

Gallifrey, the long way round

Issue #2 – Summer 2018



**Cosplay
Humans
Blake's 7
Fortitude
Star Wars
Doctor Who
and much more!**

Gallifrey, The Long Way Round

Issue #2—Summer 2018

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Jyn Erso by Richard Young (Tiny Turtle) ©

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EDITORIAL By Nick Mays, Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to Issue #2 of **Gallifrey, the Long Way Round!**

It seems that Issue #1 was well received, so my fellow Editors and I decided to carry on and produce a second issue. Yes, I know the cover date says 'Summer 2018' and we uploaded it into the ether in early September, but this 'Real Life' thing gets in the way of enjoyable pursuits such as creative writing and fanzine production, so we just couldn't get everything together in time for our planned July/August launch. Besides, Autumn doesn't officially start until September 23rd, and in Australia and New Zealand it's still Springtime, so it's all relative... Timey-Wimey stuff and all that...

Anyway, this time round we've produced a bumper 80-page extravaganza for you, covering all that's best about Sci-Fi and fantasy in all media. We're delighted to welcome on board several new contributors who have produced some thought-provoking features and essays, not to mention some stunning artwork. We fervently hope to encourage even more contributions for our next issue, - maybe you've got an idea for a feature? After all, there's hundreds of TV series, films, books, audios and comics which we would love to cover, so go on, give it a go— we'd love to hear from you. As for Issue #3, this, you'll be delighted to know, is currently in production and *should* be out before the end of 2018. Definitely. Almost certainly. We hope.

Talking of 2018, there's been plenty of great Sci-Fi and Fantasy out there, not least of which were the films *The Incredibles 2* and *Ready Player One*, whilst on TV we had the remake of *Lost In Space*, whilst there's a brand new adaptation of HG Wells' *War of the Worlds* about to hit our screens, along with Season 11 of *Doctor Who*!

There must be something about those '8' years which lends itself to good sci-fi... 1968 saw the release of *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *The Planet of the Apes* whilst on TV Irwin Allen's *Land of the Giants* aired. Ten years later in 1978 *Star Wars* burst onto our cinema screens and into our hearts, whilst on TV *Blake's 7* was launched. 1988 saw *Alien Nation* on the big screen, leading to a TV series soon after. Meanwhile, Lister, Rimmer, The Cat and Holly set sail on *Red Dwarf*. The Marvel cinematic universe kicked off with *Iron Man* in 2008 whilst Pixar scored another hit with *Wall-E*. We pay tribute to *Star Wars* and *Blake's 7* in this very issue; rest assured that we have those other greats firmly in our sights for future issues too! Enjoy!

Nick & Co

STAR WARS

A Family In The Balance

By Brad Black

"What do you want me to do, go out there with a laser sword and face down the entire First Order?"

Luke Skywalker in *The Last Jedi*.

Yes, Luke, that is exactly what I wanted you to do, way back in *Return of the Jedi*, go out there with your light saber and face down the Emperor and all his minions. Not very realistic of me, is it? There are times when I think I have never been more disappointed in a movie hero that I am in Luke Skywalker. Yes, he blew up the first Death Star, but that was clearly with the help of Obi Wan's force ghost. He went to Bespin to save his friends, and his friends had to save him. He went to Endor to confront Vader and the Emperor and destroy the second Death Star, and would have perished but for the brief return of Anakin Skywalker. Oh, and his friends blew up the second Death Star, not him. In *The Last Jedi*, we find out he tried to be the new Jedi Master, and failed.

And there are other times a little voice in my head paraphrases Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, "The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our *Star Wars*, but in ourselves."

I blame Yoda for my unrealistic expectations. In *Empire* he implies that with the Force, the only limit is your mind. Leaving the theater in 1980 as an imaginative young man, I pictured Jedi as the ultimate Super Heroes armed with the ultimate weapon, the light saber. I wondered how they could possibly have been defeated, even by Darth Vader. I

expected the *Star Wars* saga to be an epic tale of Good triumphing over Evil. For a long time the ending of *Jedi* left me unfulfilled. As I grew older, I had an epiphany; I realized that I had missed the point. *Star Wars* has never been about Good triumphing over Evil, it is about the eternal struggle between the light and the dark in all of us.

But Luke, the Last Jedi, is not our introduction to the saga. In the first film, the first major character we meet is Princess Leia. She is a leader of a rebellion, brave, fierce, and defiant even in the face of her enemies. This was something new for a movie heroine in 1977. A movie heroine was supposed to be brave, but frightened, waiting for her hero to come to the rescue. Strong sci-fi female leads like Ripley from *Alien* were still in the future.

Next we met Luke. He fulfilled our expectations for the sci-fi fantasy genre, an unassuming young lad from the middle of nowhere who dreams of adventure. Like us, Luke is smitten by an image of Princess Leia. The audience, unaware of future plot developments, feels the chemistry and expects a classic tale of the young hero defeating the evil knight and rescuing the princess. There's even a dragon to fight, a moon sized dragon called the Death Star.

Luke needed help to rescue his princess. Everyone loves an honest rogue, and Han Solo was that. He was a jaded, skeptical scoundrel out for himself, he admitted it, and he made no apologies for it. Han Solo, self-professed cynic

and scoundrel, a Space Pirate in all but name, was sold on rescuing the princess with two words: "She's rich." Han had no time for plans; he was a man of action who looked for material rewards. As he stated, "I take orders from just one person, me." In plain language he did what he wanted when he wanted to do it, trusted no one, and relied on no one.

Luke fits the classic 'chosen one' trope, the young, reluctant hero forced into a struggle not of his making, poised to triumph over staggering odds. Trained by a mentor who dies at the end of Act Two he fits the classic Arthurian pattern.

Leia is the princess in distress, but a princess full of fight and armed with an acid tongue. Our trio is complete, and they resemble a tried and tested trope that goes back to the 'Arabian Nights' genre films of the fifties; princess, unknown hero with a secret legacy, and rogue.

They are stock characters, and if used in a stock way, we would have a romantic triangle. In fact, that's what we seem to have in *A New Hope* and *Empire*. From *A New Hope*:

Luke: *What do you think of her?*

Han: *I'm trying not to.*

Luke: *Good.*

The classic way out of a romantic triangle is for one of the suitors to die heroically that the other two may live. In fact this very plot twist for *Jedi* was suggested by Harrison Ford, who volunteered to perform a death scene for Han, but by that time George Lucas had something else in mind.

The first *Star Wars* film was meant to be a standalone. Prior to its release in 1977, no one, not even George Lucas, expected it to be a hit, let alone a cultural phenomenon. As more story needed to be told for the

sequels, the relationships between the characters had to change.

It has been reported, with what level of accuracy I do not know, that in early drafts of *Empire*, Luke is visited by the Force ghost of Anakin Skywalker, (who is clearly not Darth Vader), and told he has a twin sister. However, this sister is clearly not Leia. If true, then the clever part of the evolving story is the combining of characters and streamlining of the plot. The not-so-clever part is the confusion that arises from the changing relationships and gaps in continuity. Thus, from the very beginning it appears possible that Luke had a secret sister, but that originally, Darth Vader was not his father.

In fact, in *A New Hope*, Obi Wan calls his nemesis, Darth, as if calling him by name, rather than by title. In the first film, Darth Vader is an underling to the commander of the Death Star, by *Empire*, even Admirals obey Vader's commands or suffer the fatal consequences. This 'promotion' is an indication of how Darth Vader captured the imagination of the movie going public in 1977. It's also an indication of how much the characters, and the relationships between them, changed during the evolution of the story.

I don't intend to comment on whether the reported changes from the original drafts are entirely accurate, good or bad, only to point out that they exist. That said, even though the revelation that Darth Vader is Luke's father creates some serious continuity issues, those simple words, "*No, I am your father,*" became one of the great plot twists in the history of cinema.

As someone once said, never let a few bothersome facts get in the way of a great story.



At the beginning of *A New Hope*, we think that Luke is a nobody. In *Empire* that illusion is shattered. Suddenly Luke isn't a farm boy from nowhere, but the son of the most powerful Jedi who ever lived. In *Return of the Jedi*, as Leia is revealed (somewhat retroactively) to be Luke's sister, suddenly the saga is all about the Skywalker blood line. The story has become more personal, shifting from a broad tale about a galaxy wide struggle for freedom, to a more intimate story about one particular family.

Near the end of *A New Hope*, Han, not yet part of that family, prepares to depart before the final battle against the Death Star. In this he is only being true to himself, true to the rogue and scoundrel that he was. After *The Force Awakens* came out, some speculated that Han must know more about Rey than he admitted to, as he offered her a job, a place on the Falcon. But Han offered that same position to Luke in *A New Hope*, and he had only known Luke a couple of days at most. Perhaps Han Solo is a good judge of character, or perhaps he's just good at spotting young Jedi.

Luke recovers, there is more repartee between Han the scoundrel and Leia the princess. This leads to the famous (or infamous) kiss between Luke and Leia. Ignoring the implications that arise given later plot developments, that kiss was clearly meant for Han, not for Luke. Han's flirting aside, he is totally oblivious to Luke's obvious feelings for Leia. Listening to Han wax poetic about Leia, Luke's expression is not that of a protective brother, but of a rejected suitor. Nor is his reaction to The Kiss, (no matter Leia's intentions in bestowing it) platonic.

And yet the Princess does not come between Han and Luke. As the rebels prepare to evacuate Hoth, there is a touching dialog between the two male leads in which Han Solo, rogue, rake, and scoundrel, seems to be something of a big brother figure to Luke, the last Jedi.

Han, the fiercely independent freedom-loving loner who only looks after himself, delays his own evacuation to check on Leia. Earlier, he defied death to ride out onto the tundra of Hoth at night in order to search for Luke.

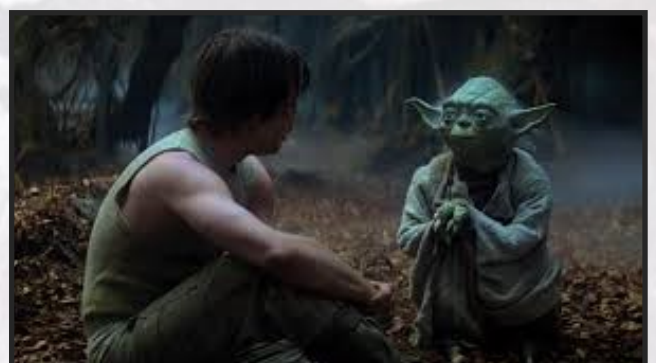


Given Han Solo's repeated declarations of independence, it's a bit surprising that in the opening scenes of *Empire*, Han is on Hoth with the rebels and has not yet paid off Jabba. Why is he there? You don't need to listen to the dialog to figure it out, you can tell by the looks exchanged between Han and Leia. Those meaningful glances are enough to tell you that they are destined to be together, and yet their dialog will convince you that eventually they are destined to go their separate ways. She is married to her duty, he to his freedom.

And in *Empire*, for the first time, we see Luke using the force on his own, without the help of Obi Wan's force ghost. This is the time to mention the score. How do we know Luke is using the Force, because we hear the Force theme. John Williams' composition is as much a part of *Star Wars* as light sabers, X-Wings, and Wookiees. When the music swells, everyone in the theater feels the Force. Luke is slowly growing in power, and yet in the opening scene of *Empire* he is ambushed by a local predator. As

Han, despite his denials, is no longer looking out only for himself.

Following instructions from Obi Wan's Force ghost, Luke goes to Dagobah in search of Yoda. Luke recognizes Dagobah as something out of a dream, in the same way Rey dreams about the island on which Luke is hiding in *The Last Jedi*. Is this the Force, showing young Jedi a vision of where they need to go for their training?



Meanwhile, on the run from the Empire, Han shows off his considerable piloting skills and continues his rather arrogant flirting with Leia. Forced together, he softens and she mellows, lowering her guard, and romance, or at least mutual attraction, blooms. Forced to find safe harbor, Han and Leia seek refuge on Bespin with Lando Calrissian.

In Cloud City, unaware that the Empire is waiting for them, Leia and Han look and act like a couple, but Han has no answer for Leia when she asks if he will be leaving as soon as their ship is repaired. Leia's heart and soul lie with the rebellion. Han must pay off Jabba the Hutt, and has made no commitment as to whether he will return. Han and Leia are from different worlds, and neither seems willing to completely give up the world they know. It may have been the moment, but under intense pressure, Leia seems ready to commit to the relationship, Han cannot commit, at least not yet. Thus, that wonderful exchange that is pure rogue, pure rake, pure scoundrel, pure Han Solo.:

Leia: *I love you.*

Han: *I know.*

Training on Dagobah with Yoda, Luke hears more about Darth Vader, without ever hearing the whole truth. Plagued by visions of Han and Leia in pain on Bespin, he cuts short his training to rescue his friends. Luke chooses his friends over the Force, a move that does not sit well with Yoda or Obi Wan, but is true to the saga's theme of hope, friends, and family. Yoda's admonition received little sympathy from the viewer in 1980, and probably less today after the prequel films. After all, as Luke points out in *The Last Jedi*, the Jedi order, led by Yoda, failed to recognize or stop the rise of Darth Sidious or the Empire, and Darth Vader was trained by Obi Wan.

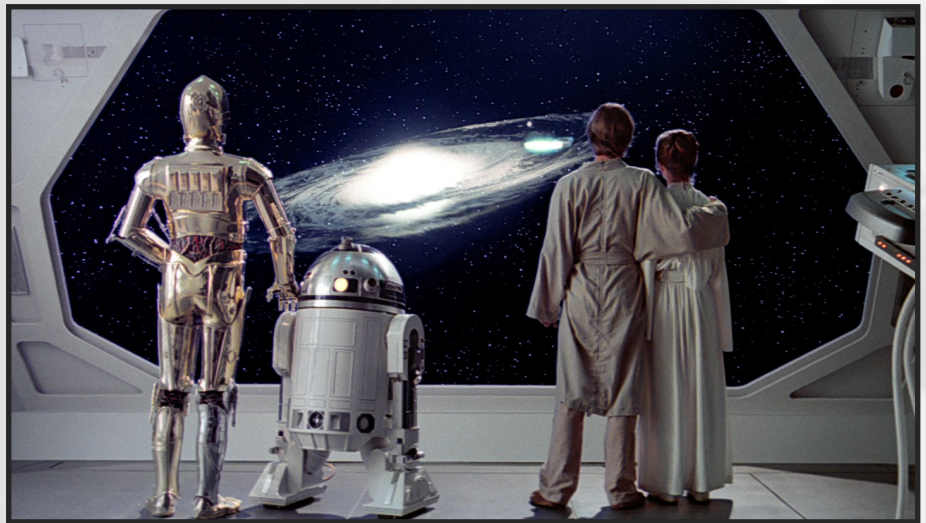
On Bespin, Luke confronts Vader, and in one of the signature jaw-dropping moments in cinema history, learns the truth; Darth Vader did not murder his father, rather, Darth Vader IS his father. Obi Wan lied. And now all the tropes fall down. Luke, the chosen one, is not the son of the noble Jedi who defied the emperor, but the son the traitor. He doesn't handle it particularly well, but I can't say I blame him.



Bested by Vader, Luke, the Chosen One, carrier of the Jedi Mantle, has to be rescued by his friends.

At the end of *Empire*, Luke gets a bionic hand to replace the appendage he lost in his confrontation with Darth Vader. The imagery is stark and disturbing. Luke, like his father before him, is now part man and part machine.

Empire ended on a cliffhanger, with Han taken away by a bounty hunter leaving Luke, Lando, Chewbacca, and Leia to plan a rescue. For Star Wars fans, it was a long three years before *Return Of The Jedi* would premiere, a time before the internet, but still a time of rampant fan theories and unprecedented hype. No matter how good *Jedi* turned out to be, there was no way it could live up to that hype.



When *Jedi* finally premiered three years later, it picked up right where *Empire* left off. Not much time has passed, and yet the change in Luke is startling. For the first time he looks and acts like a Jedi, walking in to Jabba's palace like he owns the place. As one would expect of a powerful Jedi, Luke has foreseen how things will play out, and has planned accordingly, planting his light saber on R2 aboard Jabba's yacht. The resulting action sequence is one of the best in the series, and left many of us hungry for more action. Seeing a Jedi at war was awe inspiring, so much so that we forgot Yoda's admonition, "War not make one great!"

Yet the fate of the Empire would not rest with a light saber in the hands of a young Jedi, but in a son's plea to his father, but I get ahead of myself.

With Han rescued and Jabba defeated, Luke returns to Dagobah for what appears to be some weak excuses about the lies he was told about his father. And yet there is some subtext suggesting that 'from a certain point of view,' Yoda and Obi Wan, while not totally honest, may not have had an entirely deceitful intent. That Jedi would lie, or tell a half truth, was further proof that I, the viewer, was simply expecting too much of them. I wanted gods, but Jedi were just powerful humans with human failings. In hindsight I find it somehow refreshing.

When Luke confronts Yoda, seeking the truth about his father, Yoda replies, “Told you, did he? Unexpected this is...” This line from Yoda indicates that in his mind, Anakin Skywalker had ceased to exist, replaced in the same mortal coil by Darth Vader.

A better explanation would have to wait thirty plus years for Kylo Ren to explain the transformation to Han Solo in *The Force Awakens*, “Your son is gone. He was weak and foolish... So I destroyed him.”

Yoda’s line, “unexpected, this is,” foreshadows that there may be something left of Anakin Skywalker. For Luke’s sake, there had better be.

After some adventures with Ewoks, Leia and Luke finally have time to speak face to face. He tells her the truth, about Vader, and about herself. She says she has always known deep down that she is Luke’s sister. This doesn’t fit well with the kiss in the med bay, but there you are. Han Solo, walking in on their embrace, misunderstands both the affection and Leia’s silence. Han Solo appears to be jealous. Really, Han Solo, Jealous? If that caught the viewer by surprise, then Han Solo apologizing must have come as an even greater shock. Han Solo, apologizing. It must be true love, or at least as close to true love as a scoundrel and a princess can get.

Luke finally confronts the Emperor. For a long time I thought that Luke served no real purpose in going to the new Death Star to face the Emperor. After all, his friends would soon destroy the station, and with it, the Emperor and the Empire. But Luke has a plan.

He is not there for vengeance, but for his father. He hopes to turn Vader back to the light. Failing that, he hopes to keep Vader and the Emperor on the Death Star until it is destroyed. He tells the Emperor, “... I’ll soon be dead, and you with me.”

Luke now wears black, like Vader, and is part machine, like Vader. Luke is much more powerful, and as the confrontation unfolds, we see that Luke is now more than a match for Vader, as long as he uses the Dark Side of the Force.



How do we know Luke is using the Dark Side? *Listen*. As Luke gains the upper hand in his duel with Darth Vader, the music that John Williams chooses is not the Force theme or Luke’s theme, but the Emperor’s theme.

What temporarily turns Luke to the Dark Side is a threat to Leia, to family. Only the vision of Darth Vader’s severed prosthetic hand brings Luke back to the light. In recognizing what he has in common with Vader, Luke recognizes that to fall to the Dark Side is to hand victory to the Emperor. Luke is trapped. Use the Dark Side and he will fall. Resist the Dark Side, and he will die. Either way the Emperor wins, unless something unexpected happens.

In the end, it’s all about family. A son calls for help, and a father answers. Luke has won the only way he could. The key to defeating the Dark Side lay not through might, but through compassion. As Rose Tico says in *The Last Jedi*, “We win not by destroying what we hate, but by saving what we love.”

And for decades (prequels aside), *Return of the Jedi* would be the end.... and then... Disney.



The similarities between *The Force Awakens* and *A New Hope* are numerous, and perhaps appropriate for a reboot of the franchise. After some fans had been disappointed by the prequel films, I don't think it's any coincidence that the first line in *The Force Awakens* is, "This will begin to make things right," as Lor San Tekka hands over a map that leads to Luke Skywalker.

Luke is in hiding. Leia is now a general leading the Resistance against the rise of the First Order, and Han has gone back to smuggling. Leia and Han's son, trained by Luke, fell to the Dark Side and aspires to be a new Darth Vader to Supreme Leader Snoke, having forsaken his true name Ben Solo, and taken a new name, Kylo Ren, leader of the Knights of Ren (whom we see only in a flashback).

Kylo Ren has an obsession with Luke Skywalker, his former Jedi master, but he is also obsessed with his father, Han Solo. The two come face to face near the end of *The Force Awakens*. Han, keeping a promise he made to Leia, approaches their son in an attempt to bring him home.

At the end of *Jedi*, when the Emperor was killing Luke, there was enough of Anakin Skywalker left in Darth

Vader to prevent the death of his son. In *The Force Awakens*, despite Leia's conviction that there is still light left in her son, Kylo Ren kills Han Solo in cold blood, confirming his pronouncement to Han moments earlier, "Your son is gone. He was weak and foolish... So I destroyed him." The symbolism is startling, with Kylo Ren striking his father down just as the last light of the sun disappears.

Kylo Ren's first appearance is at the end of the opening battle sequence, just as Darth Vader's was. Kylo captures Rey, a young girl, apparently a nobody from the middle of nowhere, and interrogates her with the Force. But there is more to Rey than meets the eye. For when Kylo Ren shows her the Force, it's as though *The Force Awakens* within Rey.

It happens during interrogation, and again at the end of the film. As Kylo Ren is clearly getting the better of Rey in their light saber duel, driving her back to the literal and figurative edge of the abyss, he pauses, telling her, "You need a teacher, I can show you the ways of the Force."

Rey visibly calms, channeling the light to banish her fear, and from then on, she is clearly more powerful than Kylo Ren, driving him back, wounding him, and even knocking him down, although you must keep in mind that Kylo Ren was injured before his fight with Rey began.

At this point the ground breaks open, separating the combatants. Is this an accident of the planetary breakup, or is this the Force,

separating the champions of light and dark, because each still has a role to play? We get more hints about this need for balance in *The Last Jedi*.

In *The Last Jedi*, having found Luke at last, Rey must convince the reluctant, tired, and jaded Jedi Master to help. In the end, she can't, but R2 breaks through to Luke by playing the original message from his sister Leia, the one she sent forty years prior, and that set Luke on his path to becoming a Jedi in *A New Hope*. Again, it is the call of family that forces action. Still, Luke is a bitter exile. He becomes interested only when Rey finds the sacred tree and the Jedi texts on her own, as if they were calling to her.

Meanwhile Kylo Ren is leading the fight against the remnants of the Resistance. In *The Force Awakens*, we saw Kylo Ren kill Han Solo in cold blood. If this murder of his father was supposed to be Kylo Ren's ultimate fall to the Dark Side, he looked less than triumphant immediately after the deed. In *The Last Jedi*, his finger on the trigger of his fighter's cannons, he feels his mother through the Force, and stands down, unable to fire.

During this time Rey and Kylo Ren share many Force visions. The symbolism is always there, she the representative of the light, he the representative of the dark. Snoke says as much when he has the pair of them together:

“I warned my young apprentice that as he grew stronger, his equal in the light would rise.”

Think about that line for a moment before moving on. It is, perhaps, the most profound line in the history of *Star Wars*.

In another surprise twist, Snoke, apparently the arch villain of the new series, falls. Kylo Ren has turned on his master, but is not ready to turn to the light. Perhaps he can't, but we'll save that discussion for the end of this essay.

At the end of the film, the last of the resistance is trapped in a cave, about to be wiped out by Kylo Ren's forces. It is now that Luke appears. After saying farewell to his sister, and apologizing for his failures, he walks out to confront his destiny against his former student Kylo Ren.

Of course it's a trick. Luke is simply a Force Projection, distracting Kylo Ren and allowing the remnants of the resistance to escape. Thus at the end, figuratively speaking, Luke DOES go out there with a laser sword and faces down the entire First Order.

And so we have come full circle. The first time Luke sees Leia, she is a holographic projection begging aid. The last time Leia sees Luke, he is a Force Projection come to give aid.

In closing, I want to go back to the words of Supreme Leader Snoke, as his simple statement makes everything in *Star Wars* make sense.

“I warned my young apprentice that as he grew stronger, his equal in the light would rise.”

Throughout the *Star Wars* saga there is talk of balance. Anakin Skywalker was supposed to be the chosen one to restore balance to the force. Just as I had misconceptions about the Jedi, perhaps the Jedi had misconceptions about balance. When Anakin Skywalker is finished at the end of *Revenge of the Sith*, and has become Darth Vader, he has all but destroyed the old Jedi order. At the end of the prequel trilogy there are only four Force users in the galaxy, two Sith and two Jedi. You really can't get more balanced than that.



But never is the imagery of balance so pervasive, or so subtle, as in *The Last Jedi*. I shared at the beginning of this essay my epiphany that *Star Wars* wasn't about good triumphing over evil, but about the ongoing struggle between the light and the dark. Even that simple statement is wrong. *Star Wars* isn't about the struggle between the light and the dark, but about the balance between them.

Throughout the saga the good guys and the bad guys not only fight each other, but fight among themselves. It is never more apparent than in *The Last Jedi* where both Poe Dameron and Kylo Ren launch rebellions against their own orders. If Good and Evil aren't the point, what is?

Balance.

In *The Last Jedi*, when Luke tells Rey to reach out with her feelings, she sees life, death and decay (that feeds new life), warmth, cold, peace, violence... Notice how all these things come in balanced pairs, and some are cyclical. This is the Force. This is Luke's lesson.

And then there is this.

On the floor of the Jedi Temple is a seal, a knight who is half black and half white. Flanking the white half of the knight is the yin symbol representing negative energy and darkness. Flanking the black half of the knight is a yang symbol representing positive energy and light. Together they make the Yin Yang, a symbol of balance. (Seen below upside down). Much of Rey's training takes place within sight of this symbol.



Here is the ancient Jedi Seal right side up.



Note that the Yin isn't completely dark, and the Yang isn't completely white. There is a reason for that.

This is the true nature of the Force, containing both light and dark side by side. This is why there was still good in Darth Vader and Kylo Ren. This is why there was still darkness in Luke Skywalker and Rey, because there must be both light and dark together.

It's as though the Force has commanded that there can be no light without dark, no dark without light, and has been patiently waiting for eons in the hope that the Jedi and the Sith would finally figure it out. Or perhaps that is the wrong end of the stick. Perhaps the Force *cannot* exist as light *or* dark, but *must* exist as both light *and* dark at once. Too much light, and a Darth Vader will rise. Too much dark, and a Rey will rise.

We get a glimpse of what is possible in Snoke's throne room, the darkness of Kylo Ren and the light of Rey working together. Light of Rey... Ray of Light... Have they been trying to tell us something about her origins all along?

It's a long two years to the final installment. This time, I think it *will* live up to the hype...



STAR
THE SAGA
IN VERSE
 By Lynda Anne Pinfold
WARS

Once upon a time, in a galaxy far, far away
 There lived the Jedi Knights
 They could harness the power of life itself
 And it gave them incredible might
 But whether to use it for good or bad
 Was a choice they had to make
 To side with the ones seeking power supreme
 Or the way of resistance to take
 It played out a saga, a struggle intense
 That spanned many decades and lives
 And now very briefly, in the following lines
 That tale to tell I strive

It all began with a slave-boy, who wanted to fly in space
 In order to win his freedom, he had to win a race
 The competition was very intensive
 His fellow racers were very defensive
 Against the odds
 He flew his pod
 His win in the end was extensive

He's taken in hand by a Jedi Knight, who thinks he has potential
 But sadly, the young boy, as he grew, was not very deferential
 He fell in love and got married, but was haunted by nightmarish dreams
 That his wife would die while giving birth
 He could save her and show her his worth
 If only he used the powers he had
 And turned from good to positively bad

As he unleashes his terrible power
 His children are secretly taken
 They will grow, unaware of their past
 Unaware that their father has a power vast
 Unaware that the Force within them lies
 That the future of the galaxy on them relies

Time passes by and the evil grows, a terrible weapon is built
 To wipe out planets and all life thereon, without a shred of guilt
 A resistance grows, they try to find some way to stop its passage
 They manage to steal the construction plans, and pass on a secret message
 But even as they pass it on
 The evil catches them, and they are gone

But now those children, so secretly saved
 Come into the story, their parts to play

It's one of the children who receives the message
 For which so many lives were destroyed
 And just before she's caught herself, she passes it on to a droid
 The droid and its friend escape in a pod, and land in an area of sand and shale
 They go in search of someone to help
 But they're caught by traders and put up for sale
 There a young man, who works on a farm, buys them to help in the field
 But it isn't long before a message is played
 Though only part of it is revealed

They set out to find a certain man, who needs to hear the droid
 He tells the boy his dad was a knight
 The Jedi fight to do what is right
 He wants the farm boy to stay and fight
 But his work he won't avoid
 He returns to find a disastrous sight
 His family were murdered without a fight
 Now he knows the danger is real, to join the resistance is right

They find a spaceship and its crew to take them on their quest
 They discover the girl who sent the droid is a princess under arrest
 She tells them about the terrible weapon that they must defeat and fast
 Either they find a way to destroy it, or the resistance will end in a blast

The plans reveal a weak point, put there on purpose in case
 If they can hit a certain spot, the weapon will be erased
 The task seems doomed to failure, the computers can't hit the place
 Then the farm-boy-turned-rebel-fighter thinks he hears a voice
 It says to turn off the computer is the sensible, wisest choice
 He must reach out with his feelings, must concentrate on the spot
 Then his gunfire travels straight and true, to hit it on the dot

The Death Star is destroyed
 The weapon blew apart
 But the evil isn't finished
 It's held in someone's heart

The rebels move around, keeping out of reach
Escaping every time, by the skin of their figurative teeth
The farm boy rebel Luke has gone to learn some more
About the Force that helped him out, and that his father had before

Princess Leia and Han are captured and held as bait
The evil lord who holds them wants to meet Luke face to face
He seeks to turn his loyalty to darkness from the light
And then reveals a secret that was buried out of sight
Luke's father wasn't killed, he isn't dead at all
He's standing here before him, alive and standing tall

Luke manages to escape, though injured in the fight
Han and Leia find him, and rescue him from his plight

More time passes by and Luke and Leia discover
That both of them have the Force, for they are sister and brother

Luke faces his father again and as sabres flash and spark
Darth Vader tries to turn his son onto a darker path
But Luke has come to see with a keener mind at last
That there's another way this could turn, if he plays his part
And so at last he wins, not only the sabre fight
For he has turned his father towards the path of light

It's yet another while before we continue the story
And still the evil empire is seeking further glory
They call themselves the First Order, but their plan is just the same
To find, conquer and destroy – it's still the same old refrain

Han and Leia have had a son called Ben, in whom the Force was strong
They sent him to be trained by Luke, to become a Jedi Knight
But something went awry, things didn't turn out right
Jedi Ben became Kylo Ren, and turned to darkness from the light

Another droid, another map, another escapee
This time it is a defector who really holds the key
He helps a girl called Rey, who found the missing droid
And together they escape, from the troops who are deployed
They meet up with Han, who helps them take the droid
To the resistance camp, to find out what's inside
The droid called BB8 has a map which shows just where
Luke is living in retreat, after the Kylo Ren affair

Rey sets out to find him, and seek his help once more
But Luke refuses to get involved, and shows her the figurative door
But she wants to know about the Force, for it seems she has it too
To know the what, the why, the when, the where, the how, the who

Through the Force our heroine Rey makes contact with Kylo Ren
He tries to turn her to his cause
To say the Jedi code is flawed
She goes to meet him face to face
To hope that she can find her place
She must decide, get her loyalties right
With the First Order, or the resistance fight
She makes her choice to fight and run
The resistance battle must be won

It all ends outside a cave, the resistance are trapped inside
They can't get out, the door is blocked, there is no place to hide
And suddenly there, approaching them, is Luke who tells them straight
Help is coming, at the back of the cave, they need to go, they shouldn't wait
They need to hurry, get out while they can
He'll prevent Kylo Ren from discovering their plan

Kylo Ren and the troops he leads throw everything at Luke, standing tall
He doesn't seem hurt, he doesn't seem cowed, he doesn't seem bothered at all
When everyone's safe, the vision is gone
Luke has never moved from his home
It was just a projection of the Force he made
While everyone escaped from the back of the cave

The Saga Continues...

MAY THE TOYS BE WITH YOU

STAR WARS: ICONOGRAPHY ART AND DESIGN: A REVIEW OF THE EXHIBITION AT BASINGSTOKE'S WILLIS MUSEUM

BY CRAIG SANWELL

Introduction

Forty years ago this year, *Star Wars* arrived on British shores following its unveiling to an American audience in the latter part of the year before. It started a cultural revolution, the like of which had never been seen before and heralded a new era for cinema, which has endured to this day: the Movie Block-buster. The impact of *Star Wars* was far reaching and, over the immediate years and decades that followed, could be witnessed in the invention of movie industry creations such as ILM, Skywalker Sound and THX, now permanent features within the film industry. This resulted in a change to the way that movies were marketed and promoted, in terms of the design of movie theatre posters and also in the re-imagining and manufacturing of tie-in toys and toy sales. You also have to consider the powerful impact felt personally by the movie going public, particularly children of the late 1970s and early 1980s, one of which was myself.

Up until this point, sci-fi movies were pretty formulaic and generic, mostly 'B-Movie' like, in style and tone that suffered from restrictions in budget, effects or conviction from the studio executives that produced them. Some sci-fi/fantasy in movies had pushed the boundaries, thanks to individual pioneers and visionaries in film such as Stanley Kubrick and Ray Harryhausen, and the occasional movie in the genre had pushed the envelope in terms of visual effects, or prosthetics and make-up, in films such as *Planet of the Apes* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. But none had set the bar quite as high, or captured the public's imagination worldwide, once it was unveiled to its feverish public, as *Star Wars* managed to.

The Exhibition

The *May The Toys Be With You* exhibition was on display at Basingstoke's Willis Museum from mid-January to mid-April 2018 and tapped into this, focusing upon the

immediate revolution that occurred within both the film and toy industries and on a more personal/human level within the homes of children up and down the United Kingdom.

Concentrating mainly on ephemera and memorabilia from the British Isles produced within the years of the original trilogy, from 1977 to 1983, the exhibition offered real insight into the vision and foresight of George Lucas, while at the same time paying tribute to the numerous creative minds and collaborators who helped Lucas turn his self-belief and conviction into reality in the form of the iconography, art and design which was so pivotal to the *Star Wars* phenomenon. At the same time, it offered visual and tangible nostalgia through the numerous exhibits and artefacts amassed by one single collector, Matt Fox.

The exhibits were a treasure-trove of vintage toys, figures and vehicles and their original packaging, released by Kenner/Palitoy between the releases of *Star Wars* and *Return of the Jedi*, with some extra surprises in the form of a master class in variant figures, fakes and forgeries released

either legitimately or not (due to differing licensing laws). The exhibition also concentrated on the many and varied illustrators and artists who were commissioned to promote and market the films in the form of advertising, with four quad movie posters that were displayed in and out of cinemas up and down the UK.



The Posters

Artists were represented in various formats. Tom Jung, whose image of a strong Leia below a sabre-brandishing Luke, most notable as the first official movie poster for American release, was presented here as the front cover art for an original 1977 theatre programme, signed by cast members. It is also notable for the 'cross' star-like glow, emanating from the base of the light sabre, an image used many times over the years by subsequent artists in the *Star Wars* franchise. Jung's work was also included within an array of featured official movie posters by various iconic movie poster artists, with his main represented piece on display being a towering Vader ominously looming over the central characters in *The Empire Strikes Back*, noticeable for the non-inclusion of the (at the time) brand new character Yoda; deliberately commissioned that way by Lucas, so as not to spoil the surprise unveiling for the cinema going public.

So many iconic images are associated with *Star Wars* through the medium of self-promoting movie poster art and many of them featured here. From the very first UK cinema poster that was commissioned from Tim and Greg Hilderbrandt, which utilises some of the imagery first created by Jung such as Leia flanked by a sabre-wielding Luke (in slightly different, more dramatic pose), to a fleet of many skyward soaring X-Wing launching an attack on the Death Star.

Probably the most iconic of all the pieces on display here, and the one every child of the 1970s recognises as the *most* impressionable of all the illustrated images attached to the original *Star Wars* movie, Tom Chantrell's four quad is also the most famous. Featuring all the elements of the Hilderbrandt commission, and some! Luke, Leia and Han firing laser guns take centre stage, with the addition of the Wookiee, Ben Kenobi and Grand Moff Tarkin offering further insight into the featured events. The action of the movie really does hit home and the likenesses of all the characters really do strike the viewer.

Return of the Jedi was also represented in various commissions, most notably in the accuracy and vision of artist Kazuhiko Sano and his extremely dramatic image of the three main protagonists; starting with Leia at the bottom of the piece, dressed in her iconic 'Jabba's Lair' outfit, forming a column with first Han and above him Luke, tempted by the dark side, leading all the way directly to Vader and the Death Star above, with various characters/scenes surrounding Leia at the base of the piece.

Aside from the officially released four quad posters, there were a couple of rarities and oddities in the exhibition here and it was a real privilege to see them up close. Firstly, an exceptional piece of work by Tom Beauvais, commissioned by Lucas at the same time as the Hilderbrandt brothers and Chantrell, but never taken up and unseen until now. The concept is quite unusual on several counts and is spectacularly individual in design. Conceived in landscape, although the figures appear in portraiture, the piece is presented as a mock-up theatre poster in a very literal sense, even down to indistinguishable cast list and credits including theatre release times painted into the piece. But the biggest difference to the official releases in this particular work is the juxtaposition of the lead characters, with Leia looking particularly bold and powerful in the foreground and Luke behind, unusually, in his Stormtrooper outfit, the only depiction that featured Luke in this iconic costume.



Drew Struzan had a prolific career as a movie poster artist, famous for characterising and illustrating many major Hollywood block-busters through the 1980s and 1990s. He was first commissioned by Lucas to compose a pre-release poster for *Return of the Jedi*, which would appear in cinemas to promote the movie prior to the film's official release. A true masterpiece and probably my favourite of all the movie poster design concepts, this piece is something of an oddity due to the remarkable dramatic style and tone of the imagery. Completely air-brushed in blood red, the piece features an all-encompassing Vader mask in the background with a stand-off in the foreground between a duelling Luke and the Dark Lord of the Sith. This piece is also unique in that the film title is credited *Revenge* rather than *Return*, as this was the working title during the film's early stages. Struzan would go on to form a prolific relationship with Lucas, creating official poster art for the Special Edition reissues of the original trilogy as well as for the prequel trilogies in the late 1990s/early 2000s.



Also of particular note were some additional official commissions released while the films played at cinemas that were also re-released in later years. Featured works include Roger Kastel's romantic *Gone With The Wind* take on *Empire...* with Han and Leia embraced in a clinch reminiscent of Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara. Kastel was also responsible for the

iconic *Jaws* movie poster released some years before.

The Toys

The vintage toys are the main feature of the exhibition and offer in-depth detail of the original run of toys released between the late 1970s and mid 1980s, as well as an insight as to how they came to be. They changed the way toys were made and marketed. Focusing on the impact made to the toy industry when Lucas approached Kenna/Palitoy, after having negotiated a cut in salary in return for a percentage of all future toy sales, this shrewd and genius move would go on to make Lucas millions in world-wide sales from 1977 to 1985 and earned billions for the Star Wars franchise over the next four decades, ensuring a real-life empire forged from the foundations of a fictional one!

Kenna/Palitoy also saw a niche, which several other toy companies failed to. The big bang moment being the creation of a 3.5" plastic figurine, that would outsell and ultimately replace the standard 12" doll (which included the likes of GI Joe/Action Man)

The collection of toys on show was extensive, including completed sets and dioramas. Of particular note was a Hoth battle scene featuring an AT-AT Walker, a chase scene involving a Tie-Fighter and an X-Wing, and the large spherical 3D Death Star. It housed numerous figures within an 8-section setting of scenes within the walls of the playset. Packaging, inserts, instruction manual and stickers included in the original boxes have all been gathered and add to the nostalgia invoked within the numerous displays. All the pieces loaned are just a small selection of a total collection.



Covering the complete early history and full range of the earliest 3.5" figures, the collection includes everything from the very earliest mail order playsets, the complete first run of figures including duplicates, variants and re-issues (some loose and some in original packaging), oddities and rarities such as a three-legged "R2D2" (only available when purchasing "The Droid Factory" playset), and figures only available through mail-order such as the Bounty Hunter Dengar, which could only be purchased via saving tokens in the Marvel UK comic books.

There were also a wealth of accessories, and even some customised fan alternatives, and a wonderful life-size diorama featuring "Han" frozen in Carbonite guarded by two full-size Stormtroopers!

This exhibition has been running in towns and cities up and down the UK since 2015. It was totally free and really is worth a visit for anyone with a love of merchandise, art, toys and memorabilia, or if you just want to stroll down memory lane to recapture the nostalgia of a vintage, bygone era.



One thing is for sure... *"May the Toys Be With You..."*



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STAR WARS

THE SAGA SO FAR:

A BRIEF REVIEW

Episode One: The Phantom Menace

Star Wars takes place on a such a wide canvas that it was perhaps surprising that the first part of the so-called prequel trilogy, rather than 'world building' in any real way, is focused so tightly on what is a very subjective narrative for lengthy periods of the film. But the opposite is also true. The titular *Star Wars* were, in the original classics, told through the viewpoint of a specific group of characters, yet the expansive battle scenes here can feel somehow impersonal with their vast CGI graphics. There is a lot of effort put into the visual spectacle, good examples being the variety of prominent CGI aliens and the interminable pod race, and it feels a shame that equal effort was not put into memorable lines for the main characters, many of whom come across as a little flat and lacking personality. Actors such as Brian Blessed and Oliver Ford Davies do nonetheless deliver when given little to work with. *Doctor Who* series nine (2015) adds a level of retrospective interest to this film, the 'young Davros' homage to the Anakin storyline, but overall there is a jarring inconsistency between this and the original source of tone and style, the classic trilogy, that is summed up by the lack of thought put into the fantasy tech on display; true, production standards in film making would have improved since the 1980s, but the trouble is that the science fiction technology enjoyed by the characters is similarly advanced compared with that seen in the original films. This is supposed, of course, to be prequel. There are, however, two moments to recommend here; the use of the Empire March in the score for a scene of Yoda and Obi Wan discussing Anakin's training demonstrated a subtlety missing from the rest of the film, and who would fail to smile at Jabba the Hutt receiving a final credit as being played by himself!

Episode Two: Attack of the Clones

The early sections of the second prequel come across more as a Bond movie, with space opera design and concepts obviously, exemplified by the speeder chase with the assassin. However, the film also drifts towards the comic-book superhero genre, with the Force giving the Jedi and their similarly enabled opponents incredible physical powers more like Clark Kent than Luke Skywalker. Where Obi Wan fails to be like either Bond or Kent is in the art of subterfuge and deception, proving himself a rather inept spy with expressions and reactions as easy to read as a Ladybird book. Script wise, the writers seem a little confused about the different kinds of negative personality traits, between being evil but good at what you do versus being simply unlikable. Anakin is impulsive and irrational, lacks respect for either authority or process, is openly reckless, and is portrayed throughout both this film and the next as an arrogant fool. Darth Vader by contrast is a great leader and authority figure, whatever his allegiance, and again you get the feeling that the trilogy's creators struggled to grasp the concept of a prequel as leading into a previously established story. On the subject of villains, *Doctor Who* fans will no doubt be amused by the similarities between Count Dooku's council of alien delegates and that assembled by Mavic Chen. Finally, there are two things that need to be mentioned about Padme. The first is the costume 'change' midway through the arena scene, where a fluke claw from a monster neatly tears Padme's practical action outfit across and around the middle to reduce it to a revealing crop-top. If the intention was to homage Carrie Fisher's infamous outfit in *Return of the Jedi*, then the attempt is a clumsy one. The parallel of a

Star Wars heroine in the monsters' lair, midriff exposed, chained, and facing imminent peril is undermined by the issue that, while the Leia slavery storyline is at least a part of the plot, the female lead 'accidentally' losing part of her clothing to reveal what the director thinks male audiences might want to see is more overtly and traditionally exploitative. The second problem with how Padme is treated in both this and the next film is in the soapy, soft focus, Young Adult teen romance sub-plot, which could have worked perfectly well if it had been carefully edited into the final cut so that it did not jar so abruptly with the rest of the film. But it wasn't.

Episode Three: Revenge of the Sith

You know that the creators of a film have failed to step back and look objectively at what they are doing when the opening titles explain that a hitherto secondary character has been captured by robots and that is your only way into the story. Of course, we know through continuity and hindsight that this event is much more important than that, but any drama should not rely upon the viewer's continuity obsession or willingness to watch your production multiple times in order to grasp their attention, but that is clearly the expectation here. This lack of objectivity extends to the interactions of Obi Wan and Anakin in the initial 'rescue' section of the film too, as they talk in such perfect descriptive soundbites that you imagine small speech bubbles containing the words above their heads as though they are in the pages of a comic-book. This results in the impression that the action sequences were storyboarded with dialogue that was then simply copied into the script. The adolescent scenes of Padme telling her lover Anakin about her pregnancy are equally awkward. Perhaps that biggest issue with this film and the trilogy as a whole is, however, the lack of mystery. We know that Anakin is Darth Vader as a child in the first film. We therefore know too, once the relationship is established, that Padme is Mrs Darth Vader, and therefore Luke and Leia's mother, as early as the second film. All of this would have made awesome revelations at the end of the third film if everything before that point had been heading in a different direction. Anakin is never a hero that went bad because he's an idiot from the start. Padme is never the tragic figure that Leia and Luke's mother should be, because audiences are so stressed by the irrational romantic fluff with a character who they know is evil. Even worse is that, despite a whole six hours to set this up,

Anakin still only has the thinnest of motivations for betrayal. Yes, that might be because he is written as a weak personality from the start, but that's not an excuse for the writers failing to give him more depth in the first place. If there is anything that saves this film then it must be Ewan McGregor's performance as Obi Wan, which is reasonably plausible as the same character that was originally played by Alec Guinness.

Solo: A Star Wars Story

This is the latest film in the saga at the time of writing and so, like most other fans, this reviewer has only seen it on the cinema screen and not in a setting conducive to making notes.

Solo was a refreshing diversion for the franchise, though probably not a sustainable one, because of what it does not try to be. This is still undeniably a space fantasy but, as one in a different genre to the rest of the series, a leap into the realm of fantastical crime drama. This is a heist movie! There is little or nothing here about wars amongst the stars or the supernatural Force that drives the other films so directly, and it does not overtly take place in a galaxy far, far away. This could be any futuristic space setting except for the characters and continuity references. It was the characters that were the real gamble here, and it mostly paid off. Donald Glover and Alden Ehrenreich were convincing enough and still allowed the freedom to make the roles their own, and the cast members playing new characters put in good performances. This was a crazy action film with very little depth of ideas and character, but it fitted the requirement for a Han Solo prequel. Lots of action, a good story, exciting visuals, a twist or two, plenty of links to the established background of Han in the original films, and an enticing ending that could easily lead into a second film between this and *A New Hope*, or even a spin-off featuring Emilia Clarke as Qi'ra.

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story

Straight away, *Rogue One* lets you know that it is true to its heritage but going to take you in a powerful new direction. The music is amazing, powerful and emotive, and carries the viewer on a journey from the opening moments. The character of Jyn Erso adds the personal angle that the prequel trilogy was searching for but, in doing so with a new character free of clumsy continuity or expectations, allows you to meet and get to know her from a clean start. Modern CGI is put to brilliant use later in the film with the loving recreations of Peter Cushing and Carrie Fisher as

Tarkin and Leia as they appeared in *A New Hope*, and this effective integration with the original classic counterbalances the fresh newness of the main elements and characters. As with many modern films that tie in with other material, there are a lot of creative references. K-2SO is instantly familiar as resembling Marvin the paranoid android in personality and dialogue if not design. Probably unintentional, but of interest to Doctor Who fans, is the similarity between Bor Gullet and The Teller in series eight's *Time Heist*. Elsewhere, elements reference serious matter such as Middle Eastern extremism or lighter influences like the pop-culture cinematic martial arts that appeared in *Doctor Strange*, the *Marvel Avengers* movie also released by Disney at around the same time. And it is the lighter aspects that define much of this film, even when the characters are facing perilous situations, with a neat balance between comedy, quick punch lines, and sharp rapport versus the necessary need for tension. Much of this tension is effectively generated by darker elements such as the Death Star. The visual appearance of the huge vessel gives you a feeling for how characters might be terrified by its presence, and the nuclear weapon inspired visual effects of its destructive power are especially chilling and possess a strong quality of realism. In this regard the Death Star effects demonstrate how less really is more, with slowness and silence juxtaposed with sudden destruction in a manner reminiscent of the quiet between the flash of an atomic blast and its deafening sound reaching observers. This cinematic excellence was also seen in the effects of the Star Killer Base in the first Disney entry into the canon, *The Force Awakens*. The realistic feel of *Rogue One* extends also to the military operations, with much of the final battle visually referencing films of the Pacific Island war or Vietnam, and again the action VFX near the end of the film demonstrate that less is more and that dazzling the audience less gives more emotional impact to the plight or demise of the characters. And the demise of our heroes is one of *Rogue One*'s most powerful moments. Yes, we know that everyone dies, because the opening scroll of *A New Hope* told us so in 1977. And, yes, we also know that *Blake's 7* did it on screen in this genre first. But this is, arguably, the best demonstration of this kind of ending yet. The slow build up and emotive music draw you right into the moment in a way that a sudden event does not, we have a countdown to heighten that tension, there is a doomed romance, but we also have a new beginning because, quite literally, the end of this story is the start of another...

Episode Four: A New Hope (*Star Wars*)

The original and, for many fans, still the best, Episode IV was a traditional space adventure. It was true to a tradition that included television shows such as the original *Star Trek* series or *Lost in Space* with its more family themed format, unmissable cinema epics like *Buck Rogers* or *Flash Gordon*, or any of a great number of earlier space movies. The difference here was that *Star Wars* was stunning visually and captivating as a narrative with virtually no weakness or unintentionally funny moments to weigh it down. This was a single, feature length session of everything that was great about what the US film industry could offer space fantasy fans that you could safely tell all of your friends to go and see. And everyone did just that. In a way, *Star Wars* was also something of a mould breaker for science fiction, with a lot of cuteness and comedy even in the first film that would mean that even non-fan partners could come away from a cinema date with a smile. But, in other ways, the film equally well fitted the existing mould and expectations for the time. Some of the innovation that we associate with *Star Wars* and retroactively attach to the first film actually comes later. For instance, Leia here is a heroine far, far away from the space Emma Peel that we think of now and was essentially a metaphor for Dale Arden, however well Carrie Fisher the actress handled that material. Darth Vader is basically Christopher Lee's interpretation of Count Dracula but wearing a space helmet, and, with hindsight and the fact that his Hammer co-star Peter Cushing was in the film, it is a surprise that Lee was not cast as Vader himself. As with the later *Rogue One*, much of the action is visually influenced by how film makers interpreted the Pacific War for the big screen, just with different models. Also, with the benefit of hindsight, it is interesting to note that *Midway* preceded *Star Wars* relatively closely in the film schedules of the era. Did George Lucas know that a big Pacific War blockbuster was in the studio while he was planning the details of his space opera? Probably. Did he ask his effects team to tap into something that was going to be in the recent memories of a larger similar audience? Quite possibly. Certainly, while watching *Star Wars* now, the attack on the Death Star feels sufficiently like a surreal kind of Space Midway that the notion is plausible. This is reinforced by the awards ceremony at the end of the film, which has a style of incidental score unlike that for any other *Star Wars* films or scenes but exactly like the kind of music that plays near the end of most World War

Two movies. Finally, one amusing observation that crosses your mind during the awards ceremony sequence, having watched the prequel trilogy and *The Force Awakens* in the last few months about Leia's father and son respectively, is that the family's evil genes obviously pass through Leia! It is such a shame that Carrie Fisher was not fully aware of Lucas' allegedly pre-planned backstory at the time as she would no doubt have run with the idea very well.

Episode Five: The Empire Strikes Back

What really strikes you at the beginning of this part of the story is that Luke is not the Rebellion hero that fans recall him as, or that perhaps he should be after the events of the previous adventure. When he is lost outside the rebel base, nobody apart from the other regular characters even cares whether Luke has returned or is safe. There is no urgency or interest in finding him, it is as though these fellow rebel fighters can barely remember who he is. When he disappears for a large part of the film to look for Yoda, the cause simply carries on without him. That middle section really is about pairings too, for, while Luke pairs with Yoda for his training, Leia and Han are pairing in a different way altogether. The result will be, as mentioned in connection with the previous entry, a new baby Vader, and it really is impossible to unthink that as you re-watch these earlier films! In production terms, there are some set creations worthy of particular mention with the impressive water-logged jungle into which the fighter craft piloted by Luke becomes partially submerged. Thematically, this film is comparable with *The Last Jedi* in that it is all about failure; the Rebellion is defeated on Hoth, Luke fails to understand or even complete his training with Yoda, Captain Needa is killed by Vader for failing to capture the Millennium Falcon, Han and Leia still fail to evade Vader, Luke fails to rescue Han, Vader fails to turn Luke to the Dark Side, and even Chewbacca fails in his efforts to reassemble C-3PO. Everyone's day at the office was rubbish. Returning to the impressive design work on the film, Cloud City is stunning and all the more notable because of how the internal and external imagery is consistent. The fight between Luke and Vader is good, traditional sword play, with the obvious fantasy twist of energy weapons, and is a throwback to classic cinema moments like Errol Flynn and Basil Rathbone duelling in *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. There is a neat deception near the end of the film as audiences are misdirected to see Luke calling Leia to rescue him by means of the Force, when actually Leia also possesses the Force and is, in a fashion more fully

explored in *The Last Jedi*, mind-linking with him.

Episode Six: Return of the Jedi

It is not the intention of this review to argue the case either way, but no review of this film is complete without a mention of the scenario that has divided fandom for decades and adorned virtually every poster for even longer. The reason why 'Slave Leia' has a timeless popularity is not due merely to the combination of cult acclaim and sexual suggestion. Whatever the right or wrong of the idea from the viewpoints of creativity, political correctness, gender politics, or objectification in cinema, one simple and undeniable fact of the matter is that, within the subjective boundaries of the production, the idea is as brilliantly and professionally realised as the rest of the film. However risqué or inappropriate or otherwise the costume might be, what there is of it does fit Carrie Fisher perfectly and, unlike a lot of the awful fetish clothes actors of both genders were forced to wear at the time, it really does flatter Carrie Fisher and show her figure attractively without 'pulling her in' anywhere. The scenes are as well directed as any others, and Carrie Fisher plays them extremely well. And that is not simply because she was an actor and it was her job, as lots of otherwise very good actors cannot make captivity and restraint scenes look convincing. The reason why this combination of character, actor, costume and scenario are remembered so well, while hundreds of other sexually suggestive scenes are completely forgotten, is because, in film making, design and performance terms, it's actually very well done. Not only that, but this is also the film where Leia becomes that character that everyone remembers. She gets involved in the action in a way that truly established her as a defining cinematic heroine with a unique place in science fiction. This is also a very rewarding film for being able to enjoy all of the main characters working together as a team, something else commonly associated with the franchise but only truly the case here. The forests of Endor provide an effective and memorable setting, with the scenes around the Ewok camp and the speeder chase being particular highlights along with the Ewok themselves. The Battle of Endor is near perfection and collects much of what defines Star Wars as a franchise together in a single event; serious action and impressive hardware, comedy moments, visual cuteness as the Ewok look almost playful in their efforts, ingenuity in the film's direction, an effective split-narrative between the action in space and the forests, and the conflicts between light and dark, father and son.

Episode Seven: The Force Awakens

Wonderful 'world building' identifies *The Force Awakens* right from those early scenes of Finn, Rey and BB8 on Jakku, with its visually captivating landscape of a former war zone scattered with the sad remains of wrecked spacecraft. This atmosphere of creativity, while undeniably nostalgic, is truly felt most of all in the choice to introduce a cast of new characters with the likes of Finn and Rey, Phasma, Hux and so on, rather than immediately confronting audience expectations of being reunited with old favourites. BB8 is similar to R2D2 in the kind of visual 'cute robot' humour that it provides, but at the same time there is something fun and new about the use of its spherical design concept. There is also a familiarity about the relationship between BB8 and Rey when compared with that shared by R2D2 and C-3PO, but again the 'one girl and her droid' routine adds a different flavour. The subtle way that Han Solo and Chewbacca are reintroduced is well worked, as a pleasant surprise rather than a big fanfare. Spectacle is provided by the awesome power of the Star Killer Base, not continuity references. World building is again to the fore as we witness a beautiful, natural planet, decorated with stunning architecture, and the devastation of it caused by the invading First Order forces. These contrasts are a common theme of the film as a dramatic presentation. We have heroes, but reluctant ones. Comedy and bleak dystopian visions share the screen side by side, and the lighting and direction demonstrate phenomenal use of light and shade in telling the story with neither words nor action. Fans are allowed a sentimental reunion between Han and Leia, but it fits within the overall tone and pace of the movie. As the narrative moves to the base itself, we discover more contrasts. The comedic sequence of Rey using the Force to persuade a guard to release her and leave behind his weapon is followed a short time later by Kylo's murder of his father. This in turn is followed by another truly brilliant use of light and dark in Rey and Kylo's light sabre fight in the forests; the dark of the trees versus the light of the snow, the dark and light of their respective costumes, and the red and blue flashes of the sabres. The use of the darkened, snow filled woods also, maybe coincidentally or unconsciously, evokes the mood of the duel between agents of East and West behind the Iron Curtain in the period between World War Two and the end of the 1980s. Quite possibly the strongest possible return for the franchise.

Episode Eight: The Last Jedi

Less is more. While this can certainly be true, aiming for too much less brings its own problems. This is a film that curiously lacks an actual, definable plot. Yes, you could write a synopsis that lists events in various orders, but this drama is less about moving the story in any particular direction and more a mini-saga of the trials and tribulations of its players. In much the same way as *The Empire Strikes Back*, this is a depressing tale of failure on all sides. The Rebellion is almost destroyed, yet the First Order still fails to eliminate its main targets; Finn's mission fails; Rey's mission fails; Snoke obviously fails, but it is not only the leader of the First Order but also Luke Skywalker that dies; and Kylo fails to turn Rey to the dark side. As a production, the casino is visually effective but underused. At least the similarly effective island and caverns are used well as the backdrop to two characters' personal storylines, the psychic link between Rey and Kylo being an outstanding feature of the film, but all of these elements suffer equally from the disjointed nature of the overall narrative, like stand-alone short stories that should link together but fail to really do so. This is highlighted by the way that the timelines do not work once you take a step back from the action, as the casino sub-plot takes a great deal longer than the short period of time the rebel fleet has before the arrival the First Order ships. The quality does improve with the stunning visualisation of Snoke's palace and red guards, and the light-speed collision between the larger ships in space, but crashes again with the Skid Speeder attack on the nearby planet surface. These sequences are appalling padding, with the speeders seeming to take forever to drive out for an attack they never make before simply turning around and driving back. Someone may have thought that the red dust effects looked so good that they needed the maximum possible screen time. Unfortunately, the principle dramatic effect of this portion of the film only underlines reliance of this episode upon lengthy battle scenes to maintain interest. And as for the stables and the kid who may or may not have the Force in him, the question really needs to be asked whether any new Star Wars film truly needs a *Phantom Menace* homage?



Veerle In Wonderland

A Cosplay Story

By Veerlie Kik

What's *wrong* with her?' '

She's *crazy*!

'He's *gorgeous*!

Whirls of colour and the swishing of elaborate costumes surround me. Like Alice through the rabbit hole, I seem to have travelled to a world where everything is just a bit different than it ought to be. Different with a touch of impossible.

It's Saturday morning, and I am currently dressed in a long green dress and apron, a yellow wig and have make up on that wouldn't go amiss in certain shadier parts of Amsterdam, had the situation been different. Next to me I find my two doppelgangers, except they are pink and yellow clad. Together we are the Bimbettes: Paulette, Laurette and Claudette. Also known as the bargirls swooning over Gaston in the Disney animation of *Beauty and the Beast*. After first being mistaken for Sleeping Beauty's fairy godmothers, people seem to have caught on now.

Though like most kids I loved playing dress up when I was young(er), I'd've imagined only two out of those three exclamations at the start of this article, should the thought of **Comiccon** have crossed my mind at all.

Indeed, the first time I went to a con, I very much expected to be called crazy. I *felt* crazy. And I knew for sure people would be wondering what'd gone wrong in my head. But I had to admit, it was crazy in a good sort of way. In any case, I wasn't even in my own country, so even if it all turned out to be a giant mistake, I could just go home and no one would ever know. History shows it went differently though...

Veerle in Wonderland : How it began.

Let me start at the beginning. I've always had a geeky streak. I used to joke that if I hadn't lived in the Netherlands, I would've probably ended up a Trekkie. But, well, here you had to be a grown up, pay rent, cook dinner, act normal, and so on. A very Dutch thought: 'acting normal is crazy enough'. But then my relationship – and with it my life – fell apart and normal was a dream quickly forgotten. The year of Saying Yes started. So when four years ago a sort of friend, who once had lived in the States, posted a message online: 'Who wants to go to Comiccon San Diego with me? Please only respond if you are seriously willing to save up the money and actually go.', I realised that I no longer had any holidays planned. And no-one to tell me not to act so childish either. So I said 'Yes' and the adventure began. The 'sort of' was dropped and Marion became a good friend. It was quickly decided that I should at least do one Doctor Who cosplay, as that was really all I knew about.



Dreaming of Wonderland



Claudette, Laurette, Paulette

Watching the Doctor save the world over and over, had also saved me during all the turmoil of moving, buying furniture and mending my heart. Since we were both very new at cosplay, we had no idea of the proper terminology yet, so we never thought about 'genderbend' or 'crossplay'. I just dressed up as the Doctor and that was that. (See 'Lingo'.)

But, while we were happily unaware and fast asleep in our time zone, it happened that San Diego sold out in about 30 seconds, and we almost had to cancel our plans. Then I remembered having read somewhere that London had had its own Comiccon once, maybe we could google? Two days later we had tickets and a renewed sense of urgency, because London would be over a month sooner than we had originally planned. I ordered two of my outfits online, and assembled one out of the clothes I already owned. All I needed now was a fez and a bowtie. The day before the flight I must have visited 25 men's clothing stores, but apart from one with little Christmas trees on, no bowties were to be found. I decided to take my chances and search for one in London. I did manage to get hold of a fez though, when with uncharacteristic bravery I asked a very bemused shop owner if he would please go home and get it for me. He turned out to be charmed enough, so even though he didn't sell them, he agreed to bring me the one he brought from a vacation in Turkey once. The only price was that I'd show him pictures of this bizarre adventure afterwards!

And then suddenly we were in London. We had a day to spare, so we went bowtie shopping. Now what need does a young lady have for such an item? Slightly embarrassed I confessed I was one of those nutters dressing up as superheroes. The man looked at me suspiciously and answered: 'What do you mean nutty? My son in law does this too! It's a very serious thing to get all the costumes just right, you know.' (What's *wrong* with her?) Still, the next morning it took us several minutes to venture into the hallway of our hotel, afraid to be seen by anybody. More to avoid getting out on the streets for a few more minutes, than for anything else, we awkwardly posed for a few pictures taken by one of the hotel staff. At least we'd have a picture, we reasoned. Eyes averted we hurried to the Underground.

The closer we got to the convention centre, the more dressed up people joined our train. Pretty soon, we didn't stand out at all. We relaxed. A bit. At this point I still mistakenly believed that I solely went for the experience. Just so I could tell the story of How I Went To Comiccon One Time. Afterwards, it would be nothing more than a Story To Tell.



That first awkward picture

Veerle in Wonderland - How It Got Me

Marion, knowing way more about the characters and stories of basically everything but *Doctor Who* (I hadn't converted her yet), started showing the first signs of delight about the costumes. I remained as composed as is possible when wearing a bright red wig and skin tight *Black Widow* suit. Secretly I wanted to make fun of all the people who seemed way too into it. I imagined myself the Jane Goodall to their monkey business. Observing, enjoying, but never going native. Remaining one of the 'normal' people. But then we reached the building.

Now, keep in mind I have always considered myself a very down to earth, rational person. I don't cry at weddings, I don't gush over babies, romcoms make me roll my eyes. When I went to see a boyband in my teens, I *sat down* to listen to the performance. I am rational. Silly of course, but rational. But in the very moment we walked up to the entrance, all that went away. In a matter of seconds, everything I believed about myself was challenged. From right in front of me, hair all sticky

uppy, his long overcoat blowing in the wind, screwdriver in hand, approached The Doctor! I swear the sun broke out that very moment he turned to face me. My very rational self was suddenly jumping up and down, hands frantically flapping around, forgetting all décor and yelping 'Oh my god oh my god OH MY GOD IT'S THE DOCTOR!!' He smiled at me and trembling with awe I asked him to take a picture with me. Pretty please?

Before you sympathise too much, let me make it very clear that at no time during this, not even for a second, I believed that (a) this was the *real* Doctor, or (b) this was the real actor playing the Doctor. No, I knew full well that this, like me, was just a cosplayer. To this day I cannot fully explain what had come over me, but I had found My People. Marion looked at me in bewilderment, wondering what had happened. And what was that about some doctor? Doctor what? Within 10 minutes she would experience the same though, when she met the Oliver Queen to her Black Canary. Her smile could have lit up all of London.



OMG! OMG! OMG! OMG! OMG!

Riddle me this:

Mirror mirror on the wall...

look at my 7 outfits in the pictures, can you find and name them all?

The rest of the three days went by in a blur. I remember massive gatherings of Doctors, people who wanted to hug, posing for hundreds of pictures, tons of merchandise, lovely people... All embarrassment had melted away. At one point we were not only not scared to go out in public anymore, but I even made us get off the train a few stops early, just so Marion could take a picture of me in my fez, looking sadly at my screwdriver sitting under the Canary Wharf sign. (Over a year later she texted me all upset, when she finally found out what it'd actually meant.)



Remember those who fell

By the time I got home with a suitcase full of *Discworld* games, a Tardis tea mug, a button with 2 hearts and the text 'trust me, I'm the doctor', heaps of business cards so I could collect pictures, and of course about 500 photo's that I took myself, it had started to feel weird when people on the street did not ask me to take a picture with them. Or not to call out and hug them for wearing a cool T-shirt.

Wonderland – the aftermath

As happens with most events nowadays, there was a Facebook group. We joined, so we could easily share pictures. Very soon it turned out that not all stereotyping is wrong. People living with their parents, fighting over who wore it better, endless quests to get pictures removed because the person who took them fell from grace, battles over who would win: Batman or Superman, and the seemingly endless debate of whether you are even a real cosplayer if you don't make all your costumes by hand.

One message showed a picture of a girl dressed as Black Widow next to a rather sad Harry Potter with broken glasses. He wondered if anybody had seen this girl? On the other days the girl would have been Poison Ivy and the Eleventh Doctor. 'Because she liked my Dalek impression and I would like to speak to her again.'

Marion quickly surmised it was me and I allowed her to tag me. I chatted for a bit with Dalek boy, but then when I didn't spend all my time online and it took me some time (hours, sometimes!) to answer him, he quickly became annoyed and demanded to know where he stood. Did I not think him interesting enough? Was I playing him? I tried to explain about having a job and a life outside of comics and cons, but he didn't take it well, and so eventually I broke off all contact. Images of very socially awkward people with low self esteem came flooding back. (What's wrong with him? He's crazy!)

On the other hand, I met a lovely Nick Fury, who made a picture of my Doctor and him together into his banner on Facebook. He works in an art gallery and I still speak to him on occasion.



Ease on down the road. (Veerle, self portrait.)

Return to Wonderland

Months passed and since trips to London don't grow on trees, we couldn't afford to go back in the fall. Maybe next year...

It could have ended there, but lucky for us, despite the few social misunderstandings, I stayed affiliated with some of the Facebook groups, and so it came to pass that I was the first to learn about a Dutch Con. The first one ever. How exciting! Of course we had to be there!

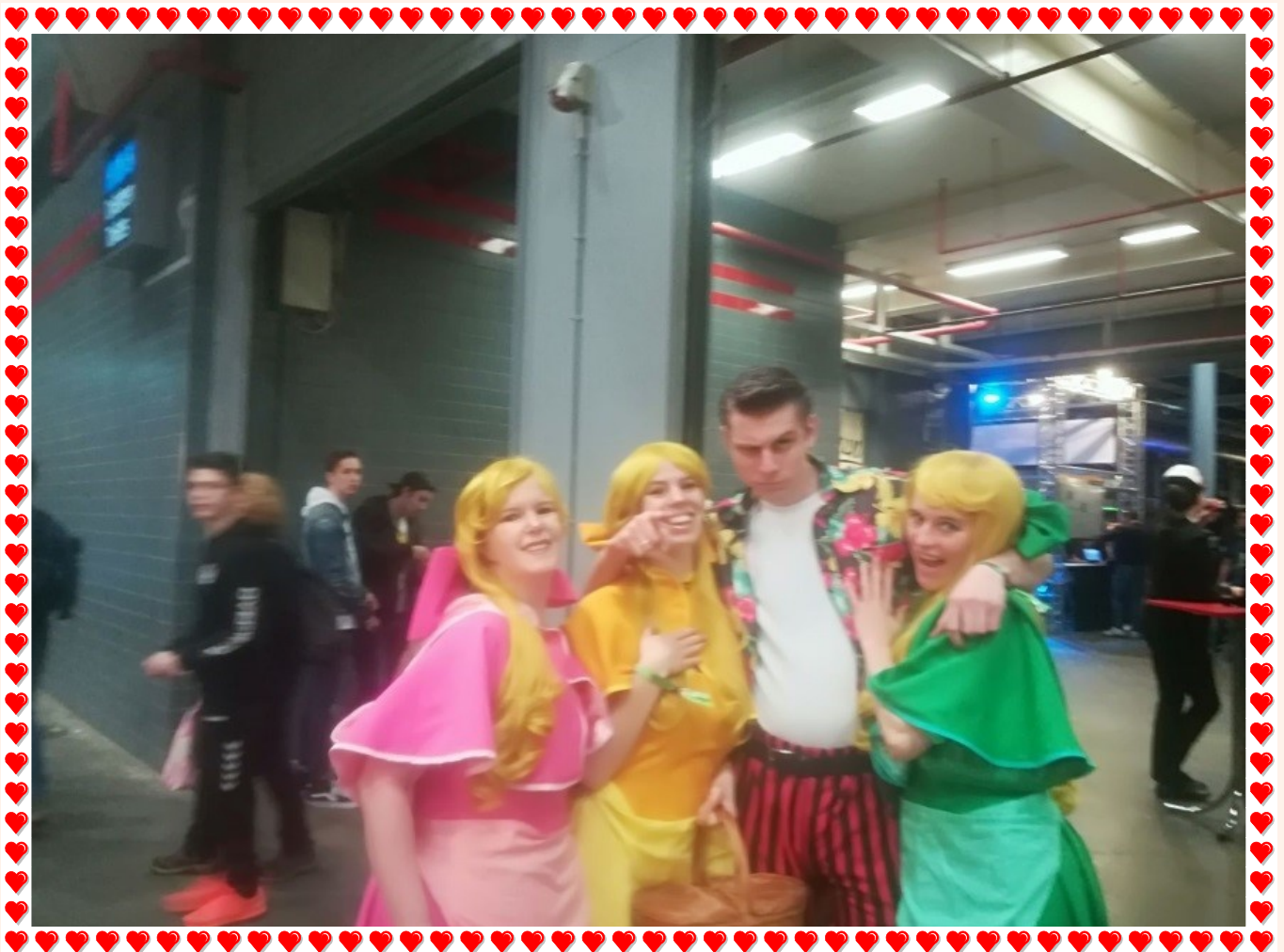
And we took some friends. Friends who had heard us going on about it for over a year. Who had heard us build it up into something 'epic'. Boy, were we nervous. What if they didn't like it? What if, after all this, we still turned out to be crazy? And, to be frank, we actually did feel disappointed when we were finally at a con again. In London, at least 95% of people we'd met had been donning their best cosplays. Here, if we hit 30% I would have been surprised. But our friends still went wide eyed with wonder and joy. So we relaxed. And conceded: It

was Holland after all. And the first time. In fact, 30% was better than was to be expected under the circumstance. Normal is crazy enough.

Within a year cons started popping up. Marion buried herself in them. She had already started designing her own outfits and took sewing lessons with her mum. She followed a professional course in make up and found a cosplaying boyfriend she could practice on. And the world turned out to be bigger: Germany and Belgium had good conventions too. And she went to all of them. She didn't just fall through the rabbit hole, she followed the yellow brick road all the way to Emerald City and bought a condo.

Although I never went as far as her, and I still buy my outfits online (or have Marion make them) rather than taking sewing lessons, once or twice a year I indulge and let out my inner Paulette. Or Dorothy. Or Soufflé girl. Sometimes briefly wondering what's wrong with me. Or if I'm going crazy.

But... oh look it's Ace Ventura! He's *gorgeous*!



Wonderland – A visitors guide

Now, after reading my story, I can imagine you are left with some questions. That's why I've included the following tourist information for visitors to Wonderland.

The first question I usually get asked, is what I do all day. See, most people sort of get the idea of dressing up and being into a show or comic, but then what?

Well, that all depends. I'll walk you through the basics.

What to expect?

When in Wonderland, you might at first think it to be an event for a select few people, but you'd be very mistaken. Especially in the last decade, cosplay and comics have come out of hiding. That's right, geeks are loud and proud! And so are people who just like tv shows and movies. Seriously though, gaming, anime, comics and cosplay are becoming more and more mainstream, so it's not surprising to find people of all sorts at a convention. Some even make it a family outing, bringing kids and enjoying the hubbub.

Generally, you will find loads of beautifully dressed people, of all shapes and sizes. It's a very inclusive community. If it's your first visit, you might only see the marvel of costumes around you, but after a while you start to detect differences. You can read more about that in 'What to wear?'

Something special you can expect at a convention, is people carrying signs saying 'free hugs'. Since there's still quite a few socially awkward people, and newcomers tend to wonder about etiquette, this very clear way of reaching out has been in use to invite contact. Be careful not to damage costumes or accidentally grab the wrong body parts. See more on this in 'Safety & Regulations'.

In each of the categories, you'll find all levels of commitment. Some go all out and get every detail perfect, some just put what looks like an elongated green diamond just above their heads and pretend to be generic people from the game The Sims. There is no real rivalry between the categories, but most do stick to their preferred genre.

The final and maybe most important thing you might expect at a con, is being in lots of pictures. Everywhere you look people are posing for them. Feel free to join in on the fun. You can either take pictures of awesome outfits, or ask to have your picture taken with them, no one will mind, just as long as you ask.

Style Council...

Though often generalized, the cosplay community has in fact a very wide range of styles. You can roughly divide cosplayers into three distinct categories:

Mainstream: These are the big 'fandoms', popular with lots of people. Here you find Disney characters, big movies and tv shows by Marvel and DC based characters like Captain America and Batman, SuperWhoLock (Supernatural, Doctor Who and Sherlock) and so on.

Anime: based on Japanese cartoons, these are usually wearing bright coloured hair and show a lot of skin. They are about power and battle and typically have poses or exclamations specific to their character. Pokémon belong to this category as well.

Gamers: these cosplayers are focused on characters of video games.

What to wear?

So, you've decided to go to a convention. Now the question arises: What outfit do you pick?

Personally I very much advise you to dress up. It doesn't have to be fancy, but even a slight effort enhances the experience a great deal. Sometimes a discount will be applied to your entrée ticket if you show up in cos. Even if your costume is simple (like my first Doctor Who one), people will appreciate it and ask you for pictures. It also gives you an easy opening to talk to people: what would your chosen character do? For example, if you glue demi spheres to a long grey silver dress, hold a plunger in one hand, and a whisk in the other, all people will really expect you to say is 'EXTERMINATE!'

For that reason it might be a good idea to pick a character that you know a bit about, so you won't look silly for not recognising your own catch phrase. Of course, if you're feeling brave, dressing up as an unknown character and seeing how people react to you might be a fun way of finding out about them.

Really, your own imagination is your limit. Don't let yourself be crippled by body issues: I've seen Snow Whites of all shapes and genders, and all are equally welcome.

Also, be practical about your outfit: Toddler on your hands? Dress up as the Princess and dress the kid as Super Mario who has shrunk after being hit by a tortoise shell.

Are you 70+? No worries! Just put your hair in a bun, carry your knitting with you and put a yellow bird on you shoulder.

New born baby? Put him in a puppy suit and dress everybody else to become the Scooby Gang!

In a wheelchair? You are the perfect Professor X!

Lazy? Dress up as the little mermaid and make someone pull your chariot while you lean back in your giant oyster shell all day.

Basically: do what you feel comfortable with, both physically and financially.

While some cosplayers stick with one character, and over time improve their costume and develop the matching personality, others go for variety and might even switch costumes halfway through a day. This also marks the difference between those who make their own cos, and who don't. For the people making their costume, it's about the process, and they want to start over from scratch just out of the need of creating. You can often follow their work on social media with W.I.P. updates.

Pro tip: Some characters are very in fashion at certain times. Last year brought us a wave of *Stranger Things*' 'Elevens', two years ago you couldn't swing a baseball bat without hitting at least 3 of *Batman*'s Harley Quins. Of course, it will probably be easy to get your costumes of those characters, and maybe even cheaper than usual. But, at a con no one is going to be looking for you for their pictures. If you love the character, stick with it. But if you want more than to just be one of many, you could try to become one of the side characters, or a different version. For example: There are usually quite a few Black Widows around, but very seldom you find one with the net stockings, black hair and eye mask, instead, they are all based on the red haired beauty that is Scarlett Johansson in the current Marvel movies. Or, if you are into *Game of Thrones*, Deaneryses aplenty, but you hardly ever see her brother with molten gold on his head.

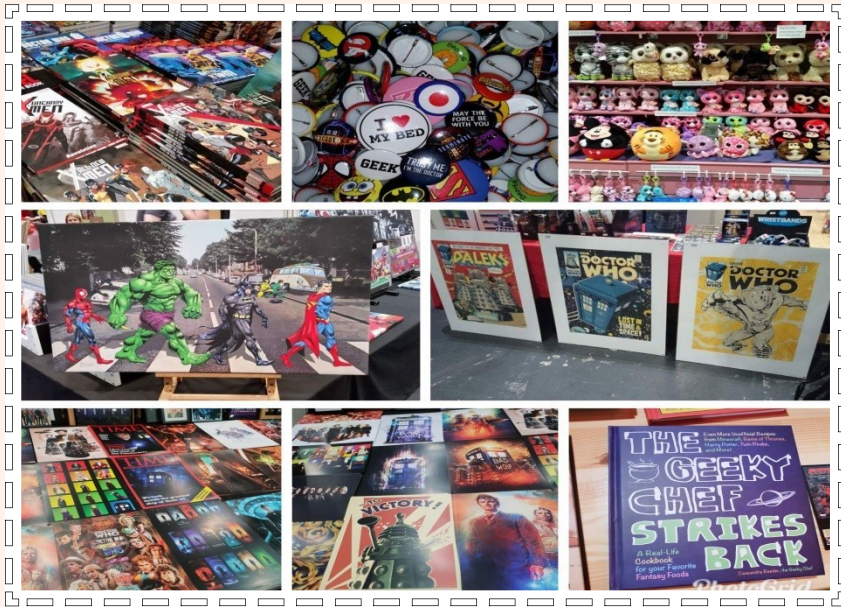
It's the reason why we chose to be the Bimbettes, rather than Belle. And we've already had plenty of invitations for shoots. *Side characters matter!*



Deaneryses in line for the side character.

What to do?

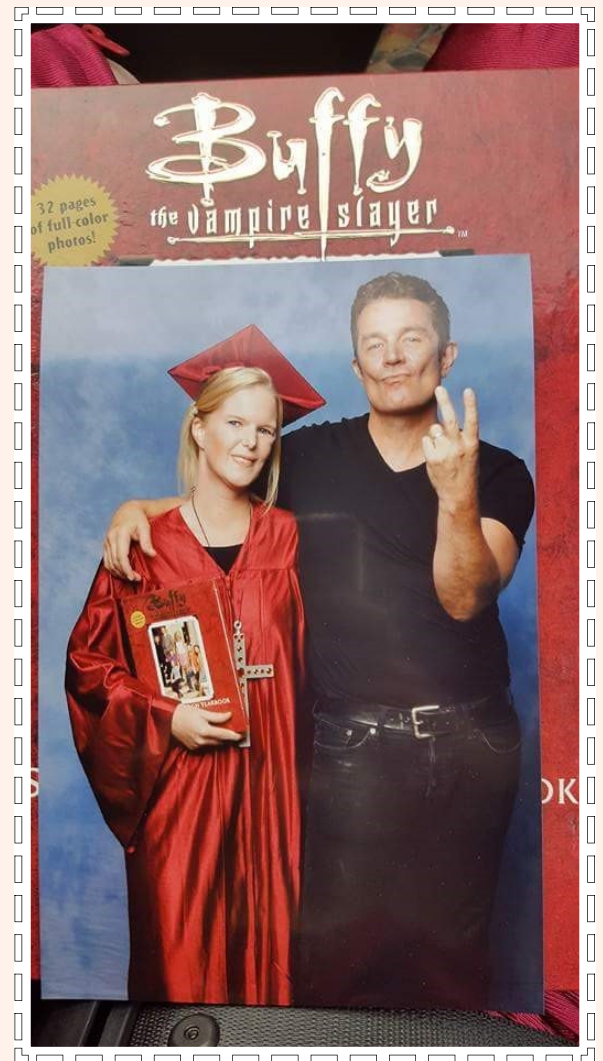
Ah, the fun part! You are there, you have your cos on, you feel comfortable. Now what? Apart from revelling in the range of cosplay around you, there are tons of stands with merchandise. Of course there's board games, comics and books to be bought, and game supplies like dice, but also clothing items like hoodies and beanies with your characters catch phrase or logo, miniatures and puppets, materials used in the crafting of your accessories, stuffed animals, posters, buttons, paintings, key chains, calendars, wigs and coloured lenses, helmets and replicas of weapons and props, to name a few.



Be sure to bring your wallet. Or buy a new one at the con.

After you are out of money, you may want to check the guest stands. Here you find actors and writers from your favourite shows and movies. If you are willing to stand in line, you can get your items autographed. Depending on the celebrity in question, there may be a fee to be paid. You can usually find out beforehand on the website of the event.

If those 20 seconds of getting your stuff signed isn't enough for you, and you don't mind spending more money and standing in line, you can sign up (you usually have to buy a ticket) to take a picture with them as well. A professional photographer will take your picture that will be printed out immediately. If you're really clever, you'll arrange for your picture with the celebrity of your choice to be taken first, and later on stand in line and have that picture autographed.



Marion meeting her hero 'Spike' (James Marsters) from Buffy, while dressed as a graduating Buffy, carrying the yearbook. Here we have an excellent example of fangirling, done by James over Marion's outfit.

Most cons also offer meetings with their stars (Q&A's). They put the actor (or other celebrity) up on stage and have them answer the audience's questions. These are usually free, but crowded.

If you are proud of your outfit, or simply want to remember it or the group you were with, you can have your picture taken at one of the green screens. Sometimes it involves props, like a Tardis control panel or a Star Fleet jacket and a phaser set to stun, sometimes it's just you and your crew with the con's logo. When the colours of your costume are likely to fade out, make sure to follow the directions of the crew so they can adjust the settings of the light and make you visible. (If like me, you see the hilariousness that is being invisible, go ahead and defy them by standing where you want and stopping them from editing.) Although more often than not, you get your picture printed immediately, they'll usually send a digital copy to you too if you leave your email address. Be mindful of the fact that with allowing them to take your picture, you'll likely end up on their social media or website too. If you know any, you can agree on a private shoot



It's not easy being green... especially not in front of a green screen. ..

with a photographer. Of course, there's plenty of hobbyists walking around to take a few snaps, that'll offer you their business card so you can find your pictures online later on. But you are never quite sure of the quality. If you want to be safe, book a photographer in advance (this gets easier if you have been to more than one con) and they will do you some professional looking pictures, very often for free. If you have typical poses for your character, or for its interaction with others, you can get those captured forever, just tell the face behind the camera. If you look great but are awkward looking in pictures when left to your own devices,

they will direct you to prevent that from happening.

When all your photographic needs have been satisfied, you can try out some of the new computer games, or even enter tournaments.

If you would indeed like to win at something, but aren't much of a gamer, then you might want to enter the cosplay competition. A panel of judges will rate you on your look, how much you resemble the character, your attention to detail and the skill with which you made your outfit. If that is too scary, then the catwalk might be the thing for you: here there is no judging, just the chance to flaunt your look.

Bat villains assembly.

For the more action loving crowd, I'd advise to look out for the fighting areas. Whether with swords, bats or lightsabres, or just you and your karate moves, there might be a stage for you. (Also see 'Safety & Regulations'.) The safety instructor will show you the basic moves, and then you and your opponent can engage in battle. And of course, there will be pictures taken.

Finally, you can join a group meeting. On social media you'll find events, like 'Disney meet at 14:00 by the fountain in the main hall'. Everybody who is dressed as a Disney character, will show up. It's a great chance to meet like minded people, swap tips and tricks, discuss fan theories, show off your original take on a character, re-enact scenes and yes, take more pictures.

What to eat?

Let's not beat around the bush: Like at many events, the food will be pretty expensive. No harm in bringing your own sandwich in a Ziploc. (Check in advance if food is permitted, or if you'll have to leave it in the car and eat in the parking lot.) And bring your water bottle too, while you're at it. Cons are full of people and it gets pretty hot, not to mention the layers of clothing and wigs. Best to stay hydrated.

Some of the food stands become a part of the con itself. There is a coffee stall for example, that sells you your drink in a reusable Viking horn, that you can keep with you forever. Be prepared to stand in line though.

Bring your own banana. Not just for parties.



Safety & Regulations

Some very important rules are to be followed to ensure a safe and pleasurable experience for everyone:

*All lightsabres, swords, hammers, knives, guns and other weapons are to be checked before entering. They can not be real or made out of a too heavy material. This is taken very seriously, and if you don't want your stuff confiscated, you'll comply. If your prop is approved of, it gets a label and you can enter the con.

*Due to the nature of their character, especially in the anime genre, some people are showing more skin than they usually would. This does not mean you can touch them. Some people carry 'free hug' signs. This does not mean that they can't say no to hugging you. It also does not mean you can touch them in places you wouldn't normally touch. 'Cosplay is NOT consent' is the adage.

On that matter, at any convention you can usually find a few stands that offer guidance and information. They are often located with the Guest Stands. These are cosplayers like anyone, except they are part of a collective, like **The Dutch Suicide Squad**, and they stand for something. In the Netherlands one of the biggest is **Cosplay Against Bullying**. By having your picture taken with their sign and logo, you help bring awareness. In the US you might see assorted actors join in on that, a very known one would be Stephen Amell, aka *The Green Arrow*.

*In recent years cosplay has become more mainstream, which is of course great, but also brings the risk of 'normal' people taking over one of the last 'safe' places the self proclaimed 'geeks' have. Personally, I feel that the cosplay community has done a rather splendid job in creating an inclusive world where anybody can feel free to be what they want to be, and any visitors are naturally exposed to this behaviour, which makes them act in a similar manner. At this point I think the balance won't be tipping to the dark side anytime.

*Another very important rule for your own safety and well being: Bring your flip-flops or trainers. You WILL get sore feet when you stay in the shoes that go with your cos. Also bring a vest, because at some point you will have to get back through the rabbit hole into the real world.

*Wear sunscreen. You will be spending time outside, and especially if your cos is on the revealing side, you'll want to save your hide. Literally.

You can easily bring a small toiletry bag, in which you may also store a small sewing kit and some superglue for cos emergencies, a make up touch up/removal set (those wet tissues by *brand* are excellent for both freshening up and removing itchy colours off your face at the end of the day!) and a comb for after wig issues.



All these weapons aimed at my fez have been approved. Nothing I can do about it.

Final Thoughts

Well, you have come far, young padawan. You now have a basic understanding of cosplaying and conventions. This should be enough to declare yourself an expert when dealing with laymen, or to actively converse with accomplished cosplayers.

Beware though, like cats, they can be a bit peculiar about being pinned down and are prone to move in exactly the direction you didn't expect.

Whether you want to go and dip your toes in the cosplay sea, or you just enjoyed learning about it, I thank you all for embarking on this trip to Wonderland with me. For now, it's time to wake up... up...



Above: Bat villains assembly

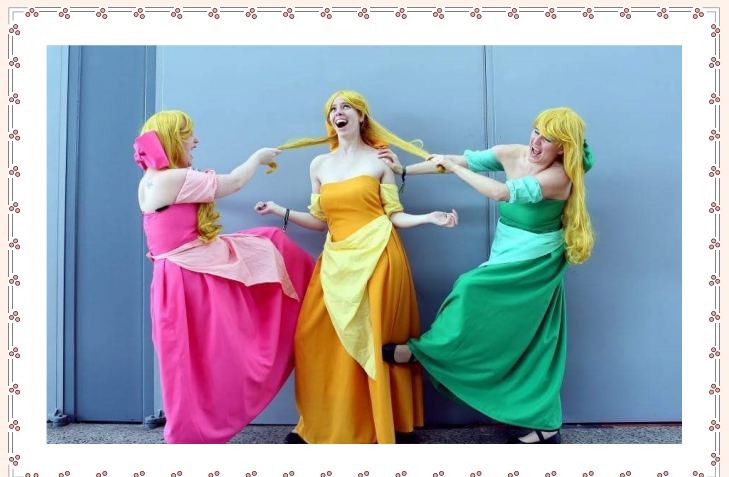
Right: Dutch Doctor Who meet



Right:

The Doctor and River: Song – re-enacting that first kiss...

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Cosplayers are an inclusive lot, playing very well together...

FORTITUDE



BRIEF OBSERVATIONS OF THE FIRST TWO SERIES

Arguably one of the television highlights of 2015, the first season of *Fortitude* was a good example of how to produce a quality drama that represents multiple genres and stays truthful to them. Created in the style of the currently fashionable ‘*Scandi-Noir*’ crime and political thriller genre, with a plot that covers disputes over planning permission and murder investigations, this is also very much a modern science fiction classic. In the latter terms, it is very reminiscent of the ‘long format’ serialised dramas that were popular on radio and television in the 1950s and 60s and gave the world such classics as *The Slide*, *The Quatermass Experiment*, and *The Nightmare Man*. The latter is an especially good comparison, with *Fortitude* relying heavily upon the narrative and stylistic juxtaposition of claustrophobic isolation amidst wide open spaces. The question “is the enemy within or without?” raising the tension. This along with the Arctic setting will also put viewers in mind of the thematically similar, though science fiction free, Alistair MacLean adventure *Bear Island*, a film that is definitely a good primer for watching *Fortitude*. Although very different in almost every way, there is also an interesting superficial similarity between *Fortitude* and *Game of Thrones*, with the opening titles of the former seemingly inspired by those of the latter and both shows choosing Iceland as an ideal filming location. One of the things that sets this show up as visually special right from the start is the stunning setting, and the directorial style allows for plenty of lingering and wide-angle shots of the scenic beauty surrounding the town. The shooting of the episodes draws the viewer into the story even before events take a sinister turn.

The cast of *Fortitude* is as exemplary as the writing and direction. Richard Dormer plays Dan Anderssen as a wonderfully unreadable and enigmatic local sheriff, impossible to identify as hero or villain, both likable and unpleasant at the same time, who may or may not be guilty of any number of things that might or might not be related to the central plot. He is certainly a deeply flawed personality but, like many of the best screen heroes, that only serves to make him more interesting and watchable. Stanley Tucci plays a sympathetic role as an investigator sent in to assist the local police force only to find that,



Richard Dormer as Sheriff Dan Anderssen

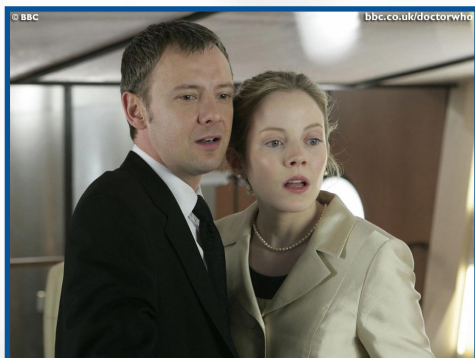
perhaps unsurprisingly, they don’t like strangers ‘ere. An interesting touch is that two of the prominent law enforcement characters are an all-female duo played by Mia Jexen and Alexandra Moen, familiar to *Doctor Who* fans as Lucy Saxon. Sienna Guillory and Luke Treadaway also form a pairing of sorts, as a research team, while much of the personal drama in season one revolves around the husband and wife characters of Frank and Jules Sutter, played by Nicholas Pinnock and another performer with strong *Doctor Who* credentials in Jessica Raine. There are a great many other *Doctor Who* connected actors here too, with Chris Eccleston appearing in the first couple of episodes, joined in the cast by Michael Gambon, Jessica Gunning and Chipu Chung to



Michael Gambon as Henry Tyson, and Richard Dormer as Sheriff Dan Anderssen

name just a few. All of the cast are spot on and play the roles with just the right balance between giving enough to hook the viewer and drive the story while not making any of the characters so much larger than life that they might appear incongruous in the slow, methodical, eerily atmospheric pace of the narrative.

Fortitude excels in many ways, and one of these is in portraying the titular settlement as a functional community. Many series allocate professional titles to characters who then default to whatever the narrative demands. But here we have a Governor whose role in the story is to be the Governor, and a Doctor who performs the role of a Doctor along with a Sheriff who leads the police, his officers support him in their responsibilities as police men and women, a research team who spend the story carrying out scientific research, and so on. This may seem very obvious but is a regular stumbling block of many television dramas. Mention of the research team brings us to another great quality of this show and that is its place in the genre of what is often called 'pure' science fiction. Many shows begin with some kind of scientific research program that then leads to the discovery of something fantastical or alien that takes the subject beyond the expertise of the characters and can be a factor in the problem that is described above, whereby characters lose their identity and become cyphers for the plot. *Fortitude* on the other hand, while it does tease the otherworldly or supernatural in earlier episodes, becomes more oriented towards recognisable science and discovery as the story reaches a conclusion. Some of the principles discussed by the characters do have a foundation in the real world but are taken to a fantastical level that creates mystery and high tension.



(Above) Alexandra Moen as Police Constable Petra Bergen, also played Lucy Saxon in *Doctor Who*, pictured here (Below) with John Simm as The Master



Mia Jexen as Police Constable Ingrid Witrey

This atmosphere is another great selling point. The cold and bleak environment, captured by stunning cinematography, is enhanced by the use of day and night in the storytelling. There is a sense of busy times and moments of solitude, scenes set late in the evening in a hotel bar for instance, and so much effort has been taken to make *Fortitude* feel like a real place with recognisable, identifiable people. There are lots of tangled relationships, only some of which feed directly into the main narrative. Just as in real life, sometimes a romantic betrayal or misunderstanding messes things up for everyone and sometimes it just is what it is. But this element is also neatly balanced, so that the story feels real but also avoids the trap of having 'soap opera' style padding episodes in the slower sections of the story. There is plenty of emotional, physical and even sexual abuse going on, perhaps too much for such a closed community, but again a balance is found that stops it from becoming Arctic soap opera. Worthy of special mention here is Veronica Echegui, playing a Spanish woman who for good or bad links many of the character led elements together. Essentially, she fills the role of the seductive bad girl who most of the male characters want to have sex with, consensual or otherwise, but who really just wants to be nice to people and eat pizza.



Verónica Echegui as Elena Ledesma

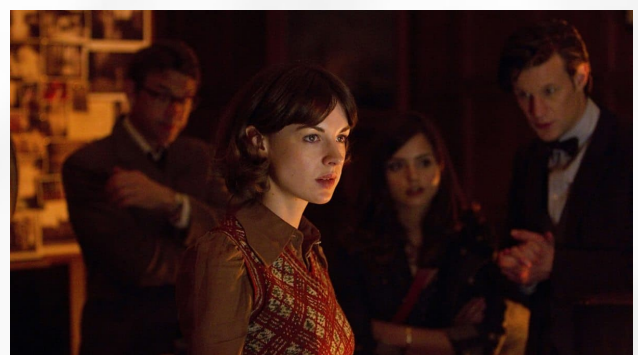
The first season is effective in bringing a complex series of events to a satisfying conclusion. The main plot is resolved, the mystery explained, and characters either given an exit or positioned for the next season. However, it is with season two that we encounter a few problems, or narrative issues with the first season become more apparent. So, before looking at the strengths of season two, let us get the negative aspects out of the way first. *Fortitude* sadly falls into three regular traps into which sequels tumble. The first is when, in trying to promise something new and exciting to distributors and viewers, the creative team confuse 'new ideas' with unnecessary changes to the old ones, and this was in this case manifested in the other two traps. The second is 'upping the stakes' by pitching the characters against supernatural forces rather than traditional antagonists or a merely scientific problem. True, many series use the supernatural very effectively. But in a case where a creative team want to make two films or series, but only have one really good story idea, the 'otherworldly' as a fall-back merely enables otherwise random and inexplicable story events to be copied from the ideas board directly into scripts without any further rational justification than blaming it all on magic. Or to put it another way, it can be a lazy opt out for not having a second idea as good as the first one. The other snare is when graphic and violent deaths lose their shock value and become a trope through over use. This actually started in season one, and those who have seen those episodes will know the scene between two big characters out on the ice near the end of the season to which we refer. Both were great actors and very important central characters, not only to the story but also the show as a drama production. It was just never the same without them, and there is a strong argument that their loss to the show far outweighed the short-term impact of the scene. Season two really brings home the consequences of what happens to a drama when murder scenes lose their effect and the writers turn their attention to gaining shock value from the familiar identities of the victims. Three characters are removed from the roles they played in the overall feel and dynamic of the original show, either by becoming outcasts or through death or both, during season two's early and mid-season episodes and nothing can replace them.

On the plus side, season two does maintain the atmosphere of bleak isolation. It still has a very good Scandinavian feel through the locations, indoor film sets, costume designs, and effective casting. Mia Jexen as police officer Ingrid gets a lot more to do second time around and becomes more of a viewer identification character when her family are introduced and become

involved in the new mystery. The double act she shares with Alexandra Moen's Petra gains greater screen time as a result of the other main police characters being removed from the scene in various episodes. New actors introduced in season two include Dennis Quaid and Michelle Fairley, as Ingrid's parents, and Ken Stott in a brilliant, darkly comic turn as a corrupt, alcoholic bureaucrat. Parminder Nagra, well-known to fans of US show *ER*, dons her surgical gown again as a medical researcher in a role that exudes intelligence and cunning and to which the actress brings a touch of glamour but also a deeper emotive angle. These and other new cast members all do well with the material they are given. But therein lies part of the problem in the second season's scripts. In the original series, the viewer had to think hard to keep up with events and the Agatha Christie style webs of intrigue and deception. But here, it becomes quite easy to recall who is who and what they are doing because, quite simply, nobody is actually doing very much. There is not much of a personal drama angle beneath the main plot, such as that is, and everyone is living well behaved, scandal free lives between the murders. *Fortitude* is less of a community in which the story takes place and is more like the generic story setting that season one did so well to avoid.



Jessica Raine as Julia Jules' Sutte (Above) and (Below) as psychic Emma Grayling in 'Hide', *Doctor Who* (2013)



There are times when *Fortitude* season two is simply too dark and sinister for its own good, at the cost of the overall story. The three members of the police force are distracted by personal issues – Eric has marital problems, Ingrid’s mother is fighting terminal illness, and Petra admits to alcoholism – and all of them collectively fail to gain any grasp on what is happening. The political governance of *Fortitude* is taken over by a corrupt politician with a personal interest in making sure that nobody finds out what is really going on. Likewise, the various scientific researchers, through a combination of personal issues and agendas, either fail to understand or prevent others from understanding the situation. Therefore, everyone who matters in the story, apart from a few civilians with no contacts or resources, for one reason or another have no interest in the truth being revealed. The flaw in storytelling technique with this is fairly obvious and it is a non-spoiler to say that both characters and viewers are just as ignorant at the end of the story as at the beginning.

Finally, a creative issue that holds *Fortitude* back through both series, although the lack of plot in the second season highlights the matter, is the use of bad language. That is not to say that bad language is the issue purely in itself, as this was an 18-rated Sky show after all. The problem lies in the fact that, in real life, people use swear words in a variety of different ways and this depends upon their dialect, background and thought processes. Some people swear for emphasis, some for humour, some quietly, some loudly, some as an exclamation, and some people swear naturally without even realising they are doing so, and everyone does not use the same words in the same way. The characters who live in *Fortitude* not only continually, and I do mean continually and virtually every

character, F-bomb every time they open their mouths, but linguistically in terms of sentence construction they all swear in the same way, making the lines sound very awkward and unnatural even from some very experienced and high-quality actors.

In conclusion, at least until season three lands in our Sky boxes, *Fortitude* could be described as hit and miss. If you were being very cruel, you could say that season one was a hit and season two was a miss, and it would be hard to argue against. In trying to make the sequel fresh and new, the basic ideas that made season one so good were all changed or discarded in the hope that the new characters and ideas would equal or better them. Not only was this sadly not the case but it was also unnecessary for a show in only its second run, that follows a serial format, and that was tapping into the Scandinavian chiller vibe that definitely still has a lot more mileage on television. The acting was amazing all the way through both series from most of the cast, the direction and cinematography was stunning, and taking away some of the appalling lines, the characters were deep enough to warrant a viewer’s attention. If season one was like *Broadchurch*, only with more snow and killer insect infestations, then *Fortitude* could not have done better than look to Chris Chibnall’s template for how to build a second series by building upon the sense of community and crisis-forged relationships. *Fortitude* most definitely threw out not only the baby with the bathwater but the tub too, leaving viewers with a few soapy memories and a dirty sponge rather than a second bath-time.



RAINE SZRAMSKI



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OLAG GAN: A PROFILE

By Alan Stevens and
Fiona Moore

OLAG GAN has the distinction of being one of the original crew members of The Liberator in Blake's 7. He also has the distinction of being the first member of the Seven to die—killed whilst trying to save Blake and his fellow crew members from a Federation trap in the Season 2 episode Pressure Point, screened on February 6th 1979. In those pre-Internet days, this came as a mighty shock to the majority of viewers, although series creator Terry Nation had indicated that one of the crew would die in Season 2 in an interview for Starburst magazine the previous year. Nearly 40 years on, perhaps it's easy to forget Gan, or just to remember him as 'the big, strong one' from the series' early days.

But as Alan Stevens and Fiona Moore reveal, there was so much more to Gan...

The 1983 edition of "*Blake's 7: The Programme Guide*" by Tony Attwood contains on page 124 the following description:

GAN — Native of Zephron. When a Federation guard raped his girlfriend, Gan killed him, was certified insane and had a limiter placed in his head to stop him killing again.

The information for this entry appears to come from "*A Quick Guide to Blake's 7*", an information pack compiled, typed up and sent out to fans of the programme by producer David Maloney's production secretary, Judith Smith. Part of the section on Gan reads as follows:

GAN Native of Zephron

A gentle giant of a man who watched the Federation murder his family and when he went berserk was certified as violently insane. His treatment included the insertion of a limiter in his brain. This acts on the aggression centre and means that he is incapable of killing ever again.

Now compare the above to what Gan himself actually says in the episode, *Time Squad*.

GAN: I killed a security guard. They said it was

murder. But he had a gun. I was unarmed. You see, he killed my woman.

This is the one and only time in the series where Gan talks about his life before meeting up with Blake, and makes any direct reference to the reason why he was transported for life to the penal planet Cygnus Alpha. He does not say that "a Federation guard raped his girlfriend", or that "the Federation murdered his family". All this is invention after the fact. However, there is evidence to back up the notion that on some previous occasion Gan "went berserk, was certified as violently insane" and "his treatment included the insertion of a limiter in his brain". This is supported by Professor Kayn's comments to Doctor Renor in the episode *Breakdown*.

RENOR: Progress to what? Brain implantation?

KAYN: A dangerous psychopath? Certainly. Or would you prefer he'd been executed?

Kayn and Renor may be engaged in an argument, but Kayn would not try to deceive Renor over a point of procedure, and at no instance does Renor try to contradict Kayn's assertion that a citizen of the Federation, who is "certified" a dangerous psychopath, would be fitted with a limiter implant. Even so, this leaves the question, was Gan treated unjustly?



Olag Gan, played by David Jackson

Gan maintains that his treatment was, indeed, unjust, and Jenna is also seen to believe the story he tells her, and shows real sympathy. Jenna would certainly be aware that the Federation is capable of punishing people on false charges, as she not only hears Blake's story about how he was falsely accused, but she had also witnessed Tel Varon from the Justice Department, together with his wife, Maja, talk openly with Blake of a "cover-up", about how Varon is going to get a holding order to allow Blake to stay on Earth while an investigation takes place, and, just before he leaves, he says to Blake, "listen, I... I'm sorry I didn't believe you". Which is all powerful and convincing stuff.... For Blake, that is. Not for Gan.

Blake represents a serious political threat to the ruling powers, and they stand to gain by manufacturing evidence against him (in his case, allegations of kidnap and child molestation): as Blake puts it, "the Administration has gone to enormous trouble — I mean, they've even put themselves at risk". Later Varon tells his wife that if the conspiracy against Blake is discovered, then it "could blow the top off the whole Administration". That's why Varon and his wife are secretly murdered by the security agent Dev Tarrant, and their deaths made to look like a transporter accident. The Administration is scared, and will gladly take the risk of killing one of its judicial staff, if it means their own duplicity remains hidden. However, Blake is enough of a political threat to them that they will engage in desperate measures.

For Gan, the situation is completely different. He wasn't political. There was no reason for the Earth Administration to risk faking up or distorting the evidence to get him convicted. The other criminals on the *London* who we encounter are all guilty of the crimes of which they are accused: Avon did in fact attempt to rob the Federation Banking System, Jenna, although we learn in *Shadow* that she was set up by the Terra Nostra, is still a smuggler, and Vila is being sent to Cygnus Alpha because, by his own admission, he is a "compulsive" thief. Vila even mocks Blake when he pleads his innocence, telling him, "we're all victims of a miscarriage of justice", implying that situations like Blake's are relatively rare. Jenna and Vila, and even Blake, plainly believe that all the people being sent to the prison planet are properly convicted criminals, and Blake himself admits to being guilty of some misdemeanours: "I'm innocent — of what I was charged with anyway", he says. Vila's remark, "I've had my head adjusted by some of the best in the business. But it just won't stay adjusted", suggests that psychological conditioning as a form of rehabilitation is standard practice. And yet Gan, who implies that he committed his one and only crime in the face of severe and heart-rending provocation, is promptly certified a "dangerous psychopath", given an expensive brain

implant, and is then sentenced to life on a prison planet, otherwise reserved for hardened felons, habitual criminals and serial paedophiles. This makes no sense, unless, of course, Gan is lying.

The most striking aspect of Gan's story in *Time Squad* is its strong resemblance to events that took place in the previous episode, and which were unwitnessed by Jenna. In *Cygnus Alpha*, Gan meets a woman called Kara. She evidently finds him attractive, even kissing him during their first encounter. However, she is later accidentally killed whilst shouting an attack warning to Gan. As it happens, the spear meant for him strikes her, and, shortly afterwards, Gan is seen grinning as he drives a spear into a prone guard. Presumably, the same guard, and the same spear, that killed Kara. Now, not only does the similarity of these circumstances cast doubt on Gan's story to Jenna, but it also proves beyond doubt that, contrary to popular misconception (fostered by the abovementioned *Programme Guide* and "A Quick Guide to *Blake's 7*"), Gan's limiter does not prevent him from killing at all. But if that's the case, what function *does* the limiter perform?

Well, as witnessed in *Space Fall*, *Cygnus Alpha*, *The Web*, *Seek-Locate-Destroy*, *Project Avalon*, *Deliverance*, *Redemption*, *Shadow* and *Weapon*, it certainly doesn't stop him from fighting with people and even, on occasion, beating them unconscious. It also doesn't prevent Gan from exhibiting behaviour that put others in fear of life and limb. In *Space Fall*, for example, Gan threatens to amputate a guard's hand, and, in *Cygnus Alpha*, he tells Arco that if he touches Vila again, "I'm going to break your arms and legs off". It also doesn't prevent him from committing potentially life threatening acts such as attaching explosives to the wall of a Federation base in *Seek-Locate-Destroy*. Nevertheless, we do know that the limiter works, because we see it in action



The limiter doesn't stop Gan from doing this...

during the episode *Time Squad*. When Gan appears in the teleport bay and attempts to shoot the guardian who is attacking Jenna, he is seen to physically freeze; even though the man is a clear and present threat to both their lives, Gan cannot press the trigger, and it is finally left to Jenna to save the day. This raises the question of what exactly made the limiter activate at this time, but not on other occasions when Gan was involved in a life or death battle for survival.

The first clue as to how it operates is given by Gan in *Time Squad*, where he tells Jenna, "I want to stay alive. And to do that I need people I can rely on. I can't be on my own". Indeed, when Gan is left alone in the episode *Orac*, the limiter gives him a headache, and he is forced to seek out the company of the Liberator crew. As for Gan's violent behaviour, it seems the limiter will not cut in if he is acting with the specific approval of the group he has sided with, or any of that group's individual members.

The limiter also has one further feature. It gives Gan a headache whenever he is alone with a woman. In *Time Squad*, Gan's head pains start when he is left on the *Liberator* with only Jenna for company, and this association is made again, a few stories later, when he is assigned to look after Avalon. In fact, the headaches get worse if that lone woman is then assaulted. This is demonstrated in *Time Squad* when Jenna, searching for Gan in the ship's inner hold, is attacked by a guardian. Even though Gan is not directly involved with the assault, the limiter still activates to wrack him with pain. Nevertheless, there are occasions when the limiter will allow Gan to attack a woman, which is when a group member indicates verbally that someone else is a threat. This is sharply demonstrated in *The Web* when Gan disarms the possessed Cally after Jenna has said to her "you're not Cally, are you", and in *Project Avalon*, where Jenna initiates his attack on the android by urgently saying "Gan, that's not Avalon".

This brings us back to *Time Squad*, and the question as to why the limiter paralysed Gan and prevented him from shooting the guardian. The answer is twofold. Firstly, the fact that Jenna was being attacked by her male assailant caused Gan's limiter to painfully intervene and prevent him from committing any violent acts. Secondly, although it seems possible, based on the evidence mentioned above, that the limiter could have been overridden by a verbal command from Jenna, she says nothing throughout the entire fight. Intriguingly, Terry Nation also made the guardians mute, which would suggest that had Jenna's assailant asked for Gan's support, then he may have received it.

Now, considering that the limiter appears to be in control of Gan's mental disorder, it is reasonable to wonder why Gan was still sent to a penal planet for a

life term. The answer, however, is made fairly obvious as Season One progresses, in that Gan hasn't been cured by the limiter, but simply contained, and even then, Gan tries to find ways to work around it. For example, in *Time Squad*, after discovering that Jenna has been assaulted by one of the guardians, Gan goes down to Hold 5 to investigate, but then purposely hides himself away, and waits there until Jenna comes looking for him, once again placing her in a position where she can be attacked.

In *Seek-Locate-Destroy*, Gan leaves Cally alone to look after a group of Federation prisoners, and then plants demolition charges on the wall of the outside corridor; he doesn't return to warn her, or provides any further backup, which leads Cally first to be set upon by the prisoners and then to be caught in the explosion. Even after teleporting up to the ship, Gan still fails to inform anyone that Cally is missing, or of the situation he left her in. Similar behaviour from Gan can also be found in *Deliverance*. We see Gan, alerted to some possible danger, leave Jenna alone as he walks up and over the crest of a hill, she is then captured by a primitive tribe. A few minutes later, when teleported up to the ship, Gan makes no comment on Jenna's marked absence, and when Blake inquires as to her whereabouts, Gan states, "well, she was right behind me when we teleported".

Still, this behaviour appears mild in comparison to what happens when his limiter stops working in *Breakdown*. After throwing Jenna across the flight deck, knocking her unconscious, Gan attempts to break Blake's neck; it finally taking four crew members and two tranquilliser pads at full strength to subdue him. Later, while under restraint, Gan fakes unconsciousness, and then, when he is left alone with Cally, cunningly manipulates her into releasing him. Gan subsequently tries to throttle Cally, while smiling sadistically, and she is only saved when the malfunctioning limiter cuts back in.



Gan's limiter malfunctions with near-fatal consequences for Cally in Breakdown



Once recovered, Gan then goes in search of Avon, attacking both him and the computers he is strongly associated with. Even more disturbing is the fact that Gan's homicidal behaviour works to a pattern. His direct attack on a woman is promptly followed by an equally violent attack on a man, in a bizarre parody of the story he told to Jenna in *Time Squad* and the events surrounding the death of Kara and his killing of the guard on Cygnus Alpha.



Gan plots murder as his limiter malfunctions

The idea of having a secret traitor among a group of adventurers is common to the sort of popular fiction Nation was referencing for *Blake's 7*. *The Guns of Navarone* and *The Dirty Dozen* both involve betrayal by a team member, with the latter featuring a traitor who is also a murderer and rapist. It's a trope Nation himself used repeatedly; as well as betrayers appearing in *The Way Back*, *Project Avalon* and the murder mystery episode *Mission to Destiny*, he also originally planned for the new regular character Captain Del Tarrant to be revealed as one later in Season Three.

Many drama series of the 1960s and 70s also heavily featured stories about young women being stalked by men who, at first, appear friendly, and Nation himself included such themes in *Survivors* and the film he co-wrote with Brian Clemens, *And Soon*



Gan—pictured here with Blake and Avon—was always thought to be reliable and loyal by his friends

the Darkness. In fact, a direct precursor to Gan appears in Nation's 1964 *Doctor Who* episode *The Snows of Terror*, where a physically powerful trapper called Vador, when freed from the influence of a planet wide "conscience" machine, reveals himself to be a cunning murderer and potential rapist. Furthermore, Nation may also have been influenced by the Brian Hayles scripted 1972 *Doomwatch* episode *Hair Trigger*, that involved the use of brain implants to calm the aggressive urges of a violent misogynist and multiple murderer who, when the process fails, attempts to restage his original crime. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to assume that Gan, initially at least, was intended to conform to a similar premise.

Clearly this set-up was heading for some kind of conclusion, and the fact that Nation was keen that Gan should die during Season Two, in retrospect, seems fairly inevitable. However, although the manner of Gan's death in *Pressure Point* could have been used to, unambiguously, reveal the man's true nature, and make the subtext running through Season One more evident, what we actually get is the opposite. Nation has frequently described Gan as being based on Lenny from John Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men*; a seeming gentle giant who one day kills a young woman, and in turn is killed by his best friend, George. And again, this scenario is remarkably similar to Gan's story about killing the guard who killed his woman, and the events surrounding Kara's death on Cygnus Alpha, only with Gan placing himself in the "George" role. The Gan-as-Lenny premise certainly would have fitted nicely into the events of *Pressure Point*. Gan is left behind in the deconsecrated crypt to look after a teenage girl called Veron (just one letter off Blake's murdered defense lawyer, Varon). His limiter fails, he strangles her, and when Blake returns, he kills Gan. Instead, according to script editor Chris Boucher, we are presented with a situation based on the Country song *Big Bad John*, about a strong man who saved his work colleagues by holding up a cracked roof timber during a mine disaster.



David Jackson was born on 15th July 1934 in Liverpool. During his prolific acting career he had roles in TV series as diverse as *The Sweeney*, *Only Fools and Horses*, *Minder* and *Lovejoy*. He played Detective Constable Braithwaite in *Z-Cars* from 1972 to 1978, before taking the role of Olag Gan in *Blake's 7* from 1978 to 79. He died on 25th July 2005 from a heart attack aged 71.

This scenario does, nevertheless, fit better with what became of Gan's character in the second season, where he did, finally, become the "gentle giant" of the group. Why this decision was taken by Nation is not known; it could be that, in the climate of the late 1970s, with the BBC coming under increasing fire from the National Viewers and Listeners Association, he decided that the storyline was too dark for a family programme, or it could be that he simply lost interest in pursuing such a complex and involved subtext. What we do know is that, from *Redemption* onwards, all references to limiters and to Gan's past simply cease.

A parallel can, in fact, be drawn with the character of Del Tarrant (one letter removed from Blake's betrayer, Dev Tarrant). Early episodes featuring Tarrant, notably *Powerplay*, have an air of ambiguity about them; when we first meet him, the story he provides is overly convoluted and Vila and Avon appear to regard him with some mistrust during *Volcano*. All the same, once the idea of having Tarrant as a traitor is dropped, then Tarrant becomes the straightforward, open character with which the audience is most familiar, and any instances of previous scepticism are forgotten. What we have is thus, in the case of Gan, something like a murder mystery in which the author changes their mind partway through as to who the murderer should be; the early clues remain, but then give way to a completely different scenario.

This is further complicated by the actors themselves often not being informed what the writer, or writing team, has in mind for their characters. It is sometimes argued that if Gan was intended to be a murderer, then actor David Jackson would have been told. However, Steven Pacey was also not told about the

original scenario of Del Tarrant as traitor, and numerous other instances litter the history of television (Ivor Danvers, for instance, was not made aware that his character on *Howard's Way*, Gerald Urquhart, was intended to be a closet homosexual, and yet the novelisation of the first series by its script editor, John Brason, indicates that the writing team had this in mind from a very early stage). David Jackson himself has said, regarding *Blake's 7*, "you weren't allowed to have a breakdown on what was supposed to be your character", because the producers believed "it would disconcert the actors if they found out what they were supposed to be", and Boucher has also stated that actors "were rarely, if ever, consulted about the development of the overall line of the series, or about any particular episode".

Furthermore, Nation had recently been through a very difficult experience with *Survivors*, in which he had repeatedly crossed swords with producer Terence Dudley over the direction the series was to take, and as a consequence, when later dealing with Maloney and Boucher, Nation was prone to be quite secretive in regard to his future plans for the development of *Blake's 7*. Although this is not to suggest that Maloney and Boucher were unaware of Gan's dangerous nature, with both agreeing that without the limiter, "he was a homicidal maniac."

The character of Olag Gan is, consequently, more interesting for what is not revealed about him than for what is, as reading between the lines not only uncovers a whodunit/murder mystery, but casts light on the nature of television writing and production during one of the medium's most creative and original decades.



Limitless

By Annie Worrall

The headache was low-level but persistent. He thought at first it was caused by eye strain and resigned himself to a life-time of pain suppressors - unless Orac and Avon could be persuaded to come up with a technical solution - something he thought unlikely.

And then a recurring dream, strange, yet familiar, began to disturb his sleep and further tax his control.

Night after night, he found himself standing on the shores of a frozen lake. Snow had fallen recently. A coverlet of white unrolled into the distance, merging with the sky: an infinity of white, timeless and still. All seemed peaceful, silent and yet he knew that under the ice-shell, nameless beasts snarled and snapped.

Now a woman joined him, her face calm, unworried. She met his eyes and knelt, placing her hands on the frozen surface. The beasts sank back into the depths.

Light on the snow threw waving lines across the landscape. The air shivered. The woman with him was ill. If he didn't reach the Governor she might die. Frantic he tried to push his way in but an Enforcer stopped him, raising a gun. The beasts snarled, splintering ice with their claws. She cried out then and tried to intervene.

Now she was falling, falling in a graceless heap, her dress riding up exposing lumpy white thighs. Her hands scrabbled for a moment, clenched and then relaxed. He noticed briefly how worn they were, those hands; their skin raw and cracked.

With a roar the beasts broke from the ice, teeth and claws slashing and he commanded them to tear their way into his heart. Effortlessly he tossed the gun aside, took the neck of the Enforcer in purposeful hands and started to squeeze slowly. As he pressed, the face clenched between his iron fingers changed. His mother, eyes bulging, stared imploringly but he remembered her contempt as she ordered him to leave and pressed harder. The tongue protruded, the struggling weakened and the face of his father, swollen and brutish now as any of those, like Gan, who were forced to scratch a miserable existence in the shanty hovels on the edge of town, turned red, then puce and finally blue.

Why his father used the authority of his position to demand the lesser punishment, he never discovered but, because of his intervention, Gan received a life sentence on a penal colony and a limiter that would tether the beasts. He had known as he travelled on the transporter to the ship that would take him to Cygnus Alpha that she deserved more, the woman who had helped him control his rage but he could no longer remember the feeling of grief.

Waking from the dream, headache worsening, he realised that it was not just physical pain that was hurting him.

Slowly the beasts were rousing and demanding that he act.



Olag Gan: Original Artwork copyright © Raine Szramka

Avon, a found poem

Have you ever met an honest man?
I relied on other people
Don't try to manipulate me
Don't philosophise at me, you electronic moron!
Automatic reaction, I'm as surprised as you are
I'll tell you a fact of life
Change is inevitable!
That's the trouble with heroics,
They seldom run to schedule.
I have never understood why it should be necessary
To become irrational
In order to prove that you care
Logic says we're dead
Another idealist, poor but honest
Shall look forward to our meeting with eager anticipation.

Staying with you requires a degree of stupidity
Of which I no longer feel capable
It's the kind of natural stupidity no amount of training
Could ever hope to match
Law makers, law breakers, let us fight them all!

What a very depressing thought.
It is considered ill-mannered to kill your friends
While committing suicide
And alone, probably
Virtually alone, then
Oh, you are curious
You are expendable.
I do not need anybody at all
Locate and destroy it.
The two don't necessarily follow.

As far as I'm concerned you can destroy whatever you like
You can stir up a thousand revolutions
You can wade in blood up to your armpits
Oh, and you can lead the rabble to victory
Whatever that may mean
Just so long as there's an end to it.
And I want it finished! I want it over and done with
I want to be free!
I want to be free of him!

*I have had enough excitement for a while
 Right now a little boredom wouldn't come amiss
 It has a perverse kind of logic to it
 Surprise seems inappropriate somehow.*

*You should never judge by appearances
 I had hoped for a more inspiring epitaph
 Too good to become involved with the rest of humanity
 Of all the things I am, I never recognized the fool
 Make me die. There's nothing else you can make me do
 Don't be sorry. Be Quiet!*

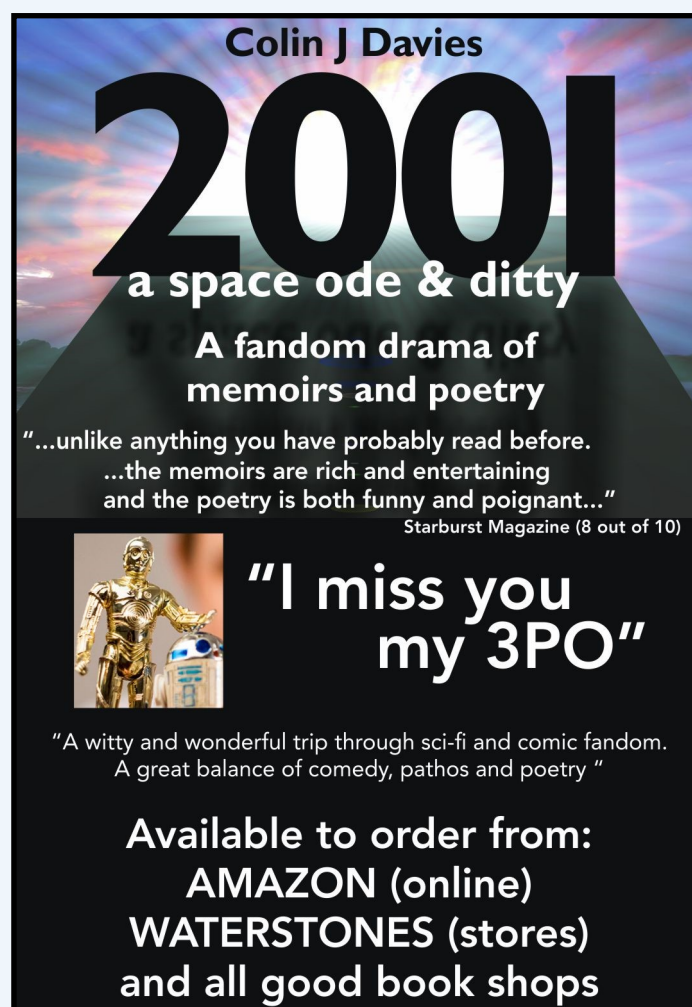
*Idealism is a wonderful thing,
 All you need is someone rational to put it to proper use.
 Stand still!
 Have you betrayed us?
 Have you betrayed me?*

Colin J Davies

"This found poem is made up of things Avon said during all four seasons of the programme. And, what's more, they are in chronological order."

Blake's 7 was created by Terry Nation who also created the Daleks for Doctor Who. Writers that may be in this found poem: Chris Boucher; Terry Nation; Allan Prior; Robert Holmes; Roger Parkes; Ben Steed; James Follett; Tanith Lee; Trevor Hoyle; Rod Beacham; Colin Davis (no relation); Bill Lyons; Simon Masters.





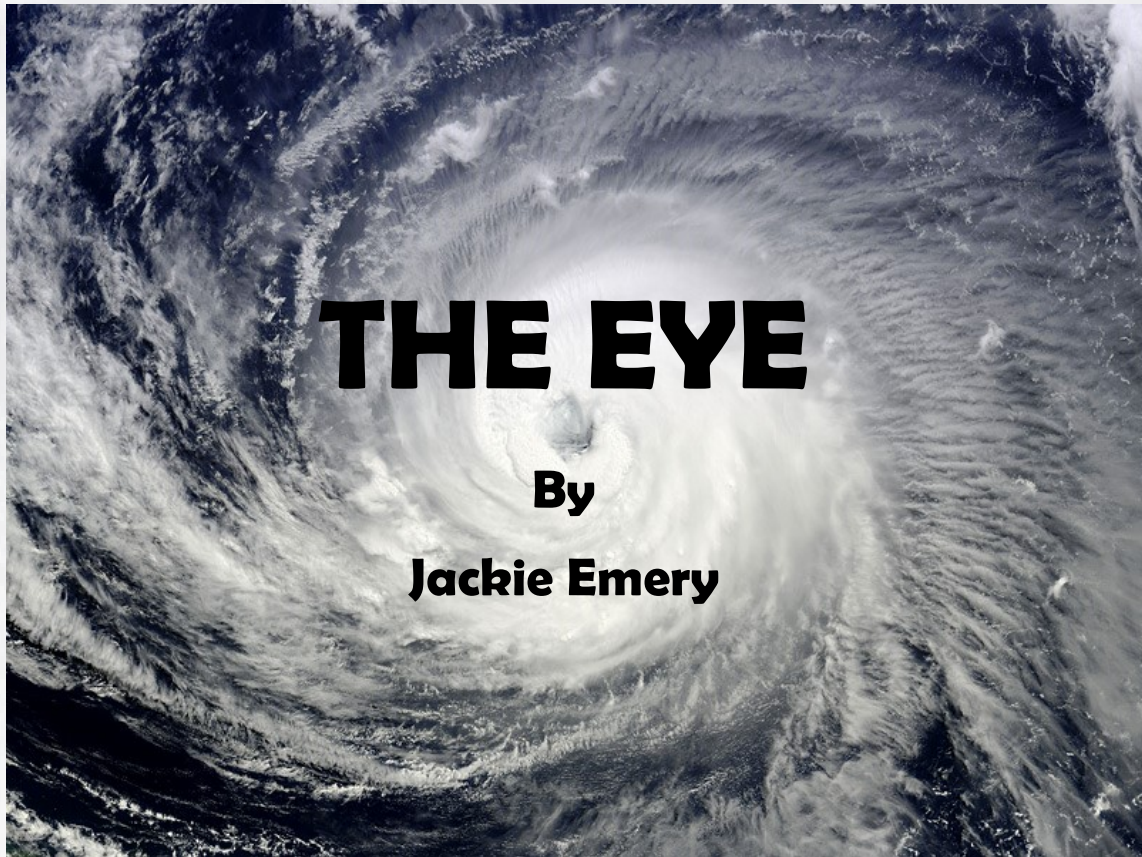
This book, based on the Saboteur Short Listed spoken word show, is one boy's story as he grows up loving all things Sci-Fi, Horror and Fantasy. It combines anecdotes and opinions with poetry inspired by the genres and his own life. Funny, informative and at times touching, this book is a love letter to all those TV programmes, films, books and games that have meant so much to so many.

Some comments about the show left on the Saboteur Awards website: "A witty and wonderful trip through Sci-Fi and comic fandom. A great balance of comedy, pathos and poetry" "Awesome!" "Chopper Lives!" "Colin is a fantastic writer and uses every word to great effect. Nothing is wasted." "Cos I get mentioned, Regards, Phantom." "For a show which is about Sci-Fi, it manages to include non-fans and not alienate them (pun not intended, or should it have been?)" "Witty and intelligent - warm and nostalgic. His timing and delivery are wonderful!"

Colin Davies was born in Brighton in 1970. At the age of 17 he moved to Blackpool where he embarked on a journey to become a successful and highly respected author, poet and playwright. His second novel for children, "Mathamagical II: Anagramaphobia - at word's end" is a 2015 Red Ribbon winner at the Wishing Shelf Book Awards. Colin's solo spoken word show "2001: A Space Ode and Ditty" was short-listed for the 2015 Saboteur show of the year award, placing third.

Colin lives with his partner and son and writes in many different genres and styles, however, he maintains that his heart can always be found in his children's stories and poetry.

Colin has sat on the committee of the Lancashire Dead Good Poets' Society. He writes reviews and blog posts for the award-winning website deadgoodpoets.blogspot.co.uk and altblackpool.co.uk as well as regular updates to his own blog. He has been instrumental in helping local poets into positions as writers in residence and seeks to help writers advance in their chosen field of art.



Vila was the last to regain consciousness.

It had taken Cally a while to locate him. Her other crew mates were already treating each others' injuries in the medical unit, by the time she found the thief curled up tightly between the flight deck's central couch and an overturned games table. Cally wondered how he had squeezed himself into such a small space. *A coward; well practiced in hiding*, she thought, the pain of her own injuries making her unsympathetic.

Cally righted the table, kicked aside the broken game pieces and crouched beside him. She knew better than to touch him or speak aloud. Instead she reached out with her mind, telepathically calling his name until he stirred.

Moaning softly, Vila uncurled and opened his eyes. Cally was expecting to see shock and lack of recognition; she had braced herself for a violent reaction. But all she saw in his face was fear.

"Cally? Is that you?" He blinked, trying to focus. "Not... not a monster?"

"It's me, Vila. You are safe."

"Where did it go?"

"There were no monsters. You were hallucinating."

He stared at her. "But it got you – you're hurt!"

She touched the tender part of her cheek, where she could feel a bruise forming. "Avon did this."

"Avon did that to you? Why?" Vila sniffed. "And why can I smell burning?" He struggled into a sitting position, looking around the flight deck, where the auto-repair systems were working to contain electrical fires and restore smashed consoles. "All that damage – we've been attacked!" "There was nothing here," Cally stated firmly. "No monsters, Federation troopers or Andromedans."

"Apparently," said Avon, entering the flight deck with the others, "we did this. For some reason, we all started seeing things, and attacked each other." He descended the stairs cautiously, favouring his right leg.

"Not all of us," Dayna corrected him, her voice slightly muffled by her swollen lip. "Cally wasn't affected by whatever it was that possessed us."

"And Vila hid," said Tarrant disdainfully, crossing to the pilot's position. His right hand was bandaged and he poked clumsily at the damaged flight controls with his left forefinger.

"I'm glad I did," retorted Vila. "You look awful. All I've got is a killer headache." He leaned his head in his hands. "And some horrible memories..."

Avon turned to him sharply. "What do you remember? Think, Vila – it's important."

"I..." Vila frowned. The images in his mind that had been so vivid were now fading, leaving only vague impressions of fear, loss and pain. "I can't... it's going away. Like a bad dream."

"Same here," said Dayna. "None of us can quite remember."

"So what did happen, Cally?" Vila scrambled up from the floor and took a seat on the couch.

"To begin with, it seemed as though you were seeing people you loved," she replied, "but then you turned violent, lashing out..." Cally paused, looking at her crew mates and the damaged flight consoles. "One by one, you lost consciousness. When you woke, you didn't recognise me and -"

"And attacked you too," said Tarrant. "I'm sorry, Cally."

"It's strange that you weren't affected," remarked Dayna.

"Is it?" Cally shrugged. "We know that my brain, my psyche, is different from yours. Perhaps the Auronar are immune to whatever caused this."

"Well, we have to find out what it was," said Avon, trying to disguise his limp as he moved across to the communications console.

"And make sure it doesn't happen again," Dayna agreed. "So what's the last thing we can remember before this started?"

"We were en route to the Meletian System." Tarrant used his left thumb to activate the newly-repaired navigation console and the dark screen flickered into life. "Here it is. Standard speed, course laid in. No Federation presence."

"Gold!" Vila perked up at the memory. "Orac said there was gold there, and sunny beaches. We were going to check it out."

"Good hunting grounds, too." Dayna's eyes gleamed.

"But then there was a meteoroid storm," said Tarrant. "It came out of nowhere. Zen didn't warn us."

"It wasn't a storm," argued Dayna, "it was a vortex, pulling us in."

"That's not right. It looked more like a glittering cloud." Vila frowned. "I remember putting up the force wall."

"The readouts showed an intense magnetic field," said Avon. "All the instruments started malfunctioning."

"But there were no clouds or storms," Cally insisted, "and no malfunctions. I couldn't understand what you were talking about – everything was working fine."

"So apart from Cally, we all saw something - even if we can't agree what it was. Let's get an objective opinion." Avon turned to face the ship's computer, wincing as his weight shifted to his injured leg. "Zen, report!"

The lights on Zen's fascia flickered on and off in a smooth sequence.

+AUTO REPAIRS ARE UNDERWAY. ENGINES ARE AT 80 PER CENT CAPACITY. LIFE SUPPORT AND OTHER SYSTEMS ARE FUNCTIONING NORMALLY+

"Have we flown through any sort of anomaly?"

+SPECIFY ANOMALY+

"Magnetic fields, vortex, meteoroids..."

"Glittering clouds," added Vila.

+NEGATIVE+

"Did anybody – or anything – teleport on or off the ship recently?"

+NEGATIVE+

"Show us what's on the main scanners."

"That's the Meletian system," said Tarrant, as Zen displayed an image on the view screen. "Ahead of us, about ten hours at standard speed. We're still on course. But what's behind us? Zen, show us the rear view scanners."

"I can't see anything," said Vila.

"Just because we can't see it, and it isn't registering on Zen's scanners, doesn't mean it's not there. Maybe Orac can shed some light... where is Orac?"

"Here." Cally slid a panel aside and reached inside, retrieving the computer and placing it on the games table. "I thought it prudent to put Orac out of harm's way."

Avon noticed that the activator key was in position and the computer seemed to be purring contentedly. "Well, Orac?" he demanded.

"Fascinating," replied the computer. "Absolutely fascinating."

Avon glowered. "That's not an answer."

"You did not ask a question."

"Orac, can you explain what happened?" asked Avon with deliberate precision.

"Of course I can." The computer said nothing more, and continued to click and whirr.

"Do it, then! I'm running out of patience."

"Very well. I have been researching psychic phenomena. It has been obvious for some time that the Auron woman is susceptible to certain stimuli to which the rest of you are immune. I wished to find out if the reverse was true. When I detected an area of psionic energy near the Meletian system, I suggested you go there."

"Not for gold and beaches?" asked Vila, with palpable disappointment.

"So this was an experiment to prove a theory of yours," said Avon. "I hope you're satisfied with the results."

"Nice work, Orac," said Tarrant, "you endangered us, endangered the ship -"

"I did nothing of the sort." Orac sounded affronted. "The auto-repairs can cope admirably with any damage to the Liberator."

"We could have killed each other!" objected Dayna.

"There was a small statistical possibility that might occur," the computer agreed, "but thanks to Cally's prompt actions, I was not at risk."

"And that's the only thing that matters, is it?" asked Vila crossly.

"Of course," replied Orac, as if that was obvious.

"Avon, shall we chuck Orac off the ship right now, or disassemble him first?"

"I assume that question was rhetorical," said Orac. "I am far too useful and important to be destroyed."

"Unfortunately, that's true," said Avon, "but don't tempt me."

"So now what?" asked Dayna. "Stay on course for the Meletian system?"

"We might as well see what's there," said Tarrant. "Zen, maintain current course and speed."

+CONFIRMED+

"Besides, there may yet be gold," said Vila, relaxing back on the couch. "I'm just glad the stupid experiment is over."

"It is not yet over," stated Orac.

"What do you mean? We're back to normal, aren't we?"

"Or whatever passes for normal in Vila's case," smiled Dayna.

"Thanks, Dayna - you've proved my point," said Vila, not rising to the bait. "Forget it, Orac. We're not going through any more of that, just to satisfy your curiosity. We aren't lab animals for you to experiment on, like -"

"Like rats in a box?" suggested Orac tartly. "But you have no choice. The first part of the test was to see how you would react initially. The second part is to repeat the experiment, but with your foreknowledge of what will happen. The test will commence in approximately ten minutes and last for 1.25 hours."

FEAR OF THE CYBERMEN

OR WHY THE CYBERMEN OUTRANK THE DALEKS

Cyber-fan TONY J FYLER makes the case that the Cybermen are Doctor Who's scariest monsters...

The Cybermen are frequently thought of as *Doctor Who's* Silver Medal Villains, the second mega-hitters in the show's history and, next to the Daleks, *Who's* creepiest, most successful returning villains.

Here's the thing: to me, the Cybermen will always be scarier than the Daleks. More interesting than the Daleks. In short, and there's no other way to put this, **better** than the Daleks.

It feels like a kind of fan-blasphemy even trying to explain why that should be so. After all, it was the Daleks that turned *Doctor Who* from an interesting programme about time travelling teachers and some fire-fearing cavemen into must-watch TV. There's no contesting the notion that the Daleks saved *Doctor Who*, and got it a second season. Their second story expanded their potential hugely, and remains an all-time classic, proving that they were more than just a flash in the creative pan.

The Dalek design is iconic (at least most of the time – we're looking at you, New Paradigm iDaleks), their voices still have the potential to scare the bejesus out of children, no matter how old they are, and philosophically, they're a combination of Nazism, atomic horror and the screaming ego of a five year-old, given a gun and told to kill the universe of the Not-We.

What have the Cybermen got that competes with that?

Firstly, the *idea* of the Cybermen is much scarier than the idea of the Daleks. Yes, the Daleks are 'bubbling lumps of hate' in bonded polycarbide suits of armour, but they never had a *choice* about that. They were 'born' that way, manufactured to be a laughable lesson in 'perfection,' and sent out into the universe to give the rest of us a cosmic kicking. The Daleks are toddler-rage, and while it can still kill you, it's all instinct, all emotion, all screaming tantrum. If they still had feet, they'd stamp them. That makes them recognisable to any child on a playground, any child that's dealt with bullies. But like all bullies, they're fundamentally weak, intrinsically impotent. As the Ninth Doctor said, 'Without a gun, what's the *point* of you?' Not much at all.

The Cybermen are *us*.



You, me, all of us. The Daleks might hate every non-Dalek thing in the universe, but the Cybermen were *frightened*. Oh, they can witter on open-mouthed about having to amend their form to survive in the wastes of space as Mondas froze on its way round the block, but Kit Pedler, who first had the idea of the Cybermen, built them from a concept of fear. He was afraid that the more we replaced ourselves with artificial mechanisms, the less human we'd become, and so he made the Cybermen afraid. Afraid of all the things you and I are frightened of in our pathetically short, squishy, organic, emotion-driven lives. They were frightened of ageing. Of decrepitude. Of a loss of memory and function. Of going blind, or deaf, or mad. Of the frailty that comes with getting old. And of the ultimate consequence of time – of death.

Mondas was not casually chosen as the Earth's 'twin' planet – it was pure science fiction allegory. The Mondasians were us, with better medical facilities. At least they were in the Sixties. Now, it would be fair to say we're

just about starting to catch them up – bionic arms and legs are starting to be 3D-printed and they're changing lives.

And that's the scary thing. The Cybermen began with such good intentions, and the replacement of limbs and organs is unquestionably a good thing for those who lack them. But Pedler feared that the more we augmented ourselves, the more our ability to do so would slide from necessary to easy, from surgical to cosmetic or functional, to elective. The idea of upgrading ourselves not because we lack anything in nature, but because the mechanical alternative is *better* is how you get from where we are right now to the Cybermen.

And as Russell T Davies was quick to point out when he took on the task of bringing the Cybermen back in New *Who*, we are a culture obsessed with gadgetry and gizmos, the latest cool upgrade and the race to be the same as everyone else, to be socially equal. If there's a killer app, we all have to have it. A killer game, we all have to have it. The most bells-and-whistles phone, it's in our pocket, transforming how we spend the time of our lives.



Imagine if there was an affordable technology to upgrade your eyes, so they'd replay anything you saw, any time you wanted, straight to your brain. Imagine a slot at the back of your neck, a chip that would give you mental access to Netflix at the speed of thought. Imagine a cyber-nanite pill that could eat excess fat. Reprogram muscle to grow. Rebuild neuron pathways. Imagine you could download your entire mind to the cloud, seamlessly, every ten minutes like Google Docs, for rebooting in the event of accidental damage. Imagine you could retard the ageing process, be young, be strong, be desirable forever. Which of us wouldn't take any of those elective steps on the pathway to the Cybermen?

Now imagine every heartbreak you've ever had. Every death you've grieved for. Every love spurned. Imagine all the rage of passion and politics, of argument, of knowing that you're right and someone else is wrong. Imagine all the pain of knowing others are suffering, and you can do nothing to help. That you can't save those who die of famine, those who flee from war, those whose parents beat them, those who find the streets a safer bet, those who are locked in cages.

You can do nothing to help any of them.

Then imagine you could take all that pain, all that passion and heartbreak and impotence, and you could flush it, cool as lemonade from your brain. How much easier would your life be without the burden of a conscience, without the *need* to care? Ignorance is bliss because it doesn't know the suffering around it. But imagine bliss with no loss of data. Imagine you could know everything that's being done to every victim in the world – and simply choose not to care.

How attractive would that be?

Plenty of people will claim it's not attractive at all, that caring is what makes us human. And they're right. But how much human pain can you take before you take the easy option? Before, like Bill in *World Enough And Time/The Doctor Falls*, you turn down the dial, to not know, not hear the pain of those around you. Before you tune it out, so that you can go on?

The Cybermen are us if we take the easy option, if we delete the painful parts of being alive because they hurt.

The Daleks are screaming Nazi children in tanks, yes, and they can shout you down, and they can kill you. But unless you're predisposed to their ideology, that can't make you *want* to be like them. The Cybermen can do that. If you're in pain, or fear, or facing the diminution of everything you are, the Cybermen can look like an escape. A reprieve. An alternative to agony, to age, to death, and to the aching human heart. Oh yes, the Cybermen can make you want to be like them, because the only reason *they're* like them is that they used to be us.

Then, beyond the heavy philosophy of the Cybermen, there's their aesthetic. The Daleks and Cybermen might both *be* former humanoids encased in metal and kept alive by artificial systems, but the Daleks don't *look* like they were ever us. The Cybermen, in all their forms – from the mummified *Tenth Planet*ers to the metallic Troughton variants, and even up to the current, somewhat cherubic mostly-androids – look humanoid. Their eyes and mouth are in the same relationship as ours, their arms and legs are like ours. The fact of their former humanity is inescapable – as is the fact that with their expressionless faceplates and their synthesised voices, they've lost the last scraps of that humanity to their fear and their need to survive.



That aesthetic of lost humanity, that blankness coming from something that we instinctively feel should be *like us*, makes the Cybermen more imposing, more terrifying than the sons of Skaro.

Then there's the variability of their use. While the Dalek shadow is thrilling when thrown against a corridor wall, there's no such thing as a stealth Dalek. Or rather, there is *now*, in terms of the humanoid Dalek agents, but there hasn't been until very recently in the show's history. Until *Genesis of the Daleks*, the Daleks themselves were overlords, plotters, schemers, big picture thinkers tied to myopic views of their own supremacy. Post-*Genesis*, they were shock troops for a generation, screaming soldiers following the orders of Davros or the Dalek Supreme, all notion of stealth abandoned.

Cyberman were doing the scary shadow thing as early as *The Moonbase* too, but they could also hide as humans in a hospital bed. They had plans that were deeply (in fact, some would say impenetrably) sneaky as far back as *The Wheel In Space*, and they've done everything from poisoning staff on a space station to send the survivors to blow up a planet, to crashing a shipful of themselves into the Earth, to altering the course of Halley's comet, to stealing children from a theme park and turning the Doctor into one of them. The Daleks have had some whacky schemes in the past too, it's true, (*The Dalek Master Plan*, *The Chase*, *Destiny of the Daleks*, *Resurrection of the Daleks*...) but for sheer, madly illogical logic, you can't beat the Cybermen. That the Cybermen's storylines have for the most part been screamingly illogical has served to

downgrade them in our minds – there are maybe three TV Cyber-stories that really work in terms of logic, and they're probably not the ones you love. But they can work, and have been *shown* to work, in audio stories, in novels, in comic-books.

That they've rarely been used to their fullest advantage on screen is not the Cybermen's fault. It's the fault of the fact that the Cybermen, used to their fullest advantage, give you very little option but to kill or be killed, and that doesn't leave a lot of room for the Doctor's usual heroics. Shoot a Dalek in the eyestalk, it'll freak the hell out and probably self-destruct, because then it will know panic, and vulnerability, and know itself to be less-than-perfect.

Shoot a Cyberman in the eye, it'll keep on coming and kill you before you get another shot in, because fear is a thing it has *conquered*.



Cyber-shock artwork copyright ©
By Jeff Goddard

That the Cybermen have in recent years been purposefully downgraded or turned into the same kind of disposable shock troops that the Daleks were in 'the Davros years' is not their fault either, and dotted in between their use by the megalomaniac of the week (John Lumic, Torchwood, Miss Hartigan, Missy, The Master...) have been stories that have given glimpses of what the Cybermen *could* be – *Nightmare in Silver*, for all it is sometimes derided by fans, makes the Cybermen a genuine threat again, against whom the only real recourse is to blow up the planet they're standing on. *The Next Doctor*, for all it's slightly overshadowed by the CyberKing, shows them taking logical advantage of the resources at hand to build their victory. *World Enough And Time/The Doctor Falls*, for all it dissolves

into a Master-Off, shows the horror of illness, of pain, and of fear that could drive us to want to die – or to be able to turn off all the shocks of flesh, and become a Cyberman. In their philosophical core, rooted in fear rather than rage, in the multiple uses to which they can productively be put, in the cold aesthetic of sacrificed humanity and in their interminable closeness to what we could become, it is the Cybermen, rather than the Daleks, who are the most fascinating, and the scariest, of all the Doctor Who monsters. I for one want to see where the Cybermen's terrifying destiny takes them next.



Cyber-Leader:
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THE DALEK MEN

AUTHORS OF 'DALEK' GEORGE MANN AND CAVAN SCOTT

INTERVIEWED BY NICK MAYS

Last year saw the publication of what must surely be the definitive take on the mutated, mechanical and maniacal sons of Skaro, namely *Dalek* by George Mann, Cavan Scott and Justin Richards (BBC Books, 2017).

As well as the fictional history of the Daleks, taken from TV, audio, prose and comic sources, *Dalek* combines the factual story of the Daleks from their conception by writer Terry Nation to their physical realisation by BBC designer Ray Cusick and their debut in the second serial of the fledgling *Doctor Who* in December 1963-January 1964.

Unbeknown to anyone—the WHO production team, the BBC and even Nation himself—the Daleks secured *Doctor Who's* long term future and went on to conquer, if not the world, then certainly the UK in the ensuing tide of 'Dalekmania'.

Dalek was reviewed in *Ish* #1 of *Gallifrey The Long Way Round* but unfortunately pressures of time and space prevented the inclusion of an interview with two of its authors, George Mann and Cavan Scott. Such niggling temporal and spatial anomalies have now been overcome by the addition of a new fluid link, so let's set out and explore the Dalek world with their human chroniclers...

NICK MAYS: *I'm guessing that you both – and Justin – have been long time Who fans and Dalek fans in particular?*

CAVAN SCOTT: Absolutely, ever since I was a kid. I loved the show since the Tom Baker days, although Baker himself scared me silly, and gradually became more and more of an active fan the older I got, getting the magazine, reading fanzines and joining fan-clubs. It was such a big part of my growing up.

GEORGE MANN: Yeah, it was a very similar experience for me, too. My first Doctor was Peter Davison, but it was really when we got our first Satellite TV box and I was able to sit and watch complete Tom Baker serials every Saturday and Sunday morning that I became a

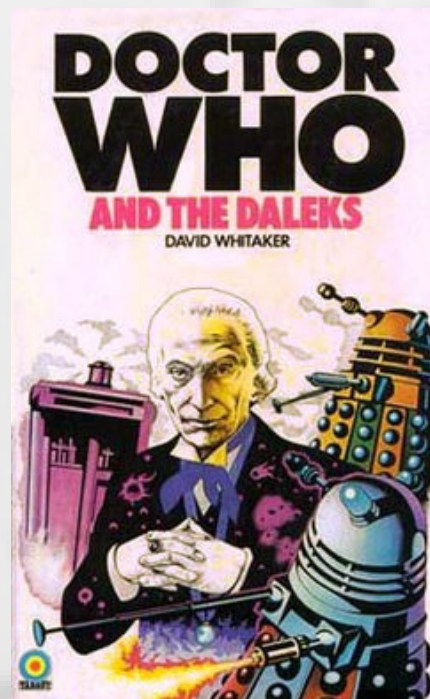
proper fan. I raided the local libraries for Target books, and started collecting older episodes on VHS. *Doctor Who* was such an important part of my youth. The Daleks, of course, were always the Doctor's most dangerous and iconic enemy, and those stories quickly became favourites for me, most particularly Genesis of the Daleks, for the insight and moral questions it posed. It's meaty stuff, and very rich in story and character.

NM: *What were your earliest memories of the Daleks?*

CS: The Daleks cornering a terrified Romana in *Destiny of the Daleks* (1979).

GM - I think mine's a little later - probably the glass incubation Dalek from *Revelation of the Daleks* (1985), and the horrific condition of the slowly mutating man inside. That's an image that lodged in my brain and has never shifted!

CS: Ah, the Glass Dalek. Finally realised after first being mentioned in *Doctor Who in an Exciting Adventure With the Daleks* (by David Whitaker). I love that.



NM: *Dalek is an incredibly well-researched book, combining on-screen 'fact' with disparate Dalek 'legends' (i.e. TV Century 21, Dalek Annuals etc.) and original fiction – how did you come up with the concept and plan the book out?*

GM: The original concept is down to Albert at BBC Books. He'd been talking to Justin about the idea on the back of the big Whoniverse book that Justin and I had co-written the previous year, and the two of them had concocted a plan, including a rough outline for what would be covered in each chapter. They invited me in as co-writer, and we divided up the chapters from there, basically, depending on our particular favourite parts of the Dalek mythology. We also planned out what stories and comic strips we'd like, and who we wanted to bring in to write them. From there, it was a case of drilling down beyond the outline to work out how to stitch it all together.

CS: I was brought in after the planning had all taken place. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, Justin was unable to work on the project as much as originally planned, and so they needed another writer. George mentioned it to me, and I jumped at the chance.



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NM: *How did you share out the work in the book?*

CS: It was largely a case of divvying out the different time periods the book covered and working out which stories fit where. Then we got to work, letting each other know what we were writing. Of course, there was quite a lot of going back-and-forth towards the end to make sure it all fitted well together.

GM: Exactly that. We work together a lot, and we know each other's strengths, so we were able to play to them, working in tandem to pull it all together.

NM: *Did you make a conscious decision to marry together all the odd bits and pieces and continuity contradictions about the Daleks' origins? [I think you did a great job btw].*

CS - Absolutely. We wanted the book to cover everything, from the TV show to the audios to the various comics there have been over the years. And yes, there are contradictory accounts of the Daleks' origins,

but as we revealed in the book, due to the timey-wimey meddling of the New Dalek Paradigm, they all happened at one point or another.

GM - This was one of my favourite bits of the book - trying to find ways to weave it all together, to make sure as much as possible was included. It was absolutely our intention - to create as inclusive a history for the Daleks as possible, drawing on lots of different sources.



NM: *Dalek is a BBC book. Did the BBC's Doctor Who production office have any input or final say-so on the book as published?*

CS - Yup, the team at Cardiff approve everything that's published in the many worlds of Doctor Who. They are our very own High Council.

NM: *Is Dalek therefore (ahem) – canon?*

CS - Yes, of course it is. Until it isn't. As with all things in the Whoniverse, history can be rewritten. As can the future.

GM - That's the wonderful thing about Doctor Who. Time and continuity is always being revised and rewritten, just by the very nature of the show. So yes, in as much as any other book is canon, this one is, too!

NM: *As far as the contradictory Dalek origins go – and this extends to the Daleks' early 'slatted/non-slatted' TV appearances - do you think the Time War may have caused different iterations of the Daleks to evolve? (i.e. blue skinned humanoids in TV Century 21, Kaleds genetically engineered by Davros on TV etc.)?*

CS - I refer the honourable gentleman back to the book. It's all in there. The trouble is, the Daleks themselves don't really know which origin is the right one any more.

GM - Just look at the Human race. We've so many different origin myths, stemming from so many different cultures. Why shouldn't the Daleks have the same? And yes, the Time War wreaked havoc with their history, so there are hundreds, if not thousands, of alternate timelines, weaving in and out of each other. Everything's true, and everything's a lie!



Davros—evil genius creator of the Daleks—in one version of their history, anyway...

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NM: We've also learned from Doctor Who (*World Enough and Time/The Doctor Falls* 2017) that Cybermen will evolve wherever there are humans, so do you think that maybe Daleks also have different evolutionary stories?

CS : I think it's a distinct possibility.

GM - Absolutely. It makes perfect sense to me.

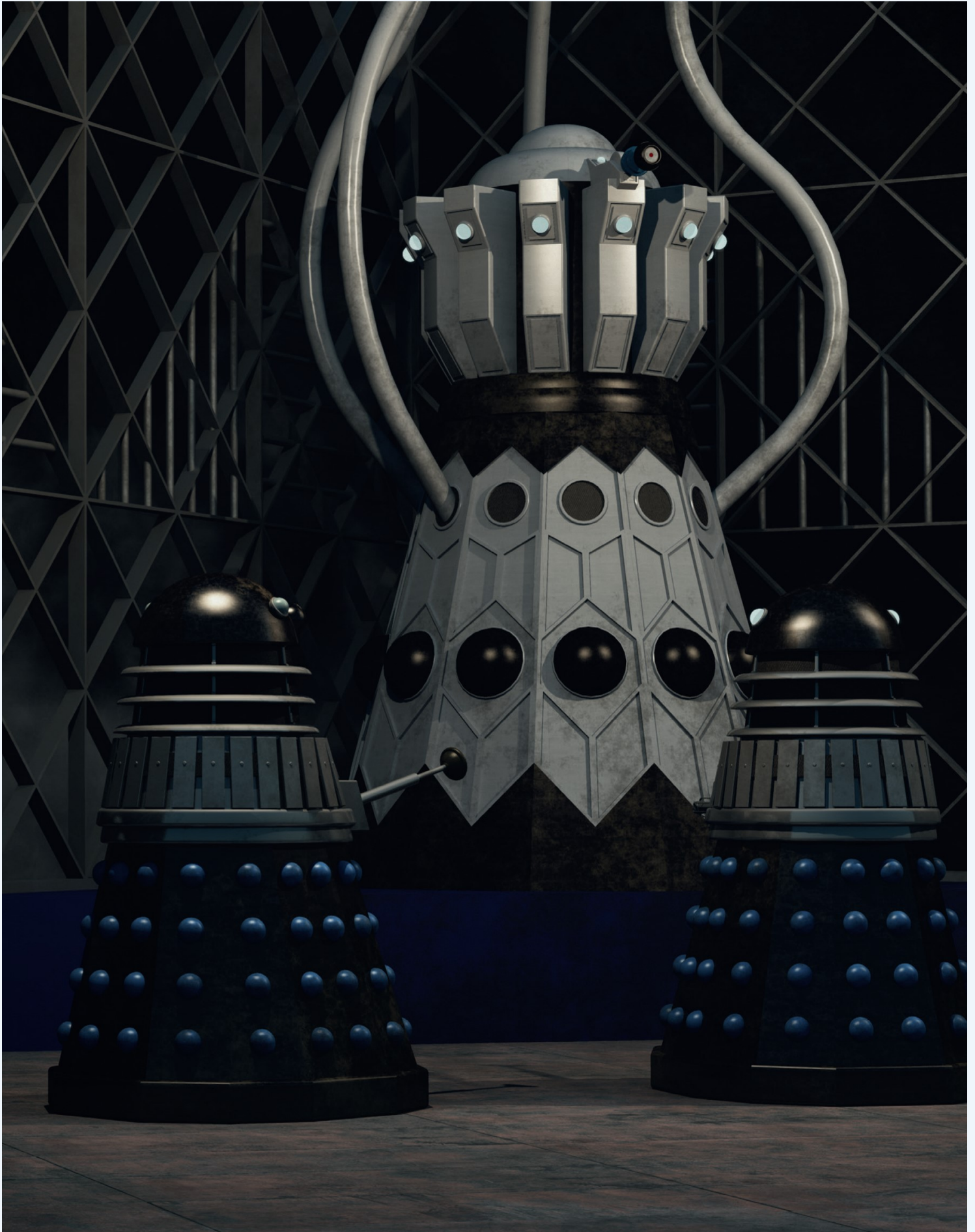
NM: *Kudos to you for building on Terry Nation's short story 'We Are The Daleks' (in the BBC's Radio Times Doctor Who 10th Anniversary Special 1973) that the Haldons were involved in the Daleks' creation and post 2005 WHO showrunner Russell T Davies' later take that the Haldons took part in the first Time War. Do you think that the Daleks' hatred of humanity may stem from the fact (or possibility) that we share a common ancestor?*



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CS: I think the Daleks hate anything that isn't a Dalek, whether that's a human or not.

GM : Cav is spot on here. It's not about humanity. Humans are irrelevant to Daleks. They're not Daleks, so they hate them. End of story.



The Dalek Emperor and its Black Dalek Imperial guards—as seen in *Evil of the Daleks* (1967)

NM: What do you think Terry Nation – and for that matter Ray Cusick - would have made of 'your book'?

CS - I hope to think they would be pleased. We certainly consider it to be our own personal tribute to the Daleks' original creators, a thank you for all the pleasure they've given us over the years.

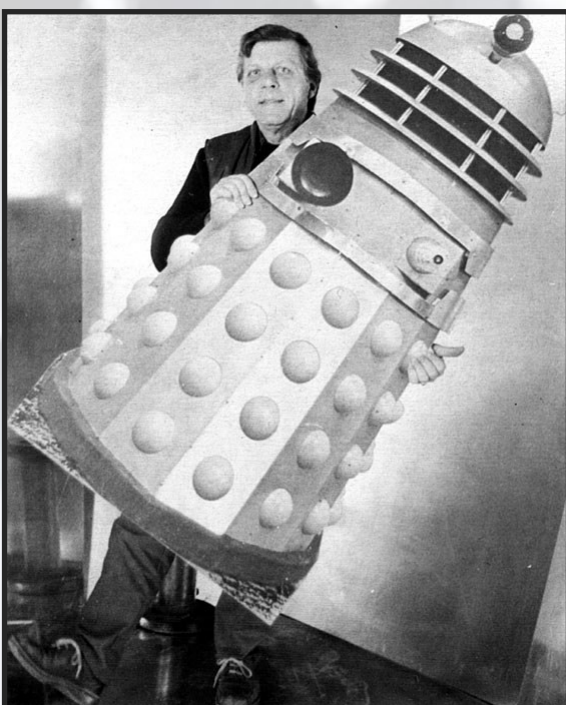
GM - I'd like to think they'd be happy so many people were still enjoying their creations. What they created in the Daleks is an amazing legacy, and our book is intended as a celebration of that.

NM: What are your personal favourite Dalek stories?

CS - On TV, it's *Remembrance of the Daleks* (1988), all the way. In comic, *Children of the Revolution*. With audio, it's a toss-up between the *Apocalypse Element*, for pure nostalgia, and the recent Big Finish *War Doctor* box-sets, which have been wonderful. And finally, when it comes to the written word, I'd have to go for George's *Engines of War*.



Dalek creator the late Terry Nation— the Daleks made him a millionaire ...



Dalek designer, the late Ray Cusick—the Daleks didn't make him a millionaire...

GM - I think for me it's *Genesis of the Daleks* (1975), but *Remembrance* is a very close second. We're so lucky to have so many great Daleks stories now, though. As Cav mentions above, the Time War audios are fantastic, as are the *Dark Eyes* stories featuring the Eighth Doctor. It's a great time to be a Dalek fan!



Davros and his creations from *Genesis of the Daleks* (1975)

NM: Do you think 'Zeg' (from the TV Century 21 comic strip 'Duel of the Daleks' 1965) would have made a good Emperor Dalek if he'd won the duel?

CS: Who's to say he didn't, out there somewhere in the multiverse?

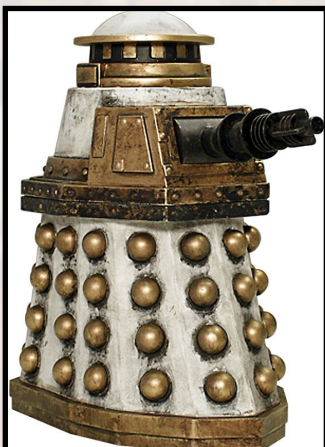
GM: Ha! I'd like to think that he did.



Above: Zeg: Would-be Dalek Emperor

Below: Special Weapons Dalek

NM: What are your favourite Dalek designs from TV? (i.e. original 'The Mutants' versions or 'Evil of Daleks' Black Domed Imperial Guards, or the bronze post-2005 series etc.)



CS: It will be a fight between the bronze 21st-Century Daleks and Davros's Imperial Daleks, including, of course, the Special Weapons Dalek.

GM: Got to be the Special Weapons Dalek. But I have a real soft spot for the original version from *The Mutants*, too. And the Ironsides are a lot of fun as well.

NM: Which missing/partly missing 1960s Dr Who Dalek TV adventure would you most like to see returned to the BBC's archives and released on DVD?

CS: *Power of the Daleks*. I know we had the animated version, which was brilliant, but I'd love to see the real thing. It's one of my favourite Doctor Who stories.

GM: *Evil of the Daleks*. I'm a sucker for Victoriana and I'd love to get a proper look at Daleks in that time period.

NM: Bit of a contentious one this: Do you think the Daleks are over-used or under-used in Doctor Who nowadays?

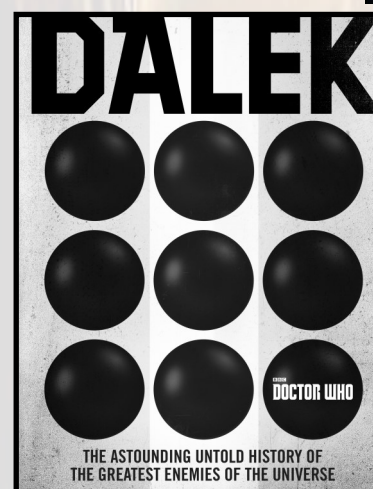
CS: I can't get enough of them. I can't wait to see Jodie facing them for the first time.

GM: I think they've got the balance just about right. But I'm always game for more!

NM: Do you think there would be any mileage nowadays in Terry Nation's old idea for the Daleks to have their own TV series, or maybe films?

CS: I think Big Finish proved that yes, there's plenty of mileage in Dalek-only stories. I'd love to see something like *Dalek Empire* on screen.

GM: Absolutely. I'd love to see something along the lines of *Dalek Empire* writ large on our TV screens. Or spy stories in a world that's been occupied by Daleks. There's so much you could do.



DALEK

By George Mann, Justin Richards and Cavan Scott
Published by BBC Books, 2017
RRP: £35.00

DOCTOR WHO

YEAR TWO

NOVEMBER 1964—JULY 1965

As Doctor Who entered its second full year of production and transmission, things were looking good for the series. The Daleks had certainly helped to cement the programme in viewers' affections and had secured it a second season of 48 weeks. 'Dalekmania' was at its height—people simply couldn't get enough of the malevolent pepperpots from Skaro, so Christmas '64 would see many children's stockings stuffed with miniature Daleks, Dalek soap, Dalek jigsaws and, if their parents were really well off, PVC Dalek costumes. The first Dalek Book had been published, some months before the first Doctor Who Annual, which might well be found in Christmas stockings too! [Personally, I think they missed a trick by not issuing Tribe of Gum miniature figures. Here we are, 55 years on and there's still no Kal, Za or Old Mother to be had even amongst the most niche models! - Ed].

As Doctor Who's second year began, there had been a change of TARDIS crew—Carole Ann Ford who played the Doctor's granddaughter Susan had left the series at the conclusion of The Dalek Invasion of Earth. Who could know that before the show entered its third season there would be another major change in the cast line-up...?

The Rescue

Now a major media event each time a new regular actor joins the show, the first story for Vicki is no less an important moment in the overall story of the programme. If there is an issue, it could be said that the creativity of the work behind the scenes to create *Doctor Who* in 1962 becomes a limitation three years later. The new companion is clearly intended to fill a Susan-shaped hole in the established format, with the new character being so similar visually and in terms of her personality that Maureen O'Brien at times finds herself acting out 'what would Susan have said or done' writing rather than creating something truly new. Even the Doctor comes to see Vicki as a kind of substitute, emotionally and within the narrative of stories such as *The Romans*, in which he protectively keeps Vicki with him through the adventure. It could also be argued that the introduction of Vicki does the



**Maureen
O'Brien as
Vicki:**

**A new
damsel in
distress?**

show a degree of harm, reinforcing early on the requirement for the show to always replace the young, helpless female role when the stronger character of Barbara does not have a true inheritor of her role until Doctor Shaw appears. Even the popular title of this story, in this instance not taken from either of the original episode titles, primes the viewer to understand the story in terms of Vicki's need to be rescued rather than focusing on the situation on Dido.

The Romans

This is the middle part of a trilogy of new types of story for the show in its second season. The previous one introduced a new regular character and the next would be a journey into a kind of fantasy unlike anything before or since. This, however, was a comedy. True, there are moments along the way that homage classic adventure epics of the big screen, but the majority of the story is a pastiche of traditional British farce and the bawdy pop culture that was established by this time on the nation's cinema screens even before the 'Carry On' series got into full swing. A large part of the story again makes Barbara more of a sex object than later seasons would dare, even in the mid-70s with Leela. And this is in a quite literal sense too, as anyone who watches Nero chasing our heroine around his palace to force his attentions upon her will testify. He is the third character to set his sights on non-consensual liaisons with Barbara on screen and will not be the last, q.v. *The Keys of Marinus* and *The Reign of Terror*. And this is in addition to the well-known scene in episode one where William Russell and Jacqueline Hill clearly improvise a lot more into a scene such that it suggests rather more than was intended by the writer and clearly was of a consensual nature!



**Barbara:
Consensual
and
Non-
Consensual**

The Web Planet

Like a certain yeast extract-based sandwich spread, this story divides opinion. For the record, this reviewer loves *The Web Planet* and has watched it in a single sitting on numerous occasions without any loss of enjoyment and makes no apology for this. If ever there was a *Doctor Who* story that possessed ambition ahead of its time, this is such a serial. We visit a completely alien world, populated by other lifeforms that are as different from each other as each is from the humans and Gallifreyans that arrive in their time machine. What is more, rather than being side-tracked by its own world building, the tale also delivers the kind of exciting adventure in outer space that the premise of the show promised and had previously delivered in stories like *The Daleks* in the previous season. There are some superficial similarities between the plot here and *First Men in the Moon*, by H.G. Wells, but there's an argument that comparison with such a literary classic only makes this entry into the genre stronger.



The Web Planet: Completely Alien...



The Crusades

Despite following the same starting point as *The Romans* in splitting Ian and Barbara off into their own adventures and teaming up the Doctor and Vicki, and with a few moments of wit notwithstanding, the story of this serial is a very interesting part of the *Doctor Who* canon and a great loss from the archives. Most of what is seen here is familiar ground, or would have been to an audience fed on a regular diet at home and at the cinema of tense action adventures set in conflicted periods of the past. But there is an adult tone to the tragic lives of the family who try to protect a fleeing Barbara, the overtly sexual and sadomasochistic predicament she subsequently finds herself in (even more so in the novel of the story), the arranged marriage and implied forced sex faced by the guest character Joanna, and, on a different level, the wider concepts of racial and religious division or unity as seen through the various scenarios and viewpoints as the story progresses. If this were a more common show for the period, a series like *The Time Tunnel* for example, the issues and relative positions of the characters would be a lot more clear-cut, a lot less topical, and definitely not as edgy.



The Crusade: Still edgy today

The Space Museum

If a story like *The Web Planet* causes division of opinion, the production itself is at least consistent in a way that most serials created during the time of Verity Lambert are. Few stories through the history of the show are, however, divided against themselves in the manner of this tale. The first episode is a brilliant piece of science fiction, as the time travellers wander through both a singular setting and an equally mysterious sequence of fantastical and unexplained phenomena. The

climax to that first part of the story is also a real spine chiller as, having seen a glimpse of a terrible future outcome, they find themselves back in the 'correct' time and place and unsure how to prevent that future coming to pass. The main problem with the next three episodes is not that they are bad television, but that they belong in a completely different kind of story. The atmosphere of tension and pseudo-scientific discovery to try and alter the course of time, by first having to understand the nature of the anomaly, is never paid off in the rest of the story. Questions are not only never answered, it is as though they were not asked. If episode one had been a crazy adventure and a moderately clever and topical analogy of student's rights issues, and not a brilliant piece of mind bending fantasy about the nature of time, the episodes two to four would probably be better remembered.

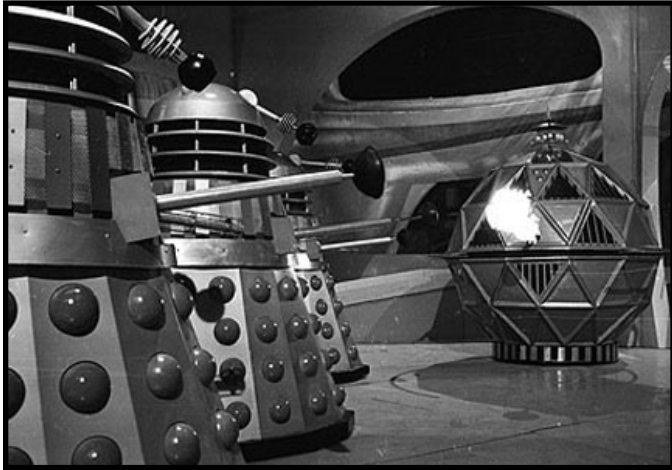


The TARDIS crew make an exhibition of themselves...

The Chase

As with *The Keys of Marinus* before it and *The Dalek's Master Plan* after, the ambition and brilliance of *The Chase* lies not in stunning visuals or quotable dialogue or seminal fantasy concepts, although the appropriation of the time scanner from Asimov's *The Dead Past* (1956) was very neat. Looking at the idea holistically, Terry Nation presented a package that was virtually a complete show. If you tuned in for just those six weeks, you could come away with a strong sense of satisfaction and fulfilment for having spared those twenty-five minutes every weekend. In the modern era, proposing a six-episode story with a regular cast, a recurring alien threat, five settings, a running plot arc, time travel, romance, and a spectacular battle between two races of robots (the true nature of the

the Daleks is not explored in this particular story) with lots of explosions and special effects, that would be your pitch for the entire show, not one story. Television in the 1960s sometimes excelled within its limitations and sometimes refused to even acknowledge that it had any. Many of the individual elements arguably fall short of the show's usual standards, but the overall effect is still very impressive.



The Chase ends... in a spectacular battle between Daleks and Mechanoids

The Time Meddler

With hindsight, this story is often singled out for introducing the first Time Lord character other than the Doctor and launching the fantasy historical format that would become the normal for the show rather than the 'pure' historical adventures favoured in the period. Taken in isolation though, this is worth special mention purely and simply for being so good! The monastery, village and coast really do evoke that period of British history, the cast are all either convincing or suitably unconvincing enough for the show to be entertaining while feeling like a period drama too. The scheme of the Monk would qualify him as a diabolical mastermind in *The Avengers*, and Peter Butterworth plays the role with wit and truthfulness, a larger than life character who actually doesn't care about the consequences of his actions while convincing the audience that he is fully aware of what they are at the same time. There is a duel element to the Doctor's outmanoeuvring of the Monk that foreshadows his fights with the Master in later seasons but which has a unique charm of its own.

Mention must also be made of how this story continues with a style introduced in *The Romans* but taken in a slightly different direction here. The previous story was a dark

comedy, with classic elements of farce mixed with some really quite adult themes of sexual and other physical abuse directed mainly at Barbara but also other female characters. The *Time Meddler* again combines comedy with moments of violence, but what sets the sexual violence of this story apart from the other is that, while Barbara was, as usual, threatened with violation, the rape of Edith, a significant supporting character, is a very real event in the story and a plot motivator.

There will be a future essay in this fanzine, penned by its principal editor, that will discuss the argument of where *Doctor Who* stands within the gender political debate and how it compares to the accusations of sexism levelled against it. Certainly this story, along with others created under the supervision of Verity Lambert as producer, offers itself as a case for the defence, as a serious attempt at fantasy drama that was both mature and accessible and took its roles for women equally seriously.



"I'm the only Time Lord in the village!"



"What do you think it is; a space helmet for a cow?"

DALEK SUNSET

Above the low roofed dwellings, Kereé could see the hillside on the distant horizon bathed in the soft green glow of the Dukisian sunrise. The trees of the forest that lay between the range of hills and the small township swayed gently in the breeze, and she could see people roaming between them and collecting fruits from the orchards that interspersed the taller trees planted for logging. Out there somewhere was her father, working on one of the logging teams for another couple of years before his well-earned retirement. After that, he would still be out there every day. Except that, when his time was his own at last, he would plant and nurture the fruit trees and encourage the next generation in their duties.

Kereé turned and slowly observed every inch of the hillsides around the township. The green glow of the sky illuminated the ground in between, and there was much activity as her fellows passed back and forth about their business.

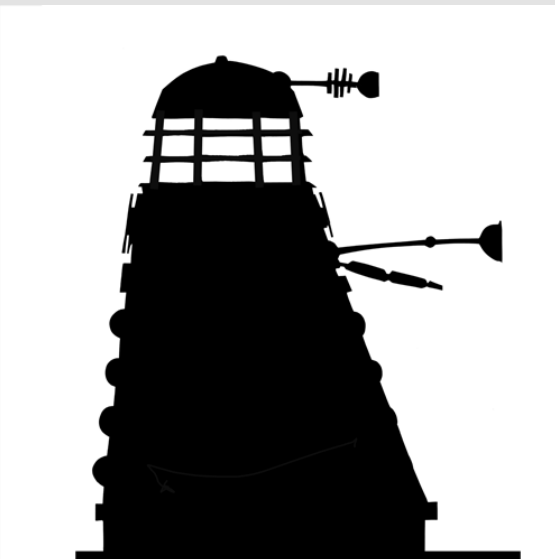
Above her, a tiny movement caught her attention as a craft sped across the sky from right to left. Nobody else seemed to notice it, or at least they failed to look up. It must be on its way to the local spaceport, thought Kereé, and from the speed it was travelling she considered that it must be a passenger ship with just a few people on board. As the craft changed direction however, she noted that it seemed much larger than she expected and was circular in shape.

The saucer flew over Kereé and was followed moments later by another three, flying in formation in the wake of the leader. They were on their way to the space dock.

More and more of the saucers circled overhead, and at last began to attract attention on the ground as hatches under the ship started to disgorge dozens and then hundreds of strange conical robots. It was only when the robots began to blaze dazzling beams of energy into the town's dwellings and civic buildings that the running and screaming began.

Kereé looked on as seven of the townspeople stood in a line and were burned alive by discharges from the energy weapons of the Daleks, their charred remains crumbling into the dirt.

More of the Daleks from the invading ships flew above the forest, picking off the fruit pickers and felling the loggers as they searched in vain for cover. Kereé watched on, helpless as the brief but decisive battle ended life on her home-world as she or anyone else had known it. She was one of the unlucky ones. She survived.



Kereé swivelled her gaze three hundred and sixty degrees as she surveyed what was left of the town around her. Beyond it, the twigs and stumps of the forest and orchards blended with the shadowy figures of Dalek patrols that glided between them almost camouflaged. Above them, the last of the flotilla descended through the soft green glow of the Dukisian sunset.

The Hypnotic Space-Sphere

An homage to the worlds of Doctor Who and Gerry Anderson

The Doctor Who/Fireball XL5 crossover you never knew you wanted

Vicki wandered idly around the console at the centre of the Tardis control room. Steven had annoyed the Doctor by calling the open space the flight deck, a few moments after taking off from the dark ages and stranding the Monk, prompting a lengthy and slightly rambling lecture from the Doctor about how the flight of a Tardis is unlike a spaceship. Flight is a greatly simplified term for the complexities of the crazy path a time machine takes through dimensions, in and out of reality and phases of existence, in its inexplicable journeys to the furthest reaches of both time and space.

First the Doctor and then her new travelling companion had disappeared into the depths of the ship. Now the room felt empty, not just because Steven and the Doctor had left the room but because Ian and Barbara were no longer on board the ship at all. For a brief moment, Vicki thought the steady hum of the console, its central dais rising and falling, had changed in pitch. Instinctively, she looked up at the scanner screen in the corner of the room to see if it was showing a destination. It was blank. "Three, five, seven..." spoke a voice in the room with her, "zero, blue". It sounded like the kind of nonsensical language that a Mechanoid might speak, but the voice was clear and soft and sounded human. It did not, however, sound like the Doctor or Steven. Looking down at the controls, usually meaningless to her, Vicki noted a small key-pad containing numbers and four coloured buttons. One of them was blue. Vicki pressed the number sequence followed by the blue button and stepped away, falling into a trance as the column at the centre of the console drifted to a stop at its lowest position.

The Doctor re-entered the console room.

"Aha!" cried the Doctor; "we appear to have landed, but where are we, hmmm?"

"On a spaceship" replied Vicki dreamily as Steven followed the Doctor into the room.

"No, no..." muttered the Doctor; "I mean where have we landed. And don't start to fall under the bad influence of Steven, my child. This is not a spaceship. It is a lot more than that, as you know!"

"No" said Vicki, snapping out of the trance; "I mean, that's where we've landed. On a spaceship!"

"But how can you know that?!" demanded Steven; "the scanner isn't even on!"

"I don't know..." replied Vicki, confused.

"Interesting..." said the Doctor, "very interesting indeed. The readings say we are inside some kind of space vessel, but how could you have known that, hmmm?"

"Can you read all this stuff, Vicki?" asked Steven, pointing to the console.

"No, I can't" answered Vicki, "I don't have any idea how to work the Tardis!"

"What do we do, Doctor?" asked Steven.

"I think..." mused the Doctor, "that spending time trying to solve this mystery from inside the Tardis will be a waste of time, and that the answers are all out there. So, we must explore!"

The Doctor, Vicki and Steven stepped out of the Tardis and found themselves in a small, metal walled and functional living space. It was windowless but had the familiar appearance of a kind of cabin found on space craft, familiar to both of the Doctor's current companions as they had been space travellers themselves before being rescued from alien worlds. Apart from some simple furniture and appliances for cooking and watching entertainment the room was empty and devoid of the desired clues as to the Tardis' latest destination. The Doctor led the way through into a small flight deck, its tinted windows looking out into an impressive star-filled vista. Seated at the controls was a pilot. He stared into space, oblivious to the Doctor and Steven's efforts to gain his attention.

"It doesn't look like he wants to talk to us, Doctor" said Steven

"More like he cannot respond to us..." said the Doctor, "like some kind of trance, perhaps..."

"So, who's flying the ship?" asked Steven; "looking at the readouts, there is a course set"

"Change course..." muttered Vicki, once again sharing the same glassy eyed stare as the pilot

"Look!" shouted Steven, pointing at the pilot; "he's doing it to! He's following Vicki's instructions!"

"No!" replied the Doctor; "No... I believe they are hearing the same instructions, but from someone else! Now, the question is who and where. Vicki, my child, who is speaking to you?"

"Three, four, eight..." intoned Vicki, "zero red... change course..."

"Who is speaking to you" demanded the Doctor, grabbing Vicki's shoulder to turn her to face him.

"It's no good!" cried Steven; "she can't hear you, Doctor! Neither of them can!"

"Patience!" insisted the Doctor; "now listen to me, Vicki, you stop listening to this voice in your head, whoever it is, and listen to me! You must not allow your mind to be controlled by anyone else!"

"Doctor?" asked Vicki, hearing him and waking; "what about the pilot..."

"Still under" explained Steven; "he's probably been under the influence for longer. Doctor, where are the ships being taken? Do those co-ordinates mean anything to you?"

"No" said the Doctor; "and what do you mean by ships?"

"Well..." said Steven, "have you looked out of the window?"

Alongside and behind the spaceship within which the Tardis had landed, flew a small fleet of craft of many different designs and sizes. One in particular stood out from the rest. It was smaller, spherical in shape, and pulsed with a regular light.

"Have all those ships been brought here?" asked Steven; "just like this one and the Tardis?"

"Yes, and that's another question!" said the Doctor; "what drew the Tardis here?"

"I'm sorry, Doctor..." said Vicki; "I think that was me. You see, I've heard the voice before..."

"On the Ship, you mean?" asked the Doctor; "yes, yes, yes... that would explain a lot about this! If you hear it again, you tell me straight away! And don't listen to it this time! Dear me..."

"What do we do now, Doctor?" asked Steven; "just wait and see where they take us?"

"Not at all!" exclaimed the Doctor; "we need to change course, break away from the influence!"

"Okay, let's give it a try" said Steven, reaching across to alter the flight controls.

Even as Steven changed the course of the ship and felt the rocket motors fire in response, two things happened. First, the previously placid pilot leapt up and began to grapple with Steven in an attempt to reach and reset the controls. Secondly, Vicki half collapsed into the Doctor and began to cry out.

"Three, four, eight, zero, red!" cried Vicki; "change course! Three, four, eight, zero, red!"

Steven pushed the pilot away, gasping in apology as the man's head hit the control panel and he fell to the floor unconscious. Meanwhile, behind him, a second thud reached his ears as Vicki fainted.

"Oh no!" cried Steven; "not both of them! Come on, Vicki... wake up..."

"Steven!" called the Doctor; "I think our ploy has worked! Look at this!"

"What is it, Doctor?" asked Steven, as the glowing sphere rose into view in front of them.

"You must leave this ship and their crews alone!" ordered the Doctor to nobody.

"You can hear them?!" asked Steven, amazed; "the voices, I mean?"

"You must stop using your hypnotic powers on these people and leave," said the Doctor firmly; "You will leave these poor people alone and fly away to wherever you came from. If you do not, then I will be forced to report you to the Proclamation... the ah... Shadow Proclamation! So, go away!"

"Report them to the what?!" asked Steven incredulously; "I've never even heard of the... whatever..."

"Shadow Proclamation," explained the Doctor as the sphere bobbed up and down in front of the ship's windows before eventually flying away; "a sort of intergalactic police."

"I'm okay" said Vicki, sitting up; "the voice has gone. I'm alright now."

"Then all of the pilots should be okay too" said Steven.

“Yes” agreed the Doctor, “except for this one. Let’s get back to the Ship before he wakes up.” A few moments later, the Doctor opened the doors of the Tardis and led the way inside. Steven stood back and gestured for Vicki to follow the Doctor.
 “Let’s go, Vicki” said Steven.
 “Let’s go, Steven” replied Vicki.

The Doctor’s two travelling companions stepped inside the Tardis and closed the door behind them.

THE END



Author’s Note: The above composite picture is an example of artistic licence for the sake of the story; although pictured, the spaceship Fireball XL5 does not appear within this Fanfic. Episode 38 of Season 1 of Fireball XL5 entitled Hypnotic Sphere upon which this story intersects was originally broadcast by ATV on 13th October 1963... six weeks before the first episode of Doctor Who was broadcast by the BBC, on 23rd November 1963.

Colin At The Capitol

Earlier this year, Colin Howard, cover artist for our first issue, was invited to the Capitol 3 convention organised by the Doctor Who Appreciation Society. We asked him a few questions about the experience...

What was it like to appear on an interview panel as a contributor to a Doctor Who production?

It was really quite strange to be back as part of the *Shada* Animation/completion panel at a convention after, I guess, 20 years or so. And, for me, it was amazing to have been part of the production of a show I have loved since I was a small child. The four of us were, I guess, all quite nervous to see how the panel would go down! Luckily, it seemed, very well, as it ran smoothly for its full time allocation, with hands still in the air and attendees wanting their questions answered when we had to wrap up. Rob Ritchie talked about his skills putting the 3D animation parts and sets together on both *Shada* and *Power of the Daleks*, Mike Tucker about his Model Effects team and how they 'scratch built' all the models like the Think-tank Station, and Skagra's ship, using the same techniques they used at the BBC back in the late 70's, Mark Barton Hill, talked about his Console Room set and how he had lovingly re-built it to that same era spec that he first saw at The Longleat Experience, as well as supplying Tom's costume for the final scene. And I wittered on about my three months hard slog supplying 50% of all the animated backgrounds as well as renders for Chris Parsons' set objects.

What were your general impressions of the convention?

All in all, really good ones; most of the attendees were really nice, I got to wander around talking to people, mostly incognito, having some quality time with the wonderful Jeff Cummins as well as being able to chat with some of the other guests in the 'green room'. The hosts looked after Michelle and I really well.

You were even the subject of an impromptu interview...

Yes it was just after the *Shada* panel, and I was asked by Robbie Dunlop if I wouldn't mind doing a

quick video interview about my involvement with the various Who products, such as books and magazines, over the years. Hopefully it went well. I think it's still up there online somewhere, even if just on my Facebook pages. There was a nice moment that I asked to be left in where, as it was being conducted somewhere on a couch at the rear of the event, I had a real 'fanboy' moment as, mid question, William Russell wandered by and I couldn't help but say 'Hello Chesterton!'

Did you meet any other well-known names over the weekend?

One thing that was really lovely for me personally was that, after thirty years, I was finally in the position to say 'thank you' in person to Colin Baker; back when I was starting out as an artist, I had met him in Norwich post performance, when he toured with the play '*Corpse*', and badgered him with some of my Artwork. He was lovely and, as a result, wrote a testimonial of my artwork abilities, which I feel went some way in getting the BBC to take notice of me. It was lovely to be sat with Rob in the Green room opposite Colin, listening to he & Nicola Bryant, and waiting for a lull to introduce myself, then see the dawning of recognition on Colin's face as the Penny dropped. We've both changed a lot in the intervening years. This was only topped off by Katy Manning approaching. Then, deftly perching on the arm of his chair, draping herself softly over him and asking "How are you, my lovely man?" - That moment was priceless!

It was also a bit of an artist's get together...

Yes, I had mentioned the amazing Jeff Cummins was there, someone I've always really admired. His *Face of Evil* and *Talons of Weng Chiang* covers are for me the very best Target Covers ever, despite my love of Chris Achilleos' work. Jeff's just such a lovely, warm, approachable human being. But, yes, Alastair Pearson was there as well. I think he's a bit of a fixture at **The Capitol**, and justly so, as his canon of quality cover work speaks for itself. And I also discovered he does a fantastic Tom Baker impersonation, as he delighted the crowd when on stage at the auction!

And of course guests can also be fans and meet people they themselves admire...

Yes indeed, I happened to mention during the *Shada* panel that I often listen to Audio Adventures, i.e. Big Finish, whilst painting. Another great favourite is *'The Scarifyers'*, as I just love the humour in those crazy *'Boys Own'* style romps. Then, whilst setting up my stall of artwork prints, this handsome devil wandered up and said: Did you say you liked *The Scarifyers*? It was only Paul Morris, one half of that amazing writing partnership, with Simon Barnard, who's responsible for those audios as well as a lot of recent years' *Jago & Litefoot*, which I also adore! It really helped make my weekend, I can tell you!!

What are your other convention plans for the year?

I am only booked in at one other Convention this year and that's **Dimension Jump XX**, in Nottingham come October, for the *Red Dwarf* Fan Club for which I am hoping to have time to complete a new painting, based on my final *'Smegazine'* cover that never was (as it was cancelled before it was commissioned). It's a crazy layout with good & evil versions of each character split down the middle!



www.colinhowardartwork.com

Red Dwarf Smegazine #6 - Kryten faces the Horror of the GEAP

© Colin Howard 1992

*Red Dwarf's Kryten
faces The Horror of
the Geap!*

*Colin's stunning
artwork from*

*Issue #6 of the Red
Dwarf Smegazine
(August 1992)*

© Colin Howard

*Look out for a feature
on Red Dwarf in a
future smegging
issue!*



SEASON 2 REVIEW

by Nick Mays

Humans owes a lot to Universal's *Frankenstein* films of the 1930s. There's the clear parallel of artificially created humans, along with the exploration of the essence of humanity - what, exactly, makes us 'human'?

There's another, more obvious parallel to be drawn though – *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), although the first (of many) sequels to *Frankenstein* (1931) was, in fact, a far better film. So it is that *Humans*' sophomore season is superior to the first; far grittier in tone, more challenging in its exploration of the essential nature of humanity and with better production values all round.

Of course, this is not to denigrate Season One or its necessary scene setting; we have to accept an alternate reality where Artificial Intelligence became a fact in the 1990s and where humanity now employs the services of Synthetic Humans – 'Synths' or 'Dollies' depending on your acceptance of them. We also have to meet a lot of principal characters, human and synth as well as gaining an insight into how they all interact with each other. So, having established all the foregoing, we enter Season Two knowing our principals. Indeed, if you hadn't watched Season One it would be easy to pick up the threads of the story (a recap in Episode 1 helpfully provides this), so we go straight into the action.

The story starts in Berlin, where Niska (Emily Berrington) begins a relationship with a woman named Astrid. She ponders whether or not to upload the 'Consciousness Code' to the global synth network to give her fellow synths free will and awareness. It doesn't take long until Niska does exactly that, but the upload only causes sporadic Synth awakenings across the world. Naturally this forces the authorities to take a firm stance against self-aware synths, rounding them up and de-activating them.



Sisters-in-arms: Mia (Jemma Chan) and Niska (Emily Berrington)

Leo Elster, son of the Synths' creator and Synth human hybrid along with his Synth brother Max rescue a factory worker synth named Hester (chillingly played by Sonya Cassidy) then retreat to their secret hideout in the countryside, some miles outside London. Their Synth sister Mia is working in a struggling seaside café. She is developing strong affection towards the young owner Ed, so she uses her superior intelligence in writing out his accounts and a business plan to secure him a much-needed bank loan.

Meanwhile in America, Milo Khoury (Marshall Allan), the billionaire head of the electronics corporation Qualia, recruits Dr Athena Morrow (Carrie-Anne Moss) to study the newly conscious synths, unaware that she has already developed her own sentient AI named V, which, we later discover, is created from her comatose daughter Veronica's consciousness. The Hawkins family meanwhile have moved house, but husband Joe (Tom Goodman-Hill) is made redundant due to a Synth taking over his position, an event which deepens his resentment against Synths. His wife Laura (Katherine Parkinson) is still a practising attorney – Synths not yet having taken up legal positions. Indeed, it is the very legal position of Synth-kind which prompts Niska to seek Laura out and ask her to defend her, as she wishes to stand trial as an individual for the murder of a human customer at the brothel from which she escaped in Season One.

Police detective Pete Drummond, living with fellow detective and conscious Synth Karen investigates a shady organisation selling a class of Synths known as Seraphim on the black market – the trail eventually leading them to Dr Morrow.

Thus the scene is set for multiple storyline strands. During the course of the next 7 episodes, we are reacquainted with Odi, a malfunctioning synth encountered in Season One. He is rescued from a scrapheap – literally – by the Hawkins' eldest daughter, computer expert Mattie (Lucy Carless) who uses the Consciousness Code to reawaken Odi. This only serves to cause Odi great distress, because he finds that he cannot handle human emotions.

During the course of the series, an interesting side plot sees the Hawkins' younger children exploring their own emotions and interactions with the world of Synths. Teenage Toby (Theo Stevenson) befriends a girl at school named Renie (convincingly played by Letitia Wright), a human being who looks and acts like a Synth, a form of psychological behaviour which affects a number of human beings, leading to such as them being termed 'Synthies'. Their youngest child Sophie (equally convincingly played by Pixie Davies), meanwhile, starts to display her own 'Synthie' behaviour. Both she and Renie have decided that this is a far better way of rationalising and indeed compartmentalising their own emotional confusion and insecurities.

Niska's 'trial' in which she must prove her emotional responses - both for killing a human being and displaying affection for Astrid—proves to be a farce. The authorities have no intention of allowing Niska to be proved self-aware, let alone gaining any degree of freedom. This ultimately results in a very entertaining set piece in which Niska escapes from confinement, a clever and exciting chase sequence which Emily Berrington says she thoroughly enjoyed filming.

Another aspect clearly shown in Season Two is that Synths are far more like human beings in their capacity for violence. Whilst you expect Niska to display aggressive tendencies – she oozes barely contained hostility at the best of times - Hester is the perfect psychopath. She doesn't scream or shout, but instead efficiently injures and kills human beings with ease, whether it is to contain information or to take revenge for the death of another Synth.... and is all the more chilling for it.

But it's usually gentle Mia – played brilliantly as ever by Gemma Chan – who surprises us most by her display of naked aggression towards Ed who betrays her to the black marketeers and in so doing betrays her feelings for him. When her anger comes it's all the more shocking because it's Mia, not Niska or Hester who reacts this way and loses control. Eventually, we learn the truth about what the Seraphim are and the secret of the Silo where dozens of self-aware Synths are being imprisoned. But a rescue attempt by Leo's gang leads to the destruction of most of the self-aware Synths, prompting a vengeful Hester to take action against Laura Hawkins in a tense and gripping stand-off.

Without giving away too many spoilers, Season Two concludes on a genuinely shocking cliffhanger concerning Mattie developing a completed version of the Consciousness Code to the Synth network, which will cause every Synth in the world to become self-aware... with potentially devastating results for humankind.

Going back to the *Frankenstein* analogy, the third film in Universal's franchise, *Son of Frankenstein* (1939) saw a distinct drop in quality which was reflected and indeed magnified in the numerous sequels following it. It can only be hoped that *Humans* Season 3—screened on Chanel 4 this summer— does not prove the rule in the law of diminishing returns...



Gallifrey,
the long way round

**(LEFT) Hester
(Sonya Cassidy)
takes no prisoners...**

**(BELOW) Don't
mess with Mia's
affections!**



STEPTOE & WHO?

By Nick Mays

Just recently I decided to re-watch 'The Beginning' Box set of DVDs comprising the very first three *Doctor Who* stories. Watching both the un-transmitted pilot episode and the first transmitted episode of the first serial *An Unearthly Child* a strange feeling of Déjà vu washed over me... I realised I'd seen this set up somewhere before... Hidden in Plain Sight as the dear old Moff might say...

The sitcom *Steptoe & Son* was first aired on BBC 1 in 1962; it's set in a scrapyard and features two related dysfunctional characters, one of whom is old and crabby, the other who is younger, but rather superior in nature and quite pompous. *Doctor Who* was first aired on BBC1 in 1963 and starts out set in a scrapyard where the mysterious Doctor and his granddaughter are hiding out in their TARDIS. We didn't know then, but both, as we now know, are renegade Time Lords. The Doctor is old and crabby, his granddaughter Susan somewhat superior in her nature to Earth people, some might say a little pompous.

Do you see the connection?

My question is this: *Are Albert and Harold Steptoe actually renegade Time Lords?* Are they exiles from Gallifrey, just as the Third Doctor was for a while, forced to live on 20th Century Earth? Could they even be (gasp) the SAME Time Lord, two incarnations forced to live together? (Remember Cho-Je and K'anpo Rinpoche?). Can you imagine having to live with yourself? Think of the arguments! All those annoying little habits. Harold is always threatening to kill Albert after all, but the only result of that would be that he'd regenerate into himself. Unless Albert is actually the future incarnation of Harold, in which case this would create something of a temporal paradox... So, if Albert and Harold *are* Timelords, where is their TARDIS? Is it disguised as the outside privvy? After all, Albert spends a lot of time in there... Or could it be Hercules the horse's stable? Or maybe it's the scrapyard itself? In fact... does the

scrapyard move around in time and space, occupying both Totter's Lane, east London and Oil Drum Lane, west London? Perhaps they knew the Doctor and let him park his TARDIS in their TARDIS?

Or (bear with me here)... could Steptoe and Son even be... *future incarnations of the Doctor and Susan*??? (We know that Time Lords can change gender after all – think of the Cosair, the General, Missy and now the Doctor him/herself). Maybe there was some sort of temporal surge when the TARDIS landed in 20th Century London and split them off into separate temporal entities – literally two parts of the same TARDIS – one in east London, one in west London, as well as two parts of the Doctor/Albert and Susan/Harold? After all, the Doctor was notoriously bad at piloting the TARDIS which was faulty anyway...

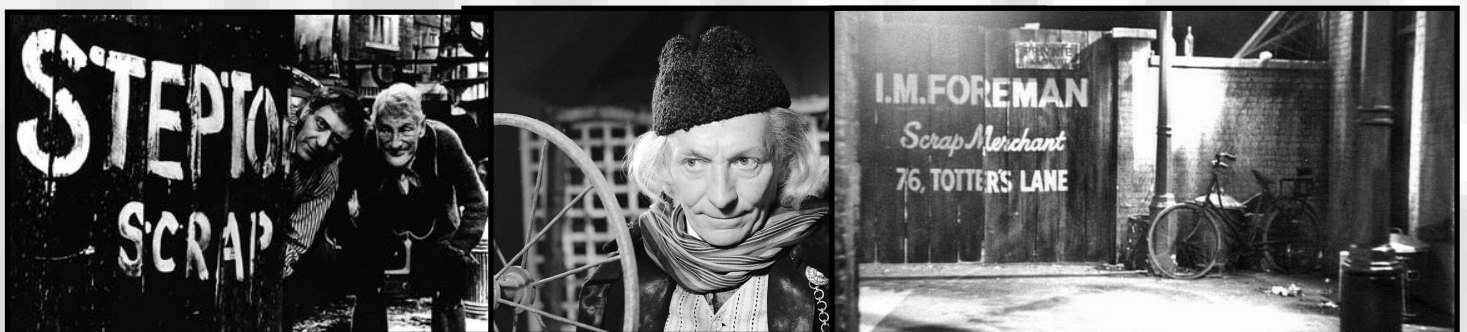
Or perhaps they were four renegade Timelords who all shared the same TARDIS, with the control room situated inside the police box shell and the outer scrapyard and house posing as a further outer disguise? So when the Doctor dematerialised in a hurry with teachers Ian and Barbara, he left Albert and Harold stranded in the non-functional TARDIS area? No wonder they're both so bad tempered!

We know that Time Lords can be found all over Earth if you look carefully. I'd cite the character of Drax from *The Armaggedon Factor* (1978) as proof to support this theory. He was a renegade Time Lord who ended up on 20th Century Earth, but became a criminal here and as a result spent ten years in Brixton jail... And let's not forget Professor Chronotis, also a Time Lord who retired to St Cedd's College, Cambridge and disguised his TARDIS as his study. (*Shada* 1979).

There! That's my theory! I think it's time the truth was told!

"HARRRROOOLLLLLDDDD! Go an' fix that bleedin' chameleon circuit!"

"Ahhh...go an' regenerate, you dirty old man!"



Out of the Vortex

News, Reviews and Previews from the Sci-Fi and Fantasy Multiverse

THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU SOON

There's always a huge sense of anticipation when a new season of *Doctor Who* has yet to air, but possibly Season 11 is one of the most eagerly anticipated of all, as it sees the debut of the 13th Doctor who this time- as you may have heard -is female.



Jodie Whittaker as the 13th Doctor

Jodie Whittaker makes her debut as the first female incarnation of everyone's favourite Time Lord (or Lady). In fact, it's a time of perhaps the biggest shake-up since the revived series returned to our TV screens in 2005. Not only is there a new Doctor, but there's a new Showrunner in Chris Chibnall, who has previously written several episodes including *The Power of Three*, *Dinosaurs on a Spaceship*, *42* and *The Hungry Earth/ Cold Blood*. Chibnall was also one of the main writers of the first two seasons of *Who* spin-off *Torchwood*. Joining Chibnall are also several new writers including best selling author Malorie Blackman, Pete Mc Thighe, Vinay Patel and *Skins* writer Ed Hime.

"We have a team of writers who've been working quietly and secretly for a long time now, crafting characters, worlds and stories to excite and move you," showrunner Chris Chibnall said in a release. "Hailing from a range of backgrounds, tastes and styles, here's what unites them: they are awesome

people as well as brilliant at their job. (It matters!) They love *Doctor Who*. And they've all worked above and beyond the call of duty in an effort to bring audiences something special, later this year."

Jodie Whittaker's Yorkshire-accented Doctor will be joined by three new friends - as opposed to companions - played by Mandip Gill, Bradley Walsh, and Tosin Cole.



Mandip Gill, Bradley Walsh, and Tosin Cole as the Doctor's new friends

Information about the new series has been incredibly tight, with the BBC keeping any details of storylines firmly under wraps, although over the summer there were two teaser trailers released showing a little of the delights to come. However, Chibnall has stated publicly that there will be no returning monsters this time round, so don't expect to see the Daleks, Cybermen, Ice Warriors *et al*. Instead, there will be new foes and situations to challenge the Doctor.

The whole season is being seen as something of a jumping on point for new viewers, so previous knowledge of the series isn't a pre-requisite - it's possibly the biggest 're-boot' for the series since 1970 and 2005, although long-time fans are assured they needn't worry - this will still be the same show and the same Doctor (well, you know what we mean...)

"If you've never seen *Doctor Who*, or want to introduce your children or family and friends to it, this series is the perfect point to start," Chris Chibnall told *Radio Times*. "It was really important to me that there's no barrier to entry. You don't need to know about anything that's come before."

Jodie Whittaker commented: "This is *Doctor Who*, so we know there will be a Tardis, a sonic screwdriver – and me and my new friends [which is what companions are now called]. We've all had the best time making it, so hopefully you don't hate it!"

As to where and when the Doctor and her new friends' travels in the TARDIS will take them, it seems that one story will be set in segregation-era America and deal with the true story of Civil Rights icon Rosa Parks, while another will be set in the 17th century and centre on themes of witchcraft featuring an encounter with Stuart King James I. In fact, it is rumoured that we may be seeing the show's first 'true' historical stories rather than the usual alien-centric 'pseudo-historicals'. The new series will have a fairly even split between episodes set in the past, episodes set in the future and episodes on present-day Earth, with various storylines centring on Whittaker's companions' home town of Sheffield (see our report in *Into the Vortex* in Issue #1).

Oh, and yes, the Doctor will have a new sonic screwdriver, which certainly deviates a lot from previous models!



The new sonic screwdriver – not just a cosmetic change...

The series consists of 10 episodes, plus the Christmas Special, rather than 12 or 13 episodes as in previous years, although the regular running time of each episode has been increased from 45 minutes to 50 minutes. Perhaps the biggest change

is that the new series will air on *Sunday* 7th October as part of BBC 1's Sunday night line up along with the ratings-busting *Strictly Come Dancing Results Show*. The switch to Sunday may save the show from suffering from the 'Strictly Factor' which has seen Dr Who shunted into either very early or very late time slots around the main Saturday evening edition of *Strictly Come Dancing*. So it really is a case of All Change! But then, as the Doctor once said: "Change my dear, and not a moment too soon!"

So will the new day and the new Doctor prove to be a hit with viewers?

Time, as they say, will tell...



COMING SOON FROM BBC BOOKS!

Doctor Who: The Women Who Lived

Written by Christel Dee, former presenter of YouTube series *Doctor Who: The Fan Show*, and author Simon Guerrier, the book will feature more than 75 inspiring tales of remarkable women of the Whoniverse, both real and imagined. From historical figures such as Agatha Christie and Queen Victoria to fan favourites like Bill Potts and River Song, each of these women has made a unique contribution to the world of *Doctor Who*.

***Doctor Who: The Women Who Lived: Amazing Tales for Future Time Lords* will publish on 27th September in hardback, priced £16.99.**



TRIPLE THE TRIPODS!

Production is well underway on the first-ever British television adaptation of H.G. Wells' classic sci-fi tale "The War of the Worlds," which is due to air in the UK later this year. Filming is taking place in Liverpool on the three-part BBC drama, which will star Eleanor Tomlinson (Poldark), Rafe Spall (The Big Short), Robert Carlyle (The Full Monty) and Rupert Graves (Sherlock).

The story has been adapted by Peter Harness (Wallander) and, unlike previous movie adaptations, the series is true to the classic novel's English setting and follows George (Spall) and his partner, Amy (Tomlinson), as they attempt to start a life together. Graves plays Frederick, George's elder brother, and Carlyle plays Ogilvy, an astronomer and scientist. The four characters are plunged into the nightmare that follows as the alien Martians invade Edwardian England in their Tripod death-machines.

"H.G. Wells' seminal novel has been adapted for the screen many times, but it's always had a contemporary (and American) setting," said director Craig Viveiros. "This is the first version to be set in London and [its environs] during the Edwardian period."



Writer Peter Harness added: "The version of 'The War of the Worlds' that I wanted to make is one that's faithful to the tone and the spirit of the book, but which also feels contemporary, surprising and full of shocks: a collision of sci-fi, period drama and horror."

Meanwhile, American network THR is about to start filming their own adaptation of War of the Worlds. This version set in contemporary America, and is being created and written by *Misfits* and *Crazyhead* mastermind, Howard Overman.

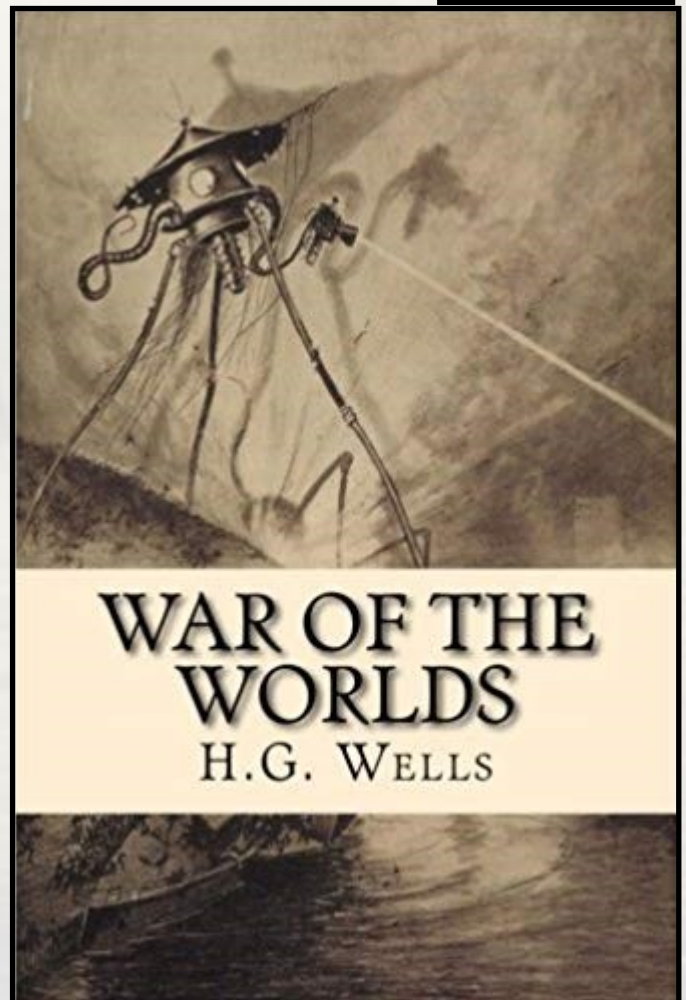
Pre-production on the new eight-part show is already underway, according to THR, with filming

set to begin in the autumn, and is expected to air in the UK in 2019.

And as if all that wasn't enough, Nottingham-based Sherwood Studios have produced an audio dramatization of Wells' original 1897 novel. The audio drama stars has been adapted by Nick Scovell and stars award-winning actor Colin Morgan (*Merlin*, *Humans*, *The Living and the Dead*) as George alongside Ronald Pickup as The Curate, Nigel Lindsay as The Artilleryman, Dan Starkey as astronomer Ogilvy, with Olivia Poulet as Marion, Luke Kempner as Herbert, Molly Hanson as Adrienne, Stephen Critchlow as Captain Rostron, Nick Scovell as Henderson and Lisa Bowerman (who also directed the production) as Helen.

Typical, isn't it? You wait years for an adaptation of War of the Worlds then three come along at once!

Gallifrey, The Long Way Round hopes to review all three versions of The War of the Worlds in a forthcoming issue, as part of a feature on HG Wells' novel and its previous adaptations for radio, film, TV and the stage.





LITTLE-KNOWN WHOVIAN FACTS #15:

Cybermat racing was a popular pastime on Telos in between invasion attempts



LITTLE-KNOW WHOVIAN FACTS #81:

Ice Lord Slaar was a hit at parties with his rendition of The Birdy Dance...



Respectful
mention of Alan
Bennion who
played Slaar
and two other
Ice Lords, Izlyr
and Azaxy. Alan
passed away
on 27th
July 2018 aged
88 .
R.I.P.

THE BACK OF BEYOND

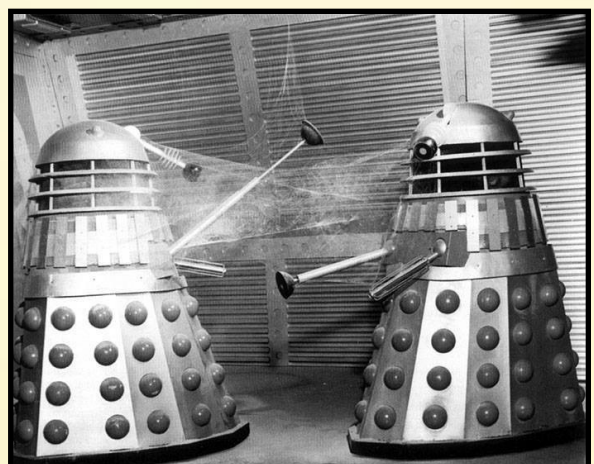
LITTLE-KNOWN WHOVIAN FACTS #44:

Jeff the Monoid enjoyed the adulation of the young female colonists having successfully convinced them that he was, in fact, the fifth Beatle who'd left before they got famous and had hitched a ride in the Tardis...



LITTLE-KNOWN WHOVIAN MOMENTS #97:

The Daleks soon realised that exterminating all the cleaners in the human colony was counter-productive...



Coming soon! Issue #3 (Autumn/Winter 2018):

Features include: Primeval * Blakes 7 *

Doctor Who Year Three * Red Dwarf * And Lots, Lots More..!

Maybe even something written by YOU? See You Soon!