

EVIL ANIMATED!

Daleks, Gods, Anime
and much, much
more inside...

Gallifrey,
the long way round

Issue 6 - Summer 2021



Gallifrey, The Long Way Round

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All submissions are subject to editorial approval.

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EDITORIAL

Hello! Fancy meeting you here! It's been a while, hasn't it?

So, 18 months on from when the Covid-19 pandemic first hit Europe and the Americas, we are cautiously heading out of lockdown, hanging up our masks and getting used to hugging each other again. But carefully. To say it's been a challenging time is putting it mildly and our hearts go out to everyone who has lost friends and loved ones during the global pandemic.

Your Editors have all had their own Covid -related challenges to deal with, along with that old bugbear Real Life. With this in mind, we took the decision to rest **Gallifrey, The Long Way Round** for a few months.

Well, those few months became a year, but we didn't get any howls of complaint from readers, which just underlines to us that such is the lot of the freebie fanzine Editor. (Is anyone actually reading this?) But as much for our own amusement as for our loyal readers (we're sure there's some of you at least!), we decided to re-vamp **GTLWR** a bit, and work towards producing smaller, but more frequent issues. Much more manageable to put together and way less stress! We just hope you'll like it.

It'd be lovely to get some feedback—good or bad.

In other news, we're delighted to welcome **Clare Juland** to our Editorial team. Clare got rather thrown in at the deep end but she's made a great splash!

The big news recently has got to be the official long wished for dream of Space Tourism becoming a reality. Billionaire Jeff Bezos won the new Space Race with the first crewed flight of his rocket ship New Shepard on 20th July. A well chosen date of course, being 55 years to the day since Neil Armstrong took that One Great Leap for Mankind by walking on the Moon.

Of course, Bezos attracted a great deal of ire from critics for his "flippant joy ride" which only "super-rich d***heads can afford." OK, so there are competitions for us plebs to win a free place on future trips and maybe we'll get lucky.

Well, I say good luck to Bezos. It's just a shame about the shape of New Shepard...

Nick

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ANIME

BY

MARK LENEY

Hands up! Who is tired of people saying that cartoons are just for kids? Those people have clearly not seen some of the Japanese *Anime* that's out there. It can be dark, scary, incredibly violent and it can also be sexy and raunchy at times too. Believe me, I've watched some stuff that you wouldn't want your mum to walk in and catch you seeing, and that's not even counting the pornographic subgenre of *Hentai* that exists out there.

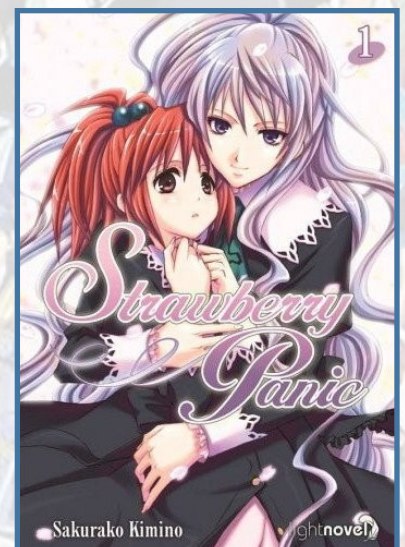
Now before you all go racing off to your laptops or PCs to google free *Hentai* (which is something I have never done) stick around a little longer and allow me to tell you more about the wonderful world of *Anime*.

Anime is derived from the English "animation", and refers to animated works created in Japan. For the Japanese, animation is just another medium of storytelling that is for everyone and not just for kids. That is the reason that you can see shows in animated form that encompass all manner of genres including horror, crime thrillers, romance, fantasy, science fiction, and, yes, even erotica.

Many *Anime* are adaptations of *Manga*. *Manga* are Japanese comics and again, these are not just for kids. Comics are a legitimate form of literature in Japan and their translations are very popular across Western culture too. *Manga* books (even translated ones) are traditionally read from back to front and right to left, rather than the Western front to back, left to right, as that is how the Japanese read *Kanji* (Japanese characters). *Manga* is incredibly popular both inside and outside of Japan and is a rich source of inspiration for the majority of *Anime* works.

Very rarely you'll see original *Anime* series created by studios which may then go on to have their own *Manga* adaptation, such as *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagaan*, *Kill La Kill* and *Little Witch Academia*, but more often than not the *Manga* will come first.

Sometimes, an *Anime* adaptation will get ahead of the *Manga* publication and be forced to continue the story in its own way until more chapters become available. One well known example of this is the popular *Fullmetal Alchemist* series which ended up creating a narrative vastly different from the original, with the blessing of its creator, Hiromu Arakawa. Later, it was adapted again (*Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood*, 2009) and was a lot more faithful to its source material. On the whole, *Anime* adaptations tend to follow the original with few omissions or deviations.



Two examples of some of the different *Anime* genres:

Left: *Kill la Kill* (shonen)

Right: *Strawberry Panic* (yuri)

However, *Manga* is not the only source of *Anime* inspiration. Some are inspired by computer games (the most famous probably being the *Pokemon* franchise) and 'light novels' which are the Japanese equivalent of 'young adult' novels. Examples of these include *Sword Art Online* and *Konosuba*.

Anime also has many subgenres. These include *Kodomo* (for kids), *Shojo* (for girls), *Shonen* (for boys), *Yaoi* (gay romance), *Yuri* (lesbian romance) and of course the aforementioned *Hentai* which features sexual and pornographic elements and, interestingly, translates as "pervert" in English.

Popular examples of these subgenres include *Hello Kitty* (*Kodomo*), *Cardcaptor Sakura* (*Shojo*), *Dragon Ball* (*Shonen*), *Barefoot Waltz* (*Yaoi*), *Strawberry Panic!* (*Yuri*) and *Aki Sora* (*Hentai*).



You can also find magical girl (such as *Sailor Moon*), sports, martial arts and history genres. As you can see, *Anime* is a great medium for telling all manner of different stories and because it is animation, it doesn't carry a special effects budget – the only real limit is its creator's imagination. I've lost count of the number of times I've watched an *Anime* series or movie and wished that I'd written it and I have to say that it has inspired a lot of my own writing.



More of the many and varied *Anime* genres:

Left: *Cardcaptor Sakura* (*shojo*)

Above:
Aki Sora (*hentai*).

Mark's Top 10 *Anime* Tips:

Fairy Tail

Little Witch Academia

Sword Art Online

The Promised Neverland

Hi Score Girl

Angel Beats

Hunter x Hunter

Kill la Kill

Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood

The Seven Deadly Sins



Another attractive component of the experience is the music. Pretty much every *Anime* out there showcases the work of popular Japanese bands or artists, who in turn utilise this exposure as a means of advertising their latest single. My own musical taste has been greatly influenced by some that I have watched and I have entire playlists on Spotify packed full of awesome music that I have discovered from various *Anime* openings and endings.

So, if you're not already an avid enthusiast, why don't you give it a go? Discovering *Anime* can be quite literally life changing. It will influence what you read, what you listen to, and may just give you a passing interest in speaking and understanding Japanese. And before you know it, you could even, as I am, be planning your first trip to Japan to see your new favourite band in concert!



A Manga classic:
Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood, faithful to the source material as created by Hiromu Arakawa.

LiSA, a prolific music vocal contributor to Anime

10 Awesome Anime Songs:

Shirushi by LiSA. Featured as *Sword Art Online 2* Ending 3.

Shunkan Sentimental by Scandal. Featured as *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood* Ending 4.

Core Pride by Uverworld. Featured as *Blue Exorcist* Opening 1.

Ignite by Eir Aoi. Featured as *Sword Art Online 2* Opening 1.

Just Awake by Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. Featured as *Hunter x Hunter* Ending 1.

Brave Shine by Aimer. Featured as *Fate/Stay Night (Unlimited Blade Works)* Opening 2.

Gurenge by LiSA. Featured as *Demon Slayer* Opening.

Touch Off by Uverworld. Featured as *The Promised Neverland* Opening.

Seven Deadly Sins by Man With a Mission. Featured as *The Seven Deadly Sins* Opening 2.

Again by Yui. Featured as *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood* Opening 1.



THE ULTIMATE INSULT COMPILATION PART 2 OF SMEG KNOWS HOW MANY

BY BRANDON MAYS

Continued from part 1! This part of the compilation goes through season 4 and 5. I was more lenient with what constitutes as an insult this time, but the general rule of "it must be directed to or about a specific person" remains.

SEASON 4



1. Camille

LISTER: Now, Kryten, remember yesterday's class? Our instructions on insults?

KRYTEN: Oh, I'm not sure I —

LISTER: Now, how do we describe the gentleman who's just been on the screen?

KRYTEN: He's Mr. —

LISTER: No no no, come on, he's a...

KRYTEN: He's a smeeeeeee...

LISTER: Yeah, come on!

KRYTEN: He's a smeeeeeee...

LISTER: He's a...

KRYTEN: He's a smeeeeeee...

LISTER: He's a...

KRYTEN: He's a smeeeeeeeg... heeeeeeead! I did it!

RIMMER: Ah, Kryten. At last. Glad you could make it this millennium.

KRYTEN: Smrrrrrg!

RIMMER: I beg your pardon?

KRYTEN: Smrrrg heeeee!

RIMMER: What?

KRYTEN: You're a smrrrrg heeeee... Oh, forget it!

KRYTEN: Sir, you're a smeeeeeee...

RIMMER: A smee.

KRYTEN: A smeee heeee!

RIMMER: A smee hee.

KRYTEN: A complete and total one!

KRYTEN: Smeeee heeee! Oh, damn my programming!

RIMMER: That idiot droid has endangered this entire vessel by landing on a planet that's about to explode, thanks to your foundation course in advanced rebellion.

KRYTEN: Camille looks like your sister-in-law? What happened? Was she involved in some kind of horrific car accident?

RIMMER: Who, Jannine? No, of course not; she was a model.

KRYTEN: And she looked like Camille?

RIMMER: Absolutely, the resemblance is uncanny.

KRYTEN: What did she model? Spark plugs?

RIMMER: I happen to think she's very attractive.

KRYTEN: You do?

RIMMER: Certainly.

KRYTEN: Do you think I'M attractive?

RIMMER: You? Of course not. I think you look like a giant half chewed rubber tipped pencil.

CAT: Hey! What's going on, buddy? Eraser-head tells me she's a mechanoid, and Captain Sadness makes out she's a hologram.

CAT: Nice? She looks like something that dropped out of the Sphinx's nose!

KRYTEN: Yes, I am. Without your lessons, without your bananas and your movies and your aardvarks, none of this could have happened. You're a complete and total smeghead.



2. DNA

RIMMER: Aliens! They're probably going to return Glen Miller.

LISTER: You what?

RIMMER: That's what they do. All those people who inexplicably vanish, they return them. Ah smeg, that's all we need. Glen Miller on board, boring us to death with Pennsylvania 6-5000. KRYTEN, open communication channels.

RIMMER: We don't want him! Go away! You took him, you can keep the smegger!

RIMMER: You're totally egocentric, you flee at the first sign of trouble, you only look after number one, you're vain, you're selfish, you're narcissistic and you're self-obsessed.

CAT: You just listed all my best features!

CAT: Hey, you think I can't handle this on my own? I have to rush off and get Novelty Condom Head to bail you out?

LISTER: What's so big about being human?

RIMMER: Listy, don't knock it till you've tried it.

KRYTEN: I don't have to take this from you. I'm a human. Shut your stupid flat head.

KRYTEN: I've been a complete and total polaroid head!

CAT: Nice idea, goal post head! Let's try it!

CAT: Eat burning death, and kiss your ugly ass goodbye, beast!

RIMMER: Are you totally insane? You're going to let that fruit bat of a computer diddle with your DNA?

CAT: We ain't got time to change him back. Let's scoot! Come on, stumpy!

3. Justice

LISTER: Oh, come on, Kryten. I've got a head like a hot air balloon. I look like the human lightbulb.

LISTER: Oh that's great, isn't it? That's just typical. The first female company in three million years, and I look like something that belongs up a whale's nose.

CAT: You know what you look like? You could go out double-dating with the Elephant Man, and he'd be the looker.

LISTER: Why isn't it activated? How come no one's started the thaw process?

CAT: What? I thought Alphabet Head did it.



CAT: Buddy, you've got a head like a watermelon.

RIMMER: Listy, what are you doing up? Shouldn't you be in the greenhouse with the rest of the cantaloupes?

KRYTEN: I simply have to establish you're a neurotic, under-achieving emotional retard whose ambition far outstrips his minuscule abilities and who consequently blames himself for an accident for which he could not possibly have been responsible.

RIMMER: You're going to try to prove that I was innocent of negligence on the grounds that I'm a half-witted incompetent?

CAT: Man, there ain't a jury in the land that won't buy a plea like that.

KRYTEN: Not a half-wit, exactly — more a buffoon.

KRYTEN: The mind probe was created to detect guilt, yet in the case of Arnold Judas Rimmer the guilt it detected attaches to no crime. He held a position of little or no authority on Red Dwarf. He was a lowly grease monkey, a nothing, a piece of sputum floating in the toilet bowl of life.

KRYTEN: I ask the court: look at this man. This man who sat and failed his astronavigation exam on no less than thirteen occasions. This sad man, this pathetic man, this joke of a man —

RIMMER: Kryten, you're going over the top. The computer will never buy it.

KRYTEN: Trust me, sir. My whole case hinges on proving you're a dork.

KRYTEN: Answer the question, please. Remember, you're under polygraphic surveillance. Would you describe the accused as a friend?

LISTER: No, I would describe the accused as a git.

KRYTEN: Who would you say, then, is the person who thinks of him most fondly?

LISTER: ...Me.

KRYTEN: And there are no others who've shared moments of intimacy with him?

LISTER: Only one, but she's got a puncture.

KRYTEN: A man so petty and small-minded he would while away his evenings sewing name labels on to his ship issued condoms? A man of such awesome stupidity —

RIMMER: Objection!

JUSTICE: Objection overruled.

KRYTEN: A man of such awesome stupidity, he even objects to his own defence counsel. An over-zealous, trumped up little squirt —

RIMMER: Objection!

JUSTICE: Overruled.

KRYTEN: An incompetent vending-machine repairman with a Napoleon complex, who commanded as much respect and affection from his fellow crew members as Long John Silver's parrot —

RIMMER: Objection!!

JUSTICE: If you object to your own counsel once more, Mr. Rimmer, you'll be in contempt.

KRYTEN: Who would put this man, this joke of a man, a man who couldn't outwit a used tea bag, in a position of authority where he could wipe out an entire crew? Who? Only a yoghurt. This man is not guilty of manslaughter. He's only guilty of being Arnold J. Rimmer. That is his crime. It is also his punishment. Defence rests.

4. White Hole

LISTER: Oh *no*, man! Dismantle him! You don't know what the little bleeder's like!

LISTER: Not this one. This one's mental.

RIMMER: You really think this can work? You really think that airhead of a computer can become a genius again?

HOLLY: You're a total smeghead, aren't you Rimmer? Why are you so unable to grasp this extraordinarily simple premise?

RIMMER: What premise?

HOLLY: The premise that I am about to expire in just under two minutes. Understand, moose brain?

CAT: So how come Grand Canyon Nostrils is still here?

RIMMER: Yes, but Rimmer Directive 271 states just as clearly, "No chance you metal bastard".

RIMMER: Yes, but the thing is, about Captain Oates; the thing you have to remember about Captain Oates — Captain Oates... Captain Oates was a prat.

RIMMER: We are talking about the trigonomics of four dimensional space, you simple-minded gimboid!

RIMMER: On one hand, we have a computer, with an IQ in excess of twelve thousand, who has a total grasp of astrophysics. And on the other hand, we have Lister, who, and let's be fair to him, is a complete gimp.

CAT: Well, I agree with you, buddy. But I'm voting for Doodoo Breath. The thing is, even though you're right, I could not bring myself to vote for someone with your dress sense.

RIMMER: You're voting for El Dirtball?

CAT: Will you relax? I've seen Gerbil Face play down in the recreation room. He's a diva!

RIMMER: You jammy goit!

KRYTEN: And as these events never happened, we will have no memory of them. In which case, Mr. Rimmer, Sir, I should like to take this opportunity of saying that you are the most obnoxious, trumped-up, farty little smeghead it has ever been my misfortune to encounter!

5. Dimension Jump

RIMMER: I don't know what it is about me. All my life, it's been the same old story. It's not easy, you know, to come in every night, look in that mirror, and see a guy nobody likes.

CAT: How do you think we feel? We gotta look at it all day!

RIMMER: You know — You now your trouble, Kryten?

KRYTEN: What, sir?

RIMMER: You're a git.

CAT: Stupid. Three weeks stuck with Captain Yawn.



CAT: You are so two-faced! Why haven't you got the guts just to tell the dude nobody likes him?

LISTER: Oh, yeah, great. Brilliant. What am I supposed to say? "Excuse me, Rimmer. D'you know you're about as popular as a horny dog at a Miss Lovely Legs competition"?

RIMMER: Now I know where I've seen you two! Weren't you the double action centrefold in July's issue of Big Boys in Boots?

RIMMER: Ace and Skipper? You sound like a kids TV series about a boy and his bush kangaroo!

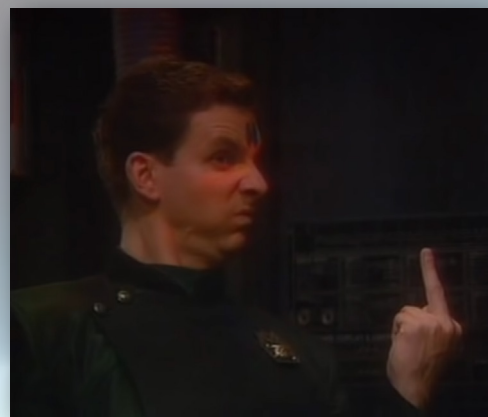
LISTER: Hell, there's probably a really, really weird dimension where you're better looking than me!

ACE: Him and me. It would never work. I just can't stand to be near the man. To see myself so warped, so bitter, so weasely. The man's a maggot.

LISTER: So where're you going to go?

ACE: Just out there. I can't go back, But there's a billion other realities to explore. A billion other Arnold Rimmers to meet. Maybe somewhere there's one who's more of a pain in the butt than him. But I doubt it.

In the decades that followed, Ace Rimmer searched countless realities and met thousands of different Arnold Rimmers. However he never encountered an Arnold Rimmer as deeply sad and worthless as the one he'd met aboard Red Dwarf. His impossible search continues...



6. Meltdown

LISTER: Rimmer, what's wrong with you? Don't you realise that no one is even slightly interested in anything you're saying? You've got this major psychological defect which blinds you to the fact that you're boring people to death! How come you can't sense that?

CAT: Man, this guy could bore for his country!

HITLER: Dummkopfs! Arrest them!

CAT: Who were those guys?

LISTER: Well the short one with the stupid tache was Hitler, and the jerky one with the child molester glasses that was Goebbels, suppose the fat bastard must've been Göring. Must've been. He was a cocaine addict and a transvestite. If things had worked out different he had the makings of a major movie star.

HITLER: Hands up, pig dogs!

LISTER: Think I've just worked out were we are.

LISTER: Smeg, it's like all the worst people in history have been brought together in one place. Oh my God, there's James Last! I recognise him from Rimmer's record collection.



CALIGULA: On your feet, pigs!

CAT: Hey, buddy, we just —

CALIGULA: Silence, scum! [Slaps LISTER] Do you not sink to your knees and bow in the presence of the emperor, Caligula?

CAT: Who is this guy?

LISTER: Caligula's a famous Roman Emperor. He slept with his mother, both his sisters, and ended up eating his son.

CAT: Hey, a little advice, bud: we all feel peckish after making love, but most of us settle for pizza!

CALIGULA: You are an impudent fool! [Slaps LISTER again]

CALIGULA: Ah, you think I'm insane?

CAT: Shall we take a quick vote?

CALIGULA: Silence, scum! [Slaps LISTER yet again]

RIMMER: Well, you're quite the worst bunch of famous historical wax droids I've ever had the misfortune to clap my eyes on! You're a total bloody shambles, and if we're going to win this war, someone is gonna have to turn you into soldiers... and that someone, ladies and gentlemen, is ME!

RIMMER: I'm winning this war, that's what I'm doing, buddy. You won't believe what a ragamuffin bunch of lefty, wishy-washy liberals they were, before I knocked some good old fashioned death-or-glory bloodlust into them.

RIMMER: You make it sound so negative, Lister. Don't you see, the deranged menace that once threatened this world is vanquished!

LISTER: No it isn't, pal. You're still here.

LISTER: Yeah, Rimmer. Right. Absolutely. Now all the corpses that litter that battlefield can just lie there safe under the knowledge that they snuffed it under a flag of peace and can now happily decompose in a land of freedom. Ya smeg head.

SEASON 5

1. Holoship

BINKS: Binks to Enlightenment. Have arrived on the derelict. Confirm initial speculation, there is absolutely nothing of any value or intrigue here. It's one of the old class ship to surface vessels — the very model, in fact, that was withdrawn due to major flight design flaws. Crew: 3. One Series 4000 mechanoid — almost burnt out. Give it maybe three years. Nothing of salvageable value. Ah, Felis Sapiens — bred from the domestic house cat and about half as smart. No value in future study of this species. What have we here? A human being, or a very close approximation. Chronological age: mid 20s, physical age: 47. Grossly overweight, unnecessarily ugly, otherwise would recommend it for the museum. Apart from that, of no value or interest.

LISTER: Lister to Red Dwarf. We have in our midst a complete smeg pot. Brains in the anal region. Chin absent — presumed missing. Genitalia small and inoffensive. Of no value or interest.

BINKS: Binks to Enlightenment. Evidence of primitive humour. The human has knowledge of irony, satire, and imitation. With patient tuition could maybe master simple tasks.

LISTER: Lister to Red Dwarf. Displays evidence of spoiling for a rumble. Seems unable to grasp simple threats. With careful pummelling, could possibly be sucking tomorrow's lunch through a straw.

BINKS: Binks to Enlightenment. The human is under the delusion that he is somehow able to bestow physical violence to a hologram.

LISTER: Lister to Red Dwarf. The intruder seems to be blissfully unaware that we have a rather sturdy holowhip in the munitions cabinet. Unless he wants his derriere minced like burger meat, he'd better be history in two seconds flat.

RIMMER: Captain, I've been in effective command of Red Dwarf now for nearly four years. I've guided that ragamuffin, ragtail crew of whacked out crazies and hippy peace-niks through hell and back.

KRYTEN: You could be reduced to a gibbering simpleton.

CAT: Reduced?

LISTER: Rimmer, they're a bunch of arrogant, pompous, emotionally weird, stuck-up megalomaniacs. Do you really think you're going to fit in with them? ...What am I saying? Bon voyage!

KRYTEN: But sir, I feel I should warn you: this is not the pile of human wreckage we know as Arnold Rimmer. Prepare yourself.

HARRISON: No, I think I'm better off where I am.

CAT: But you're dead!

HARRISON: And meeting you guys has really made me appreciate it a whole lot more.

RIMMER: But, I just want to say... that over the years... I have come to regard you... as... people I met. I'd just better go, ok?

LISTER: See ya smeghead.



2. The Inquisitor

LISTER: People that stupid deserve to be kerpowed, zapped and kersplatted in their beds! You know what the big joke is? From this particular phase in history we derive the phrase, "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts", when it would be much more logical to derive the phrase "Beware of Trojans, they're complete smegheads"!

LISTER: Wait a minute! Who's to say what's worthless?

CAT: Oh please! Take a look in the mirror! Read your entry in "Who's Nobody"!

HOLLY: No, being a totally worthless, unwashed space bum, that's what makes you prunable.

INQUISITOR RIMMER: You are a slimy, despicable, rat-hearted, green discharge of a man, aren't you?

RIMMER: What else could I have been? My father was a half-crazed military failure, my mother was a bitch queen from hell.

INQUISITOR LISTER: Well. Get out of this one, smeghead!

LISTER: You scum! You've wiped them out!

LISTER: You got three brothers: John, Frank and Howard. You're really mean with money. You're a tremendous physical coward. You once spent an afternoon on the Samaritan switchboard, and four people committed suicide. Your middle name's Judas, but you tell everyone that it's Johnathan. You sign all your official letters A.J. Rimmer, B.S.C., and B.S.C. stands for Bronze Swimming Certificate. You're a cheating, weasely, lowlife scumbucket, with all the charm and social grace of a pubic louse!

CAT: Gotta admit bud, he's got a handle on you there.

ALTERNATE LISTER: He's such a dork, man!

CAT: I hate to say it, but for once Trans Am Wheel Arch Nostrils is right.

KRYTEN: Sir, you are sick! You are a sick, sick person! How can you possibly even conceive of such an idea?

LISTER: Cheer up! Or I'll beat you to death with the wet end.

KRYTEN: Sir, if mechanoids could barf, I'd be onto my fifth bag by now. You're a sick person! Sick! Sick!

RIMMER: He killed our two crew mates in cold blood, he's a monster.

LISTER: I'm gonna use my brains for the first time in my life.

KRYTEN: Considering the circumstances, sir, do you really believe that's wise?

INQUISITOR: So now you're going to kill me? I don't think so. You're a fat little human who doesn't have the balls.

3. Terrorform

CAT: This is one weird place. Strange animal noises, unbearable stench, squelchy underfoot. It's just like your laundry basket at the end of the month.

UNSPEAKABLE ONE: Stop your putrid whining you dead tuft of rectal pubic hair.

UNSPEAKABLE ONE: Is it not true that you despise yourself? That you detest your own incompetence and stupidity? That you hold yourself in contempt for your countless failures and disappointments? Is it not true that you feel nothing but the deepest, blackest rancour for that walking vomit stain the world calls Arnold Rimmer? Is it not true?

CAT: You're a weird guy, you know that?

RIMMER: Self-loathing? I don't loathe myself. What is there one could possibly loathe about me?

KRYTEN: Would you like the list, sir?

RIMMER: What list?

KRYTEN: Well, there's the fact that you were despised by your parents for failing to achieve their standards, the fact that your three brothers were all such high flyers in the Space Corps and you ended up servicing chicken soup machines, there's your inability to form long term relationships with anyone, your cowardliness, your lack of charm, honour, or grace, and the awful knowledge that throughout your entire life no one has truly liked you because you are so fundamentally unlikeable.

RIMMER: Oh, that.

KRYTEN: Please don't interrupt, sir, I'm only halfway through my list.

UNSPEAKABLE ONE: Hand over the worm and your lives will be spared. My quarrel is not with you, it's with that excremental smear who cowers amongst you.

KRYTEN: Now wait a minute. Hmmm. This is all your fault, you know, you little glob of terburculatic sputum!

KRYTEN: Ah ha! Interesting. Sir, you are a cruddy little scudball with all the innate lovability of an itchy verruca.

CAT: How do we make him feel good? What is there about him to feel good about?

LISTER: We've got to tell him we love him.

CAT: Augh, you're sick! I want no part of this depravity!

RIMMER: Only this morning you referred to me as a cancerous polyp on the anus of humanity.

RIMMER: All that hugging stuff back there. It was just a way of escaping, wasn't it? I mean you didn't really feel that deep down I'm an ok sort of bloke, I'm not such a bad old stick once you get to know me. You didn't really mean any of that, did you?

LISTER, CAT and KRYTEN: No.

4. Quarantine

RIMMER: Clearly I am superfluous to this entire operation, ably commanded as it is by a droid who was created purely to clean lavatories. So I really don't know why you're telling me all this, Captain Bog Bot.

RIMMER: Oh, I see. First of all I am deemed unsuitable to issue the command, "Launch Scouter", and now I am being bundled into an escape pod and relieved of my duties by Commander U-bend.



RIMMER: They may not see it, but I do. I know what's going on, you've become a really nasty piece of work.

KRYTEN: But sir, I was merely —

RIMMER: You're merely a mechanoid — that's all you're "merely". Don't ever forget it.

KRYTEN: What a smee... What a smee... What a smee heeeeeeee!

KRYTEN: Blasted stupid cheap damn stupid Martian power packs!

RIMMER: I'm telling you, Kryten is taking over, slowly but surely. Remember how he used to be in the early days? A gibbering wreck, completely unassertive, no self confidence, plagued by guilt, and convinced he was fourth rate? I really liked him then.

LISTER: If you can hear us, it's me! Listen man, Lanstrom's got some holo-virus. She's totally barking!

LANSTROM: I have a riddle for you. What's dead and dead and dead all over?

RIMMER: I give in, Dr. Fruit Loop, do tell.

RIMMER: Well, much as I trust a viral screening conducted by an automated toilet attendant, I really must draw your attention to Space Corps directive 595.

KRYTEN: Frankenstein was the creator, not the monster. It's a common misconception, held by all truly stupid people.

CAT: Don't correct me, you know how much I hate being corrected! It really gets my feckles up!

KRYTEN: It's "hackles" you moron. It really gets your *hackles* up. There's no such word as "feckles"!

KRYTEN: That stupid, chirpy optimism, that inane winsome grin!

RIMMER: With... out... oxygen. No oxygen for 2 hours. That will teach you to be bread baskets!

KRYTEN: I think he's going to be ok, sir.

LISTER: He's gonna be ok? The luck virus must have worn off.

5. Demons and Angels

RIMMER: Well, I don't know if the Nobel Prize people run a fruit section, but if they do you've got to be this year's hot tip. Gentlemen, history beckons! You'll be famous, they'll build your statues. They'll even name towns after you. "Dorksville" springs instantly to mind.

LISTER: You're a toad, Rimmer. You're a weasel. You're a slimy, river-dwelling rodent with the morals of a praying mantis.

HIGH RIMMER: Philosophy, poetry, music, and study. That is how we spend our time. Trying to expand our minds and unlock our full potential in the service of humankind.

RIMMER: What a pair of losers!

RIMMER: You mean hippies.

KRYTEN: With respect, sir, you'd think Jesus was a hippy.

RIMMER: Well, he was. He had long hair, he didn't have a job, what more do you want?

CAT: I found Goalpost-Head. No sign of Dormouse-Cheeks, though.

6. Back to Reality

ANDY: You twonk! Use the laser cannons on the crashed er whatsit... Esperanto! That's how you get out of it!

RIMMER: And *how* were we supposed to know that, you Brummie git?

ANDY: Esperanto! That's a clue, isn't it? Esperanto — hope, hope defeats despair. Despair — the Despair Squid. It's a blatant clue, isn't it? Blatant! If you didn't get that you must have been playing like puddings!

ANDY: Did you get Kochanski?

LISTER: ...Was I supposed to?

ANDY: Supposed to? That's the objective of the game for Lister, you twonk! You get separated to begin with and then basically it's a love story across time, space, death, and reality!

ANDY: It's a blatant clue, isn't it?

RIMMER: A blatant clue to what?

ANDY: A blatant clue to the truth behind Rimmer.

RIMMER: *What* truth?

ANDY: The truth to why he is such an insufferable prat!

ANDY: He was a hand-picked special agent for the Space Corps. He had his memory erased and was programmed to behave like a complete twonk so no one would suspect he was on a mission to destroy Red Dwarf in order to guide Lister to his destiny as the creator of the second universe!

ANDY: Are you... are you seriously telling me you were playing the prat version of Rimmer for all that time? For four years?!

ANDY: Cor, what a bunch of twonks!



CAT: Well, if we are not who we thought we were, who the hell are we?

LISTER: The kind of sad acts who want to spend four years playing a computer game.

RIMMER: I'm sorry, but I'm afraid it makes perfect sense, *Dwane*. Imagine a guy with no elan, no style — a misfit. Doesn't it just make total sense that this hapless creature would give his buck teeth to play someone like the Cat in a computer game?

CAT/DWANE: So this is really me? A no-style gimbo, with teeth the druids could use as a place of worship?!

KRYTEN/JAKE: And if those pen-pushers up at City Hall don't like it, well, they can park their overpaid, fat asses on this mid digit and swivel — swivel till they squeal like pigs on a honeymoon!

RIMMER: Billy Doyle. Well, that's a name that came from the wrong side of the tracks, isn't it? You can see it all now: a youth spent in and out of corrective institutions. A string of illegitimate children. The wife will be all white shoes, no tights, and blotchy legs. Has to take up petty crime to cover the court orders for maintenance. Before he knows it he's standing in a bank with a sawn-off shotgun. Somehow it goes off. An old lady gets both barrels through a crocheted bobble hat. All he can do is hide. But where? And then it hits him — with all his ill-gotten gains he can buy four years in a computer game and wait until the heat's off. So ends the Ballad of Billy "Granny Killer" Doyle.

LISTER: It's yours.

RIMMER/BILLY: What?!

LISTER: It's yours, *Bill*.

RIMMER/BILLY: No.

LISTER: Check the ugly mug on the ID then, man.

LISTER: What puzzles me slightly is what a man of such undoubted good breeding would be doing wearing a coat that smells like an elderly male yak has taken a leak in both the pockets.

RIMMER/BILLY: Well, isn't it obvious?

KRYTEN/JAKE: No, it isn't.

BILLY: Oh my god. My name is Billy Doyle and my cologne is "Eau de Yak Urine."

RIMMER/BILLY: I refuse to accept I'm his alchy dropout, yak-coat-wearing half-brother.

RIMMER/BILLY: This is a nightmare. I'm on the run from the fascist police with a murderer and a mass murderer and a man in a bright nylon shirt. A flotsam, jetsam, human wreckage, sputum bag who smells like a yak latrine.

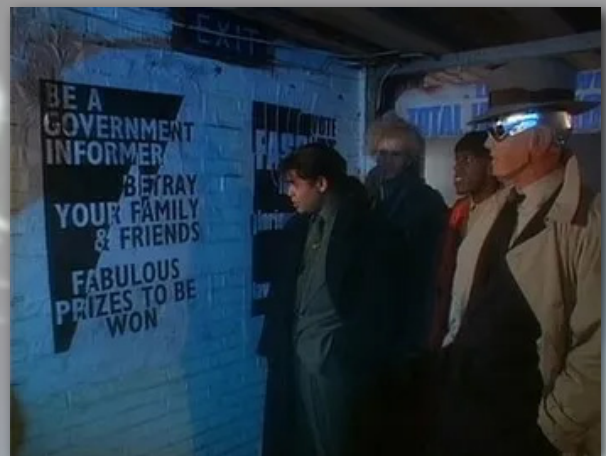
RIMMER: Have you quite finished being strange?

KRYTEN: The Cat lost his "cool" and life for him no longer had any meaning because he is so mind-meltingly shallow.

LISTER: Those planet engineers really screwed up in a big way here, didn't they? Playing god. The evolutionary process threw up a life force so much stronger and more deadly than any other species — damn near wiped out everything on the entire planet. Spreading despair and destruction wherever it stuck its ugly mush.

KRYTEN: Hmm, that sounds rather reminiscent of a species sitting not a million miles away from me now. Hahaha! ...You probably have to be a mechanoid to fully appreciate that one.

RIMMER: Kryten, no one likes a smart-alec android.



TO BE CONTINUED...



BLAKES 7

Talkin' About My Federation

By Annie Worrall

The official face of the Federation in *Blakes 7* is the masked, threatening trooper we see in the opening credit sequence for series A and B; the full facial mask transforming him or her from a person in a role to something anonymous and brutal. It is the face of a dictatorship which tortures, abuses, and massacres its citizens. And it's obvious from the press release that introduced the series ⁽¹⁾ that this was the image that summed up for the creators what the Federation was like. So, what more is there to say about it? Well, quite a bit!

Whatever those who devised the show intended, what occurred on our screens was something much more subtle, which refused to present a black and white universe. This willingness to examine the grey areas associated with rebellion and repression made the show so much more than just a 'good guys versus bad' adventure. Throughout the series, we viewers were challenged to question whether the Federation deserved all its negative press, especially when some of the evidence for it came from the rebels and criminals that opposed it or through the actions of its secret services.

There were enough contradictions or uncertainties in the show to leave us debating how big the Federation

was, whether its influence was completely negative and perhaps, more importantly, whether Blake was justified in opposing it as he did.

None of these questions have easy answers as you will discover in my rather rambling musings.

So, buckle up and concentrate. Here is your starter for ten:



The Federation Domed City on Earth—possibly

Where was the Federation Empire located?

Actually, we have little idea. Unlike Middle Earth in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, Terry Nation's universe does not come with a map. It should be simple enough to work out, shouldn't it? After all the story starts on Earth which is presented as the hub of the Federation (*The Way Back*) and there must be assumptions we can make about the location of the rest of its Empire based on the information we glean from the episodes?

Well, no, it's not that simple, for example:

Why doesn't Blake acknowledge the existence of Mars?

Not just Mars! Why, given the Federation operates from our Earth, are none of the inhabited planets that the crew visit or refer to (apart from Earth itself) apparently located in our Solar System? It is not that these planets do not exist in the future: we see the *Liberator* pass them on the way to Earth. We are also told that Ganymede, Jupiter's largest moon, supplies protein cultures to Earth (Tannoy announcement: *The Way Back*). Yet President Sarkoff does not live on Jupiter. Del Grant is not trying to liberate Venus. Are we to conclude that Saturn, Mercury, Neptune are now known by other names? Or were they not colonised at all and if so, why? Perhaps the planets that the crew do visit are located outside our Solar System and are yet to be discovered in our time. Or Albion, Palmeiro, Zeigler 5 are artificial planets like Terminal.

No answers yet and I'm afraid there are other problems.



"Hmmm... Might be Mars?"

When was the Federation formed and when did it expand to become an Empire?

According to Blake, the Federation began its expansion programme 200 years before the events in *Pressure Point*. So, is this when the Federation started or is it older than that? Two hundred years seems a very short time in which to complete the amount of terraforming required to colonise planets both in and out of our system - unless there are a lot of Earth-like planets out there which we have yet to discover and which have a similar atmosphere, similar desolate landscapes, and similar abandoned quarries, to our own.

The Press Book for series 4 ⁽²⁾ states that Earth colonised other planets **before** the Federation came into being, and that it was the chaos caused by Atomic Wars that resulted in its formation. If this is the case, the expansion that Blake refers to might have been a programme that imposed direct Terran rule on previously independent colony planets as well as conquering new worlds, rather than initial colonization.

But this still doesn't explain why Ganymede and Earth are the only worlds mentioned in the series that have the same name in the future as they do today, or why, when we see the *Liberator* passing the planets in our solar system, the distance between them seems to have shrunk.

Could Saurian Major be a planet we have yet to discover?

There must be many planets out there suitable for colonisation and near to Earth which our current technology is not sophisticated enough to detect. Every year scientists discover new ones, like the recently discovered exoplanet Kepler 186f, in the Cygnus constellation in the Milky Way for example.

We know that the President's honorary title is, 'Lord of the Inner and Outer worlds' (*Volcano*) which implies that the expansion programme targeted planets both *in* our Solar System and *out* of it. Is Cygnus Alpha an inner planet (perhaps even Kepler 186f)? It cannot be an outer planet as it only takes 8 months to get there, (unless the *London* travels amazingly fast) so has it, for reasons we are not told, been renamed? This happens at least once in the series with Silmareno being rechristened *Horizon*. But Silmareno was renamed for a specific purpose, to strengthen the Federation hold on the planet with its indigenous peoples. The planets in our system are lifeless, so while it's possible this occurred, it is not likely.

How many Terminals are there?

As for the idea that the Federation constructed all these habitable planets, the existence of Terminal and the independently constructed space research station XK72 demonstrates that this is theoretically possible. Servalan, however, says that Terminal was constructed as a scientific experiment which makes it seem like a one-off and XK72 was presumably financed privately. It seems unlikely to me that the Federation had the resources to construct artificial worlds.

Another solar system?

It is feasible that the Earth depicted is in fact a planet that was colonised by our descendants in another Solar System with planets like ours. This could explain why the inner planets seem much nearer to each other than they do in our space, assuming of course this is not just a design error on the part of the production team. We could postulate that sometime in the future, our heirs had to flee a catastrophe and stumbled on another Earth-like planet which they colonised; then much later, they conquered neighbouring planets to form an Empire. But if that is what happened then surely everyone would call the home planet **New Earth**, to distinguish it from the original? And why doesn't the Press Book tell us this?

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Summing it all up...

For me, the most probable conclusion to be drawn is that there were two phases of expansion: the first, some time before the history revealed in the series, involving pre-Federation Earth and its colonisation of the so-called inner planets. In time these colonised planets achieved independence from Earth. However, after a disaster (probably a series of atomic wars between Earth and its colonies) a Federated governing system was formed which ruled Earth and the inner planets with Earth as its headquarters. When the situation stabilised there was a second phase of expansion which pushed the Federation's sphere of influence beyond the Solar System as it colonised the Outer Planets.

The only explanation I have as to why neither Blake nor Avon ever visit the inner planets, (which as the location of gourmet food production might be expected to be a popular rebel target) is that they were too well defended to make attacking them feasible (which does then beg the question as to how on Earth Blake believes he can attack... well... *Earth*.)

Either that or the *Blakes 7* universe is located 'in a distant sky, past the edge of time, way past Gemini.'

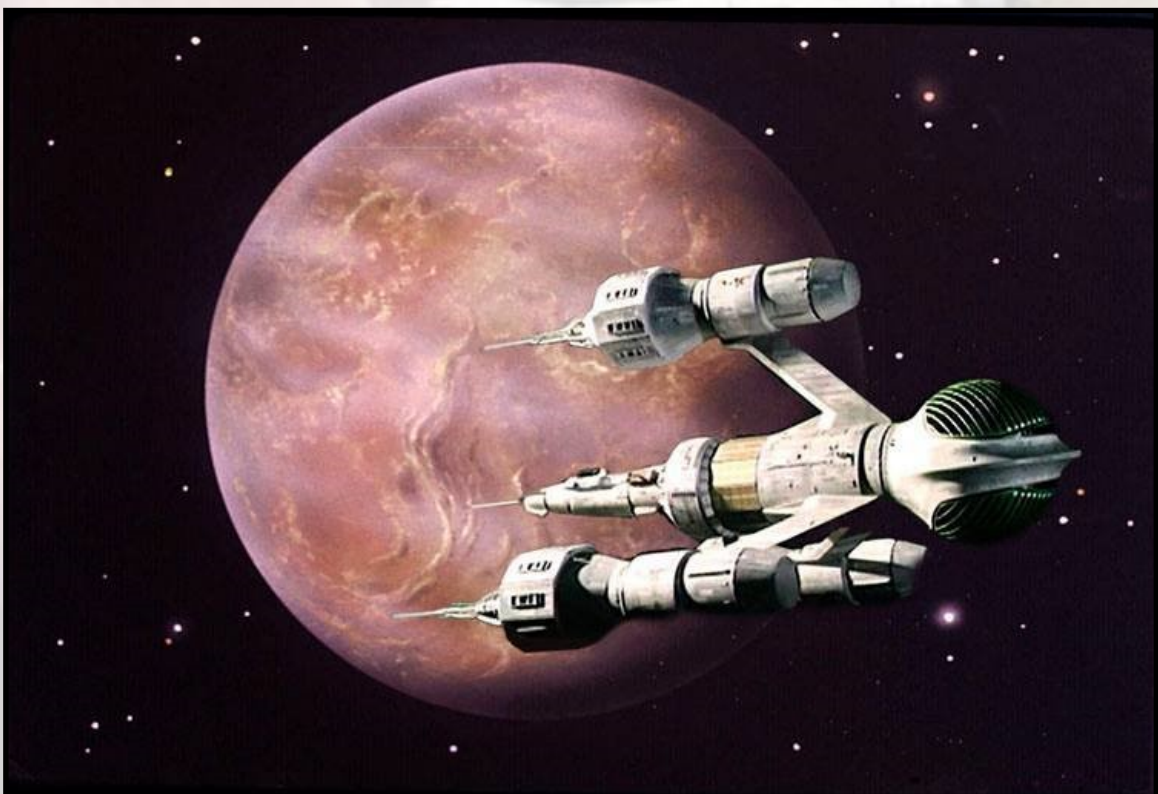
I'll leave it up to you to decide. I have other questions which I will tackle in our next edition.

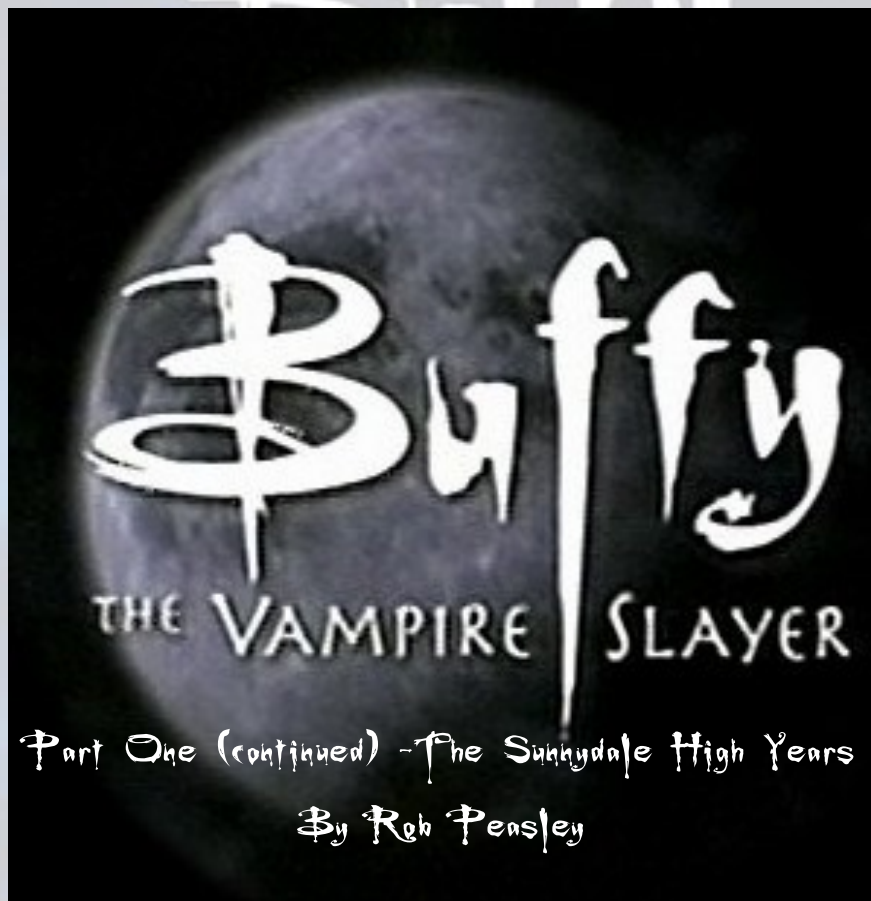
Something to look forward to, eh?

NOTES

¹: scorpioattack.com *Press Release 1978*

²: scorpioattack.com *Series D Press Book 1982*





"Bottom line is, even if you see 'em coming, you're not ready for the big moments. No-one asks for their life to change, not really, but it does. So, what are we, helpless? Puppets? Nah. The big moments are gonna come, you can't help that. It's what you do afterwards that counts. That's when you find out who you are."

A CONTINUATION of the article in the last issue, looking at the rest of the High School phase of **Buffy The Vampire Slayer**.

Last time, we left things at the highly emotional *Passion*, the 17th episode of Season Two.

Three installments earlier, in *Innocence*, we'd had the biggest metaphor yet – 'I had sex with my boyfriend and he's turned into a monster'. As always with **BTVS**, Buffy's demons are literal – Angel loses his soul and reverts to the callous, evil vampire, Angelus, he once was.

To show what a monster Angelus now is, it was always going to be necessary for him to kill someone relatively close to Buffy and that's the key ingredient of *Passion*. Jenny Calendar, the computer science teacher at Sunnydale High and the object of the affections of Rupert Giles, Buffy's watcher, was a clever choice by the show's creator Joss Whedon. She was only a semi-regular, but it results in some extraordinarily powerful performances from Sarah Michelle Gellar and Anthony Stewart Head.

Where does **BTVS** go from there? Let's waste no further time in finding out.

Also included (below) is the review of (2.15) *Phases*, which did a strange timey-timey-wobbly thing and disappeared from the last issue!

(2.15) PHASES by Rob Des Hotel & Dean Batali

Another great episode, as **BTVS** continues to borrow and adapt from traditional horror tales with its first werewolf tale... with the wolf turning out to be Oz!

Buffy has to deal with a sexist werewolf hunter, while Seth Green and Alyson Hannigan are suitably fantastic - their characters remain so cute. Willow finishes *Phases* by telling Oz: "I like you. You're nice and you're funny. And you don't smoke. Yeah, okay, werewolf, but that's not all the time. I mean, three days out of the month I'm not much fun to be around either." Bless her.

A wonderful continuity reference (back to *Witch*) in the opening scene has Oz mentioning that the eyes of Catherine Madison's cheerleading trophy "follow you wherever you go".

This story also sees Angelus leaving a little 'present' for Buffy (he vamps one of her fellow students), while it has the brilliant sub-plot of Xander suspecting Larry, the school bully, to be the werewolf and confronting him.

Larry confesses his secret, but it's not the one that Xander is expecting. Furthermore, Larry now thinks that Xander is gay too! **BTVS** is great at mixing in these little comic touches into the drama. (10/10)

2.18) KILLED BY DEATH by Rob Des Hotel & Dean Batali

Buffy is in a bit of a state after the traumatic events of *Passion*, and she ends up in hospital with a severe case of 'flu after barely suffering a confrontation with Angelus.

There she finds out someone or something is attacking the children, and it turns out to be linked with the death of her cousin, when she was eight years old.

Hospitals tend to be slightly creepy places, where people's imaginations run wild (my dad experienced hallucinations after an operation). In the case of Buffy, her creepy bogeyman turns out to be real.

Killed By Death is full of lovely character moments, such as the way Buffy's friends rally around her while she's ill, and the blossoming relationship between Xander and Cordelia. Buffy tells one of the kids: "We both know that there are real monsters. But there's also real heroes that fight monsters. And that's me."

It also a great ending, as that same kid, Ryan, sends a picture he's drawn of Buffy violently killing the bogeyman! (9/10)



Der Kinderstod. Absolutely not Freddy Kruger. Really!

(2.19) I ONLY HAVE EYES FOR YOU by Marti Noxon

"Something weird is going on. Isn't that our school motto?"

A haunting ghost story, as the exceptional run of episodes continues. There are flashbacks to the tragic events of 1955, when a schoolboy murdered the teacher he was in love with, before turning the gun on himself.

So much to recommend here. There's Giles - needing closure - wanting the poltergeist to be Jenny, until events taken such a turn that Willow tells him: "Giles, Jenny could never be this mean."

There's also a startling exchange between Principal

Snyder and the Police Chief, after an outbreak of snakes in the school canteen:

SNYDER: We're on a Hellmouth. Sooner or later, people are going to figure that out.

CHIEF: The city council was told that you could handle this job. If you feel that you can't, perhaps you'd like to take that up - with the Mayor.

There had been a previous hint in *School Hard* that Snyder knew more than he was letting on. But it's a jaw-dropping moment, as you wonder just how much those in authority know about the supernatural events in Sunnydale, while it's also the first mention of the Mayor. From this moment on, **BTVS** isn't just about developments across a single season, there's also little feeders for future years. For dedicated viewers, it's a delight.

Meanwhile, we see Willow getting on really well as a temporary replacement teacher for Jenny - one possible future for this character that we didn't go down. But we also see Willow starting to dabble in a very minor piece of magic for the first time, using the files she found on Jenny's computer.

There's a clever resolution at the end, as a possessed Buffy and Angelus switch genders, allowing the haunted soul of the boy to be released, since Angelus can't be killed by a bullet and therefore the dead teacher can finally forgive the boy.

Talking of Angelus, there's some delightful three-handed scenes also involving Drusilla and the injured Spike at their new base, the Mansion, as the sexual tensions between this trio start to reach breaking point.

Some great acting here - apparently it was on the strength of the performance of David Boreanaz as the possessed Angel that made Joss Whedon decide that an **Angel** spin-off series could work. (10/10)



Dru, Angelus and Spike—the 3 Big Bads

(2.20) GO FISH by David Fury & Elin Hampton

A fun interlude before the end-of-season finale, with a return to the slightly wacky storytelling of Season One.

It is slightly daft – it's suspected that members of the school swim team are being disembowelled by giant fish creatures, although the truth is they're actually turning into those creatures after steroid abuse.

But it's enjoyable and there are plenty of amusing touches, including cute Willow's wonderful interrogation of Jonathan, when she drags out not quite the confession that she was after:

WILLOW: So you delved into the black arts and conjured up a hell-beast from the ocean's depths to wreak your vengeance.

JONATHAN: What? No! I snuck in yesterday and... peed in the pool.

WILLOW: Oh. (digests what she's been told) Eww!

There's also a great scene when Cordelia, Buffy and Willow see Xander in a pair of speedos, after he's gone undercover to infiltrate the swim team.

Amongst all the hilarity, there's a couple of darker moments - a member of the swim team is ready to rape Buffy after locking her in his car (he comes off second best), while Buffy suggests that's exactly what has happened to Coach Marin, after he's hoist on his own petard: "Those boys really love their coach."

Go Fish looks into the sporting win-at-all-costs mentality and has plenty of fun along the way. **(8/10)**



Go Fish? Go Figure...

(2.21) BECOMING (PART 1) by Joss Whedon

"There's moments in your life that make you, that set the course of who you're going to be. Sometimes they're little, subtle moments. Sometimes... they're not. I'll show you what I mean."

Up until now, **BTVS** has pretty much stuck to linear storytelling. Therefore, this sprawling epic - that contains several flashbacks over the last 250 years, as we re-live the key moments of Angel/Angelus' life and death - is something new and rather wonderful.

Nearly everything we've see has been mentioned in passing before – Angel being sired by Darla in 1753; Angelus tormenting Drusilla and driving her insane; the placing of the curse on Angelus.

But the writing and direction of Joss Whedon in bringing those events to life is so vivid, and it overcomes David Boreanaz's slightly unrealistic Irish accent.

Perhaps the strongest flashback of the lot is the most recent, as we see a down-and-out Angel being shown Buffy just as she discovers she is the Slayer, and subsequently he gains a purpose. Sarah Michelle Gellar excels in portraying a young and vulnerable Buffy.

All these flashbacks are inter-cut with the present day, with Angelus trying to activate Acatlha to suck the whole Earth into a demon universe and end the world, just as Buffy and Willow discover Jenny Calendar's plans to restore his soul.

There's a building sense of tension throughout, and this is only heightened by the death of a Slayer - as the returning Kendra is hypnotised and has her throat slit by Drusilla.

Viewers are left totally wrapped in events and wanting to see more. **(10/10)**

(2.22) BECOMING (PART 2) by Joss Whedon

"*I need a hug*" declares the Mutant Enemy logo at the conclusion of the end credits, after an incredibly emotional final installment to a brilliant season of television, with fantastic writing and direction from Joss Whedon once more.

It's amazing so much is crammed in 40 minutes. Highlights include Xander talking Willow out of a coma, Buffy being expelled from school by a gloating Principal Snyder, Spike betraying Angelus and Drusilla and siding with Buffy, Joyce finally finding out her daughter is the Vampire Slayer, and Angelus torturing a captured Giles.

Spike has been fantastic throughout the season, and his explanation to Buffy why he doesn't want the world to end is a delight and shows how much the vampire characters have developed from the ritualistic ones of Season One:

SPIKE: We like to talk big. Vampires do. 'I'm going to destroy the world.' That's just tough guy talk. Strutting around with your friends over a pint of blood. The truth is, I like this world. You've got dog racing, Manchester United. And you've got people. Billions of people walking around like Happy Meals with legs. It's alright here. But then someone comes along with a vision. With a real passion for destruction. Angel could pull it off. Goodbye, Piccadilly. Farewell, Leicester Bloody Square. You know what I'm saying?

Meanwhile, Sarah Michelle Gellar and Kristine Sutherland are simply fantastic in a scene where Joyce simply cannot register what she's being told.

JOYCE: You don't get to just dump something like this on me and pretend it's nothing!

BUFFY: I'm sorry, Mom, but I don't have time for this.

JOYCE: No! I am tired of 'I don't have time' or 'you wouldn't understand.' I am your mother, and you will make time to explain yourself.

BUFFY: I told you. I'm a Vampire Slayer.

JOYCE: Well, I just don't accept that!

BUFFY: Open your eyes, Mom! What do you think has been going on for the past two years? The fights, the weird occurrences. How many times have you washed blood out of my clothing, and you still haven't figured it out?

JOYCE: Well, it stops now!

BUFFY: No, it doesn't stop. It never stops! Do you think I chose to be like this? Do you have any idea how lonely it is, how dangerous? I would love to be upstairs watching TV or gossiping about boys or, God, even studying! But I have to save the world... again.

Events build and build, until a massive fight that culminates in sword-fencing between Buffy and Angelus.

He appears to be winning, and he says to her: "No weapons... no friends... no hope. Take all that away and what's left?". "Me", she replies and the tide turns.

Sarah Michelle Gellar displays every emotion possible, after one final, tragic twist. Willow manages to restore Angel's soul, but the portal is already open and Buffy has to despatch her boyfriend to hell to save the world.

Full of Grace by Sarah McLachlan starts to play, as a distraught Buffy runs away from home. It's just heart-breaking and brilliant.

The Buffy/Angelus storyline needed an epic conclusion, and the two parts of *Becoming* deliver in every way possible. (10/10)



Conduct unbecoming? Buffy and Angelus face off in *Becoming Part 2*

SEASON TWO OVERVIEW:

Quite simply, one of the best-ever seasons of television. In fact, from a personal perspective, I do consider it the best - edging out Season Three of *Blake's 7* and Seasons 14 and 27 of *Doctor Who*.

The introduction of Spike and Drusilla in *School Hard* transforms a very strong programme into an even better one - suddenly the bad guys are as interesting and hip as the heroes.

Although it's a soulless - and very, very cruel - Angelus who proves to be the nastiest piece of work and the Big Bad come the end of the season.

There's more of a running theme than in Season One, but still quite a few standalone episodes, and the combination works very well. The metaphors are still there - of course, the biggie is 'I had sex with my boyfriend and he turned into a monster.'

From this season, each character goes on their own little character arc throughout each season. It's a delight to see the characters develop... and in a natural way.

For example, as cute as Willow was as an unconfident nerd, it's great to see her starting to assert herself a little more, as she develops a talent both for teaching and for dabbling with witchcraft towards the season's end. Plus, she finally stops pining for Xander and starts a very sweet relationship with Oz.

There are so many outstanding episodes in this season: *Lie To Me* deals with the difficulties of growing up (arguably the main message of the whole show); *What's My Line* throws in the curveball of Buffy not being the only Slayer after all; *Surprise/Innocence* is a masterpiece and turns the season on its head; plus there's the wonderful juxtaposition of the hilarious *Bewitched*, *Bothered and Bewildered* (Xander comedy episodes are great and this is the best of them), followed by the high drama and tragedy of *Passion*.

As if there weren't enough classic episodes in this season already, the two-part finale is truly epic, where Buffy has to make the most terrible decision of her life. It also illustrates no matter how apocalyptic events are, the centre of any drama in **BTVS** is the human emotion.

The cast were wonderful from the off in Season One, but this season really challenges the likes of Sarah Michelle Gellar and Anthony Stewart Head, and they respond magnificently with brilliant performances.

It simply doesn't get any better than this - episode after episode of superb quality, where the writing, direction and acting is spot on.

Season position: 1st.

SEASON THREE:

(3.1) ANNE by Joss Whedon

A weird one to review. With Buffy having run away to LA - where she is working as a waitress (under the alias of Anne, her middle name) - much of this exploration of the homeless and the deprived doesn't seem a lot like **BTVS**, although a nice touch is the return of Chantarelle (now called Lily) from *Lie To Me*. In between, we see how the rest of the gang are coping in her absence.

Once entering the hell dimension, there's a great defining moment when Buffy finally proclaims: "I'm Buffy The Vampire Slayer. And you are?" and then proceeds to kick serious ass.

Lots of nice touches, such as the dream sequence with Buffy and Angel on the beach, before we see the real truth where Buffy is. And it's good that the consequences of the previous season have not been ignored. **(8/10)**

(3.2) DEAD MAN'S PARTY by Marti Noxon

From the moment there is a 'Previously On Buffy The Vampire Slayer' that dates back to the previous season, this is exposed as a bit backward-looking.

On her return to Sunnydale, the attitude of Buffy's friends and mother does suck a little. Surely, they should be more grateful that she's back, and to be honest, Sunnydale should have been shown as going to hell without her - as does happen at the start of Season Six. A lot of it just doesn't quite ring true, in maybe the least convincing episode so far.

But the saving grace is Giles, the one person who realises Buffy's need for space. And there's also his brilliant quote: "Unbelievable. 'Do you like my mask? Isn't it pretty? It raises the dead!' Americans!" **(6/10)**

(3.3) FAITH, HOPE & TRICK by David Greenwalt

After two episodes that dealt with tying up the loose ends provided by Season Two, we race into the Season Three arc, with the introduction of Faith, the new Slayer in town.

Buffy initially reacts jealously to Faith, but then finds out that Faith has had a lot to cope with: the death of her Watcher and being pursued by an ancient, cloven vampire.

It's a highly promising first episode for the new Slayer and it leaves the viewer pondering where her development will go.

As for the other two eponymous characters: one is Scott Hope, a normal lad who shows an interest in Buffy, while Mr Trick is the new vampire in town, who embraces modern technology.

A delightful scene sees Principal Snyder trying to tell Buffy the conditions of her re-entry to Sunnydale High, only for Buffy and her mum to know full well that the school board overruled him. Joyce's parting shot of "I think what my daughter's trying to say is... ner-ner-ner-ner-ner" is wonderful.

There's another nice mother and daughter scene later on - this time with Joyce telling Buffy: "I know you didn't choose this, I know it chose you. I have tried to march in the 'Slayer Pride' parade, but I don't want you to die." Scenes with SMG and Kristine Sutherland are always a delight.

But the best thing in *Faith, Hope & Trick* is Giles getting the truth from Buffy to what happened to Angel, so that she can get it out in the open and move on. It's all a big white lie, but he does it very much for the right reasons - Giles is such a wonderful parental figure. Just when the Angel storyline seems done and dusted, there's a shock ending. A lot jostling for attention in a delightful episode. **(9/10)**

(3.4) BEAUTY AND THE BEASTS by Marti Noxon

Marti Noxon wrote some great stuff during Season Two, but this homage to Jekyll and Hyde falls slightly flat. It's message that "all men are beasts" is too heavy-handed and unsubtle for a series as clever as **BTVS**.

The Oz scenes are nice - it's about time the show covered him being a werewolf again, and moreover the chance of him killing while in that mode and how the likes of Willow would react to that. And it's a real hoot when Giles is knocked out by the tranquiliser gun.

But the girlfriend-abusing Pete and the returning Angel - who mostly charges around in an animal-like state - are less well done.

It's a shame when it's up to Angel to deal with Pete at the end. The usual female empowerment message is missing - Buffy proved unable to save Debbie. The episode ends in a tragic, downbeat mood. **(6/10)**

(3.5) HOMECOMING by David Greenwalt

"Competition is a beautiful thing. It makes us strive. It makes us accomplish. Occasionally, it makes us kill."

The last **BTVS** script by David Greenwalt, before he went off to become showrunner on **Angel**. It's a delight, with both humorous and character-building moments, as Buffy and Cordelia compete to be Homecoming Queen and end up kidnapped by Mr Trick, for his innovation, Slayerfest '98 - a second contest taking place during the episode.

The high-tech Germans are notable, since they are human. Buffy does kill the two operatives at the end - or rather cause them to kill each other - but she really doesn't have any choice, since they were tracking her and Cordelia with some serious hardware.

We also see a return for Lyle Gorch (from *Bad Eggs*), allowing Cordelia to show her strength is in the power of her tongue, as she talks herself and Buffy out of a potentially lethal situation by intimidating him.

There are chuckles throughout, culminating in a signposted but still amusing conclusion to the Homecoming Queen contest.

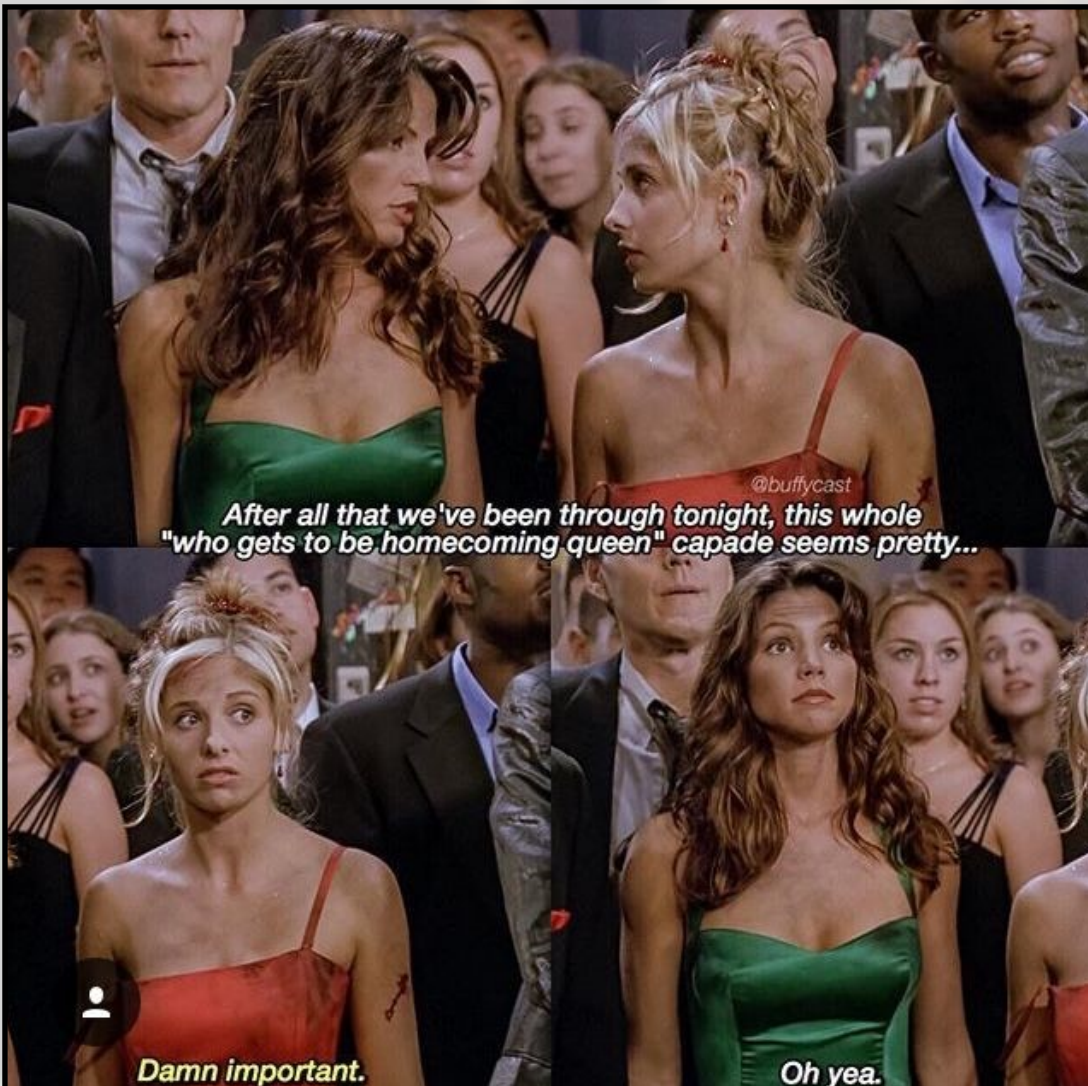
We also finally meet the Mayor, following all the namedrops in the latter part of Season Two and the

start of this season. Straight away, his mild demeanour, plus his obsession with cleanliness, make him an interesting character which Harry Groener brings expertly to life.

Plus, the ruinous attraction between Xander and Willow kicks off. All-in-all, a complete treat. **(10/10)**

(3.6) BAND CANDY by Jane Espenson

Fantastic idea, as candy bars cause Joyce, Giles and Snyder to act like teenagers, along with the rest of the adult Sunnydale population. It's the latest scheme of the returning Ethan Rayne, who has been contracted by Mr Trick, as the latter is now in the employ of the Mayor.



We find out further that Giles, or rather 'Ripper', was quite the lad, not beyond a bit of petty thieving or attacking a police officer.

Meanwhile, Joyce was very easily led, and Snyder was a bit of an excitable geek. There are lots of laughs, and it leaves us wondering exactly how far Giles and Joyce went on the bonnet of the police car - we will get an answer in *Earshot!*

There's quite a nasty motivation for wanting the adult population to let their guard down, although at least Buffy, along with Giles and Joyce, can get there in time to save the babies.

Meanwhile, Angel is shoe-horned into a single scene for the second week running and seems to be used simply for eye candy – at this point, it's really not clear why he was brought back. (9/10)

(3.7) REVELATIONS by Douglas Petrie

A big pointer to how this season will develop, with a great big fight between Buffy and Faith, after the whole gang is taken in by a rogue Watcher. Real damage is done to the relationship between the two Slayers.

Gwendoline Post is a wonderfully immoral character, and it's a shame she is written out after just a single episode.

Plus, the rest of the gang discover that Angel is alive and that Buffy has been harbouring him, resulting in her being torn down a strip by Giles. An arc story and a good one. (9/10)

(3.8) LOVERS WALK by Dan Vebber

Yay, Spike is back! He's in a drunken stupor and a mess, because Drusilla has left him for a Chaos Demon.

But as events progress, he gets himself together – which is ironic, because everyone else finds their lives and relationships ripped apart.

It's one of those mid-season episodes of **BTVS** where everything is turned upside down, after a kidnapped Xander and Willow are discovered kissing by their rescuers, Oz and Cordelia, leading to the break-up of both couples.

Meanwhile, Spike tells Buffy and Angel how it is: "You're not friends. You'll never be friends. You'll be in love till it kills you both. You'll fight, and you'll shag, and you'll hate each other till it makes you quiver, but you'll never be friends. Love isn't brains, children, it's blood... blood screaming inside you to work its will. I may be love's bitch, but at least I'm man enough to admit it."

It's ironic that the two characters who point out the blatantly obvious to Buffy and Angel during the season are Spike and the Mayor.

There's also the big tease towards the end – on first view, you go 'whoah, they've killed Cordelia' (they haven't). Another very strong episode. (9/10)

(3.9) THE WISH by Marti Noxon

BTVS pays homage to the brilliant film *It's A Wonderful Life*, as Anya the Vengeance Demon appears on the scene for the first time, to grant Cordelia's wish that Buffy had never come to Sunnydale.

The Wish really goes to town on the alternative reality concept, as we see a world where the Master rose and it's a living hell, which enables us to see many of the characters in a different light.

There's Willow and Xander as lovestruck evil vampires, while Angel is Willow's chained-up 'puppy' who she enjoys to torture – Alyson Hannigan made such an effective leather-bound dominatrix that it spawned a sequel (*Doppelgangland*).

Giles is the leader of a rebel group called the White Hats along with Oz and Larry, while a very different, hardened, cynical Buffy arrives, with Sarah Michelle Gellar dressed in tough combat gear.

The Wish also pulls no punches in killing off almost every regular, most of them just as Giles is putting history back on course. Angel, Xander, Willow and Buffy all die in little more than a minute, with Cordelia having been killed much earlier. It's a great idea, well executed. (10/10)



An alternate Buffy—be careful what you wish for!

(3.10) AMENDS by Joss Whedon

A Christmas episode, that finally answers the question: why was Angel returned from the hell dimension? Well, it was so he could be tormented, until he snaps and kills Buffy.

The villain here is the First Evil (who will return in Season Seven), an ancient non-corporeal entity who can take on the form of the dead, hence Angel is being haunted by Jenny Calendar and several of his other victims.

Containing flashbacks to Angel's past, it's nicely directed by Joss Whedon. There's also a delightful scene between Willow and Oz (back together again), where she tries to seduce him, only for him to tell her he wants their first time to be special, rather than a way for her to try to make things up.

However, the ending of *Amends* is weak. The First Evil seems to be defeated by Buffy smashing up some bones, and then there's a 'miracle' (of a higher power?) stopping the sun rise on Christmas Day due to a freak snowstorm to prevent Angel from committing suicide. Meh! (7/10)

(3.11) GINGERBREAD by Jane Espenson (story by Thania St. John & Jane Espenson)

Gingerbread begins with some occult group seemingly have murdered two young children, with a hint that Willow may be involved.

It's a study in vigilantism and how it can quickly get out of hand, that also comments how some fairy-tales - in this case, Hansel and Gretel - have their origin in real-life events.

But it develops in a slightly strange manner. The behaviour of Joyce Summers is weird, even before discovering the dead bodies (in reality, a demon pretending to be dead children). I just don't see her joining Buffy on patrol. And Willow's mother is not like how I imagined her at all.

The final scenes turn into amusing slapstick. To avoid being burnt at the stake, Amy turns herself into a rat to escape - something which will be played for laughs across the next few seasons. (6/10)

(3.12) HELPLESS by David Fury

An episode that is one of the most menacing and also adds to the mythos of **BTVS**, as Buffy encounters other bona-fide members of the Watchers Council for the first time, including boss man Quentin Travers.

In many ways, *Helpless* is about the father figures in Buffy's life. There's her own dad, who once again lets her down, by giving a flimsy work-related excuse to avoid taking her to an ice show for her 18th

birthday.

And then there's Giles, who initially does the bidding of the council, in drugging Buffy for the cruel test that she faces on her birthday, which leads to a highly-charged scene when Buffy realises he's betrayed her.

But Giles throws off those shackles when he realises the test has started to go wrong and Buffy's life is in danger. As he tells Travers: "This is not business." He loves Buffy.

Meanwhile, there's the threat posed by Kralik, an insane vampire, especially as Buffy has been shorn of her usual Slayer powers. Kralik is a wonderfully dark creation, and the way he captures Joyce and leaves Buffy photos of her mother is unsettling.

The scenes in the abandoned boarding house are classic horror, with Buffy stalked by Kralik. It's nice to see her outwit him at the end, as she shows there's more than one way to kill a vampire, before Giles saves her and her mother from a second one.

Buffy has passed her test, but Giles is sacked as Buffy's Watcher for his interference. Travers tells him: "Your affection for your charge has rendered you incapable of clear and impartial judgment. You have a father's love for the child, and that is useless to the cause. It would be best if you had no further contact with the Slayer." But Giles isn't going anywhere and tends to Buffy's wounds after her ordeal.

A top episode, which leaves the bond between Buffy and Giles stronger than ever. (10/10)

(3.13) THE ZEPPO by Dan Vebber

"It must be really hard when all your friends have superpowers - Slayer, werewolf, witches, vampires - and you're, like, this little nothing."

The Zeppo (a reference to often forgotten Marx brother) is told from Xander's perspective during a bit of an odd twenty-four hours for him. He gains wheels, encounters a Zombie gang, loses his virginity to Faith of all people, and prevents the school from being blown up.

Meanwhile, Buffy and the others are saving the world from another [apocalypse](#) in a near repeat of some of the events of *Prophecy Girl*, although we only see glimpses of this between Xander's exploits.

It's very neatly done, with lots of gags and a fair amount of drama, and a great performance from Nicholas Brendon, as Xander proves to himself that he is a worthy member of the gang. Another fantastic episode, which provided the inspiration for the **Doctor Who** story *Love and Monsters*, where the main character is sidelined in favour of other characters. (10/10)

(3.14) BAD GIRLS by Douglas Petrie

"When are you gonna get this, B? Life for a Slayer is very simple. Want. Take. Have."

In which Buffy goes a little wild, with the encouragement of Faith. The latter is already taking too many risks and it's clear that something is going to go wrong, it's just a matter of what.

It comes after a confrontation with the minions of Balthazar, this week's repulsive bad guy. While they escape, Faith accidentally stakes a human, the Deputy Mayor no less, and he dies. Buffy remains horrified – Faith is also initially shocked, but she's regained her composure by the final scene:

BUFFY: You can shut off all the emotions that you want. But eventually, they're going to find a body.

FAITH: Okay, this is the last time we're gonna have this conversation, and we're not even having it now, you understand me? There is no body. I took it, weighted it, and dumped it. The body doesn't exist.

BUFFY: Getting rid of the evidence doesn't make the problem go away.

FAITH: It does for me.

BUFFY: Faith, you don't get it. You killed a man.

FAITH: No, you don't get it. I don't care!

There's also the introduction of Wesley Wyndham-Price, Buffy's new Watcher. He's ripe for mickey-taking and out of his depth when it comes to any kind of physical confrontation, in contrast to Giles, who can handle himself.

If ever there was a moment that sums up the Mayor, it's his to-do list that we see him tick after he's made himself invulnerable:

Greet Scouts

Plumber Union Reschedule

Call Temp Agency

Become Invincible

Meeting With PTA

Haircut

He's a man of high moral value and genial demeanour, who just so happens to also want to take over the world. And there's a hint from Balthazar, before Buffy electrocutes him, that the Mayor has been around for over a hundred years.

A very neat arc episode, which covers a lot of ground and sets things up nicely for the rest of the season. (9/10)

(3.15) CONSEQUENCES by Marti Noxon

Can Faith be saved from turning to the dark side, after killing the Deputy Mayor? Well, no she can't, but there are a few twists and turns here, including the first suggestion that Angel is best suited to speak to her because of his own past.

Wesley continues to act like an idiot (and a lovestruck idiot in front of Cordelia) - his intervention seems to completely push Faith over the edge. She subsequently saves Buffy by staking Mr Trick, but it doesn't stop her from offering her services to the Mayor as Trick's replacement in the final scene.

A somewhat arresting scene is the one where Xander, feeling he has a "connection" with Faith due to sleeping with her in *The Zeppo*, tries to speak to her only to find himself half throttled by her. Eliza Dushka does evil sexy very well.

A slight shift has been occurring to **BTVS** ever since the first season, with it becoming more and more a continuing tale rather than an individual story each week. As the title suggests, *Consequences* deals with the

fallout caused by the previous installment, rather than featuring a new threat. (7/10)



Wesley Wyndman-Price:: Appearances can be deceptive!

And it's also an important episode for the Mayor, as his ascension is mentioned for the first time and we find out there's a hundred days to that event.



Vampire Willow at bay... for now

(3.17) ENEMIES by Douglas Petrie

The soulless, evil Angelus is back... or is it simply a plan by Giles, Buffy and Angel to expose Faith as having turned to the dark side and find out what she knows about the forthcoming ascension of the Mayor?

The first time I watched this episode I was completely taken in, just like Faith. On repeated viewing, it does have some strong scenes, although Buffy's behaviour is strange at times, since for most of *Enemies* she knows it's all an act.

It's also notable, as indeed it was in *Doppelgangland*, that the Mayor has become a father figure to Faith, in the same way that Giles is to Buffy.

It's important that, despite her increasing murderous ways (this time it's a demon rather than a human), that Faith remains a sympathetic character - it's revealed that she endured a painful childhood with a drunken mother. She is like Buffy, but without the support of family and friends. (7/10)

(3.16) DOPPELGANGLAND by Joss Whedon

Joss Whedon liked Vampire Willow from *The Wish* so much that he wrote this sequel for her.

It also allows for the return of Anya, who is desperate to regain her powers as a vengeance demon: "I brought ruin to the heads of unfaithful men. I brought forth destruction and chaos for the pleasure of the lower beings. I was feared and worshipped across the mortal globe. And now I'm stuck at Sunnydale High. Mortal. Child. And I'm flunking math."

It's something of a treat seeing the alternative Willow transported to the regular **BTVS** universe, and her interactions with the characters, including the normal Willow (the split screen stuff is pulled off so well). We know that Willow isn't dead, but the scenes where the rest of the gang think she has been killed are very well done.

Alyson Hannigan completely excels in her dual role. First of all, as regular Willow, who is fed up of being "old reliable", and also as leather-clad dominatrix Vampire Willow who simply wants to return to her own reality: "This is a dumb world. In my world there are people in chains, and we can ride them like ponies."

There are one or two lovely hints that the two Willows are not so far apart, and there's also quite a lot of foreshadowing to how Willow herself will develop in the future, such as the fact Vampire Willow clearly has gay tendencies.

Plus, there are some very funny moments indeed, none more so than the closing scene, when tough footballer Percy, thoroughly trounced by Vampire Willow earlier on, has not only done his homework but also leaves Willow an apple. A delightful character-based episode that leaves the usual Willow more confident and aware. (10/10)

(3.18) EARSHOT by Jane Espenson

So much to enjoy about *Earshot*, which provides laughs and also much to ponder. Buffy soon finds out being able to read thoughts is not the gift it first appears to be and then overhears someone thinking: "this time tomorrow, I'll kill you all".

Earshot gets back to one of the staples of **BTVS** – the fact that almost everyone thinks of themselves as a bit of an outsider.

Buffy being able to read the thoughts of the group is hilarious. Poor Xander is your typical High School boy and his mind is obsessed about sex; even funnier is when Buffy latches onto the thoughts that Wesley is trying to repress about Cordelia.

Meanwhile, Oz has deep philosophical thoughts ("I am my thoughts. If they exist in her, Buffy contains everything that is me and she becomes me. I cease to exist"), while Cordelia is much pretty thinking what she says!

If there's a downside to *Earshot*, it's Buffy moping about Angel and Faith's liaison from the previous episode, when Angel was clearly acting - she needs to get over herself.

But on the major plus side for her, Buffy uses what she's learnt from hearing everyone's thoughts to talk Jonathan out of committing suicide:

JONATHAN: Stop saying my name like we're friends! We're not friends! You all think I'm an idiot! A short idiot!

BUFFY: I don't. I don't think about you much at all. Nobody here really does. Bugs you, doesn't it? You have all this pain, and all these feelings and nobody's really paying attention.

JONATHAN: You think I just want attention?

BUFFY: No. I think you're up in the clock tower with a high-powered rifle because you want to blend in. Believe it or not, Jonathan, I understand about the pain.

JONATHAN: Oh right, coz the burden of being beautiful and athletic, that's a crippler.

BUFFY: You know what? I was wrong. You are an idiot. My life happens to, on occasion, suck beyond the telling of it. Sometimes more than I can handle. And it's not just mine. Every single person down there is ignoring your pain because they're too busy with their own. The beautiful ones. The popular ones. The guys that pick on you. Everyone. If you could hear what they were feeling. The loneliness. The confusion. It looks quiet down there. It's not. It's deafening.

That she had assumed that Jonathan was planning to gun down his fellow students was enough for original transmission to be delayed in America.

In the end, Xander discovers that the potential killer is a murderous dinner lady, with a large comic box of rat poison. A fun episode with a serious message behind it, which ends with Giles walking into a tree after Buffy reveals she now knows that he had sex with her mother during *Band Candy*. (9/10)

(3.19) CHOICES by David Fury

The Mayor starts to make his final plans for his ascension, while Buffy and the gang attempt to put a spanner in the works by stealing an important box, the Box Of Gavrok, from him and Faith.

It leads to a memorable trade-off in the school, also involving Willow, who has been taken as hostage. It's the first proper meeting between the Mayor and the regulars, with him getting in a few home truths on Buffy and Angel's future life together:

MAYOR: Well, I wish you kids the best, I really do. But if you don't mind a bit of fatherly advice, I just don't see much of a future for you two. I don't sense a lasting relationship. And not just because I plan to kill you. You two have a bumpy road ahead.

BUFFY: I don't think we need to talk about this.

MAYOR: God, you kids, you know. You don't like to think about the future. You don't like to make plans. Unless you want Faith to gut your friend like a sea bass, show a little respect for your elders.

ANGEL: You're not my elder. I've got a lot of years on you.

MAYOR: That's just one of the things you're going to have to deal with. You're immortal, she's not. It's not easy. I married my Edna May in '03 and I was with her right until the end. Not a pretty picture. Wrinkled and senile and cursing me for my youth. Wasn't our happiest time. And let's not forget the fact that any moment of true happiness will turn you evil. I mean, come on. What kind of a life can you offer her? I don't see a lot of Sunday picnics in the offing: I see skulking in the shadows, hiding from the sun. She's a blossoming young girl and you want to keep her from the life she should have until it has passed her by. My God! I think that's a little selfish. Is that what you came back from Hell for? Is that your greater purpose?

Choices also sees Buffy and Willow contemplate life beyond high school, and both decide to stay put to stay put in town, at UC Sunnydale, in a lovely scene:

BUFFY: There are safer schools. There are safer prisons. I can't let you stay because of me.

WILLOW: Actually, this isn't about you. Although I'm fond, don't get me wrong, of you. The other night, you know, being captured and all, facing off with Faith. Things just, kind of, got clear. I mean, you've been fighting evil here for three years, and I've helped some, and now we're supposed to decide what we want to do with our lives. And I just realised that that's what I want to do. Fight evil; help people. I mean, I think it's worth doing. And I don't think you do it because you have to. It's a good fight, Buffy, and I want in.

BUFFY: I kind of love you.

A good solid story - with plenty here that is picked up in the final two episodes, including Faith's knife. (8/10)

(3.20) THE PROM by Marti Noxon

The actual threat is a mild one (hell hounds attacking the prom), but this is more about the character moments.

There's Angel letting Buffy go, after the Mayor's speech from *Choices* - plus a subsequent visit from Joyce Summers in this episode - makes him realise the doomed nature of their relationship. It leads to a great performance from Sarah Michelle Gellar as heartbroken Buffy.

Meanwhile, Xander buys the prom dress for ex-girlfriend Cordelia, after he realises her family have hit financial dire straits. Bless him. To add a little comedy to the mix, Xander's date for the prom is former vengeance demon Anya, whose main topic of conversation is how she dealt with various unfaithful men.

But, most of all, there's a wonderful, tear-jerking moment when Buffy is presented a prom award by Jonathan:

JONATHAN: This is actually a new category. First time ever. I guess there were a lot of write-in ballots, and the prom committee asked me to read this: 'We're not good friends. Most of us never found the time to get to know you, but that doesn't mean we haven't noticed you. We don't talk about it much, but it's no secret that Sunnydale High isn't really like other high schools. A lot of weird stuff happens here.'

OUTBURSTS FROM VARIOUS STUDENTS: Zombies! Hyena people! Snyder!

JONATHAN: 'But, whenever there was a problem or something creepy happened, you seemed to show up and stop it. Most of the people here have been saved by you or helped by you at one time or another. We're proud to say that the Class of '99 has the lowest mortality rate of any graduating class in Sunnydale history. And we know at least part of that is because of you. So, the senior class, offers its thanks, and gives you this.' (Jonathan produces a glittering, multi-coloured, miniature umbrella). It's from all of us, and it has written here: 'Buffy Summers, Class Protector.'

The students have been well aware what Buffy has been doing the last three years, and they're grateful. Awww! And then Angel turns up in a tuxedo to give her "the one perfect high school moment" that she longed for. Some lovely stuff. (9/10)



"The one perfect High School moment."

(3.21) GRADUATION DAY (PART 1) by Joss Whedon

There's a tremendous amount of foreboding from the beginning with Xander telling Cordelia: "I woke up the other day with this feeling in my gut. I just know there's no way I'm getting out of this school alive."

That feeling of forthcoming terror is heightened when it turns out the Mayor will be the commencement speaker at graduation.

Anya turns out to be the one person alive who's survived an ascension. She tells the gang what she knows about it, then skips town and tries to persuade Xander to come with her. Buffy also packs Joyce's bags and tells her to leave town: "I'm going to fight this thing, but I can't do it and worry about you." Oz and Willow find a different way to deal, as they make love for the first time.

Meanwhile, the Mayor wants to keep Buffy pre-occupied and he gets Faith to shoot Angel with an arrow and poison him. What follows is perhaps a bit contrived, as it turns out only for a Slayer's blood will cure Angel.

But it results in a great big fight between the two Slayers at Faith's apartment... ending with Buffy stabbing Faith with her own knife, and Faith flinging herself onto a passing lorry to deny Buffy her chance of saving Angel.

The lack of support to help Angel also sees Buffy decide that she will no longer take any instructions from either Wesley or the Watchers Council.

It's well sign-posted in places, but it's still a terrific set-up episode. (9/10)

(3.22) GRADUATION DAY (PART 2) by Joss Whedon

Another huge end-of-season tale. Buffy allows Angel to drink her blood, even though there's a chance that she may die from the blood loss. She survives, but ends up in the hospital, where Faith is in an adjacent bed, in a coma.

Angel saves Buffy from being killed by the Mayor, while Buffy and Faith share a dream, where Faith tells Buffy: "Human weakness - never goes away. Not even his." The Mayor's weakness is his parental feelings for Faith.

The dream also proves that Joss Whedon already had Season Five all planned out in advance, with the cryptic message: "Little Miss Muffet, counting down from 7-3-0." (A reference to the arrival of Dawn, Buffy's younger sister, and how Buffy will die in 730 days - two years).

But, first of all, Buffy and her gang have to deal with the graduation ceremony. In a really nice touch, all the students - including semi-regulars Jonathan, Larry, Percy and Harmony - band together to help Buffy and friends fight the Mayor as he finally ascends... into a giant snake creature.

It pushes the CGI technology of 1999 to its very limit, but director Whedon keeps the action moving along and it works.

There are casualties. Larry is killed by the Snake Mayor, while Harmony appears to be bitten (she's confirmed as a vampire in Season Four). Snyder is swallowed whole by the Mayor, while trying to keep order on his campus - following in the footsteps of Principal Flutie of being eaten.

Buffy uses Faith's knife (the one she stabbed Faith with) to goad the Mayor to his doom, as Sunnydale High School is quite literally out for ever - blown to smithereens! Despite the shots of the wrecked school being cut, transmission was still delayed in America.

With the battle over, Angel disappears into a cloud of smoke and out of Buffy's life and into his own spin-off series. She's left contemplating her future with her friends:

OZ: Guys take a moment to deal with this - we survived.

BUFFY: It was a hell of a battle!

OZ: Not the battle. High School.

A perfect conclusion to the first three years of **BTVS**, with an episode that manages to be epic, while still not losing the little moments that are the hallmark of the show. **(10/10)**

SEASON THREE OVERVIEW:

The High School phase of **BTVS** concludes with another exceptional season.

The fallout caused by the end of Season Two means it takes a while for its successor to get going. And, yes, I do find the resurrection of Angel a bit lame, although with an **Angel** spin-off in the works, it was always going to happen.

But soon we're treated to another fine collection of stories, as the characters are allowed to grow and develop further, while betrayal seems to be a theme across a number of the episodes, although the core team always come back together, no matter what hits them.

There is some great character development across the season. Even after Rupert Giles loses his job as Buffy's Watcher, there's no way that he is going to abandon Buffy, while there are signs that Buffy,

Xander and Willow are all developing into fine young adults.

Incidentally, while fandom often refers to the main gang as the Scooby Gang, I can only detect two references across the opening three seasons, so I've avoided calling them that in this article. In latter seasons, the phrase is used much more.

Rogue Slayer Faith and the charming Mayor are highly effective villains. Unlike the sheltered Kendra, Faith is another streetwise Slayer, in the mould of Buffy. However, she's not got the same circle of family and friends, and therefore she turns to the Mayor as her father figure. He's one of the most interesting Big Bads, due to his cool demeanour and high moral standards, which conflict with his evil acts.

In many series, Cordelia would have remained the bitch queen at Sunnydale High. But, in **BTVS**, she develops and is shown to be as three-dimensional as the other characters. Charisma Carpenter as Cordelia makes her final appearance in the show in *Graduation Day, Part 2*, before switching over to **Angel**, where the character undergoes further major development.

BTVS should be commended for not trying to keep the characters at High School forever - which has been the pitfall of some shows.

It wouldn't have worked in any case. Sarah Michelle Gellar (born April 1977) was portraying a character over three years younger than herself. Nicholas Brendon (born 1971), Alyson Hannigan (born 1974) and Charisma Carpenter (born 1970) were all older still. It would have become increasingly obvious that they were no longer of High School age.

As I said right at the beginning in the last issue, **Buffy The Vampire Slayer** is a show about growing up and finding your place in the world. Subsequent seasons will deal with the various characters continuing that journey as they deal with college, finding a job and family responsibilities - as we'll start to discover in the next issue of *Gallifrey, The Long Way Round*.

Season position: 4th.



**NEXT ISSUE: Seasons Four and Five:
College Life and Family.**

DOCTOR WHO

Revolution of the Daleks

Review

By
Annie Worrall

Let's get the elephant in the room out of the way first. The inclusion of fan-pleasing Captain Jack in the story was, in the light of recent revelations, unfortunate if we charitably assume that Chris Chibnall knew nothing about Barrowman's antics with his family jewels, and less forgivable if he did: the more so because his tenure has been built around the intention to take the show in a pro-feminist direction.

That said, *was the story any good?*



For me it had its moments. The direction of the prison sequence was excellent; I thoroughly enjoyed it, and especially Jodie's performance. From then on, it declined in holding my attention, although it was visually exciting, and the Dalek sections were... well, anything with Daleks is to be appreciated even if it has all been done before.

The narrative failed to sweep me along with it, despite, or perhaps because, it attempted to address just what the Doctor's companions are for. Graham, Ryan and Yas are not sufficiently interesting, or indeed inventive, to keep me involved in their attempts to problem-solve without the Doctor. Mr Big's Robertson was acceptable, but how many of us could have predicted the 'twist' when he betrayed the Doctor and then escaped retribution? Why else did he accompany her in the Tardis if not for that? Harriet Walters was a bit wasted as Jo Patterson. The resurrected Reconnaissance Scout Dalek and its cunningly produced clones were visually arresting, but all too easily defeated.

As for the Doctor, well she was suitably bad-ass and ingenious in dealing with the Daleks, but Whittaker hasn't yet stamped an unforgettable authority on the role, perhaps because she's been saddled with yards of exposition, an irritating reliance on the sonic screwdriver and angst, *so much angst*.

Then we have the ending.

I do have a fondness for Bradley Walsh's Graham, who has been a consistently warm and amusing presence. Ryan, not so much. But I was prepared to be genuinely upset by their leaving. Alas, Chibnall's fatal tendency to tell not show, robbed this farewell of any depth of emotion, so that the bicycle riding scene (together with the obligatory ghost of Grace) was not so much a climax, as a codicil.

Perhaps it really *is* impossible to meet the expectations that surround a holiday special, especially one shown in a lockdown, but I was underwhelmed by this offering.

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The latest missing **Doctor Who** story to be animated for DVD and Blu-Ray release is the 1967 serial *Evil of the Daleks*. A sure-fire crowd pleaser, *Evil* was one of the serials wiped by the BBC in its infamous 'purge' in the early 1970s. Of the serial's 7 episodes, only episode Two remains intact in the archives.

The story was written by former **WHO** script editor David Whittaker and was intended to be the final Dalek story. Terry Nation, the Daleks' creator, owned copyright on their use and was in negotiations with the US ABC TV network to produce a Dalek series for broadcast in the USA.¹ Due to Nation's non-availability to pen the Daleks' swansong, the task fell to Whittaker. The story follows on from the previous serial *The Faceless Ones*. The TARDIS is stolen from a storage unit at Gatwick Airport and driven away in a lorry. The Doctor and companion Jamie follow the trail to an antique shop owned by Edward Waterfield, a Victorian gentleman who, with his partner Theodore Maxtible, has invented a crude form of time travel technology using mirrors and static electricity. On the way their experiment has been hijacked by – you've guessed it – the Daleks.

This epic adventure then jumps via time machine from 1966 to 1866, where the Daleks force Jamie to undergo a series of tests to determine the 'human factor' to aid in their conquest of the Universe. Typically of the Daleks, there is a hidden agenda. The action ultimately ends on the Daleks' home planet of Skaro where the Doctor, Jamie, Waterfield and his daughter Victoria meet the Dalek Emperor. The Doctor brings about a civil war amongst the Daleks. Watching the destruction of the Dalek city, the Doctor observes that it is "The final end" for Daleks...²

Evil of the Daleks was the first full **Doctor Who** serial to be repeated by the BBC in the summer of 1968, providing a link between the series' fifth and sixth seasons. Even so, this didn't save it from being wiped. Since then, *Evil* has been released as an official BBC audio, and unofficially as recons by Loose Canon and many individual fans. But now, at last, the story gets the full animation treatment, using the enhanced, original soundtrack from the serial.

Evil of the Daleks was the very last of the original **Doctor Who** series (1963 to 1989) to be novelised in the Target Books' **Doctor Who**

range, and this task fell to long-time Dalek and WHO fan and author John Peel.

When **Doctor Who** returned to TV in 2005, the onerous task of introducing the Daleks to a new generation of fans fell to Rob Shearman, also a WHO fan and experienced author. Just recently, the BBC has commissioned a new series of novelisations of "Nu-Who" stories, including Rob's own story, entitled – appropriately – *Dalek*, written by Rob and based on his own 2005 script.

To tie all these Skarosian threads together, **Gallifrey The Long Way Round** interviewed John Peel and Rob Shearman ahead of the release of *Evil of the Daleks...*

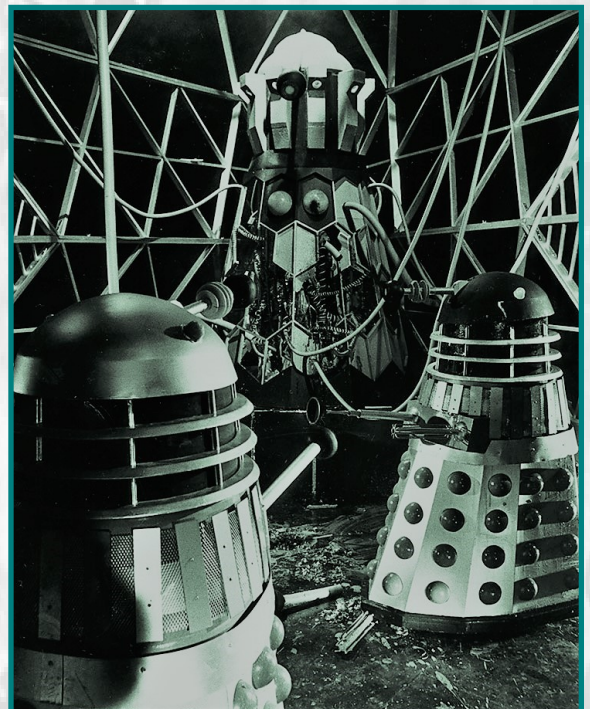


¹ Nation's negotiations with the US ABC network eventually fell through. The US's loss was the UK's gain, Eventually...

²Of course, it wasn't the Daleks' final end, although they didn't re-appear in the series until 1972 in the serial *Day of the Daleks*.

* *Evil of the Daleks* is due to be released in DVD and Blu-Ray format on 21 September 2021

* **GTLWR's** review of Rob Shearman's novelisation *Dalek* appears on page 31



John Peel: The Honour of the Daleks

Interviewed by Nick Mays

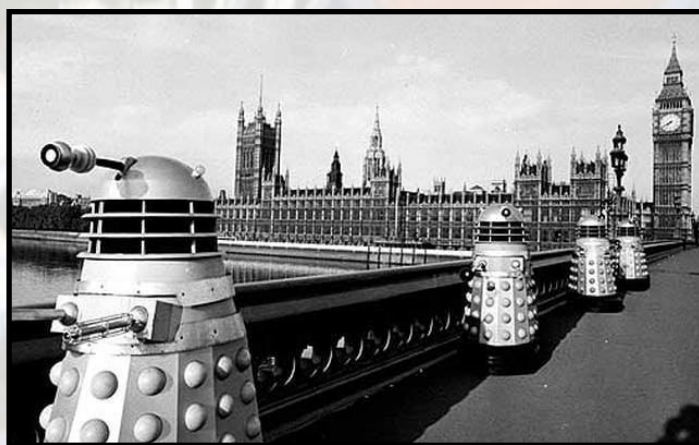


tried to get that feeling over to modern readers.

GTLWR: I take it you're obviously a Dalek fan? What is the earliest Dalek story you saw or can remember? And of course, what's your favourite?

JP: Oh, absolutely! The very first *Doctor Who* story I ever saw was the original *Dead Planet* (aka *The Mutants*) which hooked me immediately – as it did so many, many people back in 1963. It was just so compelling for me. Of course, much as I loved the other stories, it was the Daleks that were the primary draw for me. I can remember coming downstairs one Christmas morning to discover that my parents had bought me the first *Dalek* annual, and the battery-operated Dalek. I'm sure they must have bought me other things, but they're all I can remember!

As to my favourite Dalek story... Well, I loved the first one, of course, but it has to be *Dalek Invasion Of Earth*. Daleks on Skaro were one thing – but let loose in England? Wow! That was really one of the peak moments of my childhood.



GTLWR: Were you a fan of the Who *Target* books back in the day? I'd honestly say that they influenced me to become a writer and journalist. Did they have this effect on you or were you already published?

JP: Oh, yes – I had bought them when they first came out and never stopped. I loved the reissues of the Sixties novels, and I was over the moon when I realized that they were going to be continuing the series with new novels. I devoured those Terrance Dicks and Malcolm Hulke novels, and tried to restrain

Gallifrey The Long Way Round: I loved your novelisations of the 1960s Dalek stories *The Chase*, *The Daleks' Masterplan*, *Power of the Daleks* and, of course, *Evil of the Daleks*, which is soon to be released in animated format. These were the missing gems in the *Target* Doctor Who range. How does it feel to be write for such an iconic range of books, which, for many young fans (myself included), was the only way to relive classic WHO stories or to experience them for the first time?

John Peel: It was a terrific honour, of course, and I was very concerned that I get it right. As you said, these were gems, and I wanted to make sure they lived up to the expectations of the readers. It did help that I'd seen them all except "Evil", and could remember how I'd felt about them at the time, and I

my impatience for the next ones coming. We had no idea when they might arrive, so it was another excuse for me to haunt the local bookshops – not that I really needed any more excuses.

I was a teenager at this point, and had already decided that I was going to be a writer. My main influence was actually David Whitaker's novel – I don't know how often I re-read it, but it's certainly the book I've read the most often in my life. His book and the John Theydon *Thunderbirds* novels were the biggest influences on me. In fact, at the time I was writing stories (terribly poorly, I must confess!), and several of them were Dalek stories.

GTLWR: Terry Nation and his agent Roger Hancock were famously very protective of the Dalek brand. Did you have many hoops to jump through to get permission to adapt the four Dalek stories in the late 1980/early 1990s? Did you work with Terry Nation himself or was he happy to leave you to it?

JP: I didn't have to do *anything* to get to write them! What actually happened was that I was asked by St Martin's Press if I could get in touch with Terry about reprinting his *Dalek Pocketbook* from the Sixties. I realized it would need to be updated, and asked Terry about that. He was busy on *MacGiver* at the time, so he asked if I'd like to do it! Would I??? Of course I said "Yes!" It was while we were working on that book that Terry was contacted by Target Books about novelizing the remaining Dalek stories. They would do this every so often, hoping that Terry would finally agree. He'd not been happy with the last couple, and he usually said no. But this time he said he'd agree – provided John Peel could write the novels.

Well, Target agreed – they'd probably have agreed if he'd said it was provided his pet monkey could write them, they wanted them so badly! Then Terry called me up and asked if I'd like to write the novels. Of course I said yes immediately. It was all arranged before he even mentioned it to me – I think he knew what my answer would be! So, it was all Terry's doing that I got to write the books – I did absolutely nothing.

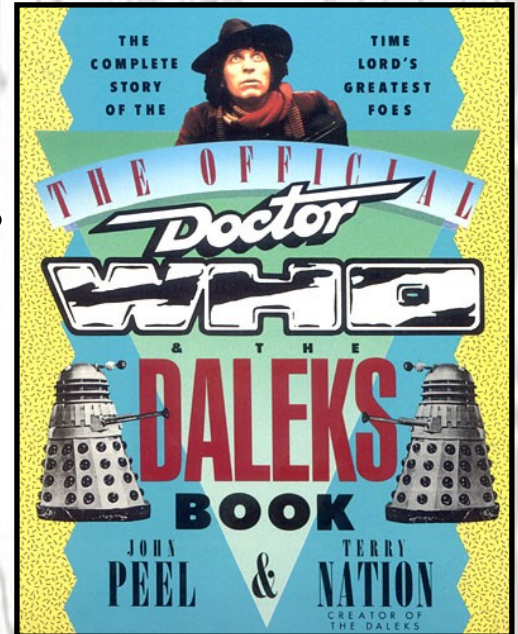
Roger Hancock... Well, you have to understand that Roger's main job was to make sure that Terry was not cheated in any deals he made. Terry was terribly kind and generous, so it was up to Roger to protect Terry's interests. He was *terribly* suspicious of me at the beginning of all of this, afraid I was just another jumped-up fan trying to promote myself off Terry's work, and I don't blame him for thinking that at all. However, when it came to talking money, Terry suggested that we split two thirds to one third, with him getting the one third. I absolutely refused, and insisted it should be fifty-fifty. That included *all* of the Dalek books I wrote, even the ones Terry had very

little input on. Roger then realized that I was not trying to rip Terry off, and we grew to having a lovely relationship.

GTLWR: Of course you worked with Terry on the *Official Doctor Who and the Daleks Book*. Was this an enjoyable and collaborative process? Terry has often been accused by fans (and, I confess, myself included) of not really bothering about Dalek history or continuity, and of his work in general just writing a script and re-using it as much as possible. Do you think this is a fair comment given your experience of working with him?

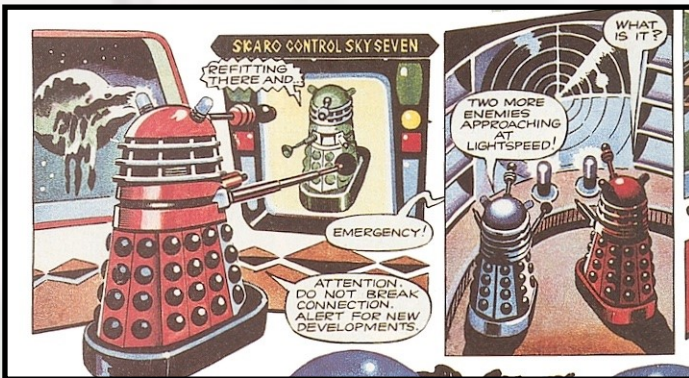
JP: Oh, absolutely – and Terry would be the first person to agree! When it came to the Dalek history part of the book, he told me: "Good luck with that! I've never worked it out." He was a working writer in the Sixties and Seventies, and when he was asked to do a story, he didn't bother about continuity because he could never be certain what part of the audience had even seen his last show. Don't forget, there were virtually no reruns on BBC back then, so once an episode was aired, nobody expected it to be shown again. It was an understood practice back then that previously aired shows could be slightly rewritten and filmed again. I once asked Terry what his favorite part of writing was, and he told me: "Reprints! All of the money, none of the work!" (Of course, he wasn't always terribly serious...).

Working with Terry was tremendous fun. We would talk frequently on the phone, and they were always calls filled with laughter. He didn't do any of the writing, of course, as he was working on other projects. What would happen was odd. You see, when Terry had moved permanently to California, he'd stacked all of his stuff into some large tea-crates and had them shipped out. Then he'd stored them in the garage and never unpacked them. When I needed something, he'd send his wife (Kate) into the garage and tell her to pull out something with "Daleks" on it and ship it to me. I never knew what I'd be getting, because neither did he. When I was finished with that, I'd mail it back and then he'd send poor Kate to get another envelope full of stuff and mail it to me!



GTLWR: I've always had a soft spot for the Red Dalek, as he/it appeared in the *TV Century 21 The Daleks* comic strip and in some of the 1960s Dalek annuals. A Red Dalek appears in all of your *Doctor Who Dalek* novelizations. Was a Red Dalek mentioned as such in any of the scripts (it certainly was in one draft of *Evil of the Daleks*), but never seen on screen. Was this a conscious choice for you to give the Red Dalek a role alongside the better-known Black Dalek?

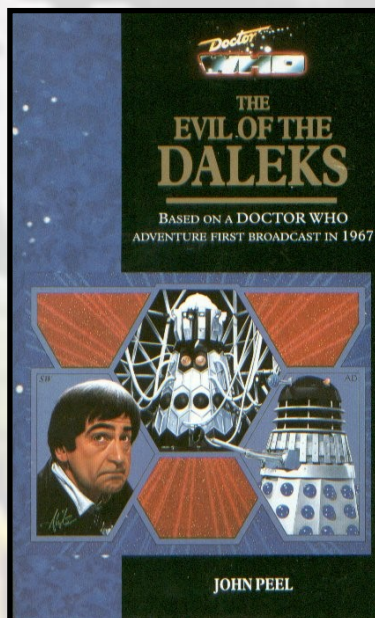
JP: Oh, yes. Like you, I'd loved the Red Dalek, but it was more of a need to differentiate between the various Daleks in the stories while I was writing that made me give him a prominent role. Most of the scripts just said "Dalek 1" or "Dalek 2", but I wanted something a bit punchier for the stories.



GTLWR: Of course, you've written a great many more Dalek novels and *Doctor Who* novels, and back up comic strips for *Doctor Who Magazine*, as well as your brilliant YP book in the *Lucy Wilson* mysteries. You must be a very busy man! Do you have any of your novels or stories of which you are particularly proud?

JP: "Which of your children do you love the most?" No, seriously, obviously there are ones that I think work better than others, for one reason or another. I'm very fond of my two YA fantasy series – *Dragonhome* and *Diadem*. The fact that they're my two most popular series doesn't hurt! But I've had an amazing number of letters telling me that Melayne (the heroine of *Dragonhome*) really encouraged them when the writers were younger, so I seem to have struck a nerve with her. She's so wonderfully direct, honest and quite naïve.

This is going to sound like a set-up answer, but *Evil Of The Daleks* is a definite favorite. As I said, David's original novel was tremendously influential

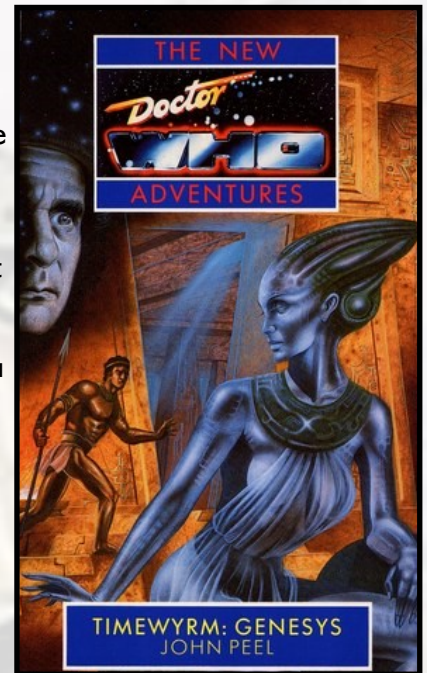


in my own writing, so to get to be able to novelize what is probably his very best script was really such an amazing honor for me. I just adored the storyline, and the nicely-drawn characters – and the utter deviousness of the Daleks.

GTLWR: You were, of course, the author of the first *Virgin Doctor Who New Adventures* book, *Timewyrm: Genesys*. How did this come about and was it a collaborative process with you, the editor of the NA range Peter Darvill-Evans and the authors of the other three *Timewyrm* novels?

JP: It came about because I pushed poor Peter so much. I *really* wanted to be the first person to write an authorized original *Doctor Who* story. I kept asking Peter when it might happen, so when he called me to tell me it was finally going to happen, I was ready. He didn't have a lot worked out, but he knew the *Timewyrm* was going to be this semi-mythical creature that the Doctor has to chase through time. So I came up with a plot and sent it to Peter.

It wasn't *Genesys* though – it was all about a planet where everybody was in thrall to the being that would become the *Timewyrm*, and it was using their brains like floppy discs (which tells you how old this story was!). Peter said it was a lovely idea, but he'd wanted Mesopotamians... which he'd forgotten to mention! "Do you know the story of Gilgamesh?" he asked me. I laughed, because I had a copy of the *Epic* on a shelf beside my desk... I'm very interested in history (because of the historicals in older *Doctor Who*, I'm sure), and I knew the story well. So I immediately wrote *another* outline, and that became *Genesys*.



Because of the time constraints, Peter had all four of us who were writing the *Timewyrm* stories working at the same time. So my first task was to write a rather longer outline and a chapter or so to demonstrate to the others what the *Timewyrm* was and how I was going to use her. There were some differences between that and the finished book, of course, so Peter had to stay on top of it. I didn't have any contact with the other writers, and had absolutely no idea of what they were doing until I finally bought their books!

GTLWR: I remember back in 1991 *Timewyrm: Genesys*, attracting a fair bit of flak from some areas of fandom and the national media for the sexual content (mild though it was) and how this was "un-WHO-like". How did you respond to this criticism and, looking back, how do you feel about it now?

JP: Well, when he'd explained the idea of the series to me, Peter had said that he wanted it to be immediately clear that this was a more adult approach to *Doctor Who*, and that we could do things in it that the BBC couldn't do on TV. And, given the subject matter – Gilgamesh is basically sexually obsessed in the myth – I asked Peter just how far I was to go. "Well," he told me, "no gratuitous sex – unless the story calls for it." Which didn't really answer the question! So I decided to include a child prostitute – which, back then, was considered a perfectly legitimate profession – basically to get people thinking about how attitudes change. Instead, it just brought in complaints! Which, in itself, I think shows how much the readers needed to think about the subject.

What *did* surprise me, though, was the complaints about Ace sleeping in the nude. I mean, what's the big deal about sleeping in the nude? But from the howls, you would have thought I was having her having sex every other page... And nobody seemed to understand that the *reason* I had her naked was because the Doctor had accidentally stripped her of her memories and they had to be rebuilt in precisely the same way Ace is stripped at the start of the story and has to get dressed. Anyway, by the time that *Transit* came out, the fuss all died down

When I met Terrance Dicks years later, I asked him if he'd been bothered that I'd been chosen to write the first original novel when, by rights, it should have been him, he shook his head. "I knew the first book would get all the flak from the fans," he explained. "I was happy to do the second!"

GTLWR: Have you ever been approached to write for *Doctor Who* on TV or for Big Finish audios and would you be happy to do it?

JP: No, I haven't. But if I was asked, of course I'd want to have a go! I'm a writer by trade, and I always try to say yes to projects – provided they interest me. And pretty much anything *Doctor Who* interests me. I've been a fan of the show for getting on to sixty years now, so I think it's too late for me to grow out of it.

GTLWR: Are you working on any projects at this time for us to look out for?

JP: Constantly! The trouble is that many of them I can't talk about until they're officially announced – the publishers like to be the ones to break the news.

But I can say that my next work to be released is a new *Dracula* novel. I worked with a friend and also Dacre Stoker (Bram's great-nephew) on this project, which is *Dracula's Bedlam*. We hope that it will continue over several books and in other media.

GTLWR: You're a Nottingham lad I believe, now resident in New York. When did you move to the States and (if it's not a rude question) why?

JP: Yes, Nottingham born and bred. I've lived in New York since 1981, though. I came over to marry a girl I actually met through *Doctor Who* fandom. There's no getting away from the show, is there?

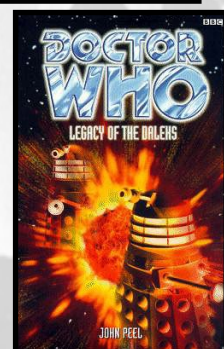
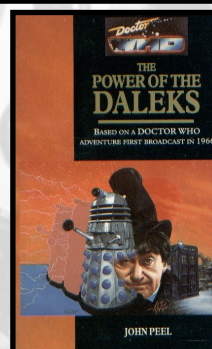
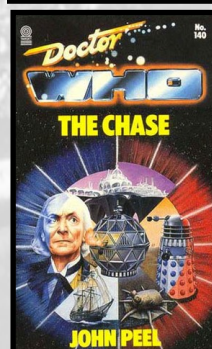
GTLWR: The animated release of *Evil of the Daleks* is scheduled for September 2021. Are you looking forward to this? And do you believe/hope/wish that one day all its missing episodes (and all the missing *Doctor Who* episodes from the 1960s) will be found?

JP: Oh, I am *absolutely* looking forward to this – it was the only Dalek serial I never saw on first broadcast. So I'm really looking forward to see how they handled it. And, yes, I'd love it if the original episodes were discovered somehow. I'm not sure that they ever will, but I'd love it if they (and the others!) were rediscovered.

GTLWR: John Peel, thank you very much.



Terry Nation (left) and John Peel (right) at a *Doctor Who* Convention in Chicago, in 1989



ROB SHEARMAN: A NOVEL TAKE ON THE DALEKS

Interviewed by Nick Mays

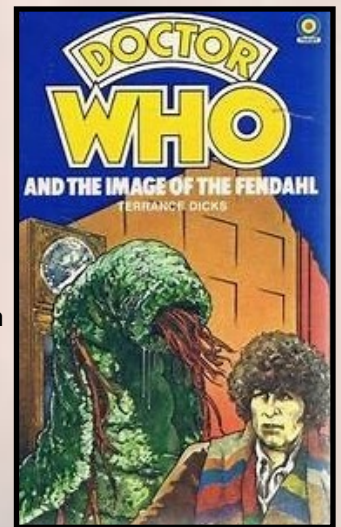
Gallifrey The Long Way Round: Congratulations on the publication of *Dalek*, your novelisation of the 2005 TV story of the same name, in the new Doctor Who *Target* books range, Rob. How does it feel to be writing for such an iconic range of books, which fuelled fandom before there really *was* an organised fandom?

ROB SHEARMAN: Well, it is a bit of an honour, really! Target books were my gateway to the series in the first place. I was far too frightened to watch the TV show when I was a kid - I'm still too easily scared by things, frankly - and just hearing the theme music was enough to make me run out of the sitting room. I don't know what it was, that time tunnel in the opening credits, maybe. And I just had this strange idea that the programme was wall-to-wall death and horror, and that if I even caught a glimpse of it, I would never sleep for nightmares ever again.



I was intrigued by it - because who wouldn't be? When a friend at school told me Douglas Adams had written it, and that as a *Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy* fan I was missing a lot, I knew I had to try it out somehow. I think maybe in my head, for years and years, I thought Adams had written *all* of it, under various pseudonyms. On a visit to Crawley

shopping centre with my Mum I dared to look at the Target books. I chose the one that had the least frightening cover - which was *Image of the Fendahl*. (That cover really is crap.) Someone died horribly in the first chapter - ironically enough, a hitch-hiker, which probably convinced me that Adams was involved. But I was hooked.

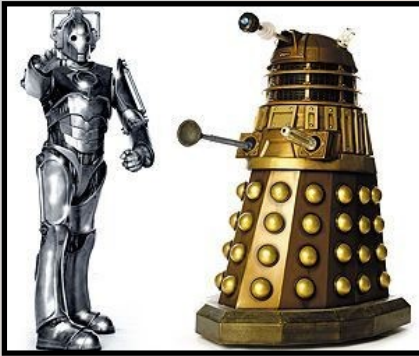


I fell in love with the TV show too, of course, and kept buying all the Targets up until the point I hit my late teens. Fortunately, I kept them when I was going through my non-Doctor Who wobble - and years later I was able to plug all the gaps without it ever being too difficult. So, I now have a full Target collection in my office, staring down at me from the shelf, in transmission order!

Funnily enough, for years after *Dalek* went out, I was asked at conventions whether I would ever do a Target novelisation should I be asked. And I was always a bit snotty about it and said no - because I genuinely couldn't see the point of turning the new series into novels. It was all freely available to view on iPlayer or Netflix anyway! But it was reading Steven Moffat's *Day of the Doctor* novelisation that showed me I was wrong and that there was so much you could do to reinvent the original script and make it something new, funny, and exciting. I just never thought I would be asked. By the time the Target series was revived, there were well over a hundred new series episodes - why would mine be picked? So, when the email came asking me whether I would join the range, I was overjoyed. I looked at my shelves full of Doctor Who books, took a deep breath, and wrote back immediately saying yes!

GTLWR: It's obvious you're a Dalek fan. What is the earliest Dalek story you can remember? And of course, what is your favourite?

RS: I was more of a Cyberman fan, really! I began watching the series when Tom Baker left, so it was *Earthshock* in Davison's first season that made the huge impact on me. The first Dalek story I ever saw, then, would have been the abridged version of *Genesis of the Daleks* that was repeated later that year. As a young kid I was always worried about Daleks, too scared to watch the show. I have memories of seeing Rod Hull and Emu doing a parody sketch about the Deadly Dustbins, and even that freaked me.



I later grew to appreciate and respect the Dalek stories, of course - but I've never had quite the same nostalgic thrill about them as I know other fans do. I think in a way it meant that when

I first was asked to write a Dalek story - *Jubilee*, for Big Finish - I didn't do it with any great sense of awe or responsibility. I just wanted to tell my own strange and silly story and deconstruct the iconography of them a bit. But I was hugely influenced by the Dalek stories I love the most - there is a lot of *Power* in both *Jubilee* and *Dalek*, the way the humans are if anything more mendacious and culpable than the pepperpots! And I love *Revelation* for its dark comedy, and *Remembrance* for its sheer joyous verve. I relied a lot upon *Remembrance* when I wrote *Dalek*, actually - it felt like such a reboot for them, they just seemed new and relevant again, and I wanted to do the same thing.

GTLWR: The premise of *Dalek* as seen on TV was based on your Big Finish audio story *Jubilee*. Did Who showrunner Russell T Davies specifically ask you to adapt *Jubilee*?

RS: Well, sort of! I think Russell had heard *Jubilee*, and liked the tone of it, and the way it tried to make a single Dalek more of a psychological villain. If you think of *Jubilee* as a starting point on the map, that's probably right - but we both knew from the first meeting that the destination would be very, very far away! It had the opposite job, in a funny way. *Jubilee* was a play for hardened **Doctor Who** fans, all about the way that we had all grown too used to them, and we were complacent about what they represented. *Dalek* had to assume that not a single viewer knew what they were - that the eight-year-olds watching **Doctor**

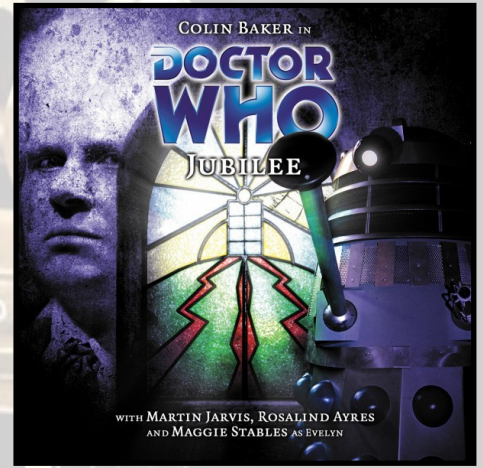
Who for the first time had to find a reason to engage with them and find them worth taking seriously.

GTLWR: *Dalek* is, for my money, the best "Nu-Who" Dalek story bar none and, like many

fans, I'd place it up there alongside classic series Dalek greats such as *Power of the Daleks*, *Evil of the Daleks* and *Genesis of the Daleks*. Russell has said in interviews that he wanted *Dalek*, which was episode 6 of the first revived series, to be a kind of jumping on point for new viewers and give us more background about the Time War and the Doctor's genocidal role in it. Did this feel like a huge burden to carry in penning *Dalek*? Did you and RTD collaborate closely on the whole Time War backstory?

RS: Well, there was certainly a bit of a burden to be writing Doctor Who - dear God, if I could go back in time and give my younger self one bit of advice, it would be to stop worrying so much and enjoy the ride! I just didn't want to have destroyed the whole future of Doctor Who by being part of a series that would get cancelled because of my script!

But as regards the Time War - it never felt important at the time. Partly because I didn't imagine it becoming this seismic part of the show's history - at the time I thought we might be the *end* of that history! And partly because it was just a MacGuffin. We wanted the Doctor freed from all baggage, so Russell created the Time War to get rid of it. It was only ever meant to be vague backstory, really. I certainly never understood the Time War at all, and we never discussed it in meetings. It's only because the series became so extraordinarily successful, and ran on and on and on, that out of those crumbs anyone was later forced to create a loaf!



GTLWR: How did you go about adapting what was a great TV script into prose form? Did you re-use any ideas from earlier drafts of your script or use ideas that that didn't make it to the screen?

RS: I did look back over my early drafts of *Dalek* - but in truth, they just weren't very good. That's not entirely fair. They were fine, but they were tonally so far removed from what the episode became. Those first passes at *Dalek* were much more like *Revelation*, say, where you had big satirical cartoon characters doing blackly comic things - not a million miles, really, from the heightened tone of Jubilee. It was a fun way into the story for me, but I didn't regret for a second that it had been junked.

The process of working with Russell had been, if anything, to make sure that everything had a good emotional heft. So that was my way into the novel too. I had always felt a little frustrated that in an episode called *Dalek* with the job of establishing what a Dalek is, the human cannon fodder, by necessity, had to be quite thinly drawn. *Dalek* is, in plot terms, essentially a short story - once the Dalek gets out of its cell, it's on a trajectory to the surface. There isn't much opportunity to elongate the action and make it feel like a novel. But I decided what I could do was hint at the backstory of the Dalek through a series of vignette chapters exploring the characters who came into contact with them. To give it more of that emotional heft that Russell had wanted for the Dalek itself.

I suppose I modelled it a little upon the first series of *Lost* - where the present-day action ran parallel with hidden stories of the characters that would give their ultimate fate a nice ironic twist. For years I'd always had the thought that the torturer who got his head crushed by a Dalek probably suffered from appalling headaches - that he could only remedy if he was torturing something else - and so, at the moment of death, he just feels this sudden relief. That seemed to me quite funny, and quite strange. I wanted to see whether I could do the same for the others.

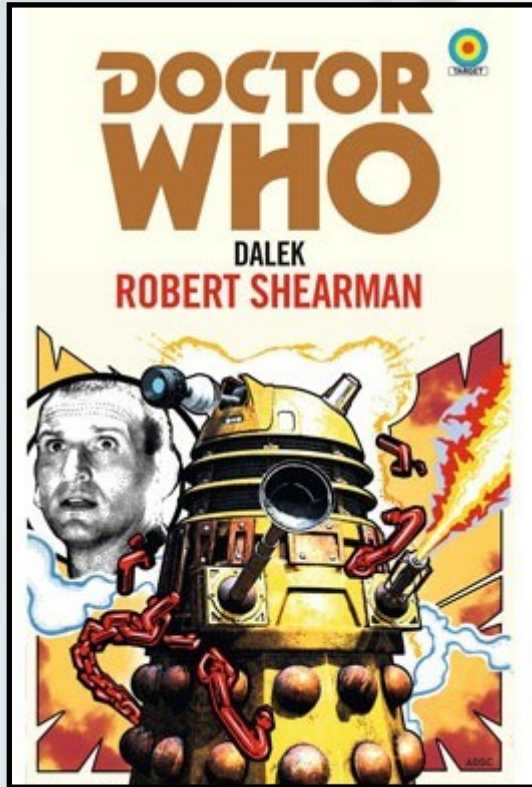
GTLWR: I read *Dalek* pretty much at one sitting and loved it. You give all the characters a backstory, even the guard De Maggio in Van Statten's fortress. Was this an enjoyable or difficult process in making their motivations in life as well as the story clearer?

RS: Oh, thank you! Yes, for me, really, that was the joy of the book. I can see that some readers might find it all unnecessary padding, and I can sympathise with that. But I see it as the actual *point* of the book. That a poor guard who is obsessed with the fact

when she last saw her son, she had to have him sit on the 'naughty step', meets her end trying to stop the Dalek going any further up a staircase! My favourite bits of Malcolm Hulke's Target books were when he could expand or twist the life of a minor character and give them a bit of tragic grandeur: Shughie in *Dinosaur Invasion*, Major Baker in *Cave Monsters* - Trenchard's fate in *The Sea Devils* utterly rewritten to give him a sadder, more ironic, and literary end.

GTLWR: Even the Dalek mutation inside the casing gets a backstory. It undergoes what amounts to torture, both physical and psychological from its own species and then later from Van Statten's sadistic henchman Simmons, so the reader feels empathy for the Dalek. Was this always your intention?

Absolutely. I worried about killing sacred cows when I wrote about the childhood of a Dalek - it's probably sacrilege! But if the TV episode worked hard at giving the Dalek a bit of dignity, I felt that an entire bloody book with his name on it had to present him as something more ambiguous than a simple transcript could allow. I wanted him never to apologise, or to be redeemable - if anything, I think I've made that relationship he has with Rose a lot more frustrated and aggressive - but still to be worthy of some pity, just because he feels real.



GTLWR: How do you feel about *Dalek's* reception as a TV story and as a novel?

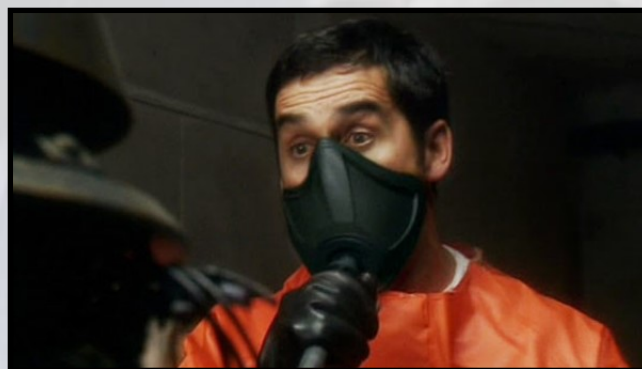
RS: Oh, I'm very proud! It's funny, really. I'm essentially a comedy writer, and I would always have imagined that if I'd ever written a **Doctor Who**, it would have been a funnier one. I'd have loved to have written *Carnival of Monsters*, or *Paradise Towers*. *Dalek* is a bit grim! But I think it's sincere and as truthful as I could write it. And with the novel I knew I had to be true to what that story is. I loved writing it. I did it with great sincerity. I'm really pleased when people like it - and understand, I think, that it's not what other people want from their **Doctor Who**.

GTLWR: Obviously *Dalek* is just one part of your who huge catalogue of work both **Who** and non-**Who** related. Have you ever been approached to write for **Doctor Who** on TV again and would you be happy to do it? Are you working on any projects at this time for us to look out for?

RS: It's been discussed a few times, but honestly, I feel that I was lucky enough to play in the sandpit for as long as I did. I'll never stop being a **Doctor Who** fan, but I don't know if I'll ever be a **Doctor Who** writer again necessarily - the stories I think up these days don't really fit into that universe! If anyone is interested in seeing the sort of craziness I get up to these days, do take a look at my new book, *We All Hear Stories in the Dark* - which is a huge modern day version of the *Arabian Nights*, a massive choose your own adventure maze of 101 different stories where by choosing the right path through a series of tales that might be horror, or comedy, or adventure, you get to bring someone back from the dead...!

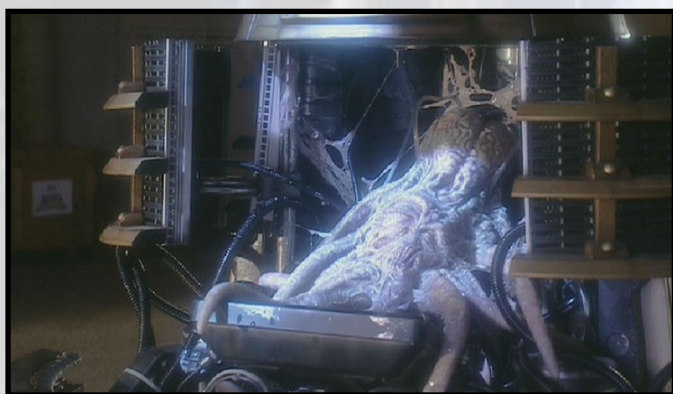


"What are you gonna do? *Sucker* me to death?"



still have to pinch myself that over thirty have been found since then. If that twelve-year-old who was so appalled to discover in the pages of *Doctor Who Monthly* that so many stories had been junked, could imagine a time when *every* single adventure would have been released in some form, with soundtrack, with telesnaps, with animation, he'd never have believed it. It's easy for **Doctor Who** fans to think about all we've lost. But what we still have - and the way we keep clawing more and more back - is just astonishing. I'll never give up hoping we'll get all the episodes back (at least a handful more, please?) - but I'm so happy that those gaps in the catalogue are being plugged!

GTLWR: Rob Shearman, thank you very much.



GTLWR: The animated release of *Evil of the Daleks* is scheduled for September 2021. Are you looking forward to this? And do you believe/hope/wish that one day all its missing episodes (and all the missing **Who** episodes from the 1960s) will be found?

RS: Oh yes, I have it on order! I shall get it, and watch it, the day of release! I've been dreaming of missing episodes ever since I became a fan in 1982, and I



Rob meets "his" Dalek on the set of *Dalek* in 2004

Andrew Skilleter

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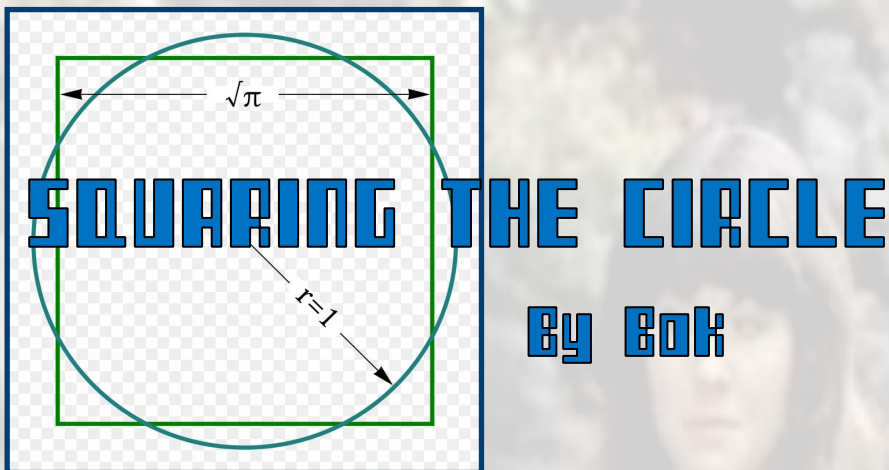
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THE ANDREW SKILLETER DALEK PORTFOLIO



Analysing and attempting to explain and reconcile all those annoying continuity contradictions and outright gaffes in our favourite Sci-Fi and Fantasy franchises.

This issue Bok investigates the verbal veracity of Doctor Who and why all aliens speak English...

"The limits of my language mean the limits of my world."
Ludwig Wittgenstein

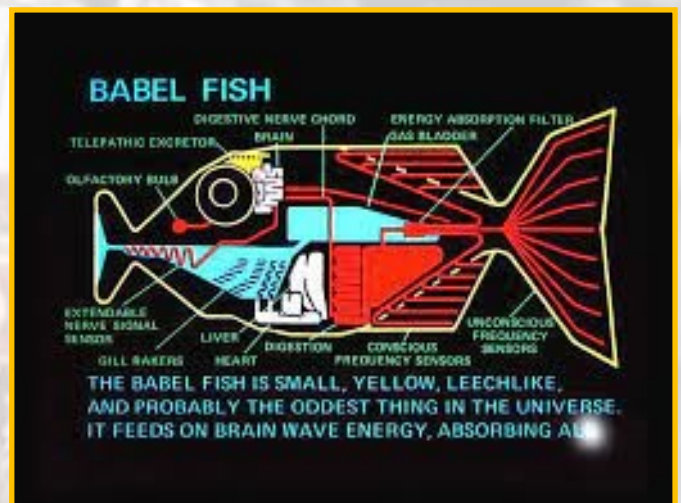
Come on, be honest – how many foreign languages can you speak? Or understand? Or have fluency in? It's useful to be an English speaker of course – because English is what we Earthlings term "a universal language". That's a bit arrogant if you think about it – why should English – or any other human language come to that – be widely understood throughout the *whole universe*?

In Sci-Fi terms, alien (as in non-human) languages often present very little in the way of a barrier to communication. If it's a case of aliens talking to each other, we, the audience assume they're conversing in their own language, helpfully translated for our benefit. If aliens converse with human beings, it's always in English, or the appropriate human language for whichever country is producing the TV series/film/book/audio etc.

The usual answer given as to how aliens from millions of light years beyond earth understand human language is invariably that they "monitored our radio and TV transmissions" which are beamed out into space. Or they intercepted the Voyager probes and listened to the golden LP of human languages.

Very few Sci-Fi stories see alien/human language as a barrier to understanding. The exception being a film which specifically addresses this issue – like *Arrival*, in which deciphering the visiting aliens' language is the key plot point. Invariably, there's usually a simple shorthand to understanding alien languages. In *Star Trek* the language barrier is overcome by hi-tech hand-held communicators.¹ Or Vulcan telepathy.

In *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, it's thanks to a tiny Babel Fish inserted in your ear.²



So, what about in **Doctor Who**? "Ah," says the Johnny-Come-Lately post-2005 revival fan, "that's easy – it's thanks to the *TARDIS translation circuits*." Top marks Johnny, you are quite correct. But in the original 1963 to 1989 series of **Doctor Who**, the whole issue of aliens (both human and non-human) understanding the Doctor and his invariably British companions wasn't overtly addressed until the 1976 story *The Masque of Mandragora*. In this adventure, set in fifteenth century Renaissance Italy, the Fourth Doctor's companion, Sarah Jane Smith is hypnotised and asks the Doctor directly how she can understand Italian, never having queried how she was able to understand and communicate with aliens, domestic and extra-terrestrial – prior to this point. In this way the Doctor realises that Sarah has been hypnotised because she's never asked this before and, what's more, *he isn't expecting her to*. With typical Doctor-ish evasion the Doctor simply tells Sarah that it's a "gift of the Time Lord" that he allows her to share in.

Whys and Wherefores

So, *why* did no companions ever question this miraculous ability to converse freely with non-English speakers?

In terms of the series' production, it probably never occurred to the various production teams or, if it did, then it was an issue they tactfully chose to ignore. After all, in the series' very first story way back in 1963, *An Unearthly Child/The Tribe of Gum*, the prehistoric cave people could speak English (albeit haltingly with lots of grunts), millions of years before that language evolved.

Undoubtedly, the question of translation arose amongst viewers (as it did in letters to the *Radio Times* magazine and *Points of View* programme), but no answer was forthcoming.

In terms of the "In-Who-niverse" however, the best explanation comes from the Ninth Doctor, who tells Rose Tyler in the story *The End of the World* in which she meets numerous aliens and asks him how it she can understand them, that the translation circuit is a "gift of the TARDIS, a telepathic field that gets inside your brain — translates." So, do we take this to mean that, in a rather insidious way, the translation circuit manipulates the companions' brains into *not* questioning their ability to understand and converse in alien tongues? If so, that's quite disturbing.



"What's the Italian word for 'Portmerion'?"

As Rose *does* question this, it's possible that one of the Doctor's former companions – Sarah maybe – told the Doctor just how disturbing it was to have the translation circuits rummaging about in her brain like this and the Doctor resolved to adjust the translation circuits accordingly. After all, the TARDIS was not properly functional when the Doctor stole it. Maybe the translation circuit was on the blink

along with the chameleon circuit? At some point the Doctor must have got around to fixing the translation circuit so that companions' brains weren't manipulated in this way. If he fixed the circuit after Sarah complained, it seems that every later companion may well have queried the gift of translation with the Doctor, but off-screen. Just like they probably need to know where the TARDIS toilets are, but we've never heard anybody ask that on-screen before either.

So What Is It?

A TARDIS translation circuit allows for the instantaneous translation of most languages spoken or written in the universe. It's clear that the Doctor – or any Time Lord using a TARDIS – is mentally linked with the circuit. We see this in *The Christmas Invasion* when the newly-regenerated Tenth Doctor is incapacitated. Rose loses access to the circuit and can no longer understand languages she does not personally speak. However, when the Doctor wakes up from his post-regenerative coma, the translation circuit starts operating again, allowing Rose and all the other humans aboard the alien Sycorax spaceship, to understand and communicate with the Sycorax.

The translation circuit has some interesting quirks. In the story *Vincent and the Doctor*, artist Vincent van Gogh, a native Dutch speaker, assumes that Amy Pond is from Holland due to her having a similar accent to his own. At least that's how Vincent perceives it. Amy, of course, speaks with a Scottish accent.



"Och aye, Vincent—let's go Dutch..."

Later, in *The Eaters of Light*, companion Bill Potts is delighted when she tells a bemused Roman soldier that not only can she understand him speaking Latin, but that the translation circuit also lip-syncs it. So, the speaker being translated appears to be moving their lips according to the language – in this case English – their words were translated into.

Latin looms large when the Tenth Doctor and Donna visit Pompeii in AD79, (*The Fires of Pompeii*). Donna wonders what would happen if she spoke Latin to the locals. When she says “*veni, vidi, vici*” to a local stallholder, he replies sarcastically, “Sorry Missy – me no speakee Celtic.” (This becomes a running joke throughout the story).



“Celtic? It’s all Greek to me, mate!”

Failure To Communicate

Although the circuit is capable of translating the vast majority of languages that it encounters in the universe, there have been notable instances where it has failed. In *The War Games*, the circuit fails to translate both German and French spoken by kidnapped human soldiers on the planet controlled by the alien War Lords. However, the War Lords themselves can seemingly speak and understand the appropriate earth languages. This is possibly due to the War Chief, a renegade Time Lord who is assisting the War Lords, using his own TARDIS’ translation circuits.

In *The Leisure Hive*, the insectoid Foamasi’s language goes untranslated. This is explained as being due to its inherent complexity, as the language stimulates the visual cortex of the Foamasi brain, meaning Foamasi effectively “see” their language.

The rune-like script written on the planet Krop Tor in *The Impossible Planet* cannot be translated as the language pre-dates this universe. Later, in *The God Complex*, the ancient minotaur’s language fails to be translated properly. Its words sound like guttural grunts and roars to the companions, whilst the Eleventh Doctor has difficulty understanding several words and has great difficulty communicating effectively with the Minotaur.



“Read my lips: I-don’t-know-what-it-says-either!”

In the adventure *Cold War*, companion Clara is complimented on her perfect Russian by Professor Gisenko, the science officer aboard a Russian nuclear submarine. However, he is baffled by Clara’s use of phrases like “hen night” and “karaoke” which do not translate into Russian.

The circuit can (usually) translate the written word, but as the Doctor reveals in *A Good Man Goes to War*, there is a time lag to enabling TARDIS passengers from seeing the translated script.

Seemingly, the Doctor effected later some repairs or upgrades to the translation circuit, which enables him to understand and communicate with animals of limited intelligence, including a Krafysis in *Vincent and the Doctor*, a horse (apparently named Susan) in *A Town Called Mercy* and a Tyrannosaurus Rex in *Deep Breath*. Not so much Doctor Who as Doctor Dolittle then. He even communicates with a young baby in *After Hours* who claims to go by the name of “Stormaggedon”. However, with many things that the Doctor says, there is a fine line between fact and embellishment.



“He says his name’s Susan and you have to respect his life choices!”

Random Verbiage

So, what about during the Third Doctor's time when he was exiled to Earth by the Time Lords and the TARDIS was disabled? We don't have any direct evidence that the translation circuit wasn't working (nor, for that matter, any evidence of the translation circuit's existence!) In the Third Doctor's first story, *Spearhead From Space* the Auton facsimiles can speak English, simply because that's where they've been based on Earth. In *The Silurians*, the titular Silurians appear to understand and speak English to all the humans (and Time Lords) they encounter, but this is most likely due to their highly developed telepathic abilities. The unnamed alien ambassadors in the next story *Ambassadors of Death* seem to understand human speech, again most likely by telepathy, whilst their fellow aliens aboard the orbiting spaceship clearly have highly developed technical translation capabilities of their own.

In the later story *Terror of the Autons*, the Doctor speaks in rapid Mandarin to Chinese official Fu Peng, even down to using the correct dialect.³ This seems to indicate that the TARDIS translation circuit *has* been disabled, as the Brigadier can only hear the Doctor speaking to Fu Peng in Chinese. It's not surprising that the Doctor can speak Chinese though – he *is* hundreds of years old after all and has visited the Earth many times during its history. Similarly, being able to communicate in the eyebrow language of the Delphon is something he's learned on his many travels throughout time and space. Maybe Time Lords are just very good at picking up languages?

Later, when the Third Doctor reluctantly undertakes missions in the TARDIS for the Time Lords, he and Jo Grant can converse with and understand aliens perfectly, so clearly the TARDIS translation circuit is working again. It possibly continues to function for the rest of the Doctor's exile and, of course, when he regains his freedom. However, in his first post-freedom story *Carnival of Monsters*, he cannot understand Showman Vorg's use of *Polari*, but then this isn't so much a formal language as a series of secret phrases amongst carnival showmen and actors. He also fails to communicate with the chickens he encounters in the hold of the ship *SS Bernice*, so he obviously hadn't upgraded the translation circuit to animal language at that point.



The operation of the TARDIS translation circuit varies according to the demands of each story, but at least we know it exists and this explains at least a few of the communication issues seen throughout **Doctor Who's** long history.⁴

So, is all that clear?

Or do you need a translation?



NOTES

¹ *The original 1966-69 series of Star Trek is often credited with predicting future technologies such as mobile phones—thanks to the starship Enterprise crew's use of communicators, which also had on-built translation capabilities. But who could have predicted that those later real-world mobile phones would one day have a downloadable app which could translate the speaker's words into another language?!*

² *The humble Babel Fish is proof that God does not exist, according to Douglas Adams, the author of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. It's a clever piece of reasoning, go read it for yourself, but be careful of using a zebra crossing!*

³ *Viewers were given helpful English subtitles on screen—the first time subtitles had ever been used in the series, Fact Fans!*

⁴ *In this article, I've concentrated on Doctor Who's TV canon. The baffling matter of language and TARDIS translation circuit is explored in great detail in other media, including novels, comics and Big Finish Audios.*

LET'S TALK ABOUT

GODS

Says

Deerle Blajic-Kik

Let's talk about Gods.

Although many religions proclaim that theirs is the 'One True One', just as many different 'True Ones' can be found all over the world: sometimes in many versions. In *American Gods*, Neil Gaiman explores a continent where Gods become more powerful if more people believe in them. And because humans create Gods in their own image, they behave like humans. (Or possibly it's the other way around: who is to say for certain?).

Before we look at this particular story, it may be a good idea to consider stories in general. Ask your mother how she met your father, and the story will not be the same as the one your father tells you. In my own life, the story of my wedding would put a chameleon to shame. Depending on my conversational partner, it is: The Day I Got To Wear A Magnificent Dress; The Day I Got To Ride A Vintage Car; The Day An Alpaca Trod On My Dress; or The Day Where I Had To Keep The Fight With The Parents Hidden. These are stories about the same day, in every version I gained a husband, and, importantly, they are all true.

This is the nature of stories. We tend to focus on the whole of them, when really, there is so much more. Stories are alive, and they change depending on who is listening.

I first heard the story of *American Gods* when it was told to me by video in the adaption by Starz television. From the first minute it wrapped me in a world of palpable tension. Shadow Moon, the main character, may not talk much, but just by looking at him you can feel the magnitude of his story. As quickly as possible I watched the whole first season of the show, at the end of which we are left

with the outburst of Easter, who finally remembers she used to be the very powerful Ostara, goddess of Spring and Fertility, instead of a frilly blonde, handing out eggs and hosting a buffet for slews of Jesus incarnations and Easter bunnies.

Fans of the book will have realised by this point that the adaption does not stick to the story in exactly the way it was written, though it had seemed as if it was doing so during the first few episodes. And although I tremendously enjoyed the novel (reading it immediately after watching the first season) I am glad it didn't. The brooding tension that slowly builds throughout the book, would present poorly on screen, resulting in a very boring visual experience. For example, in the written work, there are subtle references everywhere to the well-known death of the Norse God Odin. But to translate all that description to spoken words on the screen would have come across as extremely forced. Instead, the adapters chose to escalate the references and show Shadow being hung on a big tree as early as episode 2, and in doing so they created that perfect momentum that makes a story fly, leaving you wanting more at the end of each episode.

Now, for those of you who are not familiar with the basic premise of the story, let me explain without spoiling too much:

Shadow Moon is released from prison a few days early, because the terrible news comes that his wife, Laura, has died. On his way home he meets a man called Wednesday, who offers him a job. At first he declines, but when it seems that, by sheer unfortunate coincidence, Shadow has nowhere left to go, he agrees to be Wednesday's assistant, provided

that he's not asked to do anything illegal, or required to hurt anyone unless strictly necessary. As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that a war is coming and Shadow seems to be in the middle of it. He meets various strange people, and it doesn't take long for us to realise that most of them are representations of Gods and mythical figures from all kinds of religions. Neil Gaiman's affinity with the Norse Pantheon is clear from the start, but he also shows extensive knowledge of religions from all over the world, such as Irish folklore and old African and Oriental beliefs. Interestingly, he makes no mention of the Greek Pantheon, which could very well be because the Greeks converted to Christianity long before coming to America and thus their Old Gods did not travel with them.

Almost everyone we meet during the story, is in some way part of a belief-history, right up to the squirrel Ratatosk in the tree, near the end of the book.

Shadow, as played by Ricky Whittle



The TV adaption attracted a lot of praise for the actors, who did a marvellous job at portraying the characters. Ricky Whittle, playing Shadow, has the perfect, almost non-entity, demeanour to make him completely forgettable, which is exactly how the character was written. Shadow's 'keep your head down, do your own time' philosophy that he cultivated in prison, shines through all aspects of Ricky's performance. In both versions it is stressed that Shadow is of unknown origin, as he never knew his father. "You got some n****r in you?" asks the prison guard at the beginning of the story. Indeed he could be a white man with a tan, or have some black heritage, Hispanic maybe, or even (as he gets asked later on) part Cherokee. He is the ultimate embodiment of being part of everything, with a strong sense of justice, while being tied to absolutely nothing. The central question that defines him, seems to be where he came from: that he can't really complete the picture of himself, without having this missing piece of the puzzle of his ancestry.

Even now, when I read the book, for most characters I see the faces of the actors, but Shadow remains, well, a *shadow*. He could not have been cast better. The other actor that stood out to me, was Gillian Anderson who portrays one of the New Gods,

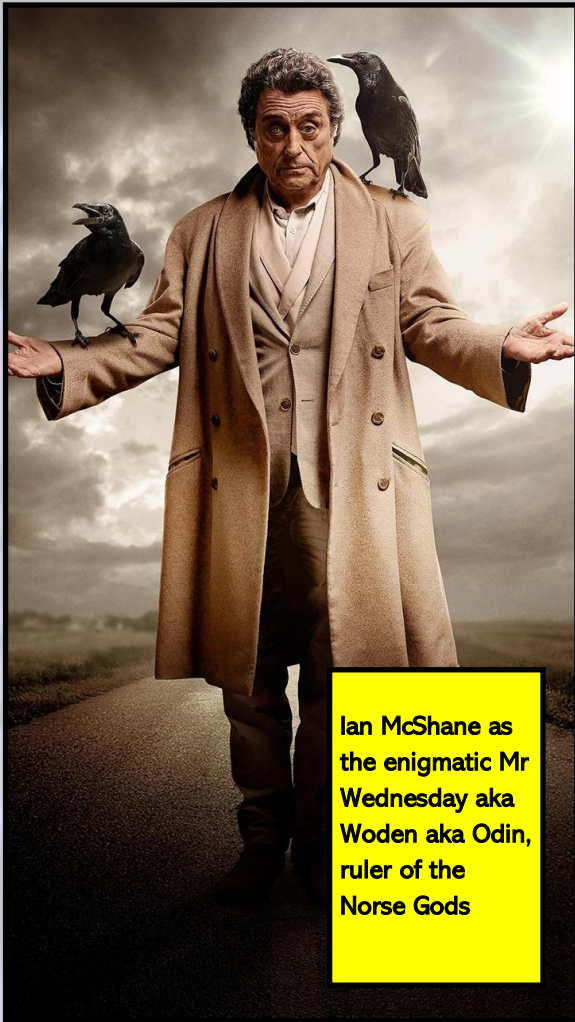
'Media'. In the book there is a confusion, where one of the Old Gods asks, "Media? Isn't that the broad that could turn a man to stone?" The answer is, "Different broad, same deal." This is both a commentary on the effects of modern-day media consumption, and an illustration of time and change. Anderson seems to have the actual abilities of Media, because she transforms into a new character each episode. Still, for season 2 she is replaced with a different actress, as the character also changes into something that wasn't around when the book was originally written. Let's call her 'Social Media'. Different broad, same deal, indeed.

The bigger picture of the story centres on the way our beliefs have changed over the past few hundred years. The Old Gods, are now people. Very *human* people. An old Slavic immigrant in a dingy flat is completely believable as the diminished version of Czernobog, the Dark God, and counterpart to Bielebog, the Light God. Mister Jackal and Mister Ibis are perfect in their roles at a local funeral home in a town called Cairo-pronounced-Cayro. They all have been getting by and living calm lives.

People have always known that, although the Old Gods may have been unpredictable, their basic motives were the same as ours: love, hate, jealousy, hunger for power, looking to better themselves.



Gillian Anderson aka Media channels David Bowie



For example, in the book, Shadow's wife Laura and the leprechaun Mad Sweeney never met. In the show they travel together for quite some time in the second season. But who is to say that is not what happened? It's not crucial to the plot, but neither is what you had for breakfast this morning crucial to how your day is going. Still, if you had the perfect pancake with honey from the bees in your backyard at the start of your day, it is still an enrichment of the story for those who care about you, bees, or breakfast. Such details really give us the chance to get to know the characters.

Another example of a new story involves Thor. At a certain point, Wednesday mentions having had a son, who died because he lost his relevance. In the book, this is just one line, casually mentioned, and it never resurfaces again. In the series, we get a dramatic story about how he, quite literally, ran away with the circus, and eventually killed himself.

To be honest, I don't know if all this was justified world building. In fact, the second season has, for the most part, felt like it was just filling in the spaces before moving on with the story - as if the episodes were idly killing time before the real story continued. But this is not unlike the mythology of Norse Gods, where various characters regularly betray each other, forge alliances, or kill each other, then reappear unharmed in the next narrative, and not all these tales are equally engaging. So in a sense the shows stays true to this format.

Still, I am hoping season 3 will pick up the pace again and not end up like *Once Upon A Time*, where the success of the original idea was so great that they kept introducing new characters and twists, and in the process (at least for me) lost all its original appeal because it turned into another soap. I want the next season to make Shadow's journey character solidifies who he is as Shadow too, and I feel it would be a waste to leave this out, especially when other stories have been invented as filling. Two other key themes in relation to Shadow that I want to see explored, are first, Laura's comment to him that even though he is not the dead one, she is not sure he is really alive either, something which influences a lot of his actions. And second, Mr. Ibis' reply when Shadow visits the afterlife and says he doesn't believe any of it. "It doesn't matter that you didn't believe in us. We believed in you."



And then there are beings that are neither. On one hand, there are the Intangibles; forces (like the force of money, in Las Vegas) that have no face, because that is not the way we believe in them. We don't anthropomorphise them. In the book they are beings you forget are there, or don't even see at all when they occasionally manifest. On the other hand you have those creatures that have become legends, like Johnny Appleseed, or the Native American representations of creation- the Wolf and the Fox for life and death. They started out as real, but became folk legends and stories, and have kept living on 'behind the scenes'.

Much of the novel is about recruiting as many of these beings as possible to the side of the Old Gods, in their war with the New Gods. Only the last twenty-five percent of it is about the war and its outcome.

The show, however, can explore all the tiny ways that this recruiting could have happened, and it's not yet known how much time will be taken up with the war. Contrary to how it happens when a written story gets translated into a movie and bits are cut, for a series there is so much space to expand. I like to think that we are being treated to all the stories that didn't fit into the book by making them come to life on screen.

- **Season 3 premiered in January 2021, but Starz have since cancelled the show. There is talk of a TV movie to finish the story off, but this has yet to be confirmed.**
- **Veerle will continue her fascinating analysis of the series in our next edition.**



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Out of the Vortex

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

WHITTAKER AND CHIBNALL TO BOW OUT

Shortly before this issue of **GTLWR** went to press, the BBC formally announced that change is imminent in **Doctor Who**. Jodie Whittaker will be stepping down from her role as the Thirteenth Doctor. She will be accompanied by Showrunner Chris Chibnall after a trio of Specials, culminating in what the BBC describe as “an epic blockbuster Special” to air in autumn 2022 as part of the BBC’s Centenary celebrations.



With a six-part “Event Serial” announced for the autumn of 2021 and two Specials already planned for 2022, BBC One has now asked for an additional final feature length adventure for the Thirteenth Doctor, to form a trio of Specials for 2022, before the Doctor regenerates once more.

After taking the helm of the show, Chris Chibnall made the groundbreaking decision to cast Jodie Whittaker as the first female Doctor. He also brought in ‘the fam’ of Tosin Cole (Ryan), Mandip Gill (Yaz) and Bradley Walsh (Graham), and cast the acclaimed Sacha Dhawan as the latest incarnation of The Master, plus Jo Martin as the mysterious “Fugitive Doctor”. This all added new

characters, layers and twists to the mythology of the show, not least of which was the revelation that the Doctor was—allegedly— “The Timeless Child” who had given Gallifreyans the power of regeneration and thus creating the Time Lords. She/He had had numerous incarnations before William Hartnell’s incarnation as the First Doctor... a fact which the Doctor herself cannot remember.

Although many WHO fans and some areas of the media have complained vociferously at the direction in which Chibnall has taken the show, citing it as “*overbearingly woke and politically correct*”, the BBC’s own Doctor Who website is proud to point out that episodes such as *Rosa*, *Demons of the Punjab* and *Spyfall* have thrilled audiences across the globe garnering critical acclaim and award recognition, including two BAFTA Must See Moment nominations, along with multiple National Television Award, BAFTA Cymru, TV Choice, Screen Nation, Hugo, Saturn, and Critics Choice nominations.

Under Chibnall’s tenure, the series has been awarded the Visionary Awards TV Show of the Year, the Canadian Rockie Award from the BANFF Television Festival for best sci-fi and genre series, while Mandip Gill and Vinay Patel were recognised with wins from the Eastern Eye Awards.

The 2020 series won Best Science Fiction Show voted for by readers at Radio Times.com, beating out competition from *The Mandalorian*, *Lucifer* and *The Boys*, as well as winning both Best Moment and Most Incredible Twist from the Digital Spy Reader Awards 2020, for *Fugitive Of The Judoon* and *Ascension Of The Cybermen*.

In 2019, the entire current cast and crew were awarded Honorary Doctorates by Sheffield Hallam University for their work on the show.

The following quotes appeared on the BBC's **Doctor Who News** website:

Chris Chibnall says:

'Jodie and I made a "three series and out" pact with each other at the start of this once-in-a-lifetime blast. So now our shift is done, and we're handing back the TARDIS keys.

'Jodie's magnificent, iconic Doctor has exceeded all our high expectations. She's been the gold standard leading actor, shouldering the responsibility of being the first female Doctor with style, strength, warmth, generosity and humour. She captured the public imagination and continues to inspire adoration around the world, as well as from everyone on the production. I can't imagine working with a more inspiring Doctor – so I'm not going to!

'For me, leading this exceptional team has been unrivalled creative fun, and one of the great joys of my career. I'm so proud of the people we've worked with and the stories we've told. To finish our time on the show with an additional Special, after the pandemic changed and challenged our production plans, is a lovely bonus. It's great that the climax of the Thirteenth Doctor's story will be at the heart(s) of the BBC's centenary celebrations.

'I wish our successors - whoever the BBC and BBC Studios choose - as much fun as we've had. They're in for a treat!'

Jodie Whittaker adds:

'In 2017 I opened my glorious gift box of size 13 shoes. I could not have guessed the brilliant adventures, worlds and wonders I was to see in them. My heart is so full of love for this show, for the team who make it, for the fans who watch it and for what it has brought to my life. And I cannot thank Chris enough for entrusting me with his incredible stories. We knew that we wanted to ride this wave side by side, and pass on the baton together. So here we are, weeks away from wrapping on the best job I have ever had. I don't think I'll ever be able to express what this role has given me. I will carry the Doctor and the lessons I've learnt forever.

'I know change can be scary and none of us know what's out there. That's why we keep looking. Travel Hopefully. The Universe will surprise you. Constantly.'

Piers Wenger, Director of BBC Drama says:

'Over the last four years Chris and Jodie have made **Doctor Who** history and their time on the show is indelibly marked on our memories..'

So, cue the inevitable, endless speculation as to who will play the next Doctor... GTLWR will not be venturing an opinion, but will bring you any genuine news on the casting as soon as it becomes available.—Eds

His Dark Materials S3 To Air in 2022

The third season of the smash-hit BBC/HBO **His Dark Materials**, based on the third of Philip Pullman's YA novels *The Amber Spyglass* will air in the Autumn of 2022.

Many established characters are set to return, including: Lyra (Dafne Keen), Will (Amir Wilson), Mrs Coulter (Ruth Wilson), Mary Malone (Simone Kirby), Serafina Pekkala (Ruta Gedmintas), Father MacPhail (Will Keen), and Lord Asriel (James McAvoy).

Several new faces have been added to the cast: *Suicide Squad's* Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje as Commander Ogunwe, *The Durrells'* Jamie Ward as Father Gomez, Amber Fitzgerald-Woolf as Ama, and Kobna Holdbrook-Smith (*Justice League*), Simon Harrison (*Endeavour*) and Chipo Chung (*Into the Badlands*) as rebel angels Balthamos, Baruch and Xaphania respectively.

As fans of the novels will already know, there will be the return of some characters who died in Seasons 1 and 2. This involves the young heroes Lyra and Will travelling to the Land of the Dead, at great personal sacrifice to them both.

Filming on S3 was, like many other shows, delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This has inevitably led to the delay in S3's airdate. However, with the final battle to establish the Republic of Heaven in Lyra's world looming large, viewers will surely agree that it will be well worth the wait!



Dafne Keen (Lyra) and Amir Wilson (Will) during filming of His Dark Materials Season 3

Dalek by Rob Shearman—published by the Target imprint of BBC Books. (11th March 2021) RRP: £4.99. Also available in Kindle format. (BBC)

I am not sure how I feel about this novel. I loved the television episode, and the book adds to the narrative by showing the events that preceded the adventure, thus, giving context for the characters and a deeper motivation, so I should have been blown away by it. But instead, I found its gruesome descriptions of abuse practically unbearable.

It is powerfully written, very powerfully, and the impact of the dark back stories of those involved, resonated with me long after I put down the book. The villainous characters have been warped by their past experiences beyond any hope of redemption, and, for me, that left a slightly sour taste. They are all so nasty, all subscribing in their different ways, to the mantra, "*Evil, be thou my good*": the point being, I assume, to foreground the Dalek in a different light.

And indeed, the Dalek does show a marked difference to the baddies, recognising through its intimate melding with Rose, exactly what a monster it has become. But choosing self-destruction over the compulsion to obey its conditioning, is a very negative outcome to this realisation, and the only hope for redemption comes from what the Doctor learns from this experience and his determination to move on from his incarnation as the monstrous War Doctor.

There is a gothic, almost comic book, depiction of villainy throughout, which I felt sat rather oddly with the moments of realistic and poignantly drawn pathos, as the Dalek and Rose struggle with its emerging understanding of its nature and purpose. Their interaction certainly succeeded in making me look at the Daleks with new eyes; I felt an abiding sadness at the process of mutilation that the Kaled boy had experienced as he was changed into a Dalek- something I had never previously thought about.

But the overwhelming impression I was left with, was that creatures with deeply painful and troubled pasts will always choose cruelty and hatred as their life mantra – and the choice, unless they are a regenerating as a Time Lord, is either to embrace their monstrous nature or, if they regret what they have become, to destroy themselves.

I would like to believe that change with a positive outcome can also occur for abused or traumatised humans if they want it. I think that was the intended message of the story - but for me it was not quite explicit enough to balance out the revulsion and depression I felt about them and their actions.

AW

The Real JRR Tolkien: The Man Who Created Middle-Earth by Jesse Xander — Published May 11th 2021 by White Owl

It's pretty much a given that JRR Tolkien is known to millions the world over as the creator of Middle Earth, brought to life as a living, breathing realm of Hobbits,

Elves, Dwarves, Wizards, Orcs and many others, complete with histories, languages, calendars and magic. And a lot of battles.

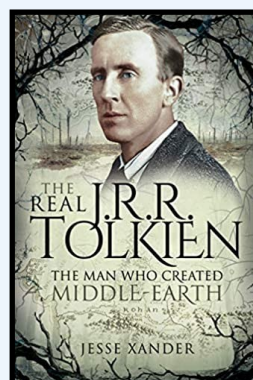
There have been many in-depth, scholarly biographies of Tolkien which have detailed his early life in the Midlands, through to his professorships in Yorkshire and later Cambridge, all written by authors who have read all of Tolkien's works and can interpret every nuance, historical antecedent and linguistic provenance—but not always with complete accuracy.

Jesse Xander, however, had never read any of Tolkien's works until seeing Peter Jackson's blockbuster *Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy at the cinema. This prompted Xander to learn more about the great man and his works, culminating in this short but engaging volume. Xander doesn't claim to be the author of the definitive Tolkien biography, but instead focuses much more on John Ronald Reuel as a boy, a lovestruck teenager, a devoutly religious young man haunted by the horrors of the trenches in WWI and, crucially, a husband and father.

Tolkien's fascination with languages and his path to becoming a professor of linguistics is explored in an accessible way, never confounding the reader with the *minutiae* of Anglo-Saxon dialect or runic symbolism.

Refreshingly, Tolkien's beloved wife Edith shares equal billing in the biography. The two met as orphaned, lonely teenagers when Tolkien was 16 and Edith was 19, and their love was forbidden by Tolkien's patron, catholic priest Father Francis Morgan. Also, the influence of Tolkien's mother Mabel on his future works is explored. Both Mabel and Edith provided the inspiration for several of the great man's Middle Earth heroines.

If I have one criticism of Xander's biography is that it focuses far too much on the Tolkiens' "*right-wing, Conservative (note capital 'C') privilege*" and on Tolkien's inherent sexism towards women, detailing how he pursued his career often to the detriment of Edith's happiness. Xander argues that this wasn't misogyny on Tolkien's part, but that he was a typical product of his time. This led to his portrayal of women in his works as feminine icons and paragons of virtue rather than rounded characters in their own right.



Xander's obvious left-wing, working class PC ideology sometimes encroaches too much onto the narrative for my liking. That said, it does help to provide a different view of JRR Tolkien and the road to Middle Earth and beyond.

All in all, this biography is a useful primer for anyone interested in studying this great man who influenced so much of the Fantasy genre way beyond his own lifetime and the twentieth century.

NM



THE LAST WORD

Doctor Who has provided a rich seam for newspaper cartoonists to mine since it first flickered onto our TV screens in November 1963. And it's no surprise that of all the Doctor's foes, those neo-Nazi peppercorns the Daleks have been a cartoonist's favourite.

Here we take a look at the earliest use of the Daleks as they, along with Doctor Who, became an integral part of the nation's culture...

The Flutters was a long-running "Funny" in the Daily Mirror, focussing on the adventures of a family of gamblers. In this instalment dated 16th May 1964, the Flutters encounter a rather eccentric inventor who claims to have invented a Dalek before the BBC got there first. This is very possibly the first comic-strip Dalek cartoon and pre-dates even the Dalek Book which was published in September 1964.



The Perishers was another long-running "Funny" strip in the Daily Mirror, and characters such as Wellington, his dog Boot and friends Marlon, Maisie and many others became firm favourites with readers. In the issue dated 30th January 1965, Wellington and Marlon do what children across the UK were doing in playground and streets (and pretend to be Daleks. (Although most real kids pretended with cardboard boxes rather than dustbins, unless their parents were flush enough to buy a Dalek playsuit).



See You Next Issue Folks!