart attack, why don't you?"

"Hurry – something's wrong with the Doctor."

Tom started, his eyes widening. Throwing aside his blankets, he scrambled out of bed and pulled on his t-shirt.

"Brooker, Miss Rossi!" The Doctor's voice bounced down the corridors. It didn't sound quite right. Was that fear they heard in his voice? "I'm in the console room, please come quickly!"

With Val leading the way, the two friends raced into the darkness...

...for about ten feet, when they came to the door that led into the console room.

"Aren't there supposed to be two left turns then a right before we get here?" Tom asked with a sigh.

Val pushed the door open to find the Doctor pacing on the far side of the console. Several dozen candles of all shapes, sizes, and scents were lit, casting creepy shadows against the opposite wall.

"It smells like Father Christmas made a fruit salad in here." Tom chuckled nervously in an ill-fated attempt to break the tense atmosphere.

"Brooker!" the Doctor snapped and turned to his friends. "This is no time for jokes!"

"What is it, Doctor?" Val asked, surprised by the outburst.

"This is wrong," he responded cryptically. "This is all wrong."

"What's wrong, Doctor?" Val laid a calming hand on the Doctor's shoulder.

"Why's the TARDIS powered down?" Tom looked around him. The column was still and the hexagonal lamp above the console was dark.

"Silent running," the Doctor answered matter-of-factly.

"Silent running," Tom asked, "like a submarine?"

"Indeed."

"But why?" Val leaned against the console and attempted to study the Doctor's face in the shifting light.

"No time," he stated resolutely. "Pack your things, you're both going home."

"What?" Val snapped upright.

"You're kidding?" Tom asked.

"Mr. Brooker." The Doctor advanced on Tom, almost menacingly. "Do I sound like I'm kidding?"

"I mean, after all we've been through, you're going to drop us off just like that?"

"Something's wrong," Val said. "I can tell. Let us help."

The Doctor turned sharply away from his companions and circled the entire circumference of the console. When he reached his confused friends, he looked them both up and down and added an indignant, "You're still here, are you?"

Tom pulled himself up to his full height and looked down into the Doctor's eyes. "Of course we're still here. What's going on?"

"Fifteen minutes," the Doctor said plainly. "Have your things ready in fifteen minutes."

Val turned angrily on her heels and marched out of the console room. Tom followed after one last look back at the person he had felt was his friend.

Once they were gone, the Doctor sighed to himself. "Why now, after all this time?"

* * * * *

"Val – wait up!" Tom hurried to catch up with Val – she had the flashlight, and the TARDIS was still dark.

"I'm sorry," she paused. "I'm just concerned. Something's going on and the Doctor's shutting us out."

"No kidding," Tom replied. "Do you think it has anything to do with his regeneration?"

"He's become more short tempered and curt, but he's never closed down like this."

"So, what do we do? It's pretty clear he doesn't want us around here."

"We do what we always do." Val reached her bedroom and tossed Tom the flashlight. "Trust the Doctor."

"But there's obviously something wrong," Tom protested. "We've always been good together in a tight scrape."

"If the Doctor doesn't want us here, there's got to be a reason."

"Well in fifteen minutes, we'll lose the last chance we have of knowing what it is."

* * * * *

The Doctor continued pacing the console room while he waited for his companions. His premonition had been clear, terrifying, and absolutely accurate – of that he had no doubt. It was a message sent to him telepathically from so very far away. There was a familiar tinge to it, like it had been sent from someone he had known a long time ago. The gravity of the message, however, was more important than its originator.

Bramahl had escaped Shada.

She had escaped the prison he had helped create. She remained a being of untold natural powers, even after Section 13 had stripped her of their augmentations. Such was her power, the Doctor had helped construct the stasis field generator that held her permanently under lock and key.

He cursed himself and his failure, and his hearts broke over the thought of the untold future bloodshed she would cause. And he felt partially responsible.

His reverie was interrupted by the arrival of his companions, each carrying a large suitcase.

“We’re here Doctor,” Val said. “Now would you please tell us what’s going on?”

“Look, I’m sorry to have been so rude earlier.” His demeanor had softened during his contemplation, and his voice reflected this. “But I have to take you home.”

“But why?” Tom insisted.

“The less you know, the better.”

“Doctor, you can trust us.” Val moved nearer, smiling.

The Doctor smiled at her charm and despite his better judgment, he relented a little. “Something’s going to happen. Something horrible. An old enemy of mine has escaped the prison I constructed for her. She has so much blood on her hands.

“I can’t risk your lives as well.”

“You can’t risk our lives *as well*?” Tom asked as he approached.

“I’ve said enough already. This person, this *thing*, can mold time on a massive scale. She’s harmed or killed many, including many of my friends. And to make it worse, she derives a perverse joy in the chaos she causes.”

The TARDIS console chimed.

“We’ve arrived. Durham, 17 February 2029. You’ve been gone three months.”

Tom shook his head, unable to believe this was it.

The Doctor approached him and shook his hand, then Val’s. “Mr. Brooker, Ms. Rossi – it’s been an absolute pleasure.”

“At least see us out.” Val pleaded.

“Very well, then I need to get as far away from you as possible.”

He opened the TARDIS doors and followed his companions out...

* * * * *

...Onto the bridge of the Cheyenne II.

“Wow!” Tom was gob smacked by the sight of the bridge. “Now this is a proper *sci-fi* spaceship.”

"Welcome, Doctor," greeted Admiral Poole, "I see you've regenerated since our last meeting. Very handsome indeed!"

"Twice actually, and thank you Commander... I think."

"*Admiral* now, I've changed too since our last encounter."

The Doctor approached Poole's chair. "*Admiral* then. We'll have plenty of time for niceties later. Hijacking a TARDIS is extremely dangerous! How did you do it and why did you bring me here?"

"I didn't, Doctor." Poole motioned to her communications station as an impossibly familiar figure rose, smiling.

The Doctor went white, "Oh my heavens, Grae!"

Grae ran to the Doctor and the two Time Lords embraced. When he had last seen Grae, she was forcibly removed from his company by the Chancellery Guard. She was to be tried for the massive manipulation of established history: the resurrection of Tamara Scott's timeline by amplifying her own time sensitivity using the power of the Mara. He had often wondered what had happened to her, but time marched on, and so did his regenerative cycle. Eventually he'd found other things to occupy his time.

But here she was, looking exactly the same. Same red hair and freckles, same long grey coat and same oval-shaped pink glasses that he had made for her as her powers of hypnosis increased. They'd shared so many adventures and had shared so much loss. Leela, ever faithful, right up to the end, Emory Ka'alakea, the Hawaiian boy who broke her heart, Dr. Taryn Fischer, who never accepted the serious implications of their life of adventure. And Tamara, poor, poor Tamara - erased from existence by Bramahl and Section 13. Grae knew that she had risked losing her mind completely to the Mara in order to bring their friend back, but she had always been the heart of the team, and truthfully, the Doctor understood her motivation. She also knew that there would be a severe penalty by the Time Lords that even her benefactor, the Lord President Quella could not save her from.

But here she was, on the Cheyenne II with Admiral Poole. He remembered back to the time he had sent her onboard as Science Officer in order to probe the mysteries of the super-drug known as Gunpowder. There were good times too, even amusing funny. Her excitement and enthusiasm on joining him on his travels, visiting with her friend Allie on Earth and the incident with Byron's bones, the luau and subsequent mishap with their desserts on Maui after saving the island from civil war, reuniting with Tamara after her sojourn with the Section. Her finding out that she could indeed regenerate, when she never had believed it to be possible.

"Doctor," her familiar voice snapped the Doctor out of his reverie. "I had always wondered when I'd catch up with this incarnation again." They pulled out of their embrace and stood looking at each other, hands clasped together. "Tenth, right?"

"Indeed," the Doctor understanding the implication of Grae's words. "You've met me in this body before, eh? Early days still, best not say anymore."

"Care to introduce us to the young lady?" Tom said eagerly, fending off Val's elbow jab in the ribs.

The Doctor turned, presenting his old friend to his companions. "Mr. Tom Brooker and Ms. Valentina Rossi, this is Graekatziasa'asterus, one of the noblest and kindest Time Lords, and one of the greatest friends you will ever meet."

"Please, call me Val." Val extended her hand.

"Grae." She responded with a smile as she took the others' hands. "Hullo Val, Tom. I forgot how tall you both were."

"Eh?" Tom squinted.

"My dear," the Doctor pulled Grae away from her new acquaintances. "As marvelous as it is to see you, I need you to tell me why you hijacked my TARDIS."

"I'm sorry, but it was the only way to get you here."

"You could have sent me a message – after all this time, you could have at least told me you were okay."

"Would you have come, if I just popped into your head and asked?" Grae asked, her emerald eyes tinged in sadness. "You never did come back to check on me."

"I couldn't." He tried to explain. "Every time I tried to find out what happened to you after your trial, I was blocked by the Celestial Intervention Agency."

"Exactly," Grae nodded. "All my records were erased, including my Bio-Data Extract. I don't officially exist."

"Why?" Val asked, "What happened?"

"Resurrecting a fallen timeline is a grave offence on Gallifrey, but it was worth it," she began, "I was expecting to be sent to Shada, or worse. They decided upon exile to Tuskal. But someone stepped in."

"The Doctor?" Tom asked.

"No, the former Lord President, Lady Quella."

"Lady Quella – the *former* Lord President?" The Doctor scratched his chin.

"She vouched for me, refused to allow the Council to pass their sentence."

"What happened?" The Doctor put his arm around the young Time Lord's shoulders.

"She stepped down, and voluntarily went into exile in my place." Grae sniffed with sadness. "I was spared, but record of my existence was wiped and I was relegated to the data storage facilities. I became a file clerk on the most remote outpost under the CIA's jurisdiction."

"I'm sorry Grae. I know how much Quella meant to you." The Doctor clasped his old friend's hand in his. "You should have sent me a message of some kind."

"But I did."

"The vision about Bramahl," he exclaimed, smacking his forehead. "You sent it."

"It's true, I'm afraid. She has escaped." Grae explained, "Madame Lord President Dahvinadhutlual, knowing my history with the criminal, reinstated me. I'm working directly for her, as a Special Operative, with my own TARDIS and everything."

"And with no records to back you up if something were to happen to you."

"Exactly," Grae nodded, "I'm not exactly thrilled at being considered expendable, but I have a score of my own to settle with Bramahl. It's personal."

"For you and I both, my dear." The Doctor hugged her again. "Oh, but it *is* good to see you!"

Poole joined the group. "Once Grae filled me in on the situation, I agreed to let her use my ship as a base of operations. Besides, she may very well need the firepower."

"Thank you Admiral," the Doctor rubbed the woman's shoulder. "You've always helped us when we needed it. I appreciate that. It's always good to have friends."

"And what do you call us?" Val approached, smiling sarcastically. "You know, the people you were about to dump at home at the first opportunity?"

"Tom, Val, come here." He motioned them to one side. They both shared a glance at each other at his rare usage of their first names.

"You've heard what Bramahl is capable of. I couldn't bear to lose, as I've lost so many to her in the past. However, I – *we* could use your help. But the choice is yours and yours alone."

"I'm in. Tom?"

"Me too." Tom smiled. "Someone has to watch your back."

"Thank you both," the Doctor responded before returning to face the bridge crew, Poole and Grae. "We need to go onto the offensive. We're going to find Bramahl before she can do any more damage. I will not tolerate another drop of blood spilt by that creature!"

An excitement murmur ran around the bridge.

"People, people," Poole pleaded, "We don't even know where we're going yet."

"Grae," the Doctor whispered, "You know we need one more piece to this puzzle if we're going to pull this off, don't you?"

"I was hoping you'd say that," she whispered back.

"Okay, everyone listen up." The Doctor addressed the crowd again. "Admiral, I hope you don't mind?"

"My ship and crew are yours, Doctor."

With a smile and nod, he turned back to the crowd. "We are going to commence remote sweeps of all sectors linked to Bramahl's known contacts and accomplices, starting with Decema 7."

"Show him the proper respect!" Poole shouted to the crew.

"Yes, Sir!" They responded in unison. Embarrassed, the Doctor nodded his thanks then turned to his friends.

"Brooker, Ms. Rossi, I'm glad you decided to stay. I have a mission for you."

"A mission?" Tom asked "Or are you just going to have us shipped home?"

"Heavens no," the Doctor retorted. "I need you both to go with Grae. She'll explain things on the way."

"I don't want to leave you here." Val looked worried.

"My dear, you're as sweet as always." The Doctor blushed slightly. "I'm in good hands with Admiral Poole."

"And I can use your help," Grae added with a smile. "The more the merrier!"

"But you need to go now!" The Doctor hustled his companions into the lift. "Grae – find her and bring her back to us."

"But, I thought you said she was dan-" Tom's protest was interrupted by the lift door sliding shut.

"Right," the Doctor looked at Poole with a determined smile. "Let's find Bramahl and end this."

* * * * *

"But, I thought you said she was dangerous?" Tom shouted through the closing lift door. "Damn it!"

"Did the Doctor just send us out alone after this Bramahl woman?" Val looked down at Grae. Tom did the same.

"Of course not." Grae smiled up at her new friends confidently. "We have something else to do first and it's definitely a three person job. We're going to pick someone else up.

"Someone else?" Val asked. "What are you talking about?"

"There's one more person we're going to need if we are to catch Brahmah and bring this awful business to an end."

"And that is?" Tom asked, frustrated.

"Look," Grae said, "You trust the Doctor." "Trust *me*."

"We've only just met you, and it seems to me that he trusts you more than us."

"Ease up, big boy." Val interjected and touched Tom's arm.

"I'm sorry, Grae." Tom relaxed. "The Doctor's just been acting strange today. It's got me a little on edge."

"Love the pink glasses, by the way," Val said, hoping to change the subject.

"They're poly-directrix lenses with circular polarizing filters." Grae explained to the bewildered onlookers. "They reduce spectral reflections by as much as ninety-six percent without any perceptible reduction in resolution. The Doctor used to wear a similar pair, but his weren't pink because he only needed a seventy-five percent spectral reflection reduction."

"Try saying that ten times, fast," Val laughed.

Tom looked puzzled. "What's that mean when it's at home?"

"It means without them, I could hypnotize you by just looking at you."

"Get out of here."

"I can't," Grae responded plainly. It was her turn to look bewildered. "The lift hasn't stopped yet."

"So." Val attempted to reel the conversation back in. "You and the Doctor obviously have a history."

"We travelled together for a long time." Grae felt her eyes get misty, but she shook it off and continued. "That's why we have to go where we're going."

"Was it just you two alone, or were there others?" Val asked with a smile.

Grae bit her lower lip. "There was more than one of us, for quite a long time, in fact."

"And we're going to pick him up?" asked Tom.

Grae nodded. "It's a she, but the problem is that *she* has no idea who we are."

The lift door opened and they came face to face with Grae's TARDIS – a tall, rectangular structure that looked as it were made out of polished silver, smooth on all four sides with no apparent door. She fished a small wand from her pocket and touched the side facing them and a smaller rectangular opening appeared in front of them.

"After you," she said, smiling broadly.

2 – RETRIEVAL

Monday, 11 January 2049: Another Day in the Life of Tamara Scott...

From the moment Tamara woke up, the migraines would start. This had been happening for a little over three months now, and they were starting to impact negatively on her career. Splashing cold water on her face, she looked at herself in the bathroom mirror. Her career had defined her: Royal Navy at twenty-one, quickly rising up the ranks after her service during the China Sea Incident of 2040. Seconded to MI-6 by the time she was twenty-six, and all with an impeccable record. And more, she loved her job and the life it afforded her.

Until three months ago, she thought as she swallowed her medication. She never suffered from migraines in the past. In fact, she never had anything worse than a cold in her life, even as a child. That helped lead to an exceptional service record with MI-6, another record she was proud of. But for some reason it wasn't enough. Ever since her thirty-third birthday she began to feel an emptiness, almost a depression, like something was missing from her life. It had brought her spirits down so low that even Steve, her long-time boyfriend had left her. And to add insult to injury, along with the migraines was the anger. Her superiors had called it *random uncharacteristic aggressive behavior*, and it had led to disciplinary action at work and eventually two months unpaid leave. She had never missed a day of work in her life, and now she was quietly being shut out because her bosses had begun to doubt both her ability to do her job and her mental state.

Her job, she thought, upset. How she missed it. Helping to keep Great Britain safe from those who wished to destroy or exploit it. Terrorists, enemy regimes, Section 13...

"Section what?" she said out loud. "Maybe you *are* losing it, old girl." *Old girl*, since when did she call herself that? Nobody did. So why did it sound so familiar to her? She resolved to not worry about it and ran the shower. But then there were the dreams. Strange, scary and vivid dreams about alien worlds, all featuring the same woman. A woman about her height with short dark hair and the blackest eyes she had ever seen. It chilled her to think about her so she shook it off and let the warm water envelop and calm her.

Several minutes later, she was showered, had her make up on and was dressed in a pair of jeans and an Arsenal sweatshirt. She stopped in front of a shelf holding a row of sunglasses. Since going on leave, she had started collecting pairs of sunglasses. For some reason she found

it a comfort. She picked her favorite, a thin-rimmed pair that adjusted the tinting to match the light exposure and popped them on. She also grabbed a plain, white rimmed set and stuck them in her purse then headed out.

"How are you feeling today, my dear?" The voice came from a well-tended garden over the fence.

"Good morning, Mrs. Miggins," Tamara said to her landlady. "I'm doing okay, thanks for asking."

"Anything exciting planned for today?"

"No," Tamara smiled. "Just meeting Kelly for a cup of coffee."

"Well have a nice time, dear." Mrs. Miggins waved and turned back to her flowerbed.

Tamara farewelled the older woman and walked to the end of the next block where a Starbucks stood. Tamara saw Kelly waiting outside, a steaming cup in her hand.

"You're late, Miss Scott." Kelly Hutchins tapped at her watch with mock indignation, imitating the headmistress of the school where she and Tamara had met and become friends.

Kelly was the complete opposite of Tamara, but they had been best friends for years. Where Tamara was tall and athletic with midnight black hair and angular, but not unfriendly, features, Kelly was a short, curvy bespectacled brunette with an extremely fair complexion and a wide sweet smile, who had started to go a little gray despite her age.

"Sorry Ma'am," Tamara curtseyed. "It won't happen again, Ma'am."

"It better not!" Kelly smiled and gave her friend a hug.

"I'm sorry," Tamara said as she rested her chin on the shorter woman's head. "I overslept."

"More migraines?" Kelly asked, as they entered the Starbucks and found a seat. "Or more nightmares?"

"Both actually." Tamara caught sight of the barista and waved. "Morning, Henry!"

"Your regular?" he called back.

"Yes please!" She turned her attention back to her friend. "I'm sorry Kels, what were we talking about?"

"You're having migraines and nightmares."

"Right."

"Is that mysterious woman still showing up in your dreams?" Kelly asked as she sipped her espresso. At that moment Henry showed up with Tamara's tall Chai Soy Latte.

"Tamara's dreaming about a mysterious woman," he said half-jokingly.

"Yeah," Kelly answered back, "and don't you wish you were in on that dream, too?"

"Keep the change, sweetie," Tamara said as she handed him the money for the coffee. He blushed and disappeared quickly back to the counter.

"You know," Kelly scooted closer to her friend. "Ever since Steve, that jerk, dumped you – I think Henry's got a crush on you."

"Yeah," Tamara said with mock snootiness. "Can you blame him?"

The two friends laughed as they sipped at their coffees until Tamara's head began to pound again. She massaged her temples with the palms of her hands.

"Tami, sweetie, you need to see your doctor."

"Doctor?" Tamara answered through a grimace. "I need to see the Doctor?" There was a glimmer of something in the back of her mind. Something blue.

"The doctor? I said *your* doctor!" Kelly corrected. "But *any* doctor would do, I suppose."

Tamara swore she could see a flashing light atop a...

"Kels, what's a Police Box?"

Tamara felt cold air brush the back of her neck and she shuddered.

"Tami?" Concerned, Kelly put her hand on her friend's shoulder. "You're scaring me. Are you okay?"

Something caught Tamara's eye across the road. It was a woman. She was about her height with short dark hair and the blackest eyes she had ever seen. Another chill wracked Tamara's body as she recognized her immediately.

"Kels – look," Tamara shouted. "Over there, I don't know how, but it's the woman from my dream!"

"What? Where?" Kelly looked around.

"No, behind you," Tamara pointed, and felt like she was telling a joke in search of a punch line. Kelly turned quickly and looked, then she looked back at Tamara, and then she looked behind her again.

"There's no one there."

"You're having me on, aren't you," Tamara said, slightly irritated. "She's right there by the lamp post, with the dark hair."

Kelly looked once more, just to humor her friend. "And you said *I'm* having *you* on? There's no one there."

Across the way, the woman turned and waved to Tamara.

"Kels, she just waved at me."

"I think you need more medication – there's no one there."

The woman in the distance pointed her finger at Tamara like a gun, then pretended to fire. Cold fire swept through Tamara, then she suddenly collapsed to the floor in convulsions.

The last thing Tamara heard before darkness swept her away was Kelly screaming.

* * * * *

No one noticed the strange rush of air, or the wheezing noise that accompanied it. There weren't too many people in the east wing of the hospital due to it being closed for weather-related structural repairs. Had there been someone nearby, they would have undoubtedly noticed the unlikely occurrence of an extra door fading into existence along one of the walls. On the door was a sign stating: Oxygen Tank Storage: Do Not Enter.

Strangely enough, three people suddenly stepped into the corridor through that very door.

"Nice!" Val exclaimed, "A functioning Chameleon Circuit!"

"And I thought the Doctor's TARDIS was high-tech," Tom said with a laugh.

"Mine's brand new." Grae smiled as she produced the wand-like key and pressed it to the door, locking it. "Fresh out of the bio-artron generators."

"I thought it still had some of that 'new-TARDIS' smell." Tom's joke was met with a punch in the shoulder from an unimpressed Val.

"Not now, Brooksy."

"It's okay Miss Rossi," Grae turned to Val "I appreciate his attempt to lighten the situation."

Tom turned and looked mock-smugly at Val.

Grae continued, "It helps me remember what fun Tamara was to be around, and how much I miss her."

"You two were pretty close, eh?" Val asked, softly.

"She was the best friend I've ever had." Grae looked resolutely up at the woman. "That's why I had to bring her back then, and that's why *we* have to bring her back now."

The trio hurried through the damaged area of the hospital without meeting anyone, but when they entered the hospital proper, a burly security guard immediately appeared in front of them.

"What were you doing in the closed area?" he asked, somewhat menacingly.

"Um," Tom started, after noticing the man's name tag, "Hi Jim, we were just fixing the, uh--"

"Actually, Jim" Grae explained as she removed her glasses, "I'm Dr. Liz Shaw from Cambridge, and these are my residents, Dr. Yates and Dr. Benton. I'm afraid we got lost on the way to Psychiatrics."

"Dr. Shaw?" Jim scratched his head in confusion, then smiled. The name sounded right to him – in fact, it sounded absolutely perfect. "Of course, Dr. Shaw. Can I see your passes though, protocol and all that?"

"We just showed them to you when we introduced ourselves."

"That's right," he chuckled, "I mustn't have drank enough coffee this morning."

"That's okay." Grae reached out and patted Jim's arm, "Easy enough mistake. You see so many new faces here every day."

For a moment, Jim lost focus staring into Grae's eyes. Then he heard another female voice cutting through his mental fog.

"So, Psychiatrics?" Val asked. "How'd we get there?"

"Sorry Dr. Yates," Jim answered, shaking his head to clear it. "Take the lift over there to the eighth floor and it's the second on the right."

Grae smiled and slipped her glasses back on, "Come on. I don't know how much time we have."

"What about him?" Tom nodded towards the grinning security guard.

"He'll be fine." Grae turned back to Jim, "won't you?"

"Yes Ma'am," he responded. But no one was there.

Jim suddenly shook his head. Surely he was just talking to someone? Walking back to the security station he poured himself a fresh cup of coffee.

Once they reached the lift, Tom turned to her.

"I have to admit," he smiled, "I thought you were pulling my leg with the hypno-thing, but I take it all back. That was pretty cool."

"Thanks Tom. We need to keep moving, pinpoint accuracy is important. This was deemed as the optimal point in Tamara's time-stream for her to be extracted, but I don't know how much of a window we have."

"Here's something I don't understand. If none of the events in her life – the life on board the TARDIS happened, how can she help?"

"In order for the Time Lords to allow this version of Tamara to remain in existence," Grae explained, "they were keen for her life to go on as it would have had she not traveled with the Doctor and I. She became far too powerful for their liking while she was undercover with Section 13. Hopefully somewhere inside her mind is the possible person she could have become. The Tamara Scott I knew and within there, some answers."

Tom scratched his head. "That's leaving an awful lot to chance, isn't it?"

"She was the only one that was inside the Section, and therefore had knowledge of its workings and of Bramahl herself."

"Why here and now, though?" Val asked as the trio boarded the lift. "What's special about the hospital?"

"This is a divergent point. One time stream shows she lives a healthy life until age 90 and the other stops today."

"Because we picked her up?" Tom asked.

"No," Grae answered grimly. "She disappears completely."

* * * * *

Tamara woke and immediately realized that something was different. It wasn't the fact that she had woken up in a hospital bed. Frankly she had expected that after she heard Kelly screaming. She felt different – stronger, like her old self before the headaches. The headache - that was it! It had gone. But it wasn't just gone. It was like it had never been there. The debilitating pain she had so frequently felt of late was healed. It had stopped, and somehow she knew it was gone for good.

Tamara got up out of bed. Looking around, she decided that the Casualty department had already decided she wasn't an actual emergency, and had left her here to wait for the next available doctor. She spotted a sliding door and opened it, and found a tiny bathroom. Stepping inside, she looked at herself in the mirror.

"Still looking good," she said out loud. Better than most days, she continued, to herself. Better, in fact than in a good long time. Whatever they gave her must have done the trick. Or did it? Her eyes blurred and lost focus for a moment. She looked at her hazy reflection in the mirror and everything snapped back into place.

"Phew," she said, shaking her head. "A little aftershock, that's all."

As she splashed a little water on her face she heard a knocking at the door.

Before Tamara could answer, the door opened and three people, two women and a man, entered. Each wore doctors' coats. The first woman was a shortish red head wearing, of all things, pink-lensed glasses. She held a chart. The other two were taller than the first, but the man looked as if he had a very slight variance in his step, maybe an old injury to the right ankle. The woman was fit and possibly pretty agile, but didn't seem to be a match for her strength-

wise. A field agent always sized up their potential competition – looking for weaknesses and ways to fight back if attacked.

I'm back, she thought to herself. If her bosses at MI-6 knew that she was firing on all cylinders mentally once again, maybe they'd let her go back to work. Then it struck her – why didn't she size up the redhead? She didn't look particularly threatening, and she was no match for her. But there was something about her. Her freckled complexion had gone slightly blotchy and her eyes reddened. She looked as if she was about to cry...

The redhead looked down at the chart and composed herself before asking, "Ms. Scott?"

"That's me." Tamara sat on the edge of the bed.

"I'm Dr. Shaw and these are my assistants, Dr. Benton and Dr. Yates."

"What can I do for you?"

"It says that you were brought here today for convulsions and loss of consciousness due to severe migraines. Is that correct?"

"Yes, but it's not as bad as all that." Tamara laughed. "Kelly probably over-exaggerated."

"Nonsense," Dr. Shaw said. "We pulled your medical records from your employer and saw that you've been seeking treatment for some time now."

Tamara let out a long sigh. "But I feel better, better than I've ever felt."

"Why should she feel better now?" The other woman, Dr. Yates, asked.

"I don't know," Dr. Shaw whispered. "That's concerning."

"Concerning?" Tamara shouted. "I feel better, whatever your boffins did downstairs apparently worked! Why is it a bad thing?"

"I'm sorry," Dr. Shaw reassured her. "My colleague was just thinking out loud." She produced a small silver capsule from her pocket. "Now, Ms. Scott – I'd like you to swallow this."

"Why? I feel better."

"Please."

"No."

Dr. Shaw removed her glasses and looked Tamara squarely in the eyes. "Please take the pill."

"Take the pill?" Tamara felt that it was the right thing to do, but why? Something about Dr. Shaw's eyes. It was almost like...

"You're in my head!" Tamara exclaimed, "How'd you do that? Get out!"

Concentrating intently, Tamara focused her will at the small woman. Bit by bit, she cleared her mind of the influence she felt. But there was more, there was something burning in her mind. Tamara amped up her concentration and suddenly the small woman flew back into the wall and slumped to the floor.

"What? How?" Dr. Benton, the male, began to panic.

"I'm sorry," Tamara began, "I don't know how I did that."

"I don't either," Dr. Yates responded. "But we need to get you both out of here right now."

"Why? What's going on?"

"Brooksy," the woman turned to the man. "Get a stretcher or something. Tamara can help us."

"I'm okay," Dr. Shaw said as she rubbed the back of her neck and climbed slowly to her feet.

"Brooksy?" Tamara questioned. "I thought your name was Benton?" Tamara shook her head. "Something's not right, I shouldn't have been able to do that. I'm not going anywhere with you lot."

Tamara suddenly made a break for the door. Tom managed to grab hold of her arm, but she was too agile and broke from his grip. Before she could take a swing at him, she felt a sharp twinge of pain in her neck – a syringe!

"I'm sorry, my dear friend." Dr. Shaw's voice whispered in her ear. "Everything will be made clear soon."

And for the second time that day, Tamara Scott fell unconscious.

* * * * *

Poole stood looking steely-eyed at the Doctor. Six weeks had passed since they began their hunt for Bramahl. Meticulously, they had scanned every system that she had manipulated or had allies in, from the resort planet of Decema 7 to the clone-breeding towers of Enzan to the ruins of Talachia. Their search had turned up nothing. It was as if Bramahl had ceased to exist.

"What's our next move?" Poole turned to the Doctor, who had taken up residence in the Science Officer's station.

"Well..." The Doctor began.

"You don't know, do you?"

"She could be anywhere!"

"Except she isn't."

The Doctor stood and walked a over to where the TARDIS stood. Several fiber optic cables ran from the open door and into the ship's computer network in several places.

"Even with the time drive from the TARDIS hooked into your surveillance systems, we can't find her. Section 13 abandoned her before their destruction. If there were any survivors, they wouldn't give her sanctuary!"

"Then what do we do?" Poole rose and crossed the floor to where the Doctor stood. "The TCA is going to have a problem with our bonuses if we don't get results."

"Then we have to keep looking. She has to be somewhere!" He patted the TARDIS's corner beam. "Let's try from sector sixty-eight, with a time vector of five hundred years. I will not be outwitted! My version of Tamara Scott was linked to Section 13, hopefully the link will exist in this version."

"Hopefully your friends will find her."

"Grae will," the Doctor stated simply. "I know it."

An alert flashed across Lieutenant Parker's screen. She looked up

"Ma'am, I'm showing we're being approached by an unregistered craft."

"That must be—" The Doctor didn't have to finish as the air was filled with the sound of a Grae's Type 78B TARDIS materializing on the bridge of the Cheyenne II. The opening appeared in the front and its pilot stepped out, with a distressed look in her eyes.

"We need Medical up here – now!"

"Medics to the bridge!" Poole shouted into her commlink.

Grae ran to the Doctor and embraced him as Tom and Val emerged from her TARDIS.

"Did you find her?" the Doctor asked his old friend.

Grae nodded, breathless. Two medics emerged from the lift with a stretcher and raced with it into Grae's TARDIS.

"I know it was difficult for you." He kissed her on the forehead, then turned to his current companions, a smile beaming from ear to ear. "Brooker, Miss Rossi, well done, my friends!"

The medics emerged from the TARDIS with Tamara lying prone on the stretcher. She started to squirm.

"I think she's waking up," Val said.

"Wh – Where am I?" Tamara asked as she sat up, dazed.

"My dear Ms. Scott," the Doctor said as he approached. "Allow me to introduce myself and explain. I'm the Doctor, this is Ms. Valentina Rossi and Mr. Thomas Brooker. That is Admiral Kathryn Poole of the Terran Colony Alliance, and we're on her spacecraft, the Cheyenne II."

"Spacecraft?" Tamara shook her head in disbelief. "I must be hallucinating."

"And this," the Doctor continued, "is Grae."

"I remember you, from the hospital." She hopped off the gurney and landed unsteadily.

"Dr. Liz Shaw – what did you do to me?"

"Dr. Liz Shaw?" the Doctor turned to Grae with an incredulous look. She shrugged in response.

"I'm sorry Tamara, it was the only way to get you here." Grae approached her old friend and touched her shoulder. The confused woman recoiled in fright.

"You drugged me, didn't you? What sort of doctor are you?"

"Please, call me Grae."

"Grae?" Tamara said the name and paused. "Why do I know that name? Have we met before?"

"No," Grae answered solemnly. "Not in this lifetime, anyway."

"Look, Ms. Scott," the Doctor interrupted. "I promised you an explanation, so here it is. We need your help."

"Help to do what?"

"Locate a very, very dangerous person on whom we believe you may have information." The Doctor helped Tamara into a chair. "After we see if you can help, we'll return you home and you'll forget this whole distressing incident ever happened."

"I'm sure you realize I can't discuss my work." Tamara began, her head clearing, "Official Secrets Act, and all that."

"Oh, it's not related to one of your MI-6 missions," Grae said. "It's a bit more complex than that."

"It's a criminal on a much larger scale." The Doctor squatted so he was eye to eye with his former companion. "Her name is Bramahl."

There was silence as Tamara digested the name. She closed her eyes and then, rather strangely, she smiled.

"Bramahl?" she asked.

"Yes," replied the Doctor. "Does the name mean anything to you?"

Tamara opened her eyes and the Doctor was instantly thrown across the floor, hitting his head on a control panel. Val and Tom ran to his side and saw he was out cold. She turned to Grae next as she rose, and the young Time Lord saw that her eyes had changed color from their natural blue to a dark black.

"No." Grae muttered quietly, frightened.

"But yes, my annoying little redheaded friend. Of course I know the name Bramahl."

"NO!" Grae shouted.

"Tamara Scott is dead – I am Bramahl!" Raising her right hand she lifted Grae off the ground. Clutching her throat, Grae gasped for air. Bramahl smiled cruelly.

"While I was in my stasis field, I dreamt about what it would be like to squeeze the life out of the Doctor's precious little Grae. What a way to start my new life!"

"Security!" Admiral Poole shouted and three security guards sprang into action. With her left hand, Bramahl swept the advancing men aside like rag dolls. Drawing her staser, Poole fired a volley of four shots at the woman. Bramahl reflected the staser pulses back at their origin, all four striking her in the chest. Grae was horrified to see the Admiral's body slump lifelessly into her chair, then onto the floor.

"Enough!" Bramahl shouted and the crew of the Cheyenne II stood frozen in a time lock.

One of the Security Guards, however, had fallen within feet of the unconscious Doctor. Val sprang to action, grabbing the guard's staser and fixed it on Bramahl.

"Put her down!" she demanded.

"Val!" Tom shouted. "You saw what she did to Admiral Poole!"

"Val," Grae muttered weakly. "Don't!"

Bramahl turned to face Val, all the while holding Grae in her choke-hold.

"What do we have here? I swear, the Doctor's girlfriends get more attractive the older he gets. I like *you*."

Bramahl dropped Grae to the floor, who lay there gasping in huge lungfuls of air. Bramahl then, with one motion, threw Val into the open doorway of Grae's TARDIS. She strode confidently inside and in moments the TARDIS dematerialized.

"No! Val!" Tom ran towards Grae's TARDIS but all he found were the echoes of its departure.

3 – RETURN

Inside Grae's TARDIS, Bramahl, still within Tamara's body, raced around the hexagonal console while Val hung beside the exterior door, trapped in a force field.

"Where are you taking me?" Val asked, scared. "What are you going to do?"

"My dear, that will take all the fun out of our afternoon plans." Bramahl laughed. "Let's just say that it's something I should have done a long time ago."

* * * * *

The Doctor awoke to a strange silence on the bridge of the Cheyenne II. Cutting through the fog of his still-clearing head was the voice of his friend Tom Brooker.

"She took Val, Doctor. She took Val then scarpered in Grae's TARDIS."

A little too quickly, the Doctor rose to his feet. The bridge seemed to shift sideways and his knees buckled. Tom and Grae caught him before he fell to the floor again. He closed his eyes, gathering his strength, then opened them again and looked up.

"Are you two okay?"

"I'm okay," Grae stated sadly. "But Kathryn wasn't as lucky."

With the aid of his friends, the Doctor approached Poole's crumpled form at the base of her chair and knelt beside it. "I will find her, my friend," he whispered. "And make this right."

"She killed her then put the rest of the crew and ship into a time-lock." Grae explained.

Shaking his head, the Doctor looked around at the frozen crew.

"We'll take care of them later. We need to get after her." The Doctor motioned towards his trusted vessel. "The TARDIS - quickly."

Under his directions, all three grabbed leads from the navigations console, pulled them loose and dragged them back into the TARDIS, closing the door behind them.

As the TARDIS dematerialized, the rectangular shaped TARDIS appeared and Grae stepped out. She closed her eyes and in an instant, the time-lock dissolved.

"Admiral!" Lieutenant Banks shouted as Christof screamed. There was confusion as the crew realized that things had changed forever.

"Listen everyone," Grae shouted. "You've been in a time lock."

"But what about Admiral Poole?" Banks asked, approaching Grae. He noticed that she looked different, tired. Her eyes were slightly bloodshot and she had dark circles under them.

"We'll make sure the TCA gives her a proper burial," she replied sadly. "But right now I need your help."

"Grae, what's going on? You were just here – what's happening?"

"I'm from the future – I need to link this ship's navigational controls to my TARDIS," Grae said with a weary smile. "How do you feel about time travel?"

* * * * *

With the Doctor busy setting the TARDIS in flight, Grae stood beside him punching away at a keyboard.

"What are you doing?" Tom asked as he finished winding the cables and threw them into a large trunk.

Grae turned to the human and explained.

"I'm entering my TARDIS's artron energy signature into the TARDIS's coordinate bank."

A high-pitched beeping began sounding from the panel before Grae.

"Is that a positive lock?" the Doctor asked.

"It is," Grae replied. "We're tracking her. It appears she's heading... oh no."

"What's going on?" Tom raced to the console.

The Doctor opened the scanner. "She's going to Gallifrey."

Grae's head dropped. "With my TARDIS she'll get through the Transduction Barriers."

"Then we need to—" The Doctor was interrupted as the TARDIS bucked violently.

"What's happening?" Grae shouted.

"Time distortion," the Doctor responded as he clung to the console. "Bramahl's preventing us from arriving before her. She's pushing us into the future. Whatever she is going to do, she doesn't want us to stop it."

"We can't get too far ahead," Grae held tightly to Tom. "Or there may not be a Gallifrey."

"Can you stop the distortion, Doctor?" Tom asked as he clung to Grae. "Or fight back at all."

"Your TARDIS is quite advanced, Grae," the Doctor yelled as the shaking grew more rapid, "But my old girl still has a few tricks up her sleeve. Hold on!"

The TARDIS lurched steeply downward like a roller coaster, then everything suddenly stopped. Grae had her head buried in Tom's chest, and he was clinging to her very protectively. There was a moment of awkward silence between the two of them, each realizing that the moment they were sharing wasn't an altogether bad one. Then they pulled apart with a blush.

"Err, um sorry." Tom took a step back and cast his eyes to the floor.

"Yes," Grae turned her focus back to the Doctor. "So what happened?"

He threw the door controls and moved towards the outer doors rapidly, his companions following behind him. He spoke as he moved. "Brahmal tried pushing us ahead by a day, but I managed to narrow the gap to about fifteen minutes."

"That's still enough time to..." Grae stepped out into the chamber of the High Council to find a massacre. Bodies of Chancellery Guards and Councillors were strewn haphazardly across the length of the chamber, each with a bloody wound through both hearts. The air stank of blood and ozone. There was something else, a sound that sent a shiver through them all. It was the sound of Tamara Scott laughing.

"Come out Bramahl," shouted the Doctor. "Come out and face me."

"Why Doctor," she said, feigning surprise. "You're early!"

"Where's Val?" demanded Tom.

"Why she's right here." Bramahl dragged Val, bound and gagged, from behind a column. With her was another woman in a similar state, with short black curly hair and wearing the robes of Lord President.

"Let them go, Bramahl!" shouted the Doctor.

"Why? What power would I have over you then? Shall I kill another of your companions while you watch, Doctor, and your Lord President before you admit defeat?"

"What do you want?"

"To be free." Bramahl stared icily at the Doctor. "And to see the Time Lords utterly destroyed. You took everything from me, and I want you to know how that feels."

"Get out of that body!" Grae screamed at the woman, "You have no right to be there!"

"But, my dear, don't you understand? Tamara and I are the same."

"Tamara was nothing like you!" Grae's voice was hoarse with emotion.

Bramahl laughed. "All that education and Time Lord ability wasted. Didn't you learn *anything* during the time you fought Section 13?"

"Grae," the Doctor turned to the young woman, "Bramahl's function in Section 13 was to fulfill a purpose. A cog in a massive machine, so to speak. When Tamara took her place..."

"She took her function as well." Tom finished the Doctor's sentence.

"Very good!" Bramahl mocked, "The new boy's cute *and* smart. But Grae, you're so, so stupid. Did you really think planting traces of the original Tamara within the new version was a good idea? They were enough for me to link back to her, find her and then to *become* her."

"I'm going to give you one more warning, Bramahl." The Doctor's voice was resolute.

Bramahl laughed again. "Or you're going to do what? Use violence against me? You?"

"He might not," Grae said angrily, stepping forward and removing her glasses. "But I will."

"Do you actually think you can hypnotize me?"

Grae stepped closer, her hearts pounding. "It's not you I'm trying to reach!"

With that, Bramahl doubled over in pain as the full force of Grae's mental abilities burrowed deep into her mind. The mental backlash hurt Grae as well, as she relived all the horrors Bramahl had engineered in the matter of just a few seconds. But her target-was there, buried deep, deep within.

Tamara Scott.

"Grae!" the Doctor shouted. "Be careful, you might damage Tamara's mind!"

"On the contrary," she stated confidently. "I'm waking it up."

* * * * *

Within her mind's eye, Grae could see her friend reaching out to her.

"Tamara?" Grae called out.

"Grae?" She responded as she appeared to her friend in the void. "I know you. But how do I know you?"

"You were my best friend." She took Tamara's hands in hers. "Let me show you."

As easily as a breath, Grae slipped her consciousness into Tamara's whose mind was flooded with images. Grae and Tristov entering the TARDIS via the Zero Room, the first time they met, and saving the TARDIS from collapsing into a singularity. Reuniting, when they rescued her from being marooned in deep space and their subsequent adventure on Gallifrey - the first time they defeated Bramahl. There were many more adventures, with the Doctor - a man of many different faces, and many facing off against Bramahl. It was all familiar. It was all as it should be. Three years of her life spent traveling with the Doctor and Grae in his TARDIS, ending in uncertainty. This was her life at the same time as the previous three months had been, suffering from migraines, having a break-up, taking medical leave from her job and hanging out with her friend Kelly.

"Where did your life take the different turn?" Grae asked. Then the answer unfolded like a flower in her mind. An invitation, sitting in Tamara's office mailbox at work, to a party by one Dr. Winston Hu.

"That's how the Celestial Intervention Agency did it - they made sure you weren't at work to receive the invitation to the party. Tamara, you need you to go to that party."

"What, how?" Tamara asked. "I don't even know where I am."

"You must trust me." Grae hugged her friend close. "It'll mean not going to the doctor about those headaches so you'll have to suffer from them for a little while more."

"That's all I have to do?" Tamara asked. "But these visions you're showing me. They end with me disappearing. What happens to me?"

"You were taken out of existence by Bramahl. But I brought you back."

"But, if I pick that life, will I disappear again?"

"You're here now." Grae answered.

"I'm sorry, but that's not exactly reassuring."

"I have one more thing to show you." A mist swirled around them and Tamara could see Grae below, alone.

She stood alone in the void. An infinity of blackness. Darkness. Nothing. She felt empty, weightless. She looked down and saw her body and was relieved that she existed at all.

She took a step forward and a cobblestone street formed beneath her with each step. She looked up and a small village had formed around her where nothing had been but a moment ago. It was night and there was no moon. The inky sky reminded her of the void from which she had just emerged.

Walking down the middle of the road she began to feel conspicuous, passing row upon row of homes. Most of the houses' interiors were lit and she could make out the bustle of activity through closed curtains. There were street lamps lining the sidewalks, but a few up ahead at an intersection on the right side of the street had burnt out.

She approached the darkened intersection. A road branched off to the right, and along the left

stood another house that was partially-hidden behind a high fence. She reached the darkened intersection and it lit before her. A familiar figure formed from the air, and she embraced it warmly, crying joyful tears into its shoulder.

Then it – she – vanished.

"That was me!" Tamara shouted.

"That's when I brought you back." Grae smiled and held onto her friend's hand.

Another figure appeared. Long brown hair and piercing blue eyes.

Tamara smiled - "That's Alice, I mean you. I remember her too."

"You knew what you had to do," Alice affirmed. "And you made the right decision." A line of eleven shadowy figures appeared behind Alice and then promptly vanished into the ether.

"She lives again. It is time to move on." Alice stated as she choked back a sob. "Farewell, my dear."

"You did that for me?" Tamara asked.

* * * * *

Reality slowly faded back into focus and Grae and Tamara awoke across the room from each other. Bramahl lay unconscious on the floor next to Tamara, who sat up, rubbing her aching head. Lord President Dahvinad was already on her feet and sending a signal from her wrist-com. Another squad of guards moved in and secured Bramahl within a transparent containment capsule.

The Doctor leapt to his feet and called out to Tom, Val and Grae. Tom and Val ran to his side, but Grae didn't. Glancing past Tom's shoulder, he saw Grae and Tamara embracing in tears.

"My dear Tamara." The Doctor beamed as he approached his old team.

Tamara broke her embrace with Grae and stood, giving the Time Lord a once-over.

"Doctor?" she asked, "Is that really you? You look so different!"

"I've regenerated twice since we last saw each other."

"It's so good to see you again," Tamara said, and all three embraced. "Both of you."

"Tom, Val," the Doctor called. "Come meet the real Tamara Scott."

As the Doctor's latest companions approached him and his old team, a technician rushed over to the Lord President. They conferred for a moment, then she thanked him and moved towards the group.

"Excuse me," she stated. "Doctor, there's something I need to show you!"

"Dahvinad," the Doctor looked up. "Of course! I'm so sorry – congratulations on your becoming Lord President!"

"Another time, Doctor." She snapped

Bramahl, meanwhile, had gained consciousness and rapped four times on the clear capsule interior. "Was no one interested in what happened to my ship?"

Suddenly there was a loud boom – something had entered Gallifrey's atmosphere traveling at great speed.

"Right on time." Bramahl gloated.

Dahvinad turned to the criminal within the capsule. "Where's it heading?"

“Why, right about where you’re standing, Madame Lord President.”

4 - RESTORATION

"Dahvinad – issue the evacuation order," the Doctor shouted.

"Where can we evacuate to?" Dahvinad asked. "A freighter smaller than Brahma's ship crashed into the Earth and ended up killing off the dinosaurs, remember?"

"Unfortunately, I do." The Doctor thought for a moment. "Then we need to get onboard that ship."

Bramahl laughed from inside her containment capsule. "There's no way you can stop it in time!"

"Tom, Val, Tamara, go with Grae," the Doctor ordered. "Lord President, with me!"

"I'm not abandoning my people at their time of greatest need," she answered back, matter-of-factly.

"Come on," urged the Doctor. "You could be killed!"

"As Lord President, I will not leave the Citadel undefended."

"Very well." The Doctor smiled at the new Lord President. "Evacuate everyone to the TARDIS bays get them out of here."

Dahvinad looked at the renegade Time Lord with bemusement.

"Thank you Doctor," she replied sarcastically. "I never would have thought of that on my own."

"I'm not leaving either." Tamara stepped away from the group. "I remember everything. Bramahl and I can't both exist. We've become aspects of the same life force. This ends now."

"Very well." The Doctor grabbed her hands and held them. "Good luck my dear."

"And to you," she said. "Grae, just in case, I don't make it."

"Tamara," Grae interrupted. "Don't say that!"

"Just in case – just know that what you did to bring me back, it's the most humbling thing anyone could do. You're the most amazing person I've ever met."

"You were worth the sacrifice."

"I just wanted to say thanks and that I love you for it."

The two friends embraced one last time, and then Grae ran to the doors of her TARDIS. She turned to take one more look back at Tamara and prayed it wouldn't be the final time she'd see her. She then entered her TARDIS and saw Val and Tom waiting for her.

"So what are we going to do?" Val asked.

"Back to the Cheyenne II."

"But what about the time lock?" Tom chimed in.

Grae smiled as she activated her TARDIS's controls. "I brought my best friend back from the dead. I can handle a time lock."

* * * * *

The bridge of Bramahl's ship was empty, which relieved the Doctor no end. He had expected Enzani Clones at the very least. Approaching the navigations console he began poking at it furiously. Gallifrey's landscape grew closer and closer in the viewscreen as he tried to unlock the coordinate grid from the ship's mainframe. There was an insistent pulsing in the background, which he chose to ignore.

"Come on Doctor," he said out loud to himself. "You can do this."

Angrily, he smashed a fist down onto the monitor. The screen cracked and a loud beep sounded.

"Ouch!" The Doctor yelped as he got to his feet, but something new on the screen attracted his attention.

"Ah, I must have released the power core monitoring system." The Doctor studied the readouts. "No, that's impossible!"

The monitor showed that the ship's core set to overload before the ship struck the Citadel. The irritating pulsing in the background was a countdown.

"Not only would that render Gallifrey uninhabitable, but the whole of Kasterborous could be affected as well."

Suddenly there was a cacophonous whooshing sound outside the ship. The Doctor looked at the view screen. The Cheyenne II had just materialized in the Gallifreyan atmosphere.

The picture on the viewscreen changed to the bridge view of the other ship, with Lieutenant Banks at the center of the screen. Grae, Tom and Val surrounded him.

"Hello Doctor!" Banks shouted. "You have exactly one minute to abandon ship before we blow it out of the sky."

"Ha ha!" The Doctor shouted. "Well done Lieutenant, the Admiral was right about Grae needing the firepower!"

"Fifty-one seconds, Doctor." Banks reminded him. "The sonic cannon is already charging."

"Right!" The Doctor turned on his heels and ran for his TARDIS.

* * * * *

On Gallifrey, the people took cover in their shelters. Grae and the Cheyenne II's timely arrival saved the planet from a lethal collision and radiation cloud, but with the ship already within the atmosphere of the planet, pieces of it rained down upon the capital and the surrounding deserts.

In the High Council chamber, Tamara paced in front of Bramahl's containment capsule, sizing up the situation. So much had happened since she got out of bed this morning. But this, this was it. All of her memories of traveling with the Doctor and Grae had returned. Her time with Section 13, and her timeline being rewritten. Her new life, her second life was now a part of her whole experience now as both timelines joined together to make one. The only thing jeopardizing it was the woman who stood before her.

Lord President Dahvinad approached. "Miss Scott, you know what to do."

"Do I?" Tamara asked.

"You've lived through something no human has experienced," she said. "Grae expended so much of her artron energy to resurrect you you've become infused with it."

"I'm a Time Lord?"

"No, but add your natural abilities, the Section 13 augmentations, Bramahl being inside your head..." Dahvinad shrugged. "I don't know what you are. But you're more than enough to do what needs to be done."

"And that is?"

"Just trust your instincts." The Lord President turned to the Chancellery Guard. "Release Bramahl."

The capsule dematerialized around Bramahl, who dropped to the floor in a heap. She quickly rose to her feet and locked Tamara in her gaze.

"You're both partially aspects of the same person now," Dahvinad explained. "Only one of you should exist."

"Tamara, Tamara, Tamara," Bramahl chided. "Killing you once was necessary, but this time it will be a pleasure."

"You're really enjoying this, aren't you?" Tamara asked as her eyes darted about the room, looking for a place to take cover.

"I am," Bramahl answered. "Think of precious little Grae's anger and sadness over losing you a second time: positively delicious."

"To think I used to fear you, but now I see you for what you are – truly pathetic."

Bramahl lunged at Tamara, who grabbed her by the neck with ease. Jabbing an elbow into her ribs, Bramahl escaped the grip and watched Tamara double over in pain. She then kicked Tamara in the chin while she was bent over, sending her stumbling backwards.

Tamara regained her balance and felt something she hadn't felt before, not at least since the hospital earlier. Her adrenaline started to burn and with one mighty burst of mental energy, she picked up Bramahl and threw her through the closed doors of the chamber and into the main corridor outside. She followed after with exceptional speed.

Dahvinad, surrounded by her bodyguards, spoke into her wrist-com. "Get the artifact and meet me in the Panoptican!"

In the corridor, Tamara had caught up to where Bramahl had landed and picked her up by the collar and hoisted her up against the wall.

"You may think you have me beat," Bramahl spat. "But we're equal." Concentrating her mental energy, Bramahl smashed Tamara into a column.

Tamara shook the pain off, as if she had stubbed a toe.

"Equal?" she mocked. "Since the moment I put a staser bolt through your temple and took your place in Section 13 we haven't been equals. There's one major difference between us." She grabbed Bramahl again by the collar and they both disappeared.

The Lord President and her guards arrived in the Panoptican at the same time as both the Doctor's and Grae's TARDIS were materializing there. The Doctor, Grae, Tom, Val and Dahvinad all were met by Tamara and Bramahl appearing there as well. They hung in the air above the central dais grappling with each other.

"Oh look," Bramahl shouted, slightly winded. "All your friends have come to your funeral."

"That's the difference, Bramahl," Tamara said confidently. "I have friends that would give up their lives for me. Who do you have?"

Tamara looked down towards Grae, who clung to one of Tom's arms. Val stood beside the Doctor, with Dahvinad on the other side. She remembered the Panoptican. This was the central meeting area of the council. Beneath it was the obelisk that channeled the power of the Eye of Harmony. It was on a fixed, but shielded signal. If only...

Tamara looked into Dahvinad's mind, and then turned to a panel on the wall. It was immediately torn from its hinges and flung across the room, exposing a bank of controls which popped and shorted out.

The Lord President broke from the Doctor and ran to the center dais. She removed the Rod of Rassilon from within her robes and plunged it into an aperture in the floor.

"Hold onto something," the Doctor shouted as the ground began to tremble.

A panel on the floor on the dais slid back and a large black obelisk rose from beneath.

"The Eye of Harmony!" Grae shouted. "But those controls Tamara damaged..."

"You fool!" Bramahl shouted, "You're giving me what I want – the power of the Time Lords!"

"I'll give you the power of the Time Lords all right!" Tamara looked Bramahl in the eye. "See how much of it you can take!"

A burst of blue light shot forth from the tip of the obelisk, blasting a hole in the roof. With a swift head butt, Tamara sent Bramahl spinning into the beam of energy.

"What?" Bramahl screamed as she felt herself being torn apart. "No! This can't happen to me! I am Bramahl!"

"You're finished," shouted the Doctor. "That beam of light leads straight into the Eye of Harmony itself!"

"Help me Tamara!" Bramahl pleaded. "You have to help me!"

Tamara descended to the floor. She held Grae tightly as Bramahl's screams continued. Val had to turn away as she saw Bramahl's body twist and stretch grotesquely as it was pulled into the event horizon of the black hole. Then the screaming stopped.

Bramahl was dead at last.

* * * * *

Gallifrey turned on its axis and its sun rose on a new day. Technicians had repaired the damage Tamara had inflicted upon the Eye of Harmony's control equipment and everyone, including

the crew of the Cheyenne II, pitched in to help repair the damage caused by Bramahl's spacecraft.

A few days later, at the TCA Headquarters at Cape Kennedy, a funeral pyre was lit in honor of Admiral Kathryn Alexandria Poole. The crew of the Cheyenne II, the Doctor and his friends as well as Lord President Dahvinad all attended to pay their respects.

After the ceremony, the Doctor walked with the Lord President through the NASA museum.

"So how is the state of Gallifrey?" the Doctor asked. "Before all this mess began?"

"Fair," she answered. "But it could always be better. I can use someone with your experience-on the new High Council. Would you at least consider coming home and being my Chancellor?"

"I'm already home, my dear Dahvinad," the Doctor smiled.

"Earth?"

"Partially." The Doctor pointed at the sky. "I mean, out here, in the thick of things. But I am flattered by your offer."

"I can see why you like Earth, though. It's so blue. But the people, are they so backward that you have to continue saving them?"

"Many Time Lords have made the mistake of underestimating humanity." The Doctor explained as they stopped by a picture of Neil Armstrong. "Look how far they've come."

"And without the pioneering minds of Rassilon and Omega to guide them," Dahvinad added.

"Exactly." The Doctor turned to the Lord President. "You are planning to allow Tamara to continue to exist, aren't you?"

"Grae infused her with so much artron energy, she actually created a single time line out of Tamara's two lives. Both lives have happened. Tamara as you knew her is alive and well and the Web of Time is still secure."

"A good day, then." The Doctor smiled. "I think Gallifrey is in safe hands."

The two Time Lords walked arm in arm to the courtyard where Val, Tom, Tamara and Grae waited.

"How blessed am I?" the Doctor asked the crowd. "Look at you all. Who could ask for better friends?"

"Good thing I was able to order these." Grae produced six Quantum Fizzies on a tray and passed them around for everyone to take. "I haven't had one in ages, and there's a shop right down the street!"

"To my friends," the Doctor began, raising his glass, "Both old and new and those who are no longer with us. For they have all touched me dearly, and I love them for that."

Everyone raised their glasses, enjoying the moment.

Dahvinad was the first to break through the chatter. "Grae, my dear. I know you held my aunt, Quella, in very high esteem, I promise to do what's right and bring her back to Gallifrey. In the meantime, you've earned your freedom. You can return to the Agency, with all your security clearances restored, if you like."

"Madame Lord President," Grae responded. "I'm honored by both your words and your actions. But, I'd like to respectfully decline your offer. In fact, I'd like to offer my resignation."

"As you wish," Dahvinad replied.

"Great," Tom interjected. "That means she can come with us!"

"Oh, you'd like that, wouldn't you?" Val teased. "I saw the way you were holding onto her!"

"What do you say, Grae?" the Doctor asked. "Just like the good old days?"

Grae smiled at her new friends, but turned back to the Doctor with a surprising answer.

"No. Thank you, though. What's in the past must stay in the past. The time I spent travelling in the TARDIS were the happiest days of my life, but the time has come to branch out on my own."

Dahvinad nodded, understanding. "Can I at least have your TARDIS repaired? Fusing it to the navigational system of the Cheyenne II surely did some damage."

"No, thank you." Grae looked at the Doctor with a wide smile. "I don't think so."

"But you'll have no idea where you're going?" The Doctor said, despairingly.

"Now doesn't that sound familiar?" She laughed. "Goodbye Doctor, and thank you. It's been wonderful seeing you again." She approached the Doctor, who took her into his arms once more.

"There's a whole universe out there waiting for you," he whispered into her ear. "Free of Bramahl, and ready to be experienced. It's all yours, my dear."

She smiled and nodded up at her former mentor. "Until we meet again."

"Indeed." He smiled contentedly.

She turned to Val and they hugged. She then moved to Tom, but when he bent down to hug her, she kissed him on the cheek. He blushed.

"So that's what it takes?" Val laughed as they all waved goodbye to Grae, who entered her TARDIS and vanished.

The Doctor looked around, suddenly aware that someone was missing...

* * * * *

"Hello TARDIS," Grae spoke out loud as she activated the door control. "Looks like it's just you, me and all of Creation."

As she set the TARDIS in flight, she heard another voice from behind.

"Me too!"

Grae felt her adrenaline race and she spun around quickly, fearing what she would find. Standing there, looking as peaceful and as happy as the day they first met, stood Tamara Scott.

"Hi," she said with a smirk.

"Tamara!" Grae shouted half out of fright and half out of joy.

"Nice to see you too," she said jokingly.

"Seeing you will always make me happy," Grae said with a smile. "But I thought for a moment..."

"Bramahl's gone, I promise." Tamara reassured. "I probably shouldn't have snuck up on you, though."

Grae began laughing as she embraced her friend. "But what are you doing here? You know that the navigation system is shot. I can't take you home."

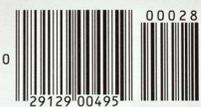
"I was wondering if you had an opening for a 'traveling companion?'"

Grae let out an excited little shout and shifted her TARDIS into the time vortex, off to new adventures with her best friend at her side.



The Doctor thought he had everything under control. The cell was constructed to his design: quartz-sapphire laser bars, stasis field, time loop – all set up within in a reconstructed sector of the Time Lord's notorious prison planet of Shada. He thought that would hold her. But he was wrong – Bramahl has escaped and is out for blood. Along with Tom and Val, the Doctor must track down Bramahl, and their only clue is her successor from Section 13 – Tamara Scott. But her life as a companion was erased... wasn't it? An old friend's timely return may hold the key.

ISBN 0-918894-28-X



This is another in a series of original fan authored Doctor Who fiction published by The Doctor Who Project featuring the Tenth Doctor as played by Laurent Meyer

