





NEIL PERRYMAN

/400 SUE BOOKS

The Fit One The Wife in Space Volume 6

Published March 2017

Sue Me Books, Hartlepool

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Cover artwork by Andrew Orton

Book design and illustrations by Graham Kibble-White

Typeset in OPTIFormula-One and Minion Pro

Printed in Great Britain by 4edge Limited, Essex.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is dedicated to everyone who supported it on *Kickstarter*: Joel Aarons, Marc Abbs, Dan Abel, Richard Abela, AGD, Christian Ainscough, Barry Aldridge, Sean Alexander, Tristan Alfaro, Ashley J Allen, Stephen Allport, Lea Anderson, Lisa and Andrew, James 'I hate celery' Armstrong, Kelly and Chris Arthur, Luke Atkins, Simon Atkinson and Paddy the Dug, Matthew Avery, Verity Bainbridge, Richard and Katharine Bairwell, Jonathan Baldwin, David M Barsky, Susan Bartlett, Jon Bartlett, Matthew Bartley, Katherine Bass, Gary Bates, Jamie Bave, Jamie Baverstock, Alex Beck, Elliot Beesley, Ross Bennet, Matt Bennett, Ste Beresford, Bob Berrow, Ed and Izzy Berrow, Steve Berry, James Bland, Mike Bond, Simon Booth, Robin Boswell, Michael Bowman, Wayne Boyle, Sean Patrick Brady, Dan 'Mind Probe' Braidley, Jason Brooks, David Brunt, Patrick Bryars, Huw Buchtmann, John Bunney, Girvan Burnside, Rebecca Burton, Alex Burton-Keeble, Robert Cameron, Marc Cameron, Paul Carrington, Simon Castle, Virginia Cerezo, Ian Chambers, Cliff Chapman, Tom Charman, Cheeso Records Foundation, Steve Churchill, Pete Clapham, Simon Claridge, David 'Sharaz Jek' Clifford, Rachel Cobb, Simon Cobon, Martin Collins, Barry Collins, John Collins, Nicholas Connor, John Cooper, Rebecca Crane, Adrian Cranwell-Child, Jason Crosby, Robert Crowder, Phillip Culley, Peter Cunnane, Ian Curry, Lisa and Daniel, Simon Darnell, Mike Davey, Rob Dawson, Uther Dean, Robert Dick, Bob Dillon, Mat Dolphin, David James Dorrell, Mark Dowding, Tim Drury, Steve Duerden, Stephen Duff, Patrick Duffy, Edgar 'Smaz' Duncan, Chris Dunford-Kelk, Vivienne Dunstan, Larry and Eleanor Dyde, Earl Ecklund III, T Scott Edwards, Stephen Ellis, David Embery, Paul Engelberg, Bill Evenson, Dr Simon Exton, Martin Fahey, Joe Fairbairn, Richard Fairweather, Kevin Farrell, Alistair Fergusson, Ken Finlayson, Brody Finney, Alex Wilcock and Richard Flowers, Ben Follis, Bradley Forssman, Dominic Francis, Marcia Franklin, Ashley Freije, Sean Gaffney, Dr Mark Gaworecki, Benjamin Gilbert, Rob Gilbert, Michael Gilroy-Sinclair @TinDogPodcast, Hyper Gimboid, Andrew Glazier, Glynn, Sebastian Goettling, Jo Golding, Christine Tursky Gordon, Ed

Gravett, Jennifer Gray, John Paul Green, David Green, Ian Greenfield, Andrew Gregg, Paul Gregory, Gretta, Owen Griffith, Ken Gross, James Hacker, Sarah Hadley, John S Hall, Andrew Hallam, Derek Handley, Jamie Hardwick, Michael Hardy, Richard Hardy, Simon Harries, Pat Harrigan, Peter Harris, Si Hart, Stephen Hatcher, Mark Hayes, Nik Hayward, Scott Heald, Mark Healey, Rod Hedrick, Patrick David Helm, Iain Hepburn, Jason Highfield, Russell Hillman at Freaktown Comics, Matt Hills, Ant Hodgkinson, David Hoffman, Nick Holland, Alistair Cowan and Nicholas Hollands, Hoops, Chris 'In 2003 I became an A-list celebrity' Hughes, Jason Irving, Alison Irwin, Judith Jackson, Mike James, Robert Jewell, Ian Jewkes, Dick 'Jinxy' Jillings, Fidel Jiron Jr., Barry Jobson, Mark John, Marcus Johnson, Gareth Johnstone, Jules Jones, Brendan Jones, Kevin Jordan, TM Jordan, juliaL49, Geoffrey Kahler, Rachael Kedge, Martin J Kennaugh, Emma Kennedy, Al Kennedy, Justin Key, Kenneth Kidd, Matthew Kilburn, Nick Kirby, Philip Fowler and Erica Kolppanen, Vagelis Korais, Hendryk Korzeniowski, Darren Kramble, George L Ganat, Jonathan L Switzer, Peter Lack, Ian Lambeth, Emmet LeBlanc, Rob Johnson (Leicester), Paul Lenkic, Philip Lenton, Andrew Lewin, Tracy Lister, Peter Lloyd, Molly Lofas, Sheila Lofthouse, Roderick T Long, Sean and Anthea Longmore, Matt Low, Tony Lyell, Michael Lynch, Richard Lyth, Charles M Paulsen, Dale Madin, John Magee, Grant Mainwaring, Laura Majerus, Richard Marklew, Andrew Marsden, Bill Marsh, Matthew Marshall-Nichols, Gareth Martland, Thomas Marwede, Ash J Mason, Bat Masterson, Mateen, Carson Maynard, Nick Mays, Mark McCreadie, Elizabeth McCrone, James C McFetridge, Alistair McGown, Dan McGrath, Walter McIntosh, John McPheat, Richard McTighe, Nick Mellish, Mendou, Joe McIntyre and Simon Middleton, Andy Miller, Tony Milton, Bryan Mitchell, Steve and Hayley Mollmann, Alan Mordey, Dave Morgan, Dafydd Morris, Paul Morris, Robert Morrison, Stefan Mueller, Mutt'n'Bear, Mark Nickol, Gavin Noble, Evonne Okafor, Mark B Oliver, Carl Olsen, Chris Orton, Peter Ould, Jon Padgett, Ed Pannett, Adam Parker @Pikmin, Steve Parker. John Parkinson, Paul, Chris Binky Payne, Richard Payne, David Peat, Abby Peck, Simon Pedley, Andrew Peregrine, Jeremy Phillips, Mark Phippen, Tim Phipps, Stephen Pasqua (Podcast Invasion Earth), Barry Platt, JB Anderton (WHO 37 Podcast),

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Erik Pollitt, pookie, Adam J Purcell, Mikhaila Pye (aka Mippy The Rani), Ed Rackstraw, Ian Radford, Viki Radford, Shaun Raven, Adam Redman, Edward Rees, Grant Reeves, Mark Reynolds, Denzell Richards, Dan Rigby, Al Robinson, Valerie Roebuck, Emily Rohde, David Rolinson, Jeremy Rosenberg, Michael Rosenberg, Josiah Rowe, Gary (Ring of Rassilon) Ruddock, Daren Ruewell, Grace Ryan, Andre Salles, Dave Sanders, Ben Scarboro, Steven Schapansky, Neil Scotchmer, Damon Sedgwick (Sydney), Frank Shailes, Matt Sharp, Andy Shaw, Paul Shields, Drew Simchik, David Simon, Billy Smart, Giles Smith, Andrew T Smith, Jason Smith, Neil Smith, Stewart Smith, Caroline Stacey, Paul Stapleton, Jamie Steel, Alan Stephen, Dave Stevens, Jonathan Storey, Alan Strange, Paul 'Sooty' Sutcliffe, Toby Edward 'Edwardio' Sutton-Long, Kevin Swinbanks, Andy Taylor, Robert Taylor, Jeroen te Strake, Luke Temple, Daniel Tessier, the Munted, Rhys Thompson, Nat Titman, Matt Treml (aka RtM), Steve Trimingham, John Trone, Jolyon Tuck, Jason Ungate, Richard Unwin, Sean Urry, Marie V, Gerard van Rysbergen, Andrew Waddington, Andrew Ward, Darren Watts, Andy Wellock, Kevin West, Adam Westwood, Pete White, Marge White, Mark Whiteman, David Whittam, David Williams, Joel Williams, John Williams, Steve A Williams (aka The Valeyard), Chris Winwood, Andy Wixon, Joanne Wood, Annie Worrall, David Young, James Young, Jeremy N Young, and Ewen Zimmermann.

Once again, this book wouldn't have been possible without the third person in our marriage, Graham Kibble-White. It also wouldn't be the same without Jack Kibble-White (because one Kibble-White is never enough), Andrew Orton's stunning cover, John Callaghan's crazy songs, and Jenny T Colgan's fabulous foreword. Thank you so much.

FOREWORD by JENNY T COLGAN

So, here is the thing. I have been married for 15 years, to a man who is sexy, funny, and excellent in many ways, and not once – not once – not one single time has he sat down to watch *Doctor Who* with me. Never. Not *Dalek*. Not *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*. Not even the Christmas day specials (so, some small mercies).

I think in the *very* early days, I might have managed it – but alas we had no new *Who* then, I couldn't afford the DVDs, and we watched a lot of X-Men movies instead.

These days, when our children and I snuggle down on the sofa, he likes to stick his head in the door and say, "*Doctor Who? Doctor Poo*, more like!", before going off to watch the All-Blacks on his own, and occasionally, for variety, "Don't you know that Daleks can't climb stairs?"

This is purely to annoy the little one, who is the truest *Who* fan in our family, most famous for sitting two rows behind Peter Capaldi at the *Deep Breath* West End premiere when she was four, shouting, "WEAH'S THE REAL DOCTAH??! WEAH REAL DOCTAH GONE?" and having to be taken out.

I realise it can occasionally be a little trying to share your life with your wife and also her 12 imaginary idealised male companions, but still, a little effort would also be nice.

So; all respect to Sue (and Nicol, obvs) and their massive, funny loving efforts to watch not one ("Just try *Horror of Fang Rock*! It's got a lighthouse in it, you'll like it!"), not two ("But *Blink* is for people who hate *Doctor Who*! He's not even in it! It's like 'Back for Good' by Take That!"), but every single episode.

I'm very honoured and pleased Neil has asked me to write about the Fifth Doctor, as, firstly, he was 'my' Doctor, and secondly, we have a little history, Five and I, and here it is.

Thirty-five years ago I won a competition to meet Doctor Who. Yes. Doctor Who. Shut up.

The show was always on in our house, along with Dick Barton, when

FOREWORD BY JENNY T COLGAN

we got home from swimming on a Saturday afternoon. The first time I really noticed it – and it conflates in my head with seeing Kate Bush singing 'Wuthering Heights' – was the pavement artist sketching the second Romana's head as a broken clock.

I was immediately transfixed. If you are interested in becoming a lifelong *Who* fan by the way, I can recommend being born around 1971 as an excellent place to start.

What sealed the deal was *Warriors' Gate* and its strange, incomprehensible beauty. By *Logopolis*, I was a signed up lifelong fan (with interregnums, which I'll come to).

My local library¹ had a good collection of Target books, which I could get through more or less at the rate of one an hour, only slightly less time than I think it took Terence to write them, and BBC2 started repeating early episodes at around teatime leading up to *The Three Doctors*, although to this day I'm unsure as to which classic episodes I've seen and which I've read.

So I sent off the competition application form – the winning tiebreaker of which I can still remember but will spare you – and then received the impossible, extraordinary news: that I was going to London (my mother was beside herself with excitement).

The local newspaper led with the story 'Prestwick Girl Meets *Doctor Who*'. (That same newspaper, incidentally, when I was writing for David Tennant for Big Finish in 2016, ran with the headline 'Prestwick Girl works with Paisley Boy', which I treasure).

Of course it was pre-internet, I was a very awkward preteen; I had never met another female *Doctor Who* fan, had absolutely no idea there were any, and it led to me being bullied mercilessly at my revolting school rather than being what it would be now – actually quite cool.

But still. Off to the sleeper we went with my new hideous Princess Diana short hair-cut and my new hideous open-toed sandals.

Now in everyone's defence may I say that it was very dark in the bowels of Broadcasting House. The team was wrapping tin foil around mattresses to turn them into 'space mattresses'.

^{1.} Now extinct, a 'library' was a place where, once upon a time, you could visit and read any book you liked. For free. It's hard to believe now, I know.

John N-T was up in the control box. Nyssa was so pretty she took my breath away – she wasn't with the show any more, sticklers, she was meeting someone for lunch so it was a special bonus to see her.

And Mark Strickson, playing Turlough, was delightfully sweet and friendly, which took me aback as I'd assumed he'd be, you know, evil. (Having had the pleasure to spend time with him in later life I can confirm he's not the least bit evil).

Obviously I was 12, but oh, I was such a *young* 12. I think in the back of my mind there was still the faintest whisper of possibility that *Doctor Who* might be, you know, 'real'. Turlough being nice to me pretty much put paid to that. I burst into tears.

Over in a dark corner was a very familiar wooden box. I gazed at it with longing in my heart. Then suddenly a tall man with a stick of celery in his coat appeared out of the gloom, and knelt down beside me.

"I wouldn't go look in there, son," he said in a deep voice. "I think you'd be very disappointed."

Yes. The Doctor – my beloved Doctor – couldn't even tell if I was a boy or a girl.

Nothing was real. The TARDIS was plywood. I wasn't, it was becoming increasingly clear, going to get immediately co-opted as the new companion. The girl from the PR company was looking worried at how tear-stained and miserable I appeared as she tried to take photos. It was, on the whole, a dispiriting day (although not for my mum, who remained giddy as a kitten throughout).

Some outcomes: it didn't – obviously – dent my love for the show. I will still defend *Time-Flight* to the death. (Though not *The Visitation*, it's rubbish).

Secondly, years later David Tennant became the Doctor and was asked if he'd always been a fan and he said yes, so much so that when he was 11 he entered a competition to meet him and was gutted he didn't win (probably for the best, father-in-law issues and all that); and every time I see Pete 'MOON! EGG! MOON! EGG!' Harness he lays out his case for why his tiebreaker was demonstrably better than mine, and it was all a stitch up, even though all of this took place, let me remind you, in 1983.

Thirdly, BBC Archives called me out of the blue a couple of years ago

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and said they were compiling the official entry for the ill-starred *Frontios*, and could I confirm I was there on such and such a date. I was. I am now listed as an addendum on the production team for that episode, which gives me more private joy than you would think being listed in a dusty archive could conceivably bring anyone.

I love Peter Davison's era. It was fresh and young and interesting and visually pushed further than ever before. The ship's reveal of *Enlightenment* (and that lovely music) remains as beautiful today as it was then. I realise, Nicol and Sue, that many of the graphics look absolutely hilarious bumwad to you, but they were pretty damn marvellous to us.

Kinda was a huge step forward in telly in general, wild and weird and terrifying, and I was obsessed with it. The Mara are surely ripe for bringing back. I woefully underrated Janet Fielding at the time, having the most massive crush on Sarah Sutton, but she is in many ways the bolshie funny prototype for the contemporary assistant.

I also may not have been an Adric fan, working on the principle that if they were going to have a stroppy teenager whining in the TARDIS, I firmly believed it should be me, but his death and that infamous silent credits scroll utterly knocked the wind out of me.

Having a baddie in the TARDIS was a tremendous idea; they should play more with a dynamic like that. And although three companions was a difficult number ("Oh lord, we'd better make Nyssa faint for an episode again"), occasionally making Peter Davison sound a bit like an exhausted supply teacher, they ignited in me that absolute love of simply being inside the TARDIS (yup, even that episode of *Castrovalva* where they're just wandering about) that runs through everything I've ever written for the show.

I didn't fancy Peter Davison's Doctor, handsome as he so clearly is. I was brought up a strict Catholic, and on some deep stubborn level, fancying the Doctor feels a bit like fancying Jesus: all kinds of wrong. Even though this was deliberately and sorely tested by Tennant, D, obviously, I still feel that way.²

Sometimes it strikes me as a shame that Davison's greatest

^{2.} One of the many joys of watching Netflix series *The Crown* is being able to fancy Matt Smith entirely without complication.

achievement was his final episodes. To me, it's a true link from the old series to the new: deeply heartfelt, highly emotional. *The Caves of Androzani* means something; it means so much; the risks are real, and the pain is huge and it will be loved, I think, for as long as people watch *Doctor Who*.

I simply couldn't take to the new Doctor after that – my problem, not his. My next big excitement was the *ooh*-so-close Paul McGann, and the constant dropping of *Doctor Who* references into my own nascent novel writing career, until someone announced that "lots of planets have a North" and started a whole new ball game... but I'll leave that to the lucky person who gets to write the forewords further down the line. Do enjoy these funny, foul-mouthed, occasionally insightful and always entertaining writings. I love the *Wife in Space*. It's not just wildly entertaining; it's also incredibly useful for cross-referencing actors who have appeared in both *Doctor Who* and *EastEnders*.

And now excuse me: I have a very tall man I want to see if I can tempt with *Resurrection of the Daleks* as a good place to start. (Quote from the Husband Not in Space: "No chance").

Jenny T Colgan
December 2016

INTRODUCTION

Me: Arghh!

Sue: What's wrong?

Me: I have absolutely no idea what to say in the introduction to Volume 6.

I've already said everything I have to say in the previous five.

Sue: Oh dear. You didn't think this through, did you?

Me: I think having the number six in the title to a book dedicated to the

Fifth Doctor makes that abundantly clear.

Sue: So just don't include an introduction this time.

Me: Are you joking? That would ruin the books' continuity. There would

be pandemonium.

Sue: Yeah, but I'm sure Graham would calm down eventually.

Me: I don't suppose you fancy writing one, do you?

Sue: Yeah, sure. Just put something like, "This is the book where my husband made me watch Peter Davison every night. Which sounds great until you realise he made me watch Adric every night too." Something like that.

Me: That's perfect. A bit short, but perfect. It's also technically incorrect

because Adric only sticks around for the first third.

Sue: Thank God. **Me**: Anything else?

Sue: He was well fit. Peter, I mean, not Adric. Obviously.

Me: I think the book's title already gives that away.

Sue: It's worth repeating.

Me: I'm not convinced that we can string this out into an actual

introduction...

Sue: I'm sure you'll figure something out. Right, I have to go. One of us

still has a proper job, you know.

Neil and Sue Perryman

January 2017

SEASON NINETEEN PETER'S RIGHT, IT'S RUBBISH



This illustration funded by Robert Crowder



Part One

Sue: Bloody hell, he's still Tom Baker.

Me: We've never had a recap like this before. **Sue**: Oh yes we have. We get them all the time. **Me**: Not before the opening titles we don't.

Sue: Oh yeah. I forgot about them.

The Watcher was the Doctor all the time!

Sue: That doesn't make any sense. It's a very disappointing regeneration. And I don't like seeing the Doctor with white gunk plastered all over his face.

Then the titles kick in...

Sue: Peter Davison! Isn't he lovely?

And the story's title appears.

Sue: Castrovalva? I'm guessing it's either a planet or a Spanish restaurant.

The story picks up where Logopolis left off, with the newly regenerated Doctor and his companions trying to escape from the Pharos Project. Unfortunately, they are immediately apprehended by security guards and the Doctor collapses. The guards drag Adric, Tegan and Nyssa away to be interrogated.

Sue: Yeah, just leave the injured person to die alone in a field.

Adric tells the authorities that he's actually an intelligent alien lifeform from

another universe.

Sue: Adric always has his hands in his pockets. It must be his age.

Thanks to Adric's distraction, Tegan and Nyssa manage to steal an ambulance – with the Doctor inside it.

Sue: It's turned into Charlie's Angels. You go, girls!

Sadly, the incidental music leaves Sue cold.

Sue: I'd love to have been a fly on the wall in Dudley's house when this went out. He must have been mortified. I know I am.

A stone column materialises in mid-air.

Sue: It's okay, I know it's the Master. I don't even have to ask.

Inside the TARDIS, the Doctor begins to unravel his scarf.

Sue: That's sacrilege! They'll never be able to sell that on eBay now.

Tegan is frustrated, too. "Rabbits!" she cries.

Sue: What has Tegan got against rabbits?

Me: It's a Doctor Who swearword. Farscape has 'Frell', Battlestar Galactica

has 'Frak', and Doctor Who has 'Rabbits'.

Sue: Oh, okay...

The Doctor's regeneration isn't going very well.

Sue: He's pretending to be William Hartnell, isn't he? He should have rabbited up his lines a bit – that would have made it more authentic.

The Doctor's regeneration is failing.

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Sue: So what does that mean?

Me: It means we get Colin Baker in approximately 10 minutes.

Nyssa tells Tegan not to worry – the TARDIS is on a preprogrammed flight.

Sue: I used to have a muff like Nyssa's.

Me: Okay, let's not go down that road again.

Sue: It's true. I also had a red velvet jacket and red velvet chords. Actually, there was a time when I probably looked like a blonde version of Nyssa.

But without the tiara.

Me: Oh, that makes it alright, then.

Speaking of clothes, the Doctor has found himself a new jacket.

Sue: So his new costume is just sitting there waiting for him? He doesn't even get to choose? That doesn't seem fair.

The Doctor stares into a mirror and rues the reflection looking back at him.

Sue: I wouldn't complain if I were you. It's a massive improvement on Tom. You should be chuffed.

The Doctor picks up a recorder.

Sue: NO! PUT THE RECORDER DOWN AND STEP AWAY FROM THE INSTRUMENT!

He plays a little tune (badly) and puts it back again.

Sue: Thank rabbit for that.

The Doctor changes into his new costume.

Sue: He needs some white underpants.

Me: What?

Sue: His pants. They're black. You can see them through his trousers.

Look!

Me: Oh yeah. I'd never noticed that before.

Sue: Don't worry, I'll keep you right. You just need to stare at Peter

Davison's arse a little bit more.

The search is on for the TARDIS' Zero Room.

Sue: Why have we never heard of the Zero Room before? And why is it so far away from the control room? You'd think it would be next to the loo, or something convenient like that.

When he finally reaches the Zero Room, the Doctor is suddenly able to levitate.

Sue: That's impressive – his jacket is defying the laws of gravity.

The Doctor gives his companions specific roles to perform during this difficult regeneration.

Sue: So it's basically Tegan's job to serve the drinks and feed them peanuts? Well, that makes sense, I suppose.

Meanwhile, Adric is trapped in...

Sue: A sex dungeon.

The Master is using Adric to generate a simulated projection of himself. Or is it stimulated? I forget.

Sue: I still don't understand what that's supposed to do.

The TARDIS is heading for Event One, which Sue correctly surmises is the Big Bang, long before Nyssa does, and Sue is rubbish at science (especially

CASTROVALVA

bioelectronics and telebiogenesis).

Sue: What a strange episode. I didn't follow most of it - there's a lot going

on - but I'm sure it will settle down eventually.

Me: What about Peter Davison?

Sue: It's too early to say. I know I'll like him – I love him in *All Creatures...* – but I still don't know how he's going to play the part. He's all over the place at the moment, but that's part of the plot, I guess. We'll just have to wait and see.

Part Two

Sue: Nyssa must be roasting in that muff.

The Master appears on the scanner screen to gloat.

Sue: (Singing) The Ace of Spades! The Ace of Spades!

The Doctor leaves the safety of the Zero Room and collapses again. Luckily, a roundel dispenses some medicine, and then a motorised wheelchair mysteriously appears out of nowhere.

Sue: The TARDIS is looking after him. You go, girl!

Meanwhile, in the Master's sex dungeon, Adric is still being tortured. At one point, the Master raises the platform he's standing on so he can taunt his victim more effectively.

Sue: (*As the Master*) Just wait there while I move this up to crotch level.

It's at this point that I feel Sue tugging urgently on my arm.

Sue: Pause it. Quickly. Pause it now. No, go back a bit... There! Yes, pause it! Look! Adric has a little stiffy...

I quickly hit the 'play' button again.

Sue: How embarrassing.

Me: It wasn't that small, was it?

The Doctor comes up with a plan to jettison a quarter of the TARDIS, although his companions are worried they'll lose the console room in the process.

Sue: Just use the other one, then. They've got two! Half of them should definitely hide in the mahogany one, just in case.

Tegan prepares to play Russian roulette with the ship's architecture.

Sue: I hope they don't get rid of the room with all the spare K9s.

The Master discusses his nefarious plan with Adric.

Sue: This makes no sense whatsoever. How can there be two Adrics running around? How can he do all this stuff?

Me: Block transfer computation.

Sue: Rabbit off. Whoever wrote this script was tripping on something.

The Master is the proud owner of a trap within a trap.

Sue: It's nice to see him planning ahead for a change. I like that.

The Zero Room has been jettisoned, and the TARDIS crew are forced to search for an alternative. Thankfully, the TARDIS data bank provides the perfect solution: Castrovalva.

Sue: It's the new Tapas bar next to the marina. If you hurry up, you might make it in time for happy hour.

The Doctor is completely helpless once again.

CASTROVALVA

Sue: Why does the Doctor always have bad regenerations? You never see the Master or Romana fannying on like this.

Me: I think it happens if you don't plan your regeneration and you just fall into it. Literally, in his case. Remember how David Tennant slept through most of his first story? This is nothing compared to that. Even Pertwee spent his first episode flat on his back.

Nyssa builds a Zero Cabinet out of the remains of the Zero Room.

Sue: I'm impressed. The sliding panel is a nice touch. Nyssa has really gone up in my estimations. She has all the makings of a good carpenter.

The TARDIS lands on the planet at a cockeyed angle (which amuses Sue a great deal), and then the crew set out to find Castrovalva.

Sue: Eh? I thought the planet was called Castrovalva. I'm *really* confused now.

Nyssa and Tegan balance the Zero Cabinet on the wheelchair.

Sue: This is what it looks like in IKEA every Sunday afternoon.

And then Nyssa falls into a river.

Sue: Was that an outtake they decided to leave in? And why are they so keen to help the Doctor anyway? They hardly know him. They are putting a lot of trust in a man who turned up in their lives just before members of their immediate family were murdered. They're very trusting, considering.

They eventually reach the place they've been searching for: Castrovalva!

Sue: Are you sure? It could be the Italian restaurant next door.

They search the rock face for an entrance.

Sue: It's a lovely location, I'll give them that. The birds are getting on my

tits though.

Me: Oh, I don't know. They're doing their best. **Sue**: I meant the birdsong, you idiot. It's too loud.

Tegan and Nyssa return to the Zero Cabinet to find the ground covered in red liquid.

Sue: Oh no! Not more lipstick spillage.

And not only that - the Doctor has vanished!

Sue: The plot thickens... Come on, let's stick the next one on.

Part Three

Sue: Why does every episode of 1980s' *Doctor Who* have to sound like a level from *Zelda*? Why is that?

When Nyssa and Tegan find the empty Zero Cabinet, Sue tuts.

Sue: It looks like someone has fly-tipped a fridge into a hedge. I hate it when people do that.

The Doctor climbs the rock face which will lead him to Castrovalva, but when he looks down, he suffers a mild panic attack.

Sue: Is the Doctor afraid of heights because he fell to his death? That would make sense. It also means Tom Baker's Doctor must have been frightened of spiders.

Tegan and Nyssa follow the Doctor.

Sue: Could Tegan be more inappropriately dressed for a spot of mountaineering? I bet she can't wait to be let loose on the TARDIS

CASTROVALVA

wardrobe.

Me: Unless they jettisoned it, of course.

Sue: Well, in that case they should land on Planet of the Shops and stock up on some more clothes. How long has Adric been wearing his outfit,

now? It's a bit silly, isn't it?

A local hunting party suddenly surround the Doctor.

Sue: They look like a bunch of Ewoks who have been out paintballing.

The Doctor is taken to Shardovan.

Sue: Shada van? Did he just say Shada van?

Me: Shar-do-van.

Sue: I had this image of Ian Levine driving around in an ice cream van, but instead of selling ice cream, he's trying to get people to watch his version of *Shada*.

Me: Then thank God you are hopeless at block transfer computation.

Castrovalvan fashion doesn't really do it for Sue.

Sue: Why is he wearing a wastepaper bin on his head with gaffa tape wrapped around it? How long did it take for the designer to come up with *that*?

The Doctor is invited to dinner.

Sue: So they're the nice guys, after all? That's good. For a minute, I thought we were supposed to be frightened of them. Phew.

The Doctor tucks into a stick of celery.

Sue: I fucking hate celery.

Me: Then you have something in common with Peter Davison. He hates celery, too.

Sue: Really? I never would have guessed. Probably because he's such a great actor, I expect.

The Doctor is introduced to the Portreeve.

Sue: Bloody hell, his wastepaper bin is *very* elaborate. He must be the top dog with a bin like that.

Luckily, she's too wrapped up in the Portreeve's wastepaper bin to pay any attention to the man who's wearing it.

Sue: I love the floors on Castrovalva. They're very Tuscan. The sets are great, actually. They've done a really nice job.

Meanwhile Adric is still tied up.

Sue: So Adric is making this up? Is that basically it?

Me: Yes. It's block transfer computation.

Sue: Complete bollocks is what it is. It might as well be magic.

The Master chortles to himself as his plan begins to mature like a good cheese.

Sue: The guy who plays the new Master...

Me: Anthony Ainley.

Sue: He's not very good, is he?

The actor who plays the Portreeve, on the other hand...

Me: What about him? Is he any better?

Sue: He's alright, I suppose. I wish he'd speak up a bit, though. Actually,

he's very familiar. Yeah, he's definitely famous.

The Doctor gets lost in Castrovalva's impossible architecture.

CASTROVALVA

Sue: It's like an Escher painting, this.

The Doctor and his companions go round and round in circles.

Sue: It is an Escher painting! Hang on a minute...

She points to her left, where a framed print of MC Escher's Relativity hangs on our living room wall.

Sue: I thought you bought that print because you liked the artwork.

Me: I do!

Sue: No you don't! It was just an excuse to sneak a *Doctor Who* reference onto our living room wall without me knowing anything about it, wasn't it? Be honest

Too late – the episode is racing to towards its hyperventilating conclusion.

Sue: So Castrovalva doesn't exist, and neither do all the people who live in it. This is actually quite interesting, now.

Part Four

Sue: The special effects are a bit crap, but the idea is sound. It reminds me of *Inception*. They should do this again, but on a decent budget, for the 50th anniversary story. The TARDIS should land on Castrovalva and we could meet all the ex-Doctors. You can do anything with block transfer whatsit, and it would be a nice nod to the fans.

Me: So you accept the concept of block transfer computation now? **Sue**: Now that I know it's basically *Inception*, and they are all in Adric's head – sort of – it almost makes sense. I just find it hard to believe that Adric could imagine all these details. Why is he imagining some of them as beekeepers? What's that all about? And why doesn't he just use his powers to confuse the Master instead?

Me: The Master is torturing him.

Sue: Are you sure? It looks like he's enjoying himself.

The Doctor realises the inhabitants of Castrovalva are unaware of their predicament and, for them, life is always like this.

Sue: So they don't realise they are figments of a teenage boy's imagination. This is a bit deep, actually.

Sue goes very quiet at this point, as she desperately tries to keep up with this story's frantic final act.

Sue: Hey, it's him! It's the fucking Master!

Yes, the Portreeve was the Master all the time.

Sue: Why is his trap so complicated? Why didn't he just kill the Doctor when he was having a nice lie-down earlier? Why does he always have to complicate things?

Shardovan takes a leap of faith...

Sue: It's Adam Ant.

...and the Master's plans come to a grinding halt.

Sue: He's very clever when it comes to making a quick getaway, but he's completely useless when it comes to just about everything else.

The projection folds in on itself, which means all the Castrovalvans are doomed.

Sue: I feel sorry for them, even if they don't exist.

Their screams would suggest otherwise.

Sue: This is horrible!

CASTROVALVA

Thankfully, Adric manages to find the exit.

Sue: Adric has to be the most powerful boy in the universe if he can do that. The fans who don't like him are just jealous.

The Master gets his just deserts as his creations turn against him.

Sue: He'll be fine. He's real, so he won't disappear. He'll be back. Hopefully with a better actor next time.

The Doctor's gang march back to the TARDIS.

Sue: Adric looks ill. Then again, imagining a whole society must have

taken it out of him, poor thing.

Me: He's hungover. In real life, I mean.

Sue: Out on the tiles with JN-T again? At least his expression suits the

emotions his character would be feeling.

Me: It's some of his best acting.

Sue: Jealous.

The Score

Sue: I loved that. Actually, I loved the second two episodes; I wasn't that keen on the first two. Once I realised it was basically *Inception*, and Adric was the one imagining everything, I could go along with it. It was quite profound in places. And it helps that I have some eye candy to look at now.

8/10

Sue: I also like the way it drew on the threads of the last story. In fact, it almost redeems the last one. Almost.

COMMENT: "Castrovalva was my first proper Doctor Who story, you know. Even though, at age 11, that's a bit on the old side. I absolutely

adored [it] at the time, it felt like a gateway to something so fresh and exciting, and I think by the end of Part Four I was as in love with the show as I have ever been. I know there are better stories, but there are none whose memory makes me quite so nostalgic. I'm so pleased Sue liked it too." – Rob Shearman

** FOUR TO DOOMSDAY

BLOGGED: 15 September 2012

Part One

Sue: I'm sorry, I missed the title. Tegan distracted me.

Me: Tegan isn't in the titles.

Sue: Our cat, you idiot. So what's this one called?

Me: Hang on, I'll rewind it.

Sue: No, just tell me.
Me: Four to Doomsday.
Sue: I beg your pardon?
Me: Four to Doomsday.
Sue: Numbers or letters?

Me: Both.

Sue: Anything to do with Douglas Adams?

Me: No.

Sue: Hmm... Strange title.

The first thing Sue notices is the length of TARDIS crew's hair.

Sue: They've all had their hair cut. I wonder if they did it themselves? Or maybe they went to a special hairdressing planet? If I were Adric, I'd probably ask for my money back.

Tegan's had more than her hair done.

Sue: She's caked in make-up. She's trying to look like Sheena Easton, I think. But nobody has changed their clothes, which is odd. They've all had some beauty treatment done (the Doctor has definitely been on a sun bed), but no one has bothered to change out of their dirty, sweaty clothes. Especially Adric. He should be ashamed. Tegan, I can understand – she's going to start her new job – like anyone would be in a rush to get back to work when they could explore time and space like this. It makes no sense

at all.

Unfortunately for Tegan, the TARDIS has landed on a spaceship instead of Heathrow Terminal 4, and the Doctor is determined to explore it.

Sue: He loves to poke around, doesn't he? One of these days, he'll press the wrong button and blow himself up.

The Doctor's progress is monitored by a floating monopticon.

Sue: It's a Toclafane from The Sound of Drums.

Of course she didn't really say that. What she actually said was:

Sue: It's one of those floaty ball things from that David Tennant episode. **Me**: Oh yeah, so it is...

Meanwhile, Adric, Nyssa and Tegan are bickering about mathematics. As you do.

Sue: You can cut the sexual tension with a knife. And Peter Davison isn't even in this scene!

Sue is especially fascinated by the crew's new helmets.

Sue: I could make a nice replica TARDIS helmet for you, Neil, if you like. They'd be dead easy to do. I'd just need some washing-up liquid bottles, some 15mm flexible waste pipe and a 1970 motorcycle helmet. Simple.

Adric continues to get on Sue's wick.

Sue: It must be his hormones. He can't understand these strange feelings he has for Nyssa and he's trying to overcompensate.

We meet Monarch, as played by Stratford Johns.

FOUR TO DOOMSDAY

Sue: And how the fuck am I supposed to recognise him under that? And why are the aliens playing Bingo?

The Urbankans want to know if Tegan is fashionable or not.

Sue: For about 15 minutes in 1981, possibly.

Tegan sketches some contemporary Earth fashions for the aliens to look at.

Sue: If the air hostess job doesn't pan out, there's always a future for her as a cartoonist. That's quite a good likeness of Paul McCartney and Jerry Hall.

Monarch gives Adric a math problem to solve.

Sue: Nicol should be watching this. The programme is obsessed with maths at the moment. Is there going to be a test at the end of this season?

And then we meet Bigon.

Sue: If there isn't a "let bygones be bygones" joke in this episode, I will have to write to *Points of View*.

When the Doctor and his companions are provided with refreshments, Adric asks someone to pass him the sodium chloride.

Sue: This is very educational. You'd happily let your kids watch this story. **Me**: Only if you wanted to turn them into irritating, obnoxious freaks.

When an Australian Aborigine arrives at the feast, Tegan has to translate for the Doctor.

Sue: Why can't the Doctor understand him? He can understand everybody else in the universe. I thought the TARDIS translated for him? Have they never heard of continuity? I'm a bit annoyed by that.

Two humans dressed in green velvet suddenly appear. They look like they've walked straight out of Tegan's drawing.

Sue: So this is just like *V*, then? Lizards pretending to be humans so they can invade the Earth? They'll be eating mice before you know it. I have to say, I've seen better first episodes.

Part Two

Adric doesn't understand how the Urbankans can transform into new life forms at will.

Sue: For fuck's sake, Adric. It's probably block transfer thingy! You created a whole society last week, so this must be a piece of piss compared to that. Seriously, the lack of continuity is really beginning to annoy me.

Three billion Urbankans are stored on this ship. Once again, Adric can't get his head around the concept.

Sue: They're probably just tadpoles. I bet you could store a lot of frogspawn on that ship.

Adric and Nyssa become separated from the Doctor and Tegan.

Sue: They are really ramping up the sexual tension this week. How will they resist each other in a dimly lit storage room?

The Doctor and Tegan are given VIP seats for a very special performance.

Me: This balcony reminds me of the video for Frankie Goes to Hollywood's 'Relax'.

Here they are forced to watch some Chinese dragon dancing (and they don't even have any popcorn to pass the time).

FOUR TO DOOMSDAY

Sue: Tegan is like the Queen at the Olympic Opening Ceremony. Smile, you bitch! Smile!

Meanwhile, Adric finally puts two and two together: there isn't enough oxygen on the ship.

Sue: Not enough action, you mean. This story is just people wandering around rooms and chatting. It hasn't been like this since the 1960s!

Nyssa starts prodding one of Monarch's workers, and when he pushes her away, Adric flies off the handle.

Sue: Adric is so blinded by lust, he's sticking up for Nyssa, even though she's clearly in the wrong. She was poking the poor sod. What was he supposed to do?

The Doctor pretends to have a dizzy spell so Bigon can talk to him in private.

Sue: It's Peter Davison I feel sorry for. When he read the script for this, he must have thought, "What the fuck have I let myself in for?"

When a gladiator is stabbed in the stomach, Adric and Nyssa watch as he is repaired.

Sue: It's bloody *Westworld* again! Every few weeks they wheel this story out. And if they're making robots for entertainment purposes, and this is the best they can come up with, then their technology must be shit. Invent the PlayStation instead, you morons. Or make a mechanical Derren Brown. Anything but this.

An aboriginal dance troupe are up next.

Sue: Here comes Kate Bush.

Me: No love, that's next week.

Sue: Eh?

The episode concludes with Bigon opening his chest to reveal he too is a robot

Sue: We're seen it all before. Several times, in fact. It's boring.

Part Three

When Adric decides to side with the Urbankans, Sue isn't surprised at all.

Sue: They do have a point. Humans *are* total shits.

Bigon tells the Doctor that Monarch plans to wipe out humanity with a deadly poison. He gets quite worked up about it, actually.

Sue: It's just a shame he doesn't come installed with an acting chip.

Adric tells Monarch about the Doctor's greatest archenemy, the Master.

Sue: He's not in this one as well, is he? That would be tedious.

Sue quite likes Monarch, though.

Sue: He's quite affable, as far as villains go. You could easily get around him with some flattery if you had to. I'm not frightened of him at all.

Tegan can't stand it any longer and begins freaking out.

Sue: Whenever Tegan speaks, I feel myself getting stressed. She's like an excitable dog that won't stop yapping.

Nyssa is hypnotised so she can be turned into a synthetic copy of herself. Enlightenment tells her that her eyes are getting heavier and heavier...

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Sue: Tell me about it.

Meanwhile, the Doctor is able to distract a monopticon with a cricket ball and his sonic screwdriver.

Sue: I liked that. That was a very Doctorish thing to do. He's quite a bouncy Doctor, isn't he?

An android named Lin Futu (played by none other than Burt Kwouk) monitors Nyssa's conversion.

Sue: If they turned Nyssa into a robot for the rest of the series, would anyone actually notice?

Adric can't stop apologising for Monarch's wicked ways.

Sue: Adric is such a pushover when it comes to powerful, older men. We should have seen this coming.

Lin Futu checks on Nyssa.

Sue: Thanks for the running commentary, Cato.

Me: So you finally recognised Cato, then?

Sue: No, I was just being racist. Sorry. Is it really Cato? Honestly?

Tegan finds her way back to the TARDIS.

Sue: If Tegan ends up flying the TARDIS, I may have to kick something.

Bigon tells the Doctor that Monarch punished him once by locking him in a drawer for 100 years.

Sue: At least he was spared the Chinese dragon dancing for a while.

I hate to break it to you, folks, but Sue is beginning to have second thoughts

about Adric.

Sue: I'm going right off him. From genius to git in three episodes. It's either his hormones or the writer is a fucking idiot.

Tegan is still freaking out in the TARDIS.

Sue: Take some Valium! Look at me, I'm actually biting my nails because

she puts me on edge. How long does Tegan stick around?

Me: Not long.

Sue: Good. My nerves can't take much more of this.

Tegan dematerialises the TARDIS.

Sue: Bullshit! And where does she think she's going, anyway? She just left her friends behind to die so she could go back to her boring little job. I hate Tegan. I can't believe you made me name one of our cats after her.

The episode concludes with the Doctor facing a beheading, despite Adric's protestations.

Sue: Oh, shut up, Adric. It's too late for that now. Good cliffhanger, though. If in doubt, threaten to chop somebody's head off.

Part Four

Monarch decides to spare Adric's life.

Sue: He fancies the pants off him. Ribbit.

Adric begs Monarch to spare the Doctor's life, too.

Sue: He's a pushover. Buy him some flowers and chocolates and he'll definitely change his mind.

FOUR TO DOOMSDAY

Monarch wants to know why the Doctor interfered with his monopticons.

Sue: Would you like me to interfere with your monopticons, Neil?

When the Doctor pretends to take Monarch's side, Adric laps it up.

Sue: What a fucking idiot. Why is Adric being written as a moron? Has the writer never seen *Castrovalva*? Jesus...

And then we are treated to some more dancing.

Sue: Oh, for fuck's sake!

At which point, the Doctor bollocks Adric for being such a dick.

Sue: It's not even a subtext any more.

Monarch has decided to use Adric as his emissary on Earth.

Sue: And Earth will piss their pants laughing.

Meanwhile Tegan is still struggling to fly the TARDIS.

Sue: With any luck, the next button she presses will result in the TARDIS landing on top of that dancing dragon, and then they can all piss off home. Because this is ridiculous.

Monarch and Persuasion watch the latest episode of Strictly Come Dragon Dancing with keen interest.

Sue: Surely they must be bored of this by now. I know I am.

Persuasion is especially excited when the time comes for Topless Male Wrestling Hour.

Sue: This is definitely her favourite programme. I bet she's got all of these on tape.

The Doctor will have to risk a spacewalk in order to reach his TARDIS, which has materialised outside the ship.

Sue: All this carry on because Tegan is a fucking idiot. This has *nothing* to do with the villains, you know. If it wasn't for Tegan, this would be over by now.

In fact, it's safe to say that Sue's patience with the Doctor's companions has well and truly run out.

Sue: The Doctor should ground them for a month when this is all over. He should have three adventures on his own while they stay locked in their bedrooms. That'll teach them.

As the Time Lord launches himself into space, Persuasion intervenes and the Doctor is forced to return to the ship in order to switch the synthetic weirdo off.

Sue: Why is he stuck in a camp waiter pose?

The Doctor tries again, only this time Enlightenment messes things up and he is set adrift in space. Thankfully, he has a cricket ball in his pocket, which he uses to save himself. Obviously.

Sue: I'm no scientist, but I'm pretty sure that's bollocks.

But it's not all bad news.

Sue: Having said that, it doesn't look *too* bad. They're really trying. It's a nice special effect.

When the Doctor enters the console room, Sue can't believe he didn't give

FOUR TO DOOMSDAY

Tegan a slap.

Sue: William Hartnell wouldn't have put up with this crap from his companions.

The TARDIS materialises on Monarch's ship and the Doctor rushes off to save Adric and Nyssa.

Sue: SHUT THE FUCKING DOORS! The next thing you know, an aborigine will accidentally dance into the console room and fly it away, because any fucker can fly the TARDIS now, can't they?

The Doctor gives Monarch's poison to Adric to look after.

Sue: Is he insane? I wouldn't trust Adric with a flask of tea!

And then, would you believe it, Monarch is killed by his own poison.

Sue: What a load of old shit.

However, the synthetic entertainers decide to stay on the ship.

Sue: (*As Bigon*) We're going to tour the galaxy together. All we need now is some Arts Council funding.

And then, just when we think it's all over, Nyssa faints.

Sue: What?

Me: Sorry, love, it's a six-parter.

Sue: Oh, for fuck's sake...

The Score

Sue: What tedious bollocks. Seriously, what the fuck was that? Whoever wrote that one should never be allowed to write for the programme again.

What the fuck was Adric playing at? And the title makes no sense!

1/10

COMMENT: "I found Adric to be as welcome as diarrhea in a pressure suit." – Adam Birch

NOTES: Our sweariest entry yet, with 13 'fucks', four 'shits', three 'pisses', two 'bollocks' and one 'bloody'. Sorry about that.



Part One

Sue: Kinda...

Me: It's pronounced Kinda, actually.

Sue: As in Kinder Surprise?

Me: Yes.

Sue: So why the weird titles, all of a sudden? What happened to *Planet of the Whatsits* or *The Whatsits of Doom*? You know where you are with a

title like that.

On the planet Deva Loka, all the stinky kids have congregated outside the TARDIS.

Sue: I thought Nyssa was supposed to be dead or something?

Me: No, she's just got a migraine.

Sue: Give her a hot water bottle and a copy of *Hello!* and she'll be fine.

We've all been there.

The Doctor knocks up a delta wave augmenter with his sonic screwdriver. Adric is concerned the Doctor will be lost without it, but he's adamant he won't need it.

Sue: Of course you'll bloody need it! You always bloody need it! You'd be completely fucked without it. I bet he wishes he had it before we reach the first cliffhanger.

In a dome in a jungle, a scientist named Todd is trying to convince her colleagues that the indigenous lifeforms on the planet don't pose a threat to them.

Sue: Oh look, it's a Liver Bird. And she's looking pretty hot, too. Just look

at that cleavage!

Me: I'm trying hard not to.

Sue: If I was in *Doctor Who*, that's the role I'd like to play: a hot scientist

with a clipboard.

Me: I don't know if the special effects budget could stretch to that.

How I didn't get a cushion in the face for that, I'll never know. Anyway, as the Doctor, Tegan and Adric explore Deva Loka while Nyssa sleeps, they stumble across some wind chimes hanging from a tree.

Sue: They've landed in Mike Oldfield's back garden.

Adric wanders off and finds an empty armoured suit standing in a clearing. The Doctor drags him away from it, but when the teen slams the door shut, the vehicle suddenly springs into life.

Sue: What is wrong with Adric all of a sudden? Has he been taking stupid pills? He hasn't been the same since he left Castrovalva.

The Doctor and Adric are escorted to the dome, where they meet Sanders, Hindle and Todd

Sue: At least you can reason with this lot. If this was a Tom Baker story, the Doctor would have been in a cell before his feet touched the ground.

When Tegan falls asleep under a tree, the camera zooms into her eye...

Sue: What the hell? This is a bit weird. Is this one going to be trippy? Oh, I do hope so.

I'm seriously impressed when Sue recognises the double helix around the neck of the Kinda, long before Todd points it out. Frankly, I'm amazed. What could Sue know of molecular biology?

Meanwhile, Tegan's head has been populated with some very strange characters indeed...

KINDA

Sue: It's Keith from the Prodigy and... No, wait, don't tell me... It's... It's... Lou Beale from *EastEnders*! Blimey, that takes me back. "Arfur! Arfur!"

They seem determined to drive Tegan mad.

Sue: I'm sorry, Neil, but this has turned into a bad student film. It's a bit pretentious.

At least the dome meets with Sue's approval.

Sue: The sets are brilliant. It's been put together like a German Huf Haus.

Me: I'll have to take your word for that.

Sue: It means it's prefabricated. And it looks like a real lab where you could actually get some proper work done. I'm really impressed with the design of this story. It feels real.

Cue Aris.

Me: If you can tell me where you've seen this actor before, I'll do the washing-up for a week.

Sue: He is very familiar. It would help if he spoke. I'm sure it'll come to me later.

Back at the dome, Hindle destroys Todd's lab in a fit of pique.

Sue: The prop guys are probably having kittens and praying they don't need another take.

Me: What do you think of the actor playing Hindle?

Sue: He's a bit hammy, but he has an interesting face, so he's just about getting away with it.

A laughing man joins Tegan in her head.

Sue: (Singing) Ashes to Ashes, Funk to Funky... Actually, he reminds

me of Joffrey from *Game of Thrones*; I definitely want to punch him in the face. I have to say, the acting is very good in this episode. I really like the way the tone keeps shifting as well, from the brightly lit scenes in the dome, to the really dark stuff in her head. It's a nice contrast and very well directed.

The episode concludes with Hindle proclaiming he has the power of life and death over everyone.

Sue: Wow. That was intense. Hey, it's not bad, this. Peter Davison is very good, too. He feels like a proper Doctor now.

Part Two

We meet Mary Morris as Panna.

Sue: Proof they didn't have Botox in the 1980s. I bet she was a looker back in her day, though.

When we finished the episode, I showed Sue a picture of Mary in her prime.

Sue: I thought so. Stunning. Bloody good actress, too.

She still can't place Aris, though.

Sue: It's really bugging me now. His name is on the tip of my tongue. Have I seen him in a film or a television programme?

Me: TV.

She'll never get it. Never in a million years.

Sue: The not-we... You call me a not-we on the front page of the blog,

don't you?

Me: It's what we call people who aren't Doctor Who fans.

Sue: Normal people, you mean?

KINDA

Me: If you like.

Sue: I don't mind being called a not-we. I've been called a lot worse. On

the blog, in fact.

Me: I'm not sure if you are still a not-we or not. You've seen more 1960s

episodes than many so-called fans.

Sue: I am *definitely* not a we.

Me: You answered three Doctor Who questions on Mastermind yesterday.

If you're interested, the three answers she got right were: Daleks, Castrovalva and Shada. She hasn't even seen Shada!

Sue: So I'm almost a we?

Me: You're more of a wee-we. **Sue**: Don't push it, Neil.

suc. Don't push it, iven.

Todd and the Doctor decide to escape from the dome.

Sue: Nerys Hughes is brilliant in this. She's showing Tegan up. This is how you play the companion role, love. With a bit of decorum.

Hindle, meanwhile, is becoming increasingly unstable.

Sue: So has Hindle been possessed by the Kinda? Just like his boss was

when he opened that box earlier?

Me: No.

Sue: I'm confused...

Me: Hindle is just insane. He's having a nervous breakdown.

Sue: Right. So he isn't possessed by anything?

Me: No.

Sue: Well, it isn't very clear. That's my only problem with this story - it's

too complicated.

The battle for Tegan's mind continues.

Sue: It's basically a video for a New Romantic song. I definitely won't

forget this in a hurry.

Hindle is so crazy, he's convinced the plants are out to get him.

Sue: I'm surprised he hasn't confiscated the Doctor's celery.

Adric has heard enough and decides to switch sides.

Sue: Oh no, not again! What are you doing, Adric?

Me: I think he's just pretending this time.

Sue: After last week's fiasco? Not bleeding likely. I've gone right off him. I gave him every chance and now I feel like he's chucking it back in my face.

Meanwhile, Tegan is still talking to herself.

Sue: This is a bit heavy for the kids.

Me: I was 12 when I saw this. It scared the shit out of me.

Sue: I'm not surprised. It's very disturbing. The psychological stuff is

much more frightening than any lumbering monsters.

Me: Imagine coming out of this story into Terry and June. The change in

gears gave me mental whiplash.

If two Tegans set Sue's teeth on edge, then 10 Tegans is pure torture.

Sue: I'll have a fucking heart attack if I have to listen to 10 Tegans all whining at once. Please make it stop!

Tegan gives in and allows her body to be used by laughing boy (aka Keith from The Prodigy).

Sue: This is very intense. Confusing but intense. Ooh, he's putting his snake into her now. And he didn't buy her dinner first.

By now it's patently obvious Hindle is several coupons short of a toaster.

KINDA

Sue: Mad bastards always make the best villains. It feels more real to me. I definitely won't forget this performance in a hurry. I can't take my eyes off him, even when Peter Davison is on screen.

High praise, indeed.

Sue: I'm not following the plot, though.

When Tegan seduces Aris, I have to pause the DVD.

Sue: Okay, I give up. Who is it?

Me: Are you giving up the chance to make me do the washing-up for a

whole week? Oh well, that's life, I suppose.

Sue: Just tell me who it is.

Me: We rang the Gas Board and they said, "I'm sorry, but this has nothing

to do with us."

Sue: He worked for the Gas Board?

Me: No, he was on That's Life! He was one of Esther's boys.

Sue: Glyn Worsnip? **Me**: No! The other one. **Sue**: Cyril Fletcher?

Me: Does he look like Cyril fucking Fletcher?! No, it's Adrian Mills. **Sue**: Oh yeah, so it is. I used to watch *That's Life!* every Sunday night. I

knew I recognised him.

Me: Can I press 'play' again, please?

Sue: Yes. The acting in this story is so good, even a bloke from That's Life!

is bloody good in it.

Sanders returns to the dome with a present for Hindle.

Sue: It's a Kinder Surprise.

Me: Well done, Sue.

Sue: I've been dying to say that ever since we started this.

The Doctor, Sanders and Todd are locked in a cell with only the Kinda box

for company.

Sue: That's a lovely box. If I had to buy some *Doctor Who* memorabilia, that's what I'd get.

The episode concludes with the Doctor opening the box. Todd screams the place down.

Sue: Bloody hell. I can't go to bed on that cliffhanger. Stick the next one on.

Part Three

Sue: Why isn't Adric doing anything to stop the mad fucker? You said he was only pretending, so why is he's just standing there watching?Me: Maybe they should have given Adric a holiday instead of Nyssa.

Sue: Who?

Ouch.

Sue: Nerys Hughes is the only companion the Doctor needs. They have great chemistry, and she isn't too hysterical. She'd be perfect for him. Take her with you, you fool! And leave the rest of them here. Let Mike Oldfield put up with them for a bit.

Aris tries to hide his tattoo.

Sue: Do *Doctor Who* fans have snakes tattooed on their arms, then? I bet they do. It's either that or a Dalek, I suppose, and that would be pretty boring.

Hindle is never going to get that toaster.

Sue: I thought he couldn't get any crazier, but he has. It's an incredible performance. It could have been awful, but it works, somehow. I love his

KINDA

catchphrase.

And then Sue doesn't comment for a while. I don't know if it's because she's captivated or confused.

Me: Are you okay? You've been very...

Sue: SILENCE!

Hindle wants to play with Adric.

Sue: What does he want Adric to measure? No, don't tell me, it doesn't bear thinking about.

The Doctor meets Panna. She's very rude to him.

Sue: She's brilliant, isn't she? Even she would be a better companion than Tegan. Can you imagine it? The Doctor would have to lead her around and she'd keep insulting him and... Actually, that's a stupid idea. She'd make a great Yoda, though. They could have saved a bomb on muppets if they'd hired her instead.

Panna and the Doctor discuss the legend of the Mara.

Me: Are you following this, Sue?

Sue: SILENCE!

And then the Doctor and Todd share a vision.

Sue: David Bowie would have loved this story.

At which point, Sue is baffled into submission.

Sue: Answers on a postcard, please. Okay, I admit defeat. I'm lost. I haven't got a clue what's going on any more. I'm enjoying it, but *what the hell was that all about?* Why was there a modern clock on the plinth? And

why the hot coals?

Me That wasn't hot coals. That was a video effect.

Sue: Oh, my head hurts.

We decide to save the final part of Kinda until Sue's brain cooled down a bit. If only I still had that delta wave augmenter I knocked up last Christmas...

Part Four

Sue: That's where the cliffhanger should have been. When the screen went white. The director missed a trick, there.

Panna is dead but her consciousness has been transferred to a girl named Karuna.

Sue: Now I'm *really* confused.

It's so confusing, Peter Davison almost falls over.

Sue: Peter was such a pro there. He just kept going. It really is an acting masterclass.

Hindle's psychosis suddenly plumbs new depths.

Sue: Did the kids actually enjoy this? Wouldn't they have preferred a big monster to a mental illness?

Aris wants the Kinda to build their own crude version of a TSS machine.

Sue: Are they making an outside toilet?

Aris growls.

Sue: His teeth remind me of that red stuff the dentists used to give you so they could check for tooth decay.

KINDA

The Doctor wants to know what Tegan did to Aris, but she doesn't want to tell him.

Sue: (As Tegan) Okay, I got all sexy on his ass! Are you happy, now?

Adric gets into the TSS machine and blasts Aris.

Sue: (As Aris) I'm on fire! I'm on fire! Seriously, I am on fucking fire!

The Doctor drags Adric out of the machine.

Sue: Adric is such a twat.

Finally! Everything is right with the universe again.

Sue: I just don't get it. One minute he can create whole worlds, and the next he can't even drive a tank. It makes no sense!

As Adric and Tegan bicker, Sue delivers the final blow:

Sue: What is Adric looking at? Is it the director? He really can't act, can he? I think the problem is the guest cast are showing the companions up. Adric is out of his depth.

Hindle finally snaps. "You can't mend people!" he screams.

Sue: That's very profound. Because he's broken, you see.

Hindle opens the Kinda box as the Doctor disables the explosives.

Sue: That was a bit of an anticlimax.

The Doctor tells the Kinda to surround Aris with mirrored solar panels.

Sue: He could easily escape through that gap, so what's he waiting for?

And then the snake turns up.

Sue: Oh well. They're trying, I suppose...

The snake grows bigger...

Sue: They are really trying.

And bigger...

Sue: Oh dear, What a shame.

Once the Mara has been defeated, Sue delivers her final verdict on the reptilian menace.

Sue: It wasn't that bad. The jester was more annoying than the snake. But if I was making that back then, I would have stuck to the small one. That was scarier. It isn't the size of the snake that's important, Neil, it's what you do with it.

Hindle and Sanders take a stroll in the jungle.

Sue: Hang on... Isn't Sanders still mad?

Me: Well...

Sue: He is, you know. He lost his mind when he opened the box, didn't

he? I bet he'll be wearing a grass skirt by the end of next week.

Todd and the Doctor say their goodbyes.

Sue: Oh, just take her with you! She's practically begging you!

The Doctor returns to his stinky companions instead.

Sue: Fuck Nyssa!

KINDA

The Score

Sue: I liked it, but I didn't understand it. The main problem I have with it is that the Doctor was sidelined too much. I wouldn't mind usually, but it's too early to be doing it to *this* Doctor. The acting was brilliant, but Adric has to go. Yeah, I kinda liked it.

Me: You've been dying to say that all night, haven't you?

7/10

I am bitterly disappointed. Kinda is a nine at the very least.

Sue: Maybe I'd enjoy it more if I saw it again.

Me: With a score like that, you won't be seeing any more snakes for quite some time, love.

COMMENT: "I cherish *Kinda* more than my balls. Maybe Sue will like *Snakedance* more. Rob Shearman loves *Snakedance* and Sue loves Rob Shearman." – Steve O'Brien

* THE VISITATION BLOGGED: 21 September 2012

Part One

For the first time since The Three Doctors, Sue's older brother, Gary, agreed to join us for an episode or two.

Sue: It's 1982, Gary. How old would you have been?

Gary: Twenty-six.

Me: What were you doing on Mondays and Tuesdays at 7pm, Gary?

Gary: If I told you that, you wouldn't be able to print it.

Moving swiftly on...

Sue: Ahh, wood. Lots and lots of wood. I love the historical stories, you know where you are with them straight away.

A young woman named Elizabeth stares out of a window at a pair of falling stars which light up the sky like fireworks.

Sue: (*As Elizabeth*) Papa! It's that bloody Jean Michel Jarre playing in our field again. You can hear his electronic racket from here.

It doesn't take long for Sue to pass judgement on Peter Moffatt.

Sue: Who directed this? We've been looking at the same boring shot for ages. I wouldn't mind if it was a good three-shot, but it isn't. Look at that composition, Neil, it's terrible.

Something bronchial is moving up the cellar's stairs. We follow its progress via a shaky POV shot.

Sue: It's Michael Myers from *Halloween*. With a ray gun.

THE VISITATION

A gloved fist punches its way through a door and, when Gary and Sue get a good look at its owner, they both howl with laughter.

Gary: It's a gay Iron Man!

Meanwhile, on the TARDIS, Adric is doing what he does best – annoying everyone around him.

Gary: He's a pretty boy.

Sue: That's Adric. I used to like Adric. I don't know what went wrong, but

I can't stand him now.

Gary: Why is he dressed for bed? Not that I'm complaining.

Tegan talks to Nyssa about her recent experience with the Mara.

Gary: I thought you said this was the first episode. I don't know what they're going on about here. What have I missed?

Sue: Well, Gary, let's see... Okay, so Tegan basically got taken over by a snake last week. It was very symbolic and Buddhist and stuff like that.

Gary: Tegan? You named your cat after an Australian air hostess?

Sue: Don't look at me. Blame Neil!

Tegan desperately wants to return to Heathrow airport.

Sue: Why the rush? Could somebody please explain to Tegan how time travel works? I'm sure Adric has nothing better to do.

Gary: (As Tegan, if Tegan were Welsh) Chicken or beef? Tea or coffee?

Sue: Time or space?

Tegan admits she hasn't always been the best of companions.

Sue: That's an understatement, love. I really hope she makes her plane, because she's stressing me out.

Sadly, the TARDIS has arrived on Earth 300 years too early. And the place

stinks, too.

Sue: My money is on Adric. He looks very shifty in this scene.

The Doctor and his companions are set upon by villagers armed with cudgels.

Sue: Peter Davison's Doctor is pretty handy. That's the first time I've seen him throw his weight around. Hmm... Nice.

Me: Snap out of it, Sue. I am still here, you know.

Adric runs away and ends up flat on his face.

Sue: He can't even fall over properly. That was terrible. Shall we do a retake, do you think? Nah, that'll do!

Meanwhile, the thespian Richard Mace is sitting in a tree, A-C-T-I-N-G.

Gary: Oh, it's him from *On the Buses*.

Sue: Reg Varney?

Gary: No, the other one. Olive's husband, Arthur. (As Olive) Arfur! Arfur!

You know, I'm sure we did this last week...

Me: That's 10 points to Gary. Well done.

Sue: That's not fair!

Me: Don't worry, there are 100 points available to the first person who can tell me which *EastEnders* actor plays the lead villain.

Richard Mace leads the Doctor and his companions to a nearby barn.

Sue: The location is wonderful. There's so much wood, I don't know where to look.

Gary: I'm too busy looking at the boy who won't stop playing with his balls.

THE VISITATION

Mace tells the Doctor about the strange lights in the sky.

Sue: He sounds like Russell Crowe. It's uncanny.

The Doctor and Adric explore the barn's hayloft.

Sue: Peter Davison is right at home here, digging around in hay and horse

shit.

Me: I hope he doesn't stick his fist up Adric's arse by mistake.

Gary: Oh, I don't know.

Nyssa finds some power packs.

Gary: She's Carol Vorderman in a wig. **Me**: She's as clever as Carol Vorderman.

Sue: She's almost as annoying as Carol Vorderman.

The Doctor discovers the staircase leading to the cellar has been bricked up.

Sue: The aliens must have had the builders in. And they must be aliens because I'm sure that type of brickwork didn't exist back then.

Sue, brick expert, there. Anyway, as the Doctor tries to work out the significance of the wall, an android arrives.

Gary: Oh dear. Alvin Stardust just locked them in.

Sue: What a rubbish cliffhanger. The direction in this episode is appalling.

Me: Are you going to stay for Part Two, Gary?

Gary: No, I have to wash my hair. **Me**: But you haven't got any hair.

And with that, Gary is gone. Who knows if he'll ever visit us again?

Part Two

When the Doctor walks through the wall as if it doesn't exist, Nyssa is overjoyed to see him again.

Sue: Yes, thank heavens you've been killed and are now a ghost. That will be really helpful.

The Doctor can detect the unmistakable aroma of soliton gas.

Sue: You can't blame Adric this time.

And that's when Mace decides to get pissed.

Sue: I love this guy. He has all the best lines. He's the only interesting thing in this story so far.

The android appears once again, but this time it's dressed in a black cape and skeleton mask.

Sue: I was only joking when I said it was Michael Myers. But it really is.

Tegan is shot and the Doctor runs away.

Sue: WHAT? The direction in that scene was abysmal. I think that may have been the worst directed action scene in the whole series so far.

When we encounter a Terileptil for the first time, Sue sighs.

Sue: Is the actor under that mask the guy from *EastEnders* you were

talking about earlier?

Me: Yes, and it's worth 100 points if you can get it. **Sue**: Typical. Okay, I can do this... Is it Dr Legg?

Me: No.

Sue: Pete Beale?

THE VISITATION

Me: No.

Sue: How am I supposed to get this? It's impossible! Is it Nasty Nick?

Me: No.

Sue: Well in that case, I give up.

Me: I'll give you a clue – he was the Queen Vic's landlord at one point.

Sue: Dirty Den? **Me**: Don't be silly.

Sue: Barbara Windsor with a cold? I don't bloody know!

Me: It's Michael Melia. He played Eddie Royle.

Sue: Who?

Me: Eddie Royle.

Sue: Never heard of him.

Me: He was killed. Sue: That doesn't help.

The android locks Tegan and Adric in a cell.

Sue: Here comes the Glitterbot again. No wonder they make it walk around in a cape. No one would take it seriously if it went out of the house dressed like that.

As we hurtle towards the halfway point, Sue wants to throttle Peter Moffatt.

Sue: I can't get over how bad the direction is. It's so flat. Peter Davison is pretty good, and he works well with this guy, but once again, it's just showing us how ridiculously shitty his usual companions are.

The Terileptil leader controls the villagers, including one guy with a bow and arrow.

Sue: At least the Zelda music is appropriate this week, that's something, I guess.

When Adric tries to open a window, he complains it's too stiff.

Sue: Stick your hands in your pockets, pet, then you might be able to hide it.

The episode concludes with the Doctor and Mace facing summary execution.

Sue: Not again!

The Doctor: Not again!

Sue: Hey, drawing attention to the fact your script editor is an idiot

doesn't make it any better, you know. God, this is tedious.

Part Three

As the executioner prepares to bring his scythe down on the Doctor's exposed neck, Sue spots a fatal flaw.

Sue: It's impossible to execute someone like that. The tip of the scythe will hit the ground long before the blade reaches the Doctor's neck. The only way to do it would be to pull the scythe up from below the neck, taking the head off in a backwards motion. The idiots.

It's all academic, anyway, because the execution has been stayed, thanks to some very important men with beards.

Sue: Good Lord. The direction is killing me now. Has he never heard of a close-up? This is just blokes milling around like they're sharing a cramped stage together. It's embarrassing.

It turns out the Terileptil leader was tortured and scarred during his stay at the tinclavic mines on Raaga.

Sue: I think the mould went wrong and they had to write that bit in to explain the damage. That's my theory anyway.

She is impressed with the overall effect, though.

THE VISITATION

Sue: The mouth on the mask works well, and I like the way the nose and gills move. It's just the neck I don't like. Still, it's not bad, if a bit generic.

Meanwhile, in the TARDIS...

Sue: Why is Nyssa listening to early Genesis? I'm sure this track is from the album *Trespass*. And what is she doing with that hostess trolley? Ooh, that's a nice bedspread...

Nyssa returns to the console room.

Sue: What a beautiful piece of wood. **Me**: You are very cruel to Nyssa.

Sue: I'm talking about the wooden thing standing next to her. That wood has been turned beautifully. I'm really impressed with that.

Sue is shocked when she discovers there's more than one Terileptil on planet Earth.

Sue: The one on the left is definitely pleased about something. Look at his insane grin!

Adric is supposed to be keeping his eye out for trouble, but when some villagers advance on the TARDIS, he decides to slip under the console for a bit.

Sue: What is he doing under there? Has he gone for a Twix?

Adric helps Nyssa assemble her sonic booster by bringing her some heavyduty cable.

Sue: My, what a big hose you have, Adric! **Me**: What has gotten into you recently, Sue?

Sue: It's not my fault! It's the sexual tension between these two. They

should get a room. The TARDIS has plenty.

The Doctor offers to help the Terileptils settle on another planet, but their leader doesn't want to negotiate with him.

Sue: He wants the moon on a stick. The Doctor gave him a chance, and now he'll have to take him down. All bets are off.

Then, suddenly...

Sue: Fuck me! A close-up! A brief, fleeting close-up! Give the director a medal

Meanwhile, Adric and Nyssa are still bickering in the TARDIS.

Sue: Sexual tension!

Nyssa doesn't understand why Adric won't listen to her.

Sue: It's because he's a twat with raging hormones, Nyssa. Give him 10 years and I'm sure he'll grow out of it.

Adric races off into the forest.

Sue: He can't even run properly. Oh for God's sake, Neil, he just looked straight down the camera lens. What a pillock.

The Doctor can't reconcile the Terieptils' love of art and beauty with their thirst for genocide.

Sue: If that robot is their idea of art, then God help them.

The Doctor is imprisoned in another cell.

Sue: Not again! How many times is that now? Still, at least there's plenty of wood for me to admire, I suppose.

THE VISITATION

The Terileptil destroys the Doctor's sonic screwdriver, and when Sue doesn't react, I pause the DVD.

Me: Well?

Sue: Well what?

Me: He just destroyed the sonic screwdriver!

Sue: So what? Nyssa can knock up another one in a couple of hours. I don't see what the big deal is. It's not as if he doesn't get a new one

eventually. Get some perspective, Neil.

The episode concludes with a brainwashed Tegan about to release some plague rats into the room.

Sue: That's three terrible cliffhangers in a row. Shall we finish on a close-up of a rat? No. Shall we zoom in on Tegan as she opens the cage? Nah, that'll do. That's a fucking wrap.

Part Four

Sue: Let me get this straight... This lot are going to steal the TARDIS, and then they're going to use it to travel the universe shopping for androids? They're having a laugh!

Back on the TARDIS, Nyssa puts the finishing touches to her sonic device.

Sue: What is she making again? I've completely forgotten. It's not a fridge, is it?

The Doctor escapes from his bonds with the help of a safety pin. And then, a little later, he uses the very same pin to short-circuit an electronic lock.

Sue: Is this the replacement for his sonic screwdriver? A safety pin? Handy for the kids, I suppose, but very difficult for the BBC to market.

Nyssa notices Adric approaching the TARDIS on the scanner and she rushes

outside to greet him.

Sue: She's sending mixed signals. One minute she's bickering with him, the next she wants to give him a big hug.

But wait! The android is hiding behind the TARDIS! Nyssa races inside as Adric tries to kick it to death with his Wellington boots. However, his efforts are in vain and the android enters the ship.

Sue: Nyssa left the bloody doors open AGAIN!

The android dispenses with its disguise.

Sue: It isn't so scary when it looks like a prop from *Starlight Express*.

Nyssa shakes it to death with her homemade sonic booster.

Sue: So Nyssa was making a huge vibrator in her bedroom? Okay, fair enough. I can believe that.

Nyssa is sad to see such a magnificent machine go up in smoke.

Sue: Don't worry, they'll be other vibrators, chick.

And then Adric pilots the TARDIS, managing to land it on a sixpence, right next to the Doctor.

Sue: Un-fucking-believable!

The Doctor searches for the Terileptils' hidden base with maps of old London town.

Sue: I wish I had a lute so I could play the theme to EastEnders over this.

The Terileptil meets his comrades at their secret bakery base.

THE VISITATION

Sue: Bloody hell! Is that a bong? Are they trying to get high? It would explain their ridiculous plan, I suppose. Shopping for androids, indeed!

The Doctor and his gang (there are too many of the fuckers to list) reach the bakers.

Sue: Is it definitely a bakery? The red lighting makes it look like a brothel.

Adric becomes distracted by one of his inexplicable erections and topples into some boxes – there's no other explanation for it, sadly. And then the story concludes with a badly-staged fight scene and the Doctor committing arson.

Sue: Right. So the Doctor just started the Great Fire of London. That's heroic.

As the place burns to the ground, the Doctor ushers his companions out of the door.

Sue: When he pushed Adric outside just then, he did it with such venom. He really doesn't like him very much.

The Doctor leaves Mace to clear up the mess. It is only a small fire, after all.

Sue: He always leaves the wrong person behind. It's becoming a habit.

But he leaves him with a souvenir – part of the control panel from the Terileptil base.

Sue: Okay, so the Doctor started a huge fire and fucked with the laws of time. Well that's just great, isn't it?

The Score

Sue: That was crap. The only redeeming features were the wood, the bloke

from *On the Buses* and Peter Davison. Everything else – especially the direction – was dreadful. There was nothing to it. Bland, boring, bollocks.

3/10

COMMENT: "To me, *The Visitation* will always be the story with the dullest Target novelisation cover of them all. And that's about it, really." – Christopher Prittard

NOTES: This was the post where I announced to the world I was writing a book based on the blog for Faber & Faber, mainly because it accidentally showed up on Amazon as a pre-order (and there's nothing scarier than seeing a book you've barely started writing available for pre-order). The fact that Amazon placed it in the category 'Doctors and Medicine' didn't seem to harm it, though, and at one point, for about an hour, the book actually outsold Keith Lemon's Official 2013 Calendar. I know. Impressive, eh?

Did Gary ever join us again? You'll have to buy the remaining volumes in this series to find out. (The short answer is yes, he did. Sorry about that.)



Part One

This story begins with a murder.

Sue: Blimey, this one isn't messing around, is it? Straight in with a death, no pissing about. The editing isn't very good, though. That gurgling noise doesn't match the victim's lips.

Meanwhile Sarah Sutton is fast asleep.

Sue: Eh? Is Nyssa dreaming this? Are we on the TARDIS? What the hell is going on? Is this another trippy one?

The Doctor doesn't understand why the TARDIS has chosen to land on Earth again.

Sue: Aliens are probably trying to invade it. Earth never gets a break.

They've arrived on a railway platform in 1925.

Sue: Are they are going to re-enact scenes from *The Railway Children*? That would kill an afternoon, I suppose.

Our heroes are greeted by a chauffeur who seems to be expecting them.

Sue: Is he staring at Nyssa's tits? Did they do that sort of thing in the 1920s? Is that a clue? Is this block transfer thingywhatsist again?

The Doctor is mistaken for a cricket player. We can't think why. Sadly, Sue isn't a fan of the game.

Sue: I can take it or leave it. I certainly wouldn't pay to watch it. It's too slow for me. A bit like this story.

The Doctor and his gang are driven to a cricket green and Charles Cranleigh greets the Time Lord as a friend of a friend. Charles is also bowled over by Nyssa, mainly because she's the double of his fiancée, Ann.

Sue: Look at that cheeky smirk. I bet I know what he's thinking right now, and it definitely isn't cricket.

Sue seems to be enjoying Black Orchid so far.

Sue: It's a period drama with a nice location, that's two on the trot. I'll try not to get my hopes up.

The Doctor throws himself into the cricket match.

Sue: This is almost as long as a real game. Actually, Peter Davison is pretty good at this. I'm impressed.

When the Doctor bowls out a batsman, Sue gasps.

Sue: Fucking hell! He's really good. He's wasted on Doctor Who.

After, our heroes retire to Cranleigh Hall for some light refreshments.

Sue: This is basically *Doctor Who* meets *Downton Abbey*, and I can live with that. We should have saved this for a Sunday. This has Sunday afternoon written all over it.

We meet a South American named Latoni, which Sue mishears as Tony.

Sue: It's Sting's mate from the rainforest.

The Doctor mistakes WG Grace for the Master ("Don't worry, we've all done

BLACK ORCHID

it"), but it's the image of Adric sipping cocktails in a bath that will haunt us forever. Tegan, on the other hand, is drawn to an orchid in a display case.

Sue: I bet it's an alien plant who wants to take over the world. The title pretty much gives it away.

Thankfully, Tegan is a bit of an expert when it comes to orchids (what are the chances?) and she knows George Cranleigh was a famous botanist and explorer.

Sue: She must have read that in an in-flight magazine.

Latoni enters a rooms upstairs and notices an empty bed.

Sue: (*Singing*) Every breath you take, every move you make...

Meanwhile the Doctor is given fancy dress to wear.

Sue: It could be worse, it could be Colin Baker's costume. And it isn't a million miles away from what you're wearing now, so man up and put it on.

Ann and Nyssa decide to dress in identical costumes, just so they can mess with our heads.

Sue: (Dreamily) Ooh, Peter Davison in a dressing gown. That's nice...

Nyssa wants to dance with Adric.

Sue: Come on, Adric, just mince in time with the music.

Poor Adric.

Sue: I love the way he wears his gold badge over his pageboy costume. He's so proud of it. And Nyssa is sending mixed signals again.

Me: You think so? I think Adric only has eyes for the mixed salad.

Sue: He's a terrible dancer. For a boy who likes to count, he hasn't got any rhythm.

Unlike Adric, the party is in full swing.

Sue: It's nice to watch them relax for a change. We don't see them letting their hair down enough.

Lady Cranleigh confers with Latoni.

Sue: (Singing) Don't stand, don't stand so, don't stand so close to me...

We don't see the tropical storm which passes over Cranleigh Hall.

Sue: This always happens to us when we throw a party. It *always* pisses down. The only difference is we tend to go back inside the house when it rains. This lot must be masochists.

Tegan and Sir Robert enjoy a quick bop under the slate grey skies.

Sue: She's so much nicer when she smiles.

Sue is devastated when she realises the Doctor hasn't taken his trousers off, but this is immediately offset by some nice wood panelling and a nice chair.

Sue: I'm just not a big fan of this genre. It's all a bit too upper-class for me to give a shit. I want more deaths.

Right on cue, the episode concludes with a man dressed as a harlequin attacking Ann. Luckily, a footman intervenes.

Me: I love the way he saves the mustard first!

The footman is strangled to death.

BLACK ORCHID

Sue: It's always the fucking servants, isn't it?

Sue is still shaking her head when the credits roll.

Sue: What a strange episode. I'm looking forward to finding out which alien is behind it.

Part Two

The Doctor shows Lady Cranleigh a dead body he found in one of her cupboards.

Sue: Fuck me, the body is still there. I would have put money on it vanishing. So that's clever.

George Cranleigh finally shows us his true face.

Sue: He's a creepy Frank Spencer. "Hmmm, Betty, I burnt my face off when I was making the dinner. Hmmm, sorry."

Despite the deteriorating weather, the party-goers are bravely soldiering on.

Sue: Poor sods. They are freezing to death out there. Nyssa – or Ann, I can't keep up – will probably catch pneumonia in that skimpy dress.

The Doctor is accused of murder.

Sue: It's quite clever, this. I thought the mistaken identity would be caused by Nyssa and her double, not the Doctor and somebody else. It's clever misdirection.

The Doctor and his friends are in big trouble.

Sue: This is what happens when you decide to gatecrash a buffet. Let this be a lesson to you all.

The Doctor leads his inquisitors to the cupboard containing the corpse, but it's disappeared!

Sue: Oh, they got there in the end. How disappointing.

Charles telephones Smutty Thomas to see if this Doctor chap is all he's cracked up to be.

Sue: So the Doctor wasn't Pervy Stephens after all!

Tegan is adamant the Doctor is no imposter.

Sue: Yes he is! He been pretending to be Dirty Bernard, or whatever his name is. Oh do keep up, Tegan!

The Doctor and his companions are driven to the local police station as Sue sings the theme music to All Creatures Great and Small.

Sue: Why can't we watch *All Creatures* from the beginning? I'd actually look forward to that every night.

They arrive at the train station but the TARDIS has disappeared!

Sue: Anyone could have taken it. A very confused train conductor is probably fighting Daleks as we speak.

The mystery of the missing TARDIS lasts all of two minutes.

Sue: So why bring it up in the first place!?

The Doctor invites Sir Robert to take a look inside his vehicle. Tegan warns him he's in for a surprise.

Sue: And a possible heart attack.

BLACK ORCHID

The Doctor offers to take everyone back to Cranleigh Hall in his time machine.

Sue: Is Adric going to fly it? He's the only one capable of landing it on a sixpence. God, just imagine if the Doctor gets it wrong and he ends up with six companions!

Back at the house, George kills Latoni.

Me: I really hope the Russians love their children too.

George sets fire to his bedroom door.

Sue: That's a great stunt. *Doctor Who* is completely obsessed with fire at the moment.

George escapes from his room and abducts Nyssa by mistake.

Sue: It's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* meets Agatha Christie meets *Downton Abbey* meets *Doctor Who* meets *The Antiques Roadshow* meets...

Me: Okay, you can stop now.

George manhandles Nyssa on the roof.

Sue: Here comes the cliffhanger...

Meanwhile, down on the ground, Lady Cranleigh transforms into a human exposition machine.

Sue: Isn't it a bit cruel to have a man with no tongue guarded by a man with a really big one? No wonder he's mad.

George moves closer to the roof's edge.

Sue: I want to feel sorry for him, but he's a serial killer, so it's quite difficult. And I'm not very happy with the implication that a deformity automatically turns you into a deranged psychopath, either. It doesn't feel right to me. I don't like it.

The Doctor tells George he has the wrong girl.

Sue: Yeah, that's right, confuse the crazy guy. That'll work.

George falls from the building and Sue praises the stunt work once again.

Sue: So where the hell do they go from here? Does the orchid bring

George back from the dead or something? **Me**: *Black Orchid* is only two episodes, love.

Sue: Really? But that's excellent! Why didn't you tell me?

Me: I thought it would be a nice surprise.

Sue: You idiot. I might have enjoyed it more if I knew it was only two

parts. The thought of four parts was beginning to depress me.

The Doctor and his friends stay for George's funeral.

Sue: Anything for a free buffet.

The Score

Sue: Another really bad one. Once again, it had good sets, good costumes and a nice location, but the story was rubbish. It wasn't *Doctor Who*.

Me: That was the programme's first straight historical since 1966.

Sue: Define 'straight'. Me: No aliens in it.

Sue: Aside from two of the lead characters, you mean?

Me: Three, actually, but I take your point.

Sue: It was boring.

Me: I thought you liked the historicals?

Sue: Only when they deal with an interesting period in history. At least

BLACK ORCHID

we learnt something about the Romans and the Aztecs and Marco Polo. This was just an excuse to do an Agatha Christie murder mystery, and they are ten a penny. So why bother?

3/10

Sue: At least it was short.

Me: We could always watch it again.

Sue: Sure, why not? We've only got *Doctor Who*, *The X-Factor*, *The Thick of It* and *Match of the Day* to watch tonight, so yeah, let's do *Black Orchid*

again. That sounds like a topping idea.

Me: I'm serious. Sue: You're mad.

Me: Hear me out. We haven't listened to a commentary track for an entire story before. And the commentary track on this DVD is brilliant. Trust me.

Sue puts up some resistance, but as soon as she hears Peter Davison call Black Orchid "crap" (which takes him all of 30 seconds), she gives in and enjoys the ride.

Sue: See! It's not just me. Even Peter Davison hates it.

To be fair, hardly anyone has a good word to say about Black Orchid.

Sue: It's refreshing to hear a commentary where everyone isn't slapping each other on the back every five seconds. Peter Davison is *very* bitchy.

Matthew Waterhouse, on the other hand, is out of his tiny mind.

Sue: I can't believe he's complaining about eggy performances. What a nerve! Is he watching himself? That's priceless!

Peter Davison is very proud of cricketing skills. Incredibly, nobody mentions Matthew's ball-handling.

Sue: I'll tell you something, though, they have better chemistry on this commentary than they did in the actual programme. Although I do detect some animosity towards Matthew. Peter isn't very happy with him. He probably thinks he's cramping his style.

Davison is fairly relentless when it comes to running Black Orchid down.

Sue: Peter Davison hit the nail on the head when he said the BBC were making this type of drama anyway, so what was the point? Even Matthew Waterhouse agrees it isn't *Doctor Who*, and he's clearly insane.

In fact, the cast can't think of anything nice to say.

Sue: Listening to this makes me question things even more. I mean, why did the TARDIS take them there in the first place? Was it taking the piss? Did it think, "I know, let's get Nyssa killed in a domestic dispute"? I mean, what was that all about?

With the commentators' vitriol still ringing in her ears, Sue sums up:

Sue: I enjoyed that. And I don't feel bad about giving it a low score, now. In fact, I want to change it.

2/10

Sue: Peter's right, it's rubbish.

COMMENT: "I'm shocked that Davison's bare-chested antics didn't net this at least another three or four marks." – Fuchsia Begonia

NOTES: We blog an episode of *All Creatures Great and Small* in the *Extras* section of this book. Unfortunately, watching every episode in chronological order remains a pipe dream.



Part One

Sue: Eric Saward. Why do I know that name?

Me: He's about to take over as script editor. Oh, and he wrote The

Visitation.

Sue: Script editor? How did that happen? The Visitation was shit!

The first episode of Earthshock takes place on Earth.

Sue: These paintballers are using some serious kit. They've got an Igloo tent for a start. I've always wanted an Igloo tent.

A marine named Scott ("He's been in loads of stuff") and a Professor named Kyle ("She hasn't") are about to search some caves for a group of missing geologists. Scott tries to reassure the professor by telling her that going down again must be hard.

Sue: I bet he says that to all the girls.

Meanwhile, on the TARDIS, the Doctor wants Adric to read Black Orchid, the book written by the famous serial killer and mentalist George Cranleigh.

Sue: Oh, just let it go! Why bring that up again? Who cares?

Adric wants to know why he's constantly teased.

Sue: Because you can't act. Oh, sorry, you meant in the show, didn't you?

Adric pops a fist into his pocket.

Sue: Oh, please give it a rest, Adric, just this once!

Adric chastises the Doctor for not spending enough time with him.

Sue: He'll be ringing Childline next. Tom Baker wouldn't have stood for this nonsense

In short, Adric wants to go home.

Sue: Good. Take him. Replace him with somebody who actually *wants* to be there. The same goes for Tegan. It should be the same in *Big Brother* as well: if you go to the Diary Room and you say you want to leave – BANG! – straight out the door and bring the next one in. But I digress.

As the marines enter the caves, their life signs are tracked on a huge monitor on the planet's surface.

Sue: This reminds me of *Aliens*.

Me: That's interesting, because Aliens wasn't released for another four

years.

Sue: In that case, I'm impressed. Who directed this one?

Me: Peter Grimwade.

Sue: Ah, yes, the 1980s' Douglas Camfield.

Adric and the Doctor are still sparring on the TARDIS.

Sue: Does Adric leave in this story? I bet the Doctor ends up taking him home, which will make Tegan insanely jealous.

On the whole, she's fairly impressed with Earthshock so far.

Sue: There are a lot of women in this one. It's great to see a female marine, for example. It's just a shame they couldn't find a hat that fit her. It's going to slip off her head any second now.

When the marines head into the tunnels, a pair of androgynous androids start picking them off.

Sue: Oooh, they've got acid for blood. They are very creepy, actually.

Blank faces always scare me.

Me: I know what you mean. It's why I gave up teaching.

Scott tries to take control of a rapidly deteriorating situation.

Sue: He's basically a futuristic version of the Brigadier, isn't he?

The TARDIS materialises in the same cave system, which the Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa decide to explore while Adric sulks back in the TARDIS.

Sue: This is very educational. I like this. I'm also amused that the Doctor clearly can't stand Tegan.

You'll be pleased to know that Malcolm Clarke's return to the series doesn't go unnoticed.

Sue: I really like the music. It doesn't sound anything like the theme tune to *Zelda*, for a start.

Me: You have impeccable taste, Sue. I love the music to *Earthshock*. **Sue**: KLANG! KLANG! KLANG! Yeah, I like it, too. It's not bad this. So far, so good.

In fact, Sue is already biting her nails.

Sue: Look at this direction. See, Mr Moffatt, this is how you direct for television. Look at that composition... I'm referring to the rubbish Moff by the way, not the good one.

A bomb has been planted in the caves.

Sue: Just use the sonic on it.

Me: He hasn't got a sonic screwdriver any more.

Sue: Hasn't he replaced it yet? Why not?

The first episode of Earthshock ends with a shock.

Sue: Cybermen!

She is genuinely thrilled and surprised.

Sue: I had no idea. That was really exciting. I actually felt butterflies in my stomach when I saw them. Seriously. I've never felt that from watching *Doctor Who* before.

I tell her that JN-T refused a Radio Times cover so he could keep their appearance a surprise.

Sue: Good for him. That has to be the best cliffhanger in the series so far. **Me**: And a generation of children all fell off their chairs at once.

Sue: I bet they did. I almost fell off mine. Okay, I take it all back, Eric

Saward can stay.

Part Two

Sue: We haven't seen the Cybermen for a long time, have we?

Me: Seven years, give or take. Or a couple of months in our case.

Sue: I like their new helmets. And their new voices. The leader on the left

is hamming it up a bit, but at least I can understand him.

The Doctor ushers the marines into his TARDIS before the bomb can go off.

Sue: I'll never be bored of seeing people's reactions when they enter the TARDIS for the first time. It's always hilarious. Somebody should do a compilation on *YouTube*.

Sue hasn't enjoyed an episode as much as this for a very long time.

Sue: The direction, the music, the acting – it's all coming together this week. It feels like proper *Doctor Who* for a change. It's excellent.

And then, right on cue...

Cyberleader: Excellent!

Me: That's the Cybermen's new catchphrase by the way.

Sue: Excellent.

Me: Yes.

Sue: No, I mean that's excellent. I like monsters with catchphrases.

There are so many passengers in the TARDIS today, it's starting to look smaller on the inside.

Sue: Bloody hell, it's cramped. Unfortunately, this Doctor has to take at least one decent actor with him to make up for his companions' deficiencies.

The Cybermen do some research into the Time Lord known as the Doctor.

Sue: That equipment is very *Wizard of Oz*. Oh look, it's William Hartnell. Yay!

The Cybermen fast-forward to a clip featuring Patrick Troughton.

Sue: YAY!

And then they finish with a Tom Baker rant.

Sue: Whatever.

Me: I'm probably wrong, but I'm sure they shouldn't be able to see that

Tom Baker clip because it hasn't actually happened to them yet.

Sue: Oh fuck off, Neil. I bet you loved that scene when you were a kid.

Adric admits he doesn't want to go home after all.

Sue: They shouldn't tease us like that. Seriously, the next time one of your companions throws a strop, take them home before they change their

mind. But take Adric last – you need him to steer the TARDIS properly.

Meanwhile, on a space freighter heading for Earth...

Sue: Bloody hell! It's Mollie Sugden!

Me: Not exactly. Even I wouldn't make you watch Come Back, Mrs Noah.

Sue: No, wait, don't tell me. It's Beryl Reid. That's even madder.

Me: It is a bit.

Sue: Is she any good? Does she play it straight? Oh God, I hope she's

good.

The early signs are encouraging, especially when she gives one of her crew a good dressing down.

Sue: I love her already. So is she going to be like Ripley in this? Will she

be the last survivor to face the Cybermen?

Me: Yes. She even strips down to her underwear.

The TARDIS arrives on the same freighter.

Sue: The set is enormous, and beautifully lit. You could probably still get away with this today.

The Doctor and Adric investigate the ship as the Cybermen start picking off its crew.

Sue: There's real suspense in this story. Why can't they all be this good? It's frustrating.

The Doctor and Adric wander into the middle of a crime scene and the episode ends with Ringway apprehending them for murder.

Sue: Very good. Excellent, in fact.

Part Three

Beryl Reid begins to worry Sue.

Sue: She's playing it too light. I'm not convinced she's taking this seriously.

The Doctor protests his innocence. As per bloody usual.

Sue: I like the way he wants to drag people back to his TARDIS. After all, it worked for him last week! It's very funny.

Deep in the freighter's cargo hold, Cybermen are beginning to stir.

Sue: Not for kids! Not only does that look like autoerotic asphyxiation, kids might have copied it by putting plastic bags on their heads. It's not very responsible, is it? However, I do like the idea that the Cybermen shrink-wrap themselves.

If the episode falls short when it comes to health and safety, at least it's progressive in other ways.

Sue: It's good to see older women in charge for a change. There are a lot of strong roles for women in this one. About time, too.

Sue is fascinated by the Cybermen's console.

Sue: It looks like a mini-TARDIS. Can the Cybermen travel in time? **Me**: That would be a bit silly, wouldn't it?

The Doctor warns Briggs not to head for Earth, but she doesn't listen.

Sue: She wasn't too bad, there. She reminds me of Margaret Thatcher a bit – the greed, the obsession with private enterprise and bonuses, the silly hair...

The Doctor doesn't know what the Cybermen want this time.

Sue: Good, it isn't just me then.

Finally, there's some good news.

Sue: Tegan has put on some different clothes! I don't believe it! Quick, burn her uniform before she can change back into it.

Nyssa isn't so lucky.

Sue: Could you imagine Romana wearing the same costume for more than one story? She would have been mortified.

Briggs wants the Doctor and Adric on the bridge where she can see them.

Sue: They never should have told me they had a brig. Now I just think they are completely stupid for not locking them up in it. If Adric and the Doctor were pirates, they could simply walk up behind the crew and garrote them.

When Scott tells Tegan to buck her ideas up, she admits she's just a mouth on legs.

Sue: Another blow for feminism. At least now I understand why you named our cat after her. That description is very apt.

The Cybermen advance on the freighter's crew.

Sue: The Cybermen don't care about being hit by the humans' poxy guns. It's very scary, actually. There's real tension in this story. The Cybermen's new theme tune is great, too. It's very Hans Zimmer.

Beryl Reid struggles with her dialogue.

Sue: She's a good actress but this isn't the right part for her. I'm sure she hasn't got a clue what's going on.

The Doctor gives Briggs and her crew a potted history of the Cybermen.

Sue: I like it when they refer to the past like this. I even remember some of this stuff now that they've mentioned it. I didn't like the one with the tombs on Telos very much. I definitely remember that.

When we are reminded the Cybermen are allergic to gold, Adric tries to hide his badge for mathematical excellence.

Sue: Things must be serious. He bloody loves that badge.

Tegan and Scott sneak up on two Cybermen who are having a chat.

Me: What do you think they're talking about?

Sue: Their post-invasion holiday plans, probably. He's saying to the other one, "When we arrive on Earth, we should give Australia a miss – it's got a Gold Coast. Majorca is supposed to be very nice, though." Something like that.

The Cybermen try to burn their way through the door which leads to the bridge. The heat causes Briggs to back away like an arthritic Marcel Marceau.

Sue: Oh, don't make Beryl do that! That isn't very dignified.

Tegan makes up for all the sexist crap she was spouting earlier by strapping on a gun and kicking some serious arse.

Sue: You go, girl! The guns remind me of Dyson vacuum cleaners. Maybe Dyson branched out into arms-dealing in the future?

The Doctor traps a Cyberman in a doorway.

Sue: That looked amazing. It's all down to the direction, you know. I'm really impressed.

The Cybermen circumvent the problem by blowing a hole in another door.

Sue: Careful! You might get a splinter from all that wood!

The Cyberleader starts throwing his weight around.

Sue: I really like the guy who plays the lead Cyberman. He's really going for it.

The episode concludes with an army of Cybermen advancing down a corridor.

Sue: The director is a fucking genius.

Part Four

Tegan is tooled up and ready for anything.

Sue: So is Tegan Ripley in this? I'm relieved. I don't think Beryl could have pulled that off.

Me: Janet Fielding is Sheena Easton in the Sigourney Weaver story.

Briggs is surrounded by Cybermen.

Sue: She doesn't know where to look. Her eyes are darting all over the place. Maybe Matthew took her aside for some acting lessons. She's definitely copying him in this scene.

When the Cybermen pursue the marines back to the TARDIS, one of them manages to damage the console.

Sue: You can't shoot the TARDIS!

Me: They just shot Nyssa's friend, too.

Sue: The frumpy miner? Oh, I couldn't give a toss about her.

The Doctor and the Cyberleader discuss the human condition.

Sue: The problem with Peter Davison is that he doesn't do anger very well. He can do fear brilliantly, but when he's angry he just sounds petulant. Sorry, Peter.

She's not impressed with the well-prepared meal speech, either.

Sue: It's okay, I suppose. The Cyberleader is great, though. I love the way you can hear every single word he's saying.

Me: Some fans criticise the Cybermen in this story for displaying far too much emotion.

Sue: It doesn't really bother me. Is smugness an emotion?

Adric decides to stay on the freighter so he can stop it from crashing into planet Earth.

Sue: I have a bad feeling about this. They're really milking this scene. Is Adric going to be okay?

The Cyberleader decides to commandeer the Doctor's TARDIS so he can reach the Cyberfleet, which is currently miles away.

Sue: That's bad planning. If the fleet is too far away, then you didn't think it through. It's crisis management at best, and I bet it will turn out to be his downfall. Never change your plans.

Me: Pray he doesn't alter them further.

Nyssa keeps tabs on the carnage from the safety of the TARDIS.

Sue: She looks like she's about to use a Ronson shaver.

The Cybermen prepare to evacuate the ship.

Sue: The Cybermen have tight little arses in this story. Just saying.

The Cyberleader breaches the TARDIS defences (ie. Nyssa) and he orders one of his men to search its interior.

Sue: You'll be a long time, chick.

Meanwhile, on the freighter...

Sue: Adric will solve it. Hang on a minute... Where's his badge? His badge has to be significant in some way. I'll be disappointed if Adric doesn't use it.

Adric cracks the first lock and the freighter responds violently.

Scott: That was some bump.

Briggs: It's bigger than you think.

Sue howls with laughter. In fact I have to pause the DVD because her giggling fit is even worse than Sarah Sutton's.

Sue: "It's bigger than you think!" The way Beryl said that line! God, that's the funniest thing in *Doctor Who* ever! I loved that.

The freighter has jumped time warps, which Adric puts down to the fact an alien machine is currently overriding the freighter's computer.

Sue: Well, if you say so... No, wait, what?

And then the penny finally drops.

Sue: I've got it. They've travelled back to the time of the dinosaurs, and this is the spaceship that wipes them out. That's very clever, actually.

A second passes.

Sue: But that means... Hang on, if the dinosaurs get killed, that means...

The Doctor tries to lock onto the freighter.

Sue: Come on, Doctor! Materialise around Adric! That's what Matt Smith would do. Oh no! Adric is the only one capable of doing that at the moment. Oh shit...

Adric tries to crack the code.

Sue: But if he succeeds, he will interfere with time and the dinosaurs won't die! Somebody has to stop him!

The Doctor attacks the Cyberleader with Adric's gold badge.

Sue: How soft was that gold? Was it made from chocolate? Eh?

The Cyberleader blasts the TARDIS console.

Sue: No! They've killed the TARDIS!

The Doctor retaliates by shooting the Cyberleader at point-blank range.

Sue: Bloody hell, the Doctor just shot him!

Pause.

Sue: He just shot him twice!

Pause.

Sue: Three times!

Me: Shit just got serious.

The Doctor tries to rescue Adric but it's too late.

Sue: Oh no.

Sadly, Adric will never know if he was right.

Sue: Fuck me. I'm shocked. **Me**: You're Earthshocked.

The credits begin to roll.

Sue: Oh no, there's no music.

Me: Yeah, what do you think about that?

Sue: It might have worked if a better character had died. It's making me feel a bit uncomfortable. Maybe they should have used a sad version of the theme tune, you know, like they do in *EastEnders*. Don't they have a tiply piane version?

tinkly piano version?

Me: No.

Sue: Well, run a competition where people send in a sad version of the theme tune which you could play over the credits when Adric dies.

Me: Okay, but don't hold your breath.

When the DVD cycles back to the menu screen, Sue lets out an exhausted sigh.

Sue: Wow. Poor Adric. But at least he died trying.

The Score

Sue: I don't know what to say. It succeeded in what it set out to do – it surprised me. For the first time, I think, I was genuinely shocked. Twice! The direction was superb, the new Cybermen were great and I really got caught up in the story. Some of the plot was nonsensical, and Beryl was

hopelessly out of her depth, but the atmosphere more than made up for it. Yes, I really enjoyed that.

9/10

And then we watched Part Five.

Me: Make sure you read the credits to this extra.

Sue: Why, is it Ian Levine? Has he made a longer version of Earthshock

where Adric doesn't die?

Me: No.

A Claymation version of Adric is eaten by a dinosaur.

Sue: It's not Rob Ritchie, is it?

Me: No, he would have been eight when they made this extra.

Sue: So? It looks like an eight-year-old made it.

Ouch.

Sue: So is that it, then? Oh. Right. Okay.

The credits roll.

Sue: Rupert Booth! I knew him from Stonehills. God, it's a small world. Hey! Arthur Banks! We know Arthur really well.

Me: I've got a funny story to tell you about that Claymation Adric, but I'm saving it for the book.

Sue: Is it about the time you accidentally ended up in a fan video and...

Me: Like I said, I'm saving it for the book.

And then we watch the Putting the Shock into Earthshock documentary, which Sue enjoys a great deal.

Sue: They all look so young. Steve O'Brien looks very cheeky. The Moff

looks even better now than he did back then. I'm not sure what's going on with Mark Gatiss, but Ian Levine looks okay. Who's the small boy?

Me: That's Gary Gillatt. He was one of the very first people to comment on our blog.

Sue: Really? In that case, I should probably tone the swearing down a bit.

When the documentary reaches the topic of silent credits, Sue believes she has a solution.

Sue: You could start with silence and then you could slowly fade up the theme music. It isn't rocket science, you know.

Ah yes, the Blake's 7 approach. Nice. This extra also gives Sue an opportunity to enjoy some of the episode's shortcomings that she mercifully missed on her first (and let's face it, last) viewing. These include Matthew Waterhouse's touch-typing skills (so funny, she made me play it three times) and the fact Sarah Sutton visibly laughs when Adric meets his untimely end.

Sue: Okay, that's as much *Earthshock* as I can take, thanks.

Me: But we haven't watched Did You See...? yet.

Sue: Enough!

Me: Okay, but before we go, remember the Matt Smith episode on Saturday night, when the Doctor was talking to Rory's dad and he told

him that every once in a while one of his companions died?

Sue: Was he referring to Adric?

Me: Of course he was. For a terrible moment, I thought he was going to say Adric's name out loud, which would have spoilt everything.

Sue: So Matt Smith was thinking about Adric in that scene? Do you think they made him watch *Earthshock* first?

Me: Probably. So, do you have any final words for Adric? It's not as if we'll ever see him again.

Sue: I feel sorry for the character. His death was tragic because it was so meaningless. But he had to go. There are too many companions and he couldn't act. It doesn't take a boy genius to work that out.

COMMENT: "When I saw the Cybermen I thought, 'Wow! Shit! Fantastic!' Looking back, what a peculiar reaction." – Steve O'Brien

NOTES: Our *Earthshock* blog has the dubious honour of receiving the most comments: 201 to be precise. Steve O'Brien's was the first one posted. I couldn't be bothered to trawl through the rest. Sorry. I did save my Claymation Adric story for the book, but it was ruthlessly removed by Andy Miller. So here, for the very first time, is the condensed version:

I met Rupert Booth (the man responsible for the Claymation Adric) at university, when I briefly taught him the basics of video production, even though he'd already spent several years making dozens of semi-professional *Doctor Who* fan-films (I think we spent the lessons talking about Sontarans instead). Anyway, he sent me a script for his latest production and asked me to be in it. I was too flattered to turn it down, plus I played the lead role in my sixth form's production of *The Crucible* and I was eager to get back into "shouting at night". And it was a very big role. The scene was basically a four-page monologue featuring a Time Lord filing a report with Gallifrey's High Council before his TARDIS crash-landed, and as I dutifully learnt my lines, I wondered if Rupert would let me scribble some of the more difficult technobabble down on the TARDIS set he had lovingly recreated on an industrial estate just outside Gateshead.

A couple of months later, the day came to record my scene. When I arrived, I proudly told Rupert I knew my lines backwards and he just laughed and pointed to a toilet where I could change into my costume, which was basically a toga. Not a proper toga, mind, just some bed sheets that had been made to look like a toga. "Okay", I thought, "maybe this particular Time Lord had just been to Rome," and the lights in his makeshift studio were ridiculously hot, so I didn't complain.

And then, as I strolled onto the TARDIS set, trying to protect my modesty from the crew (I went full Roman commando) I saw him. I don't remember his name, but I'll never forget his face, framed as it was against a huge Gallifreyan collar made out of cardboard.

And that's when it hit me: I hadn't been cast as the Time Lord. Of

course not. I was there to play his companion. A companion who didn't even get a name above his one line in the script, which was, "Opening transmission portal to Gallifrey, sir" if I remember correctly (it was the one line I never bothered to learn).

I don't know if Rupert ever finished this particular production, and I don't really care.

Rob Ritchie had nothing to do with the Claymation Adric, but Sue clearly recognises talent when she sees it because he ended up animating *The Power of the Daleks*.

And finally, I'm happy to report that a sad version of the *Doctor Who* theme now exists thanks to Alison Eales. You can listen to it at: https://soundcloud.com/alisoneales/sad-doctor



Part One

Sue: Peter Grimwade again? So he writes and directs at the same time. Excellent.

Let's see how long it takes her to work it out, shall we?

Sue: Bloody hell, it must have cost the BBC a small fortune to film on Concorde. Unless this is stock footage from an old British Airways training film. I can't tell yet.

The plane disappears into thin air.

Sue: (*Singing*) Bermuda triangle, try to see if from my angle...

Meanwhile, Tegan is back in uniform on the TARDIS.

Sue: No wonder they look depressed, it's probably the stench of BO.

The crew are actually mourning Adric's death.

Sue: Oh, yeah. Sorry. I forgot about him. **Me**: *Forgot*?! We only watched it last night! **Sue**: I am so over it, Neil. Let's move on.

Tegan and Nyssa want to know why the Doctor won't save Adric.

Sue: No, don't do it! That would break the laws of time *and* common sense. And is it just me or is Nyssa still trying not to laugh?

The TARDIS crew decide to take Sue's advice and get on with their lives.

Sue: At least they mentioned it, I suppose. It would have been a bit weird if we'd joined them sipping cocktails on a beach after the last episode.

The TARDIS is heading for Earth when it's buffeted by time turbulence. But despite this, the Doctor still manages to get them to Heathrow airport on time.

Sue: Hey, if that's Heathrow airport, that means they can finally get rid of Tegan!

The TARDIS has materialised over a runway, which perplexes the hell out of Air Traffic Control (which seems to staffed by one man and his boss, whose moustache reminds Sue of Ron Swanson from Parks and Recreation). Anyway, the TARDIS dematerialises again and Air Traffic Control write it off as a small aircraft.

Sue: Well that's alright, then. It's only Heathrow-fucking-airport, we always let light aircraft stray into our flight paths. Jesus!

The TARDIS makes a short hop to the middle of a terminal building, which annoys Tegan no end.

Sue: She's never bloody happy, is she? She doesn't want to go. Not really. Well, that's just tough. Push her out the door and go!

The Doctor and his companions decide to loiter in the terminal instead.

Sue: How brown is this airport? Are you sure they haven't landed in 1972?

When questioned by the authorities, the Doctor uses his UNIT connections to ease his way into a plot that's already in progress.

Sue: Excellent, we haven't had a UNIT story for ages. It's good timing, too, because we had one in the new series on Saturday [*The Power of Three*]. It must be fate or something.

TIME-FLIGHT

One telephone call later, the Doctor and chums are given full security clearance.

Sue: Makes a nice change to being arrested for a crime you didn't commit. I feel like we've been spared an episode.

Concorde is so impressive, Sue's EastEnders detection alarm fails to go off when First Officer Bilton and Captain Stapley step into the frame.

Sue: It's a design classic. Everyone I know who has travelled on it has told me how amazing it was. I wish I'd flown on it, but I never had more money than sense.

Me: I remember owning a die-cast toy Concorde when this story went out. I loved it to bits, but then I broke its nose off. A wheel fell off as well, I think.

The TARDIS is taken to the plane's hold.

Sue: If Adric was still here, he could have landed it inside the plane without all this faffing about.

Tegan is overjoyed to be in Concorde's presence.

Sue: Why is she still here, Neil? Why didn't she head straight for the Qantas check-in desk as soon as they arrived at Heathrow? She definitely doesn't want to leave, you know. It's all a big act.

It's fair to say that Time-Flight's direction fails to impress Sue.

Sue: Peter Grimwade must be having a bad day. The direction is okay but it's nothing special. It's very flat.

Me: Peter Grimwade didn't direct this story, he just wrote it. The guy who directed *Black Orchid* directed this.

Sue: Oh, right. You can definitely tell. It's workmanlike at best.

The Doctor jumps into the TARDIS so he can flip it the right way round.

Sue: I can imagine Matt Smith doing something daft like this. I really liked that.

Concorde passes through some time turbulence and the TARDIS begins travelling backwards through time. However, when the plane lands, everything appears to be completely normal.

Sue: That was a bit of an anticlimax. And it isn't very often the Doctor is wrong.

But something isn't quite right. Nyssa can see decaying corpses, for a start.

Sue: Did they die waiting for their luggage to turn up?

The location suddenly takes on an unreal hue.

Sue: Their flight has been diverted to the capital city of Chromakey.

And that's when Sue's EastEnders alarm finally went off.

Sue: Oh, it's Barry's boyfriend, Colin!

Neil: I'm sure Michael Cashman will be flattered with that extensive summary of his career.

The abrupt shift from a beautiful location to a fake studio set fills Sue with disdain.

Sue: Oh dear. It's all gone pear-shaped. And it started so well.

We cut to a control room where an oriental sorcerer is chanting over a white globe.

Sue: Am I supposed to think that's you-know-who?

TIME-FLIGHT

Me: Does it look like him to you?

Sue: How should I know? He's always in disguise!

Either way, Sue thinks she has the sorcerer's plan sussed.

Sue: So he's hijacked a plane and he's hypnotised all the passengers into thinking they're having a wonderful time in Times Square, when in reality they are probably mining for something or other. It's always fucking mining, isn't it?

The Doctor tells his companions Heathrow airport won't exist for another 140 million years.

Sue: I've heard of the hotel not being ready on time, but this is fucking ridiculous.

Concorde's wheels almost buckle when it lands on a prehistoric plain.

Me: My toy Concorde had the same problem with our carpet. **Sue**: What rubbish. How can you hypnotise people so they don't suffer from whiplash? Why didn't all the alarms go off? It's nonsense!

But wait! Another Concorde has landed here as well.

Me: Look! There's my toy!

The episode concludes with... I'm sure Sue can explain it...

Sue: A shower cubicle is assaulting the Doctor.

Cue credits.

Sue: How could they follow Earthshock with that?

Part Two

The Plasmatons envelop the Doctor.

Me: (*Singing*) You're in the colony of Slippermen...

Sue: Very funny.

Me: I can't take credit for that. Patrick Sanders on *Twitter* pointed out the similarity between this lot and an old Peter Gabriel Genesis routine. He's

right, though, it is uncanny.

Sue: It's the wrong song, anyway. It should be (singing) Workin' at the car

wash...

One of Concorde's stranded passengers is an academic from the University of Darlington.

Sue: WHAT? The University of Darlington? Is he having a laugh? This really has turned into proper science fiction, now. The University of *Darlington*? Ha!

Professor Hayter's specialist subject is hypnosis.

Sue: You'd have to hypnotise yourself if you lived in Darlington. Seriously, though, The University of *Darlington*??!

Nyssa has a panic.

Sue: No one's rushing to help her, even though she's displaying all the classic signs of a heart attack. How very odd.

Nyssa is possessed by an alien force. She warns our heroes not to approach the citadel.

Sue: That was Nyssa's best moment in the series so far. And it wasn't even her.

TIME-FLIGHT

Tegan volunteers to stay with Nyssa while Captain Stapley accompanies the Doctor to the citadel.

Sue: Another blow for feminism. Plus, she's more handy than the captain. When was the last time *he* shot a Cyberman in the chest?

The Doctor rounds on Professor Hayter for his willingness to abandon his fellow passengers to their fate.

Sue: What I want to know is how could the University of Darlington afford to fly their staff on Concorde? It doesn't make any sense.

Sue isn't very impressed with Kalid's make-up.

Sue: Now that we can see it in a close-up, it looks as if a pigeon has shat plasticine all over his head. His teeth are minging as well. And is it just me or does he sound like Chris Eubank? I can't take him take seriously.

Concorde's passengers are hard at work in the sanctum's chamber, probably for the first time in their lives, which may explain why they are making such a pig's ear of it.

Sue: What are they are banging on? Is it a giant tortoise? Look at the guy who's trying to use the palm of his hand as a mallet! *What is he doing?* Give them some proper tools!

Captain Stapley finds Bilton, who still believes he's flying a plane.

Sue: I don't blame him. I'd pretend I wasn't in this episode if I were him.

Stapley tries to jog his first officer's memories.

Sue: (*As Stapley*) Oh yes, the Australian with the terrible BO problem. We had a good laugh about it, remember?

Kalid continues to monitor events on his globe.

Sue: He keeps having to waft his own farts away. And when he's chanting, he sounds like he's singing Shaggy's 'Mr Lover Lover'.

Nyssa and Tegan enter the citadel, and as they turn a corner...

Sue: Eh? What?

Thankfully, Adric is just an illusion.

Sue: That was some of Matthew's best acting. Has he gone for good now? Was he contractually obliged to appear in all the episodes or something?

I explain that Matthew Waterhouse appeared in this episode so they could keep his departure a secret – this way his name wouldn't be missing from the cast list in Radio Times, which would have been out when Earthshock Part Four was broadcast.

Sue: I don't care what anybody says, JN-T was a genius.

And then...

Sue: It's the Melkur! Is it? No, it's just another illusion. Ha! They almost had me going there, for a second.

I'm just surprised she got the Melkur's name right, although she does drop the ball when a Terileptil suddenly appears.

Sue: Oh, it's one of them. You know, the android shoppers.

When Stapley and Bilton arrive in Kalid's lair, a two-headed snake keeps them at bay.

Sue: That doesn't look anything like the Mara!

TIME-FLIGHT

And then something happens. I can't remember what exactly, and I didn't jot anything down in my notes. In fact, I may have nodded off. Anyway, whatever happens, Kalid ends the scene vomiting over himself. But it isn't Kalid! It's...

Sue: NO WAY!

Yes way.

Sue: Well, I didn't see that coming. I'm shocked. And not in a good way, but a "Oh no, here we go again" way. It just doesn't make any sense to me. Why did the Master throw up on himself like that? And why bother dressing up at all? What was the fucking point? There had better be a bloody good reason for it.

Part Three

Sue: Shall I tell you what the best thing about *Time-Flight* is, Neil? It's the music. And I don't mean the incidental music, I'm talking about the theme music.

Peter Grimwade's writing credit appears on screen again. Sue sighs.

Sue: Peter should stick to directing, although I don't think even he could have saved this script.

The Master is back!

Sue: (*As the Master*) So, after I escaped from Castrovalva, I thought to myself, "I know what I'll do – I'll steal a couple of planes and dress as a racist pantomime villain. Yeah, *that's* what I'll do."

The Master admits the planes were accidentally trapped in his time contour.

Sue: Well of course they were! It was silly of me to think he could have

done it on purpose.

The Master threatens Stapley and Bilton with his tissue compression eliminator

Sue: Be careful, lads, he could turn you into a pair of collectible figurines.

The Master uses the Doctor's TARDIS to travel to the sanctum's chamber.

Sue: Why not just walk there, you lazy bastard?

When Stapley and Bilton infiltrate the Doctor's TARDIS behind the Master's back, it feels like we're watching an exceptionally camp episode of The Benny Hill Show.

Sue: I think I've finally worked out why this is Glen Allen's favourite story.

Stapley can't work out how to pilot the TARDIS.

Sue: This is very funny. Just imagine the spin-off possibilities if he manages to hit the right button.

In the sanctum's chamber, the passengers have finally stopped hallucinating.

Sue: They'll be writing stern letters to *Watchdog* as soon as they get home, because this was definitely not in the brochure. Having said that, they seem to be taking the news in their stride that their flights have been delayed by a few million years. I'd be livid.

Me: They'll all revert to savagery when the complementary nuts run out.

Captain Stapley passes the audition to be the Doctor's next companion with flying colours.

Sue: He's great. He likes to get stuck in, he'll believe just about anything, and I bet he's handy with his fists.

TIME-FLIGHT

Stapley sabotages the TARDIS but the Master doesn't seem that bothered.

Sue: Why would he want that heap of shit when he's got his own? His TARDIS can sit in a chair and fire laser bolts from its eyes. The Doctor's TARDIS just confuses people.

When we return to the sanctum, which Sue compares to an up-market toilet, her mind begins to wander.

Sue: Peter's celery is a bit limp. He needs to sort that out.

Professor Hayter decides to make the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of ultimate knowledge.

Sue: Just think of all the modules he could have taught at the University of Darlington. What a waste.

When Scobie bumps into Angela, a flight attendant he's probably slept with (ask Sue), he successfully breaks her mental conditioning.

Sue: British Airways took a big risk when they agreed to be in *Doctor Who*, don't you think? That scarf is blatant product placement and it would be very hard to distance themselves from this if it all went wrong.

If?

Me: What do you think British Airways thought when they saw *Time-Flight* for the first time?

Sue: Someone probably got fired.

A Xeraphin materialises in the middle of what looks like an up-market urinal.

Sue: His suit is very tight. Just saying.

And then Sue begins to lose the will to live.

Sue: This is crap. I've stopped paying attention to it. I just don't care any more. Rub my feet, Neil, because this is torture.

The episode concludes when the Xeraphin are transferred to the centre of the Master's TARDIS. Or in other words: the Master has finally defeated the Doctor.

Sue: Yeah, *right*... For fuck's sake...

The credits roll.

Sue: I was really looking forward to Peter Davison but this series is all over the place. Please tell me it gets better, Neil. I don't think I can stand much more.

Part Four

Sue: Come on, let's get *Shite-Flight* out of the way. Let's get rid of Tegan and move on.

Stapley and Bilton take the TARDIS back to the Doctor with help from Hayter's ghost. The Doctor commends him for piloting the TARDIS with such precision.

Sue: Are you joking? Any idiot can fly it these days. What's the big deal?

And then Sue falls silent for a good five minutes.

Me: You're not saying very much.

Sue: I know. I can't be bothered. What can I possibly say about this? The plot involves a plan where they have to dig a hole for Concorde to sit in while they change its tyres. And then they have to build a runway. It's bollocks. It'll take them months! And even if they did take off, where are

SHITE-FLIGHT

they going to go? Prehistoric New York?

The Doctor does a deal with the Master – he'll give his arch-nemesis his temporal limiter in exchange for the safety of Concorde's passengers.

Sue: Are the passengers still hallucinating? They look like they're hanging around outside a McDonald's at Heathrow airport. They certainly aren't reacting like they've been kidnapped by aliens.

They change the plane's tyres.

Sue: No fucking way! They aren't Concorde tyres! That's the tyre from a Mini Cooper! They are definitely taking the piss, now.

Cue a rant from Sue involving alloys and measurements that means absolutely nothing to me.

Sue: And another thing, where are the stairs, eh? How are they actually getting in and out of that fucking plane? Give me strength!

Tegan is given the job of ushering the passengers back on board.

Sue: (As Tegan) I hope you can all jump because the door is fucking miles away.

Incredibly, Concorde manages to take off, runway or no runway.

Sue: Un-fucking-believable. You can even seen the terminal buildings in the background!

When Concorde is back in the air, Sue is even more damning.

Sue: The plane on the ground had silver engines but the plane in the air has black engines. Oh, why do I even care?

The Doctor programmes the flight computer and the plane enters a time contour.

Sue: It's like that film with the Navy in it. You know, where their boat goes

back in time.

Me: The Philadelphia Experiment?

Sue: Yes, but this is more like *The Philadelphia Light Experiment*.

Back at Heathrow airport, Tegan is thinking about her future. After all, it isn't exactly dull travelling with the Doctor...

Sue: Yes it is! Even the Doctor fell asleep during this episode. Leave while

you still can!

The Doctor traps the Master on the planet Xeraphas.

Sue: That makes no sense at all. None whatsoever.

The Doctor hopes it will be for good this time.

Sue: It never bloody is, though, is it?

Meanwhile, Tegan is still wandering through the airport.

Sue: Doesn't she have a funeral to go to?

The Doctor and Nyssa do a runner before Ron Swanson can launch an official investigation, and in the confusion, Tegan is left behind.

Sue: I feel sorry for her. She deserved a decent goodbye scene at the very least. She looks quite bitter, actually. Be careful what you wish for, chick.

As the credits roll, Sue boos.

SHITE-FLIGHT

The Score

Sue: I'd like to give the captain one.

1/10

Sue: The rest was crap.

COMMENT: "Sue sure likes looking for racist elements. I'm beginning to suspect that she's a loony leftie. Just a hunch, like." – Broton

SEASON TWENTY WHAT KIND OF PLANET HAS A DEATH ZONE?



This illustration funded by Dave Sanders

** ARC OF INFINITY BLOGGED: 2 October 2012

Part One

Sue: Has Johnny Byrne written for *Doctor Who* before?

Me: Yes, he wrote *The Keeper of Traken*.

Sue: Shit... Oh well, I'm still looking forward to seeing this Doctor on his

own for a change. **Me**: What about Nyssa?

Sue: Oh yeah, I forgot about her.

This story begins on Gallifrey and Sue recognises the collars immediately.

Sue: Ooh, a Time Lord...

This particular Time Lord is colluding with a mysterious figure.

Sue: Am I supposed to know who that is?

Me: Sort of.

Sue: Is it the Master? Is he wearing another disguise? Why does he always

go to so much trouble? I don't get it.

Elsewhere, two men are talking about bio-data extracts.

Me: Do you know where we are?

Sue: Yes, we're on Gallifrey. I know we're on Gallifrey because that guy on

the left is dressed in my mam's curtains.

Meanwhile, the Doctor and Nyssa are spending a pleasant Sunday afternoon doing a spot of DIY in the TARDIS.

Sue: He could have given his round thing a good dust before he put it back in again. Has he no pride?

The next thing we know, we're in Holland.

Sue: Hey, it's Amsterdam! I recognise that clock! And that bridge! And I remember the police breaking up a fight over there. Actually, while we're on the subject, don't include any of our Amsterdam stories on the blog. **Me**: Not even the one where you accidentally gave your boss magic

mushrooms at a conference and...

Sue: NO!

Me: Are you impressed that they've gone abroad again?

Sue: Yes. It's great. It opens everything out a bit. I guess this must be their

Paris?

Me: I guess so.

Sue: Will we see the Doctor and Nyssa falling head over heels in love as

they run through the streets of Amsterdam?

I bite my tongue and say nothing. And then we meet Robin and Colin. Colin wants to grab something to eat.

Sue: (As Robin) Fuck that, let's get a huge spliff and a prostitute instead!

Sue isn't impressed with the boys' acting.

Sue: The crew must have found them on the streets when they got there. They were probably wandering around the red-light district in a daze. I refuse to believe the BBC flew these two out to Amsterdam with them. They can't act!

Back on Gallifrey, the mysterious figure is worried his transmissions will be detected by the Time Lords.

Sue: Hey, don't be so negative. Get it? Because he's...

Me: I get it, Sue.

Colin and Robin enter a deserted crypt.

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Sue: This place should be full of hypodermic needles and used condoms. We're supposed to be in Amsterdam.

The boys get ready for bed.

Sue: Are they lovers?

If they are, Colin is playing hard to get.

Robin: Oh, come on! It's only a pump house.

Sue: Is that a euphemism?

Later that night, a TARDIS materialises in the crypt. However, its occupant isn't who Sue was expecting...

Sue: Fuck me, it's the Atomic Rooster!

Meanwhile, the Doctor is attacked by a mini-extradimensional-time-tornado that has invaded his TARDIS.

Sue: Anti-matter, eh? That can't be good. Nicol should have watched this with us. She has some very strong opinions when it comes to anti-matter universes.

Robin searches for Colin but comes face-to-face with Ergon the giant chicken instead. The creature fires a weapon, but Robin manages to escape.

Sue: He just shot a Weeping Angel in the face!

Meanwhile, on Gallifrey...

Sue: The music is dreadful. For the last time, WE ARE NOT IN MEDIEVAL TIMES! Get the bloke who did the music for *Earthshock* back. Fuck *Zelda*!

The High Council convene to discuss the situation. Sue recognises Michael Gough as the man who played Batman's butler, but that's about it. (I didn't bring up The Celestial Toymaker just in case it spoiled her mood.) And then Colin Baker turns up.

Sue: Did they cast him as the Doctor because of his performance in this story?

Me: No, they cast him as the Doctor because of his performance at a wedding.

Sue: That makes sense. You couldn't play the Doctor like this.

Robin has been abandoned in Amsterdam.

Sue: He'd better not be the new companion! I'm serious, Neil. He has a face you want to slap.

Robin returns to the crypt to find his friend working for the giant chicken. He has a vacant, zombified look on his face. And Colin doesn't look that great, either.

Sue: He's having a whitey. Too many space cakes will do that to you. Quick, give him some orange juice!

As the Doctor and Nyssa race through Gallifrey's corridors, I remind Sue that the last time we were here, the Doctor left some companions behind.

Sue: Oh yeah, I remember now. So are they going to bring Leela and K9 back because his current companions are hopeless? No?

Commander Maxil seems to relish his job.

Sue: He isn't very nice, is he?

Me: Colin was known for playing tough guys. He was in *The Brothers*, you

know.

Sue: Was that on BBC? We were an ITV house so we probably didn't

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watch it. I like his performance, though. It's definitely memorable.

The episode concludes with Maxil shooting the Doctor at point-blank range.

Sue: That was a fabulous cliffhanger and a very strong episode. There's quite a lot going on. Hurry up and stick the next one on.

Part Two

Sue: Does Colin ever put his hat on? Or does he have to carry it around

with him the whole time?

Me: If he put the hat on, he wouldn't be able to get through the doors on

the set.

An unconscious Doctor is carried back to his TARDIS.

Sue: Is this Nyssa's bedroom?

Me: Yes, unless the Doctor is a cross-dresser on the quiet.

Sue: So that means Nyssa does have other clothes she could wear!

Me: Do you really want her to run around in that butterfly costume again?

Sue: Anything's preferable to her usual sweat magnet.

When we cut to Schiphol airport, I feel my buttocks clench.

Sue: Wait a minute... Isn't that...?

It's Tegan Jovanka.

Sue: WHAT? Tegan is Colin's cousin? Really?

Me: Yes.

Sue: So that means all her relations have been killed by aliens! Why isn't she being investigated for murder? Fucking hell, I can't believe she's back.

Me: It is a bit of a coincidence.

Sue: Maybe she's stalking the Doctor? Or maybe the Master got to her in the last story and she's been sent to kill the Doctor in this one? Yeah, that

would make sense.

Yes, it would.

Sue: Her hair is so much better. That style really suits her.

Me: What about the boob tube?

Sue: You can't blame her. We all wore boob tubes in the 1980s.

Me: Speak for yourself.

Sue: It's not doing her any favours, but it's John Galliano compared to her

purple outfit.

Tegan and Robin retire to a coffee shop to discuss their next move.

Sue: His eyes are the size of saucers! Of course Tegan won't believe him; she'll think he's tripping his bollocks off. I wouldn't believe a word he says, especially when he gets to the bit about the giant chicken.

Back on Gallifrey, Nyssa and Damon discuss the Doctor's plight.

Sue: Is this scene taking place in a Gallifreyan wine bar? **Me**: It reminds me of an airport departure lounge.

The Doctor retires to Nyssa's bedroom so he can examine the bio-data extract Damon has given him.

Sue: Why are we in Nyssa's bedroom again? Why can't we see the Doctor's bedroom? That's the bedroom I really want to see.

As Damon, Nyssa and the Doctor plan their next move, Maxil barges in on them. This gives Sue a fit of the giggles.

Sue: Rewind that bit. Look at the way Colin Baker comes through that door. He's so arsey! I love him.

As the Doctor is led away, Nyssa and Damon conspire some more.

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Sue: She's going to stay on Gallifrey with him. He's like a love-sick puppy whenever she's around.

The High Council have assembled to oversee the Doctor's execution.

Sue: Colin's got his hat on. Hip, hip, hooray!

Maxil leads the Doctor to his death.

Sue: He can't wait to take over the role, can he?

Nyssa tries to intervene but the Doctor talks her down.

Sue: Nyssa is so much better when she's given something to do. She must be gutted that Tegan is coming back.

The Doctor surrenders to his fate.

Sue: Are they lightly steaming him to death?

The Doctor vanishes

Sue: He isn't dead. He's been taken over by the bad guy. It's obvious.

I tell her the character is credited as The Renegade.

Sue: Is he a Time Lord?

Me: Yes.

Sue: And I've seen him before?

Me: Yes.

Sue: And he isn't the Master?

Me: I'm not saying.
Sue: Is it the Monk?
Me: Wait and see.

Sue: Is it the Black Guardian?

Me: The Black Guardian isn't a Time Lord. **Sue**: Right. Yes. I knew that. Is it Romana?

Me: Okay, that's enough. You'll find out tomorrow.

Sue: The tension is killing me.

Part Three

The Doctor is trapped inside the Matrix and taunted by an enemy he doesn't recognise.

Sue: Well, if the Doctor doesn't know who he is, I don't feel so bad.

It's Peter Davison Sue feels sorry for.

Sue: It must have been an embarrassing afternoon in the studio for him. All that hip thrusting. Backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, backwards and...

Me: Okay, that'll do, Sue. We get the idea.

Tegan and Robin find Colin toiling away in the crypt.

Sue: For God's sake, give him some vitamin C!

Omega dispatches his pet chicken to deal with the situation.

Sue: It's definitely plucked – you can see its ribs. Who came up with this idea? And who decided to light this so brightly? They're insane. And why aren't the cast laughing at it?

The Renegade confers with the Time Lord traitor again.

Sue: What is that thing he keeps waving about? It's really distracting.

Me: I think it might be a pen.

Sue: It could be a key ring, I suppose. Or a tiny orchestra baton. Or maybe he's been whittling some wood in his spare time? It must be important,

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whatever it is.

The villain threatens to kill Tegan if the Doctor doesn't cooperate.

Sue: The Doctor wouldn't fall for that. The chances of him bumping into Tegan again must be a million to one.

Me: But still she comes.

The villain tortures the Doctor's ex-companion. Her cries are unmistakable.

Sue: The Doctor isn't that bothered if you ask me.

We discover that Hedin is the traitor.

Sue: Batman's butler did it! That's a shock. I really wasn't expecting that. He's been really nice up to now.

The President is so appalled by this, he stumbles over his lines.

Sue: I just had a flashback to William Hartnell. I'm not impressed with this guy.

Me: It's Leonard Sachs!

Sue: Well, he might have been a great actor once, but he's very dithery now. It's like watching Bruce Forsyth on *Strictly*. I'm a bag of nerves waiting for him to cock it up.

Hedin persuades Nyssa to drop her weapon.

Sue: It sounds like her gun shattered into a thousand tiny pieces when it hit the floor. That's shoddy Gallifreyan workmanship for you.

Hedin drops a bombshell - the villain is Gallifrey's very first Time Lord.

Sue: I should know this, shouldn't I?

Omega!

Sue: Nope. Sorry, that doesn't ring any bells.

I pause the DVD.

Me: How can you forget Omega? **Sue**: I've never seen him before!

Me: That's because he's wearing a different hat. Wait...

I find a picture of Omega circa 1973.

Me: Does this ring any bells, Sue? You kept mispronouncing his name.

Gary watched it with us. Gel guards (with a hard G)? No?

Sue: Vaguely. I don't remember those kinds of details. I'm not a fan and I haven't got enough room in my brain to store that sort of information. If he'd worn the same hat, I might have stood a chance.

Me: I know. I remember being bitterly disappointed when I saw this aged 13. I wanted him to look exactly like he did on the cover to *The Three Doctors* Target novelisation. It still annoys me to this day.

Sue: You complain about Nyssa never changing her clothes but when a villain does it, you go mental. It's double standards, Neil.

The episode concludes with Omega taking control of the Matrix.

Sue: That was very exciting.

Me: Was it?

Sue: Yes, there's an epic quality to this one. I'm actually following it, too.

What's not to like?

Part Four

When the Doctor tells Nyssa that Tegan is alive and well, Nyssa smiles.

Sue: I'm surprised by that. I thought Nyssa would want to keep the

ARC OF INFINITY

Doctor to herself.

The Doctor traces Tegan to a youth hostel, but he doesn't have enough money to make a phone call.

Sue: He'll have to pimp Nyssa out in a shop window. It should only take her half an hour or so.

As the Doctor and Nyssa continue their investigations, Sue sings the theme tune to Van der Valk.

Sue: This is very interesting, actually. It's a snapshot of what life was like before mobile phones and sat-navs. If they remade this story today, they would have found Tegan 15 minutes ago.

Tegan, Colin and Robin decide to wait in Omega's TARDIS.

Sue: Tegan is such a wimp in this story. After everything she's been through, I expected her to be in the middle of an escape attempt by now.

The Doctor reaches Omega's crypt, but when he disconnects the fusion booster from the wall, the Ergon attacks him.

Sue: Hang on a minute... If the Atomic Rooster kills the Doctor, wouldn't that completely fuck up Omega's plan? He hasn't thought this through.

Nyssa shoots the Ergon in the head.

Sue: Fried chicken!

Omega threatens to kill Tegan if the Doctor interferes with his plans.

Sue: So the choice is basically Tegan or the safety of billions of innocent people? It's not exactly rocket science, is it?

The Doctor drops his gun.

Sue: Idiot.

The Arc of Infinity destroys Omega's TARDIS.

Sue: Did Omega just do an Adric? I'm sure he jumped off his chair before that explosion went off.

Omega removes his helmet and the Doctor stares back at himself in disbelief.

Sue: That would have been a fabulous cliffhanger. What a waste. However, I do like Peter Davison's deep voice; it's very sexy.

Omega wanders into Amsterdam and becomes fascinated by a steam organ.

Sue: If he thinks that's good, just wait until he sees the red-light district. That'll will blow his mind.

Omega bonds with a small boy. No, not like that.

Sue: That's a bit creepy. Actually, I'm not sure who's the creepiest here, Omega or the kid? That boy will grow up to be a serial killer, you mark my words.

As the Doctor, Nyssa and Tegan pursue the renegade Time Lord through the streets of Amsterdam, they hear a woman screaming in the distance.

Sue: False alarm. It's just somebody having a bad LSD trip. It happens all the time in Amsterdam.

Omega begins to fall apart.

Sue: It looks like he's had an accident with a carton of mushy peas.

ARC OF INFINITY

Nyssa spots Omega across the street.

Sue: (As Nyssa) Quick, Doctor! He's run into the History of Sex Museum!

Omega ducks into an alleyway. And when he comes back out again, he's suddenly played by Ian Collier.

Sue: Hey! That isn't Peter Davison! Why did they do that? Did Peter refuse to go all the way?

The chase goes on...

Sue: Those cobbles are so uneven, it's a miracle nobody was hurt.

The pursuit terminates at the end of a pier.

Sue: I'm surprised you didn't drag me to this location the last time we went to Amsterdam. Didn't you want to visit the place where Peter Davison shot Omega?

Me: I was too busy dealing with your boss...

Sue: STOP IT!

Sue feels sorry for Omega. Until he decides to take everybody down with him in a fit of pique.

Sue: Okay, I've gone off him now. Shoot him.

The Doctor obliges and Omega pops his clogs.

Sue: Ooh, he's made of tiny fireworks. That's nice.

The story concludes with Tegan rejoining the TARDIS crew. The look on the Doctor's face says it all, really.

Sue: I think he secretly hates Tegan, you know.

As the credits roll, Sue has a question.

Sue: What happened to Colin and Robin? We didn't get to say goodbye to them.

Me: Don't worry, they'll be back in the next story. Oops, sorry, that was meant to be a surprise.

The Score

Sue: I really enjoyed that. The location was excellent, I could follow most of the plot and I can even forgive the silly chicken. Okay, I *can't* forgive the silly chicken, but it definitely had its moments. Yeah, I've seen worse.

7/10

COMMENT: "Was Colin Baker in *The Brothers*? Fancy." – John Williams



Part One

Sue: Snakedance... Sounds a bit rude to me.

Sue's jaw slackens in disbelief as Nyssa enters the console room dressed in a different outfit.

Sue: Is that the best she could come up with after all this time? She's had ages to think about what she was going to wear, and she still chose *that*? Don't they have mirrors on the TARDIS? That skirt clashes with her top!

Even the Doctor notices that Nyssa looks different somehow.

Sue: (*As the Doctor*) You smell different, too. I can breathe through my nose for the first time in years.

Elsewhere on the TARDIS, Tegan is having a bad dream.

Sue: Why is Tegan sleeping in Nyssa's bedroom? Is there something I should know?

Meanwhile, on the planet Manussa...

Sue: Are we still on Gallifrey?

Me: No.

Sue: Are you sure about that? This looks like another airport departure

lounge to me.

A character named Lon is played by an actor who's so famous, even Sue recognises him.

Sue: Bloody hell, it's Martin Clunes! Is this his first television role?

Me: Yes.

Sue: I always feel a bit queasy when I look at Martin Clunes' face. Good

actor, though.

Me: It's a week's washing-up for the first person who says he's behaving

badly. Okay?

Lon makes a passing reference to the Mara, but it sails over Sue's head. So I rewind the scene.

Sue: The Mara. Oh yes, I remember now. The two-headed snake. **Me**: No! The Mara is the giant pink snake with one head. *Kinda*,

remember? **Sue**: Kinda. **Me**: That'll do.

Lon is reminiscing about the good old days with his mother.

Sue: The costumes are all over the place. There's a bit of Rome over there, a bit of India over here, and a hint of Russia, too. There's no consistency to this at all.

The Doctor suspects that the Mara is still hiding inside Tegan's head, so he hypnotises her. The Mara tells the Doctor to go away.

Sue: That was pretty scary. It's a good job this didn't happen when she was working as a stewardess. (*As Tegan-Mara*) Chicken or beef?

Lon decides to tour Manussa's local market.

Sue: They are really pushing the boat out with this set. It's just a shame we're stuck in a studio.

Me: Maybe it's an indoor shopping centre?

Sue: Maybe.

SNAKEDANCE

The Doctor hooks Tegan up to an anti-dreaming device ("It's basically an iPod with a fucked-up shuffle setting") before leading her to the cave which featured in her dream.

Sue: Surely this can't be doing her any good. What is the Doctor playing at? Shouldn't they be heading in the opposite direction? Isn't this what the Mara wants them to do?

The Doctor enters the cave alone, but Lon, his mother and a tedious academic named Ambril have already beaten them to it.

Sue: He's famous.

Me: That's John Carson. You probably recognise him from all the

Hammer films I've made you watch over the years.

She points excitedly at a Manussan guard.

Sue: And I definitely know that face.

Me: Oh, yes, him. He had a show called In Bed with Medinner, which we

used to watch in the early 1990s. I can't remember his name.

Sue: Bob Mills.

Me: How can you recognise Bob Mills in a non-speaking role, but you can't recognise the Mara or Omega? How does that work, exactly?

And then Sue stops talking for a while.

Me: You're very quiet all of a sudden, Sue. Are you enjoying the story too much to comment on it?

Sue: Not really. I'm struggling to get into it. I have a lot on my mind today – I'm trying to buy some cabinets on *eBay* and I'm worried I'll be outbid.

Tegan finds herself in a fortune teller's tent. The seer who works there is incredibly honest, admitting she basically just makes things up as she goes along.

Sue: She really needs to work on her sales talk if she wants to stay in business. She may as well put up a sign outside that says, 'Hey! I'm shit!'

The episode concludes with a snake skull escaping from an exploding crystal hall.

Sue: That was a bit shit. **Me**: *Are you serious*?

Sue: Yes. Hang on a minute... Bollocks! Outbid by a measly quid!

Part Two

Sue: Did Christopher Bailey write the first Mara story?

Me: Yes.

Sue: But didn't he say in the documentary you made me watch that he had a terrible time and he hated the experience? Why did he come back,

then? Was it the money? I bet it was the money.

Sue has some very strong opinions about Peter Howell's incidental music.

Sue: It sounds like a rehearsal for the Durham Miners' Gala. All I can hear are brass bands tuning up in the background.

When the Doctor warns Ambril to call off the ceremony before it's too late, Ambril takes the piss out of him.

Sue: That's very funny. And believable, too. You wouldn't take the Doctor seriously because he does sound like an excitable child.

At least somebody believes him.

Sue: "Aveline! Aveline!" I used to love *Bread*. He's a good actor, too. The performances are definitely the best thing about this story.

Sadly, the Six Faces of Delusion riddle fails to fox Sue.

SNAKEDANCE

Sue: How is it possible he didn't notice that before? That is ridiculous! Don't they have peer-reviewed research on this planet? Did no one notice the bleeding obvious? Even the guy from *Bread* didn't get it!

Tegan finds herself in a Hall of Mirrors that's run by a showman named Dugdale.

Sue: It's Ridley Scott.

Tegan speaks with the voice of the Mara. "Look at me!" she cries.

Sue: Are you sure it's the Mara? I think she may have been possessed by Jeremy Kyle.

Back at the Federator's residence, Lon tells his mother that he is going to skip dinner so he can wallow in his boredom instead.

Sue: You could always get another earring, pet. Or you could practice with your Duran Duran tribute band if you're that desperate for something to do.

The Doctor investigates some pictograms which confirm his suspicions – the Mara will return.

Sue: If there's one thing Peter Davison does really well, it's excitement. They'll have to scrape him off the ceiling if he doesn't calm down soon.

The Doctor and Nyssa return to the TARDIS so they can concentrate on a blue crystal in order to determine its properties. Unfortunately, there are far too many distractions.

Sue: The background hum in the TARDIS would drive me mad. He should dampen it. Nyssa's outfit probably doesn't help, either. You know, I think I actually prefer her in her original costume, and I never thought I'd ever say that. What she's wearing now was never fashionable. Not even in

the 1980s.

The mark of the Mara can be seen on Lon and Tegan's arms.

Sue: (*Singing*) The union of the snake is on the la-la-la... Sorry, I've forgotten the words.

The episode concludes with Tegan going full-blown Mara.

Sue: You can get filters to remove red-eye, you know. I've got hundreds of

photos where I look like that.

Me: You're not enjoying this very much, are you?

Sue: Not really, no.

Part Three

The Doctor is thrown into jail for being a smart arse.

Sue: Now *this* is what you call a proper cell. It's very cleverly designed, actually – the slanted angle forces the prisoner to outstretch his arms before he can get his hands on the bars. All prison cells should be made like this. The lighting's very nice, too.

Chela tells the Doctor everything he needs to know about the Great Crystal.

Sue: Haven't we seen this before? A big blue crystal with telepathic powers? I'm sure we have.

Me: You're thinking about *Planet of the Spiders*.

Sue: Do the snakes and the spiders gang up on the Doctor? That would be

mental.

We catch a glimpse of Dojjen.

Sue: Is this character trapped inside an oil painting? I don't get it.

SNAKEDANCE

When Lon returns from his rendezvous with Tegan, his mother accuses him of sneaking out to have fun.

Sue: She isn't happy with him. Maybe it's because he's been behaving badly.

Me: You just couldn't resist, could you?

Sue: I've just realised that Martin Clunes' shirt collar is *supposed* to look like that. I thought it was just the way he'd dressed himself in the morning, but it's actually intentional. The costume designer must be taking the piss.

She doesn't have a problem with Martin's trousers, though.

Sue: Martin has a tight little arse, don't you think?

Me: Is this what we've been reduced to? Martin Clunes' arse? I had such

high hopes for this experiment when we started it.

Sue: Poor Martin. He looks like he's just lost his pet falcon.

A potted history of Manussa is presented to us via the medium of Punch and Judy puppeteering.

Sue: The programme is obsessed with showing us scenes of small children staring at naff street entertainment. What's *that* all about? I thought changing light bulbs in every story was a bit weird, but that's nothing compared to this.

The Doctor and Nyssa share a well-designed cell. If only they still had a sonic screwdriver...

Sue: Why hasn't he replaced it yet?

Me: Please stop asking that. Let's just say he doesn't get another sonic

screwdriver for quite some time.

Sue: But why? That's a bit stupid, isn't it?

Lon escorts Ambril to the cave where he met Tegan ("She's really gone

overboard with the fake tan") and a totally fucked-up Dugdale.

Sue: *Doctor Who* does possession far too much, you know, but this is still a pretty good example of it. It's pretty creepy, actually.

Lon threatens to break some priceless artifacts if Ambril doesn't give him access to the Great Crystal.

Sue: But the cups are already broken! Who'll notice the difference?

Tegan's tattoo turns into a real snake. Well, real-ish. However, the episode concludes with a contretemps in a corridor instead.

Sue: Nyssa wouldn't scream like that. That's completely out of character. That's one of the laziest cliffhangers I've ever seen.

Part Four

If the cliffhanger was bad, its resolution is even worse.

Sue: That was pathetic! Why didn't they end the last episode with a close-up of the snake? That would have been so much better.

Speaking of which...

Sue: They should have made Tegan handle a real snake. They should have written that into her contract when they rehired her.

Me: They didn't get rid of her. Tegan was always supposed to come back. Sue: Oh, I thought they tried to get rid of her but she had something incriminating against JN-T. I didn't know it was planned. That just makes her initial departure seem even more stupid. Actually, maybe the Mara was responsible for Tegan getting back with the Doctor because it subconsciously... Oh, who am I kidding? It's rubbish.

When the ceremony to celebrate the Mara's passing finally gets underway,

SNAKEDANCE

Sue is convinced she recognises the MC.

Sue: It's Lionel Blair! **Me**: No, it isn't.

Sue: Yes it is! It's Lionel Blair!

The Doctor, Nyssa and Chela arrive at some ruins in the wilderness.

Sue: And now we are on film all of a sudden. And it looks great. Why didn't they do it all like this? It's still in a studio but it looks so much better.

When the Doctor's crystal hums a little tune, Sue spoils the mood by singing the theme to Close Encounters over it. And then we reach the scene that I've been dreading ever since we began this story...

Sue: I take it all back: Nyssa is no longer the worst dressed person in this story. Fucking hell!

Me: This is the clip they always use on chat shows to embarrass Martin Clunes. It's a shame, really, because he gives a fantastic performance in this. It's nothing to be ashamed of.

Sue: He looks like a massive twat!

Me: He's supposed to look like a massive twat. I think. **Sue**: Fuck off! The costume designer wants sacking!

The Doctor finally meets Dojjen.

Sue: Roger Waters has really let himself go.

The Doctor is bitten by a snake.

Sue: I bet Peter Davison has handled a few snakes in his time. He doesn't need a rubber one to get the job done.

The snake's poison contains hallucinogens.

Sue: He really is tripping this week. They aren't even trying to hide it with scientific mumbo-jumbo, either. The Doctor really is tripping his face off. This is not for kids. I'm not sure who it's for, actually.

Dojjen communicates with the Doctor telepathically.

Sue: This doesn't make any sense to me. It's just like that other Mara story. The scriptwriter has got his head up his arse.

Back in the cave, Lon prepares to complete the ceremony.

Sue: His outfit would look a lot better if the fluffy clouds covered both his nipples.

Sue has nipples on the brain this week.

Sue: They're going to subject him to a nipple temptation? *What*?

Me: Triple temptation, Sue. Triple.

Lon's mother is appalled when she notices her son bears the mark of the Mara.

Sue: (*As Lon's mother*) First the earring, now a tattoo! You are grounded for a month, young man. You have behaved very badly indeed!

May That's true versite' versiting up for very

Me: That's two weeks' washing-up for you.

Sue: It was worth it.

When Lon places the Great Crystal in the mouth of an ornate snake, all hell breaks loose.

Sue: That was the best scene in the whole story. That was very effective. Finally, something happened!

The Mara manifests itself.

SNAKEDANCE

Sue: It's a lot better than last time, I'll give them that.

The Doctor urges everyone to concentrate and find the still point.

Sue: Er, excuse me, what's the still point, exactly? Is there an instructional video for this type of yoga?

The Mara speaks with Tegan's childlike voice in an attempt to distract the Doctor.

Sue: This is very disturbing. In fact, it's even more disturbing than Martin Clunes' knees, and that's saying something.

The Mara is destroyed and Dojjen returns to the wilderness. But not before he allows us one last look at him.

Sue: Yes, okay, we can see you. It's like he's on a catwalk or something. What's he waiting for? A fucking bow?

The Doctor tells Tegan that the Mara has been destroyed.

Sue: That was very touching, but he's wrong, of course. The Mara will be back. The monsters always come back. It's becoming very tedious, actually.

The Score

Sue: That was nothing special. I'll tell you what the problem is – it lacked atmosphere. It was very flat. There were some good performances, and some of the sets were okay, even the direction had its moments, but it lacked excitement and the plot bored me rigid. It's average.

5/10

I shake my head. I can't believe I postponed a colonoscopy for this. This is a

much bigger pain in the arse.

Sue: I mean, why did they bring the Mara back so soon?

Me: It's *Doctor Who*'s 20th anniversary so all the stories this year had to

feature old monsters.

Sue: It might have been more exciting if I'd waited a whole year to see the Mara again, but it wasn't that long ago for me. It just feels like they're recycling ideas. It's lazy. Let's do something different instead. I'm sick of being stuck inside Tegan's head.

I slam my notebook shut.

Sue: The fans are going to hate me, aren't they?

Me: Do you care?

Sue: No.

Me: Would you like to watch any extras?

Sue: No.

Me: The documentary tells you how they recycled the sets from A Song

for Europe.

Sue: I could always give it a four...

Me: But it's Rob Shearman's favourite story!

Sue: Don't tell me. I bet he says it's rubbish on purpose.

COMMENT: "The only thing that sticks in my mind about *Snakedance*, which I haven't seen since broadcast, is that Martin Clunes' character seemed to believe Tegan was offering him sexual favours. And since that sort of thing didn't happen very often in *Doctor Who*, even by subtle implication, that got me moderately excited." – Philippa Sidle

NOTES: It still hurts. Sue's score, I mean, not my bum.

** MAWDRYN UNDEAD

BLOGGED: 9 October 2012

Part One

Two boys are admiring a vintage car that's been parked in the grounds of a school.

Sue: Is this story going to be about upper class toffs? Oh well, that's the BBC for you, I suppose.

Ibbotson tells his friend, Turlough, that the car is a classic.

Sue: Turlough? I know that name. I've heard you mention him before so he must be a companion. But that means we'll have three companions again. Did Adric die in vain?

Turlough takes the car for a joy ride.

Sue: What the fuck has happened to the incidental music? Even the Chuckle Brothers would have had second thoughts about that!

The car crashes and Turlough has an out-of-body experience.

Sue: Meanwhile, on Top of the Pops...

The schoolboy is joined in this electronic limbo land by an imposing figure dressed in black. He claims to be Turlough's guardian.

Sue: Is it the Black Guardian?

Me: Yes.

Sue: Seriously? It's really, really him?

Me: Yes.

Sue: I'd almost given up on him. It's about bloody time. Hang on, what's

he got on his head? That isn't a dead bird, is it? Surely not...

The Black Guardian offers to give Turlough his freedom if he kills the Doctor. Turlough agrees, just as long as he isn't sent back to Earth.

Sue: Eh? What?

Meanwhile, at the scene of the motor accident, a man surveys the damage that's been inflicted to his 1929 roadster.

Sue: It's the Brig! Blimey, it's all go today, isn't it? Hey, what happened to his moustache?

Meanwhile, in the TARDIS, Tegan is still trying to come to terms with Snakedance. I know exactly how she feels.

Sue: Is she still going on about that bloody snake? Get over it, chick!

Tegan wants to know why Dojjen didn't just destroy the Great Crystal in the first place.

Sue: You can't discuss the plot holes now! It's too late for that. You had your chance to explain it DURING THE ACTUAL STORY.

Nyssa enters the console room.

Sue: Yes! She's changed out of the mess she was dressed in last week. That's so much better. It's almost trendy. She's gone overboard with the make-up, though. I think she's subconsciously trying to compete with Tegan. I suppose it depends on whether the Doctor goes for the slutty look or not.

Turlough is recovering from his accident in the school's infirmary when he finds a strange object under his pillow.

MAWDRYN UNDEAD

Sue: I hope they don't expect him to provide a sample in *that*.

The school's matron tells Turlough to rest.

Sue: Does Turlough have learning difficulties?

Me: What makes you say that?

Sue: Well, he's about 25 years old and he's still at school. He must be very

slow.

The Brigadier discusses Turlough's actions with the school's headmaster.

Me: Are you surprised to see the Brig in a school?

Sue: I assumed he was there to give a talk to the boys about serving in the

military. Why?

We learn that Turlough's parents are both dead, and the headmaster deals with a very strange solicitor in London.

Sue: He's so strange, he walks around with a dead bird for a fascinator. **Me**: No, that's a completely different strange man. I think. Actually, now that you mention it, maybe he *is* referring to the Black Guardian.

Sue: I'm confused.

Me: I know. You gave Snakedance five out of 10.

Sue: What kind of name is Turlough? It's a bit daft. And I can't believe we're going to end up with three companions again. Unless they kill Nyssa off. It won't be Tegan they get rid off because they would have done that last week when they had the chance.

Me: Doctor Who doesn't suddenly make a habit of killing off the

companions, you know.

Sue: Doesn't it? Oh, that's a pity.

The TARDIS is forced to materialise on a spaceship that's heading straight for it.

Sue: Is it a hotel in space? I love the Rennie Mackintosh art nouveau feel.

It reminds me of an old Odeon cinema I used to go to when I was a bairn.

Turlough follows the Black Guardian's instructions and arrives at an obelisk near the school.

Sue: Turlough is very odd, but I like the actor who plays him. He's very good. There's something about him.

Suddenly, a spherical object appears out of thin air.

Sue: It's the Sontarans! I can't keep up with this. It's too much to take in.

And then the music kicks up a gear.

Sue: It reminds me of Muse. Prog rock with some electro funk. Do you think Matt Bellamy is a *Doctor Who* fan?

Me: Have you actually heard the song *Uprising*?

Incidentally, Sue and I are both learning to play the guitar at the moment (Sue on lead and me on bass), so if anybody has the tabs for the Mawdryn Undead soundtrack, we'd be really grateful. You can skip Turlough and Ibbotson Take A Ride, though.

Sue: Tegan's not that fussed about Turlough, but I think Nyssa may have the hots for him. She's funny like that.

The episode concludes with Turlough preparing to smash the Doctor's brains in with a boulder.

Sue: Good cliffhanger. It's an interesting introduction for a companion. If I didn't know any better, I'd never have guessed he was one of the good guys.

MAWDRYN UNDEAD

Part Two

Sue: The only problem I have with this story is the naff MTV effect behind the Black Guardian's head. I keep expecting him to introduce a song by Soft Cell.

I take the hint and I switch the DVD to the new CGI effects option. Sacrilege, I know, but sod it.

Sue: That's much better. Thanks.

The Fifth Doctor and the Brigadier are reunited, but the Brig fails to recognise his old friend.

Sue: He's displaying the early signs of Alzheimer's.Me: He hasn't met this incarnation of the Doctor yet.

Sue: Oh yeah. Fair enough, then.

Tegan and Nyssa walk in on a burns victim in the transmat capsule. Nyssa immediately assumes he must be the Doctor.

Sue: He looks nothing like him. That is definitely not Peter Davison's crotch!

Tegan and Nyssa take the injured man back to the TARDIS. Then Tegan proclaims that it's too risky to move him again.

Sue: Too risky? You just dragged him across the floor like a sack of potatoes!

The Brigadier and the Doctor settle down to discuss old times. Sadly, the Brig still doesn't remember any of his adventures with the Doctor.

Sue: I told you he had Alzheimer's.

It turns out that Benton is now selling used cars for a living.

Sue: WHAT? I'm sorry, but WHAT?

The Doctor triggers the Brigadier's memories.

Sue: Ooh, this is nicely done.

We are treated to a sepia toned celebration of the Brigadiers greatest moments. Sue gives the first three clips – Yeti, Cybermen, Troughton – a hearty cheer.

Sue: I'm cheering and I'm not even a fan.

The transition back to the present day is very nicely done, too.

Sue: Lovely.

It turns out the Brigadier is currently working as a maths teacher. I pause the DVD.

Me: The Brigadier wasn't the first choice for this story. They were going to bring a companion back who was already a teacher.

Sue: Ian?

Me: Well done. Anyway, it didn't work out and that's why the Brigadier is suddenly teaching maths.

Sue: Wouldn't it have been better if he taught PE instead?

Me: The other thing this story is famous for is the UNIT dating controversy, because Sarah Jane told us she came from 1980 in *Pyramids of Mars*, which implies that the UNIT stories of the 1970s were set in the future. However, this story clearly states that...

Sue: Oh, not this bollocks again. I couldn't care less. Play the DVD, please.

Tegan arrives in 1977, where she meets a younger version of the Brigadier, complete with moustache.

MAWDRYN UNDEAD

Sue: Oh, this is very clever. It's gone all timey-wimey. Hey, I bet Tegan was the person who gave the Brig his nervous breakdown.

The 1977 version of the Brigadier checks the school register for Turlough's name. There's a Trumper...

Sue: Trumper? *Trumper*? Is that his real name or his nickname? What kind of school is this?

But no Turlough.

Sue: Really? Are you sure he hasn't been studying there for the last 15 years? Maybe he was expelled from several schools before he got there, because he's definitely a mature student.

Back at the infirmary, Turlough ties some bed sheets together.

Sue: Is he going to hang himself? Are things really *that* bad?

In the TARDIS, Tegan decides the wounded person may not be the Doctor after all.

Sue: No shit, Sherlock!

But that raises another question:

Sue: Is it the Master? **Me**: Are you serious?

Sue: He's regenerating, and only Time Lords can regenerate so it could be him. They're throwing everything else at the screen, so why not him?

The creature calls himself Mawdryn.

Sue: Oh, so *he's* Mawdryn! I thought Mawdryn was the name of the school. You know, like Mawdryn College, Oxford.

Reader, this is why I married her.

Sue: So he isn't a Time Lord, he just *wants* to be a Time Lord? Is that it?

Me: Yes.

Sue: Well, he's wearing Tom Baker's coat so that's a good start, I suppose.

The episode concludes with a meaty close-up of Mawdryn.

Sue: His brain is falling out of his head! It's moving and everything! We have to put the next episode on. Go on, Neil, I bet Steven Moffat really likes this one.

Part Three

Tegan isn't convinced that Mawdryn is the Doctor, because the last time he regenerated he turned into a human being.

Sue: Yeah, he certainly didn't end up with a bird's nest on his head. Hey, maybe this is where the Black Guardian's dead bird comes into it.

Mawdryn is the victim of a terrible mutation.

Sue: I just about buy the fact they might think it's the Doctor at first; he is a bit like the Doctor, I suppose. He's basically William Hartnell gone wrong. Or gone wronger, somehow.

The Brigadier is convinced that Mawdryn is the Doctor.

Sue: What? He just told you that he wasn't! Are you deaf? And if you aren't entirely sure, ask him a question about the Yeti or something. Ask him what Benton's first name is. Go on.

The Doctor warns of the dangers of two Brigadiers interacting with each other.

MAWDRYN UNDEAD

Sue: So, you can't touch your other self?

Me: Well, that used to be the case. But then Steven Moffat made *A Christmas Carol* and there's a scene where Michael Gambon gives his younger self a cuddle. When I saw it for the first time, I was convinced the universe would explode.

Sue: I like the idea of the cuddle better. Sod the Blinny-whatsit.

Mawdryn shows us what he's got on under his coat.

Sue: It looks like something Nyssa might wear. It's dreadful.

And they still think Mawdryn is the Doctor.

Sue: They should be asking him more questions. Like: why are you wearing a dress? And: are you always going to be this stroppy? Because if you are, I'd like to go home now, please.

When the Brigadier orders Tegan to remain on the TARDIS, she calls him a chauvinist

Sue: That's rich coming from a person who described herself as a mouth on legs. And the Brig might be a sexist pig, but I still love having him around. He makes me feel safe.

With the threat of the Brigadier touching himself hanging over the story, Sue finally puts two and two together.

Sue: I bet meeting himself is what triggers his nervous breakdown. It's very clever, this. The Moff would be proud.

Turlough ambles down a corridor, begging the Black Guardian to dispense his usual advice and threats.

Sue: Can you imagine Matthew Waterhouse in this scene? This guy is in a completely different league.

Turlough releases Mawdryn's people from a hidey hole in their spaceship.

Sue: Roller skating aliens! Spooky...

And then the Doctor discovers the truth: Mawdryn's people stole technology from Gallifrey in a desperate bid for immortality. Now they long for death, not that the Doctor is sympathetic to their plight – it is the result of their criminal ambition, after all.

Sue: Yeah, like you never stole anything from Gallifrey, you hypocrite.

The only way the Doctor can put these aliens out of their endless misery is if he surrenders his remaining regenerations.

Sue: A moral dilemma for a cliffhanger – you don't get many of them to the pound. I'm loving this so far. Let's finish it off.

Part Four

The Doctor tells Tegan that he can only regenerate 12 times.

Sue: That means he's only got two bodies left after Matt Smith. I hope they don't waste them on shit actors.

Sue can't understand Mawdryn's problem.

Sue: Can't they just chop their heads off? And if that doesn't work, why don't they just fly into the sun?

Even the Black Guardian is worried about two Brigadiers running around the ship. The instability could destroy everything.

Sue: Or they might have a cuddle, which would be nice.

When the Doctor leaves Mawdryn to suffer his fate, the alien makes a veiled

MAWDRYN UNDEAD

threat.

Sue: Ask him what he meant by that! Don't just walk away! Oh, that is very frustrating.

Meanwhile, Turlough is still wandering around the spaceship.

Sue: This is the only ship I've seen where I keep expecting to spot a concierge around the next corner. I like it, though. I'd rather have decor like this than grey steel flats any day.

However, when the Doctor tries to leave the ship, it's Nyssa and Tegan who suffer the consequences as they rapidly age to death.

Sue: That's horrific. Although at least Nyssa's outfit now matches the pallor of her skin.

The Doctor reverses the polarity of the neutron flow, but this results in his companions becoming younger and younger.

Sue: I didn't know Tegan used to be a boy...

When it's Nyssa-as-a-child's turn to speak, I pause the DVD.

Me: I'll do the washing-up for a month if you can tell me the name of the *EastEnders* character she grows up to play.

Sue: Okay, don't tell me. I can do this... I recognise her eyes. It's on the tip of my tongue...

And that's when Nicol walked into the living room.

Nicol: It's Lisa. She shot Phil Mitchell.

Sue: So it is! Ha! You have to do the washing-up for a month, Neil.

Thanks, Nic.

Me: Hey, that's not fair!

The Black Guardian threatens to kill Turlough if he doesn't buck his ideas up.

Sue: Why doesn't he just kill the Doctor himself? Why does he need

Turlough?

Me: He can't be seen to be involved.

Sue: Why not?

Me: He'll get into trouble with the Guardian police... I don't know!

Sue: It's ridiculous.

The Doctor has to make a difficult decision.

Sue: It would be a good way to go, saving your friends like that, but he won't do it. We're only halfway through Peter Davison, or at least that's what you've told me. You could be lying, I suppose.

The Doctor prepares to make the ultimate sacrifice.

Sue: I bet the other Brig walks in and the massive explosion sorts everything out.

She's right, of course.

Sue: So the Doctor survived because Turlough is totally inept. If he'd kept his eye on the Brig, that never would have happened.

On his way back to the TARDIS, Turlough makes a startling discovery: his crystal is suddenly defective.

Sue: Did he just say "crack"?

Me: Cracked.

Sue: Oh, for a moment there, I thought he was going to smoke it.

The Doctor returns the Brigadiers to their respective time zones.

MAWDRYN UNDEAD

Sue: Does he ever come back again?

Me: Wait and see.

Sue: So that's a yes, then.

The story ends with the Doctor welcoming Turlough to the team.

Sue: The TARDIS is very crowded again. I like him, though. He's

interesting.

The Score

Sue: I really enjoyed that. It's nice to see a story where the villain doesn't want to take over the universe for a change, he just wants to die. I enjoyed the time-wimey aspect, too. They don't do enough of that in the old series.

9/10

Sue: I'm taking a mark off because the direction wasn't anything special. But it was still very good.

COMMENT: "As for UNIT dating nowadays, I couldn't give a flying fanboy fart. The Time War screwed it all up anyway. Or the Timewryrm. Or something." – Nick Mays



Part One

Sue: *Terminus*? I hope this story doesn't take place in a bus station.

Sue loathes bus stations. And burnt toast. And pointless arguments concerning UNIT dating. But I digress... Turlough is fiddling with the TARDIS.

Sue: It can't be a good idea to put important electronics in a corridor, can it? What happens if the Doctor jettisons that corridor by accident one day? Shouldn't anything important be stored in the control room? You don't want to be running down a corridor to change a fuse every time something goes tits up, do you?

Tegan and Turlough end up bickering again.

Sue: Oh, just get a room!

Turlough scowls at Tegan behind her back.

Sue: I'm just waiting for the EastEnders drums to kick in.

Tegan leads Turlough to a bedroom. No, not like that. She tells him that it used to belong to Adric.

Sue: (*As Tegan*) He was just some boy who got killed. You should probably clean the sheets before you get into the bed.

Turlough wants to throw Adric's belongings out.

Sue: (As Turlough) But I'll keep these porno mags under the mattress. Just

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in case.

Tegan leaves Turlough to it.

Sue: Why has the TARDIS only got two bedrooms? I thought it was supposed to be huge? Why can't Turlough have his own room? It doesn't make any sense.

The Black Guardian instructs Turlough to remove the space-time element from the TARDIS console (having retrieved it from Longleat first). And then Sue becomes acquainted with Mary Ridge's unmistakable directing style.

Sue: And cut! They left that shot on-screen for *ages*. Did I miss something important or was that sloppy editing?

Turlough's tinkering results in the TARDIS interfacing with another structure, and Nyssa ends up staring at a pixelated wall.

Sue: Oh no, not hypnotism again! **Me**: That's Sarah Sutton acting, love.

The Doctor uses the scanner to monitor Nyssa's predicament.

Sue: So the Doctor can look into Nyssa's bedroom whenever he likes, eh? That's interesting. And a bit sick.

A skull appears on the wall behind Nyssa.

Sue: Have they landed on a pirate ship? Or is this a tattoo parlour?

Back on the TARDIS, Tegan tells Turlough she can hear her friend screaming.

Sue: That didn't sound anything like Nyssa. Unless she's turned into a werewolf...

The Doctor finds Nyssa cowering on the floor. She is very happy to see him.

Sue: That was sweet. Companions should cuddle the Doctor more often.

Me: Even Turlough?

Sue: Is Turlough a companion? Can you be a companion if you want to

kill the Doctor all the time? He's more like a squatter.

Suddenly, a massive explosion takes out half a corridor. And when I say massive, I mean MASSIVE.

Sue: Nice explosion.

Me: I should hope so. It was so big, the bang was heard on the Six O'Clock

News. They were recording it live in the studio next door.

Sue is too distracted by what is emerging from the billowing smoke to care about that.

Sue: Is that Barbarella?

It takes her a while, but she eventually realises Liza Goddard is playing Kari the space pirate.

Sue: I remember her from that comedy. What was it called? *Yes, Dear.*

Something like that.

Me: You're confusing Yes, Honestly with Yus, My Dear. A horrific

combination.

Sue: I remember her on *Give Us A Clue*, too.

Me: She's also Colin Baker's first wife.

Sue: Wow...

Me: And that's all the Goddard facts we have. **Sue**: One last thing. Is that her hair or a hat?

The Doctor identifies the spacecraft as an old passenger liner.

Sue: What kind of passenger liner stencils skulls on the wall? Are you sure

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this isn't a tour bus for a heavy metal band? Maybe these two are roadies.

She's pointing at Kari and her partner Olvir (who, according to Sue, is played by "the member of Duran Duran no one ever remembers"). And then Turlough tries to contact the Black Guardian, but he isn't picking up.

Sue: Is that a crystal in your pocket or are you just pleased to see me? No wonder Tegan has the hots for Turlough – look at the bulge in his trousers!

Tegan attempts to open a locked door, but when she does, she is attacked by grabbing hands that grab all they can.

Sue: She's doing her best to stop that hand from going any lower. This is a very uncomfortable scene to watch.

A crowd of cloaked people shuffle into the corridor, groaning.

Sue: Is it a prison ship? A zombie ship? *What is it*?

Olvir has the answer she seeks. This is Terminus, where the lazars come to die.

Sue: Lezzers? What's he talking about?

Olvir spells it out for her by screaming: WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIHIHEEEEEEEEE!

Sue: Anyone fancy a retake? No? Are we happy with that? Oh, okay...

Part Two

Tegan and Turlough take cover under the flooring.

Sue: If they were real lepers, flakes of skin would be raining down on

them through the grating. Just saying.

The switch from video to film resurrects an old bugbear of Sue's.

Sue: Can't they do something to the video to make it look as if it was all shot on film? Fuck VIDFire, work on something that makes it look *less* like video.

Tegan and Turlough search for a way out.

Sue: (As Turlough) Yeah, you go first, love. No particular reason.

As Turlough is left to stare at Tegan's arse, Kari admits to being a space pirate.

Sue: (*Singing*) I lost my heart to a starship trooper. Something-something-hyperspace...

Tegan finds a ladder.

Sue: (As Turlough) You can go first again. No reason at all.

If that wasn't bad enough, Nyssa is revealing a lot more than usual, too.

Sue: Don't they have bras in outer space?

Me: Nyssa isn't wearing a bra? I hadn't noticed.

Sue: Laura Mulvey would have a field day with Terminus.

Sue isn't very impressed with Dominic Guard's performance as Olvir. Actually, that's an understatement.

Sue: He makes Adric look like Daniel Craig.

The Doctor realises that Terminus is slap bang in the centre of the known universe.

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Sue: Either that or the ship is using Apple Maps.

Meanwhile, Turlough and Tegan are STILL trapped.

Sue: It's a bit like *Alien*, only Turlough is the alien, and he isn't *that* scary. Apart from that, it's very similar.

We meet the Vanir, the slaves who run Terminus.

Sue: Are they infected, too? Because they look like shit. In fact, everyone looks like shit in this episode. Even the ones who aren't supposed to look like shit look like shit. It's shit!

On the bridge of the space liner, the power suddenly goes off. The scene ends with Nyssa kneeling in front of a giant glowing phallus while her breasts threaten to spill out.

Sue: And this was directed by a woman?

A little later, Nyssa decides to remove her skirt.

Sue: I can't believe she's gone from buttoned-up scientist to shameless floozy in two episodes. It makes no sense. Does Lezzer disease...

Me: Lazar.

Sue: Does it make you lose all your inhibitions? **Me**: She took her skirt off because she was hot.

Sue: Well, she's certainly hot now.

Me: Are you sure you haven't come down with a bad case of the Lezzers

as well?

Sue: That was borderline offensive, Neil. Stop it.

When a Vanir named Valgard straddles a stairway, Sue makes appreciative noises.

Me: What's wrong?

Sue: I'm just staring at his sports cup. It's massive. See, now you know how it feels.

Nyssa is transported to the heart of Terminus.

Sue: If I'm not mistaken, that's the Metro Centre car park in Gateshead.

And then we meet the Garm.

Sue: What the hell is that supposed to be? Is it fancy dress night on *Terminus* or what?

The Garm seems amicable enough.

Sue: He has a very cute waddle going on there.

Meanwhile, the Doctor and Kari have reached the centre of the universe...

Sue: It's a teeny-weeny bit underwhelming, don't you think? It looks like some shelving. I'm not sure if that's funny or crap.

Turlough and Tegan are, yes you guessed it, still trapped under the floorboards.

Sue: He bloody loves it. Any excuse to stare at Tegan's bum. You could have escaped hours ago if you really wanted to. Look how easy that bar came off. Trapped, my arse!

The episode concludes with a badly staged fight between Valgard and the Doctor.

Sue: That was very shabby. The direction is all over the place.

TERMINUS

Part Three

Kari rescues the Doctor by deflecting a laser beam into the Valgard's head.

Sue: Why go to that much effort? Why not just walk up behind him and shoot him? It would have been so much easier. Mind you, she'd probably be a great billiards player.

Tegan and Turlough escape from the underfloor grating of doom.

Sue: Halle-fucking-lujah!

Nyssa isn't so lucky – she has been thrown into a Lazar pen, where she is befriended by a fellow Lazar sufferer named Inga. She tells Nyssa that escape from the Vanir is impossible. You can't even bribe them.

Sue: (*As Inga*) I offered them sexual favours once but they turned me down. I can't imagine why.

When the Vanir strut their stuff, Roger Limb ramps the incidental music up to 11.

Sue: The music has to be this loud to cover the sound of their uniforms clattering around. They look great, but they aren't very practical. The sound people must have torn their hair out.

Sue gets a good look at the Vanir's leader, Eirak.

Sue: He's a cross between Dracula and Steve Harley from Cockney Rebel.

The Doctor and Kari encounter a badly disfigured Vanir. Sue is blown away by the horrific make-up.

Bor: My name is Bor. **Sue**: I'm saying nothing.

Peter Benson's Liverpudlian twang makes him sound like the second-best drummer in The Beatles.

Sue: It's Ringo Starr!

Bor tells the Doctor the engines on Terminus are unstable, and how he tried to wall in the radiation, in spite of the danger to himself.

Me: It's quite bleak this, don't you think?

Sue: I'm sorry, you'll have to pause it. I'm laughing too much. Maybe he should ask the Fat Controller to look at his engines. I'm sorry, I'll stop it now.

Ding! Ding! It's the Doctor and Valgard Round Two!

Sue: That wasn't a fight scene. That was bad performance art.

The Garm reappears.

Sue: He's so cute. I just want to tickle him under his chin.

The giant dog approaches Nyssa, who has been chained to a pole.

Sue: What's he going to do? Lick her to death?

As the Garm carries Nyssa into the Forbidden Zone, Sue has some pet care advice for the Vanir.

Sue: That dog needs to go on a diet. And they should take him for walkies a bit more. He's obese.

The Black Guardian chastises Turlough for his continued incompetence.

Sue: Turlough will be on a written warning if he's not careful.

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The Doctor comes to the conclusion that Terminus travelled back in time, dumped some fuel, and accidentally kick-started Event One.

Sue: Let me get this straight: pilot error created the universe? You know, I actually like that idea. It's mental.

The episode concludes with the Doctor underplaying the threat by proclaiming that if he doesn't do something quickly, the whole universe will be destroyed.

Sue: If you don't do something quickly, the audience will fall asleep.

Part Four

Valgard and Olvir duke it out in the engine room.

Sue: This scene is atrocious. The direction is shockingly bad. It looks like a rehearsal.

Valgard recognises Olvir as someone who has been combat trained by Colonel Pereira, the same man who taught him.

Sue: So that's why they fight like sissies? They were both trained by a moron?

Meanwhile, Tegan is trying to stop the space liner from leaving Terminus. She bangs the console with her fist.

Sue: That was a pathetic thump. She must have been worried about punching her way through the set.

And then...

Sue: Oh look, Nyssa is lying half-naked on the floor. I bet you love *Terminus*, Neil.

The Doctor can't stop Terminus from firing its engines, mainly because the technology is too phenomenal.

Sue: And yet it's controlled by a big red lever, instead of a computer, or something high-tech like that. Believable?

Bor resigns himself to his fate.

Bor: In a couple of hours there won't even be a *Terminus* or a Company or anything!

Sue: (As Ringo/Bor) And where will Thomas the Tank Engine go then?

At this point her patience snaps.

Sue: There are too many fucking corridors in this story. Really drab corridors, too. It's relentless.

Nyssa overpowers Olvir by mistake.

Sue: She climbed on top of him *after* she knew it was him. His cloak was supposed to come off later, I think. Why on earth didn't the director ask for a retake?

Nyssa tells Olvir that the cure to Lazars disease would work, if only somebody could be bothered to perfect it.

Sue: Nyssa is going to stay behind at the end. It's obvious. She'll probably end up marrying this joker while she's at it.

The Doctor politely asks the Garm to pull the lever.

Garm: And if I fail?

Sue: (As the Doctor) No more Jumbones. Ever.

The Garm complies.

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Sue: I hope he doesn't break a nail.

Thankfully, the Garm is successful.

Sue: Yay! A dog saved the universe. You don't see that very often.

Me: Dog is god spelt backwards, you know.

Sue: Either this is really deep and clever or... Well, let's just give it the

benefit of the doubt.

And then Nyssa drops the bombshell: she has decided to stay on Terminus.

Sue: She should go back to the TARDIS for a change of clothes, first. She won't last five minutes dressed like that.

Nyssa gives the Doctor a quick peck on the cheek before collapsing into Tegan's arms.

Sue: I'm sort of sad. But I'm also glad at the same time. I bet Peter Davison's wife was pleased as well.

The Score

Sue: Hmm... I liked some of the ideas – I bet it looked great on paper – but the execution was a shambles. The design was bland one minute and unintentionally hilarious the next, the acting was all over the place, and the music was too medieval. But it was the direction that killed *Terminus*. It had "that'll do" stamped all over it. Ringo Starr was brilliant, though.

3/10

COMMENT: "Bor is the spitting image of Alan Hull from Lindisfarne." – Al Drehan

ENLIGHTENMENTBLOGGED: 12 October 2012

Part One

Nicol joins us for the first episode. Let's look in as Sue attempts to bring her daughter up to speed with the Black Guardian trilogy...

Sue: So the Doctor's companions are Tegan – she's Australian – and...

Nicol: I know who Tegan is.

Sue: And an alien called Turlough. He looks like a public schoolboy. It's complicated. Anyway, Turlough is trying to kill the Doctor, but the

Doctor doesn't actually know that yet.

Nicol: How long has this been going on for?

Sue: Eight episodes.

Nicol: And he still doesn't know? He can't be trying very hard.

Sue: No. Anyway, Turlough is employed by the Black Guardian. He's like

the Devil. Don't worry, I'm sure you'll pick it up in no time.

Barbara Clegg's name appears on screen.

Sue: A woman. That makes a change.

Me: She's the first woman to write for *Doctor Who*.

Sue: Really?

Me: Yes, it only took them 20 years.

Sue: I can't believe I didn't notice that before. **Nicol**: I just hope she isn't related to Nick.

The story begins on the TARDIS.

Sue: I love the lighting. It reminds me of a plane when it's flying at night.

They should light the TARDIS like this all the time. **Nicol**: Peter Davison's hair is longer than I expected.

Sue: He should get it cut. Another month and he'll have a mullet.

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Nicol: Why does the Doctor walk around with dead leaves on his coat?

Sue: That's his celery.

Nicol: Okay, so why does he walk around with a stick of celery on his

coat?

Sue: How the hell should I know?

The Doctor is visited by...

Sue: That's the White Guardian, Nicol. He's God in the Doctor Who

universe.

Nicol: Why is there a stuffed bird sitting on his head?

Sue: Ask Neil.

Me: It's a dove. It's a symbol of peace.

Nicol: But it's dead. Did somebody shoot it?

The Doctor makes it abundantly clear he still doesn't trust Turlough.

Nicol: If Turlough is so bad, why does the Doctor hang around with him?

Why doesn't he just kick him off the TARDIS?

Sue: Because he's a half-decent actor.

The Doctor follows the White Guardian's garbled instructions and ends up on what appears to be a sailing ship.

Sue: I like this story already. It's full of atmosphere and it's lit beautifully.

Who directed this? **Me**: Fiona Cumming.

Sue: Another woman? See, this is what happens when you put some

women in charge of the programme for a change. It's great.

Tegan is left to brood in the TARDIS. Unbeknownst to her, a Peeping Tom has popped over for a visit.

Nicol: For a horrible moment there, I thought he was going to be the Hoff.

Sue: Is he a dwarf?

Me: What?

Sue: He must be really small.

Me: Where do you think the TARDIS scanner is situated?

Sue: Where the 'Pull to Open' sign is? Or maybe in the windows.

Me: Really? I'm sure the programme has already established that it's in the light bulb on the top. Hasn't it? I'm not sure... God, I don't know anything

any more. It's all a blur now. I'm turning into you.

Sue: Oh, I guess that would make sense. Let's go with the light bulb idea.

The White Guardian warns Tegan that the winner takes all, which inspires Sue to launch into a spirited rendition of the Abba song while all I can think about is the ITV game show fronted by Jimmy Tarbuck. It's a miracle we've stayed together this long. Anyway, the face on the scanner suddenly slips away.

Sue: He's fallen off his step-ladder.

The Doctor and Turlough enter the ship's forecastle (or fo'c'sle, if you're a nautical pedant).

Sue: (Singing) In the Navy!

Nicol: Sshh, mother.

The Doctor finds a newspaper from 1902; the same year the first British submarine launched.

Sue: This is too big to be submarine. If this turns out to be a submarine, I'll have to knock five marks off The Score.

As Tegan searches for the Doctor so she can deliver the White Guardian's message, she finds a chest with the word 'Striker' stencilled on it.

Me: That must be where the captain keeps his football magazines.

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Meanwhile the Doctor and Turlough are introduced to the ship's crew.

Sue: It's Roy! Pat's husband!

Me: Tony Caunter to his friends. That's 10 points to Sue. More EastEnders

actors to come, Nicol, so you can still catch up.

Nicol: Be quiet, I'm trying to listen to this.

When Tegan encounters the mysterious Mariner, he immediately threatens to put her in irons.

Sue: He's a bit creepy.

Ha! She ain't seen nothing yet!

Sue: The sailor with the mangy beard reminds me of a Jehovah's Witness who used to come round and visit us. Do you remember?

Me: How could I forget? They were banned from coming to ours after a while because we were supposedly a bad influence on them. I hope he's okay and wasn't too upset when the world didn't end.

Nicol is far more interested in Turlough's eyebrows.

Nicol: Why doesn't the Doctor know his companion is an alien? How

many humans do you know with eyebrows like that?

Me: He might know. It's not clear.

Sue: I don't think he knows.

Nicol: So the Fifth Doctor is stupid? Right...

Mariner flirts outrageously with Tegan.

Sue: She could do a lot worse.

And then we meet Keith Baron as Captain Striker.

Sue: Oh, it's him.

Nicol: Who?

Sue: It's on the tip of my tongue.

I'm hoping she'll say Nigel Barton, but of course she doesn't.

Sue: It's the guy from Duty Free.

To be fair, she's far more interested in the episode's wood.

Sue: This story must have had a great carpenter working on it. The panelling is gorgeous, and those chairs are beautiful. It looks fabulous.

Turlough and the Doctor discuss tactics in a corridor.

Nicol: He's alone with the Doctor right now. So why doesn't he just pull out a knife and stab him? What's he waiting for? What kind of assassin is he?

Sue is becoming very suspicious indeed.

Sue: Something's not quite right about this ship. I think they may have been transported into the future, like an Edwardian *Philadelphia Experiment*.

Tegan notices the ship is equipped with wetsuits.

Sue: Maybe we are on a submarine after all. A really big submarine.

The Doctor consults the ship's navigational charts.

Sue: They're stars and planets. They're on a spaceship, aren't they?

Less than 30 seconds later, Sue's theory is proved correct.

Sue: Excellent. That was a great start. I can't wait to see what happens

ENLIGHTENMENT

next. What about you, Nicol?

Nicol: Yeah, it wasn't bad. I can imagine the new series doing something similar, only quicker.

Part Two

With Nicol in bed – one of us has to hold down a proper job – Sue and I continue our journey towards Enlightenment.

Sue: Sailing ships in space. It's the sort of thing Monty Python might do.

Me: I don't think it's meant to be funny.

Sue: It's bonkers.

Tegan retires to her cabin with a bad case of space sickness. Mariner gives her something to drink.

Sue: Don't! I bet it's laced with Rohypnol.

The camera pans across Tegan's cabin.

Sue: Hey, that's the chair from Tegan and Nyssa's bedroom. That's lazy set decoration, that is.

I almost agreed with her, but then I remembered it's a plot point. The room even includes a photograph of Aunt Vanessa.

Sue: Did she ever visit her grave? Or is she still on the run for her murder? We need to know.

The Doctor verbally attacks Striker for using the humans as playthings.

Sue: Peter Davison is excellent in this story. I take it all back, he *can* be angry when he wants to be. It helps that the script is a good one, mind. A woman, you see. Just saying.

Turlough tries to contact the Black Guardian.

Sue: He never answers his phone when you need him.

Later, the Black Guardian decides to terminate his arrangement with Turlough.

Sue: You can't say Turlough wasn't warned. Throttling him will be frowned upon by the HR Guardian, but he did give Turlough several thousand chances before he fired him.

The Doctor warns Tegan that the Eternals can recreate anything they see in her mind.

Sue: God help them if they ever make a bedroom from the contents of your mind, Neil.

Turlough and Tegan decide to sit out the rest of the adventure in the TARDIS.

Sue: The Doctor is really disappointed. His companions have let the Doctor down, they've let the audience down, and they've let themselves down.

Mariner persuades Tegan to slip into something more uncomfortable.

Sue: You don't need to be a mind reader to know what his game is.

When Mariner escorts Tegan to the ship's deck, she is awestruck, apparently.

Sue: Tegan wouldn't be *that* impressed after everything she's seen on her travels with the Doctor. I don't buy it.

And then we reach Sue's favourite moment in Doctor Who so far.

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Sue: (Dreamily) Peter Davison in latex. Nice...

Tegan and Mariner are joined by Turlough and the Doctor.

Sue: This looks brilliant. This is one of those times when the switch from video to film actually works. It makes this feel even more strange. And I'm loving the big, dramatic close-ups, too. The women are doing themselves proud.

She even praises the special effects.

Sue: They're trying their best. The concept should be a non-starter, but it works.

The Black Guardian decides to taunt Turlough for a laugh. So Turlough kills himself.

Sue: Excellent cliffhanger. Let's keep going. I want to know what happens next.

Part Three

Sue: I really like the music in this story. It's even got a choir in it. **Me**: It's by Malcolm Clarke. You've always liked Malcolm Clarke. You're that kind of woman.

Turlough throws himself off the ship again.

Sue: This looks amazing.

A pirate ship called the Buccaneer catches the suicidal companion in a large net.

Sue: That doesn't look so good, but they are trying so hard.

Turlough has been rescued by the lead singer of...

Sue: Boney M.

I pause the DVD.

Me: Close.

Sue: He's definitely a singer.

Me: Well, he's definitely not an actor.

Sue: I can see him on Top of the Pops. What was the name of that song...?

Me: Would you like me to sing it to you?

Sue: No. It's a one-word band. Begins with an I. Illusion. Something like

that.

Me: Imagination. They had a hit with *Just An Illusion*. His name is Leee John and he was a last-minute addition to the cast when another actor had to pull out.

Sue: Did he wander onto the set after he'd recorded a *Top of the Pops* one night, and the production team said, "He'll do. He's even brought his own costume"? Is that what happened?

Speaking of singers...

Sue: She's famous, too. She's been in loads of *Carry On...* films. **Me**: No she hasn't. She's been in one, which barely counts.

Sue: Who is it then?

Me: Think sitcom. Or, if you are feeling really perverse, think EastEnders.

Sue: Oh yeah, it's Christian's mum.

Me: Most people know her as Nurse Gladys Emanuel from Open All

Hours.

Sue: Which one was that again?

Me: You know. N-N-N-N-Nurse G-G-G-Gladys Em...

Sue: Oh, that. I never saw much of that.

Give me strength!

ENLIGHTENMENT

Sue: She's also been in two episodes of *Doctor Who*. Do you remember the Matt Smith episode with the Cybermen in the department store?

Sue: Yes.

Me: Well, she's in that. She also sang the song in *The Gunfighters*. **Sue**: Did she really? Does she sing in this one? A sea shanty, perhaps?

What's her real name?

Me: Lynda Baron. No relation to Keith, by the way.

Leeee John takes the wheel.

Me: Like I said, he's not a real actor.

Meanwhile Mariner is probing Tegan's mind.

Sue: I wouldn't do that if I were you. It's full of snakes.

Tegan isn't that keen, either.

Sue: So, these Eternals – are they like the Guardians?

Me: I think they're one tier down. If the Guardians are gods, the Eternals

are angels.

Sue: He's not very angelic. I bet he's thinking some very dirty thoughts

right now.

Tegan changes for dinner, but the Doctor completely fails to notice.

Sue: Aww, she looks lovely. And look at that cleavage!

I don't respond because I know it's a test. And then the ship navigates its way through an asteroid storm.

Sue: Is the other ship chucking oranges at them?

Leeeee John is still at the wheel.

Sue: (*Singing*) Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ah-ahh.

Me: Like I said: not an actor.

Sue: What is he doing in this scene, exactly? What is he gawping at?

Me: Nothing. He's using his imagination.

Wrack's buffet reception allows the Doctor to replenish his celery.

Sue: How does he make it stick to his coat like that? That's what I'd like to know.

Turlough investigates Wrack's ship and comes across a room that contains an eye-shaped hole in the floor.

Sue: I spy with my little eye, something beginning with 'S'.

When Turlough is locked in the room, he panics and turns to the Black Guardian for help.

Sue: Oh, that is very disappointing. I thought we'd gone beyond that, now. Don't be such a dick, Turlough.

The Black Guardian refuses to help his ex-employee. He prefers to gloat instead.

Sue: That man has a horrible laugh. (*As Turlough*) I suppose a reference is out of the question, then?

Turlough freaks out.

Sue: You couldn't accuse the actor of not going for it. I really like him. He's my favourite male companion since Ian. I hope he comes good in the end. I think he will. Do you think the Doctor knows what's going on with Turlough? Do you think he's setting a test for Turlough, or is he blissfully ignorant?

Me: I honestly have no idea.

ENLIGHTENMENT

The episode concludes with Wrack placing a red gem in Tegan's tiara when she isn't looking.

Sue: It's the kidney bean of death. Couldn't they get their hands on a jewel that sparkled a bit?

Wrack delivers the episode's final line straight down the camera lens:

Sue: Okay, we could have done without that.

I tut.

Me: Women.

Part Four

Mariner continues to woo Tegan.

Sue: Isn't she sick of people poking around in her head by now?

And then I notice Sue humming along to Malcolm Clarke's Edwardian Cocktail Party theme.

Me: If we ever renew our wedding vows, this is the music we should play at our reception.

Sue: Over my dead body. And the same goes for the music.

Mariner is acting like a love-sick puppy.

Sue: So Tegan has copped off with an angel who can make her dreams come true? Like I said earlier, she could do a lot worse.

Leeeeeeeee John, however, is beginning (beginning?!) to get on Sue's wick.

Sue: Is he taking the piss or what?

Me: The way I look at it is this: the Eternals are permanently bored, so if it looks like he's taking the piss, it's probably because he's taking the piss. Does that make any sense?

Sue: Ooh, ooh, ooh, ah-ahh.

At one point, Turlough looks like a rabbit caught in headlights.

Sue: Is it really true they asked the actor to shave his head for this part?

Me: Yes.

Sue: It's a bloody good job he didn't. He would have looked like the man from *The Hills Have Eyes*, which would have been too scary for the kids.

At last, the race's finishing line is in sight.

Sue: A giant chandelier. Okay...

Sue bites her nails as the two remaining ships vie for supremacy. Wrack, with the help of the Black Guardian, prepares to destroy Striker's ship.

The Black Guardian: Focus. Focus. Focus. Focus. Focus. Focus.

Sue: Is the worst DIY company ever.

The Doctor smashes the gem Wrack placed in Tegan's tiara, but that turns out to be a really stupid idea and the Doctor and Tegan have to transfer the shattered fragments into a handkerchief.

Sue: Just pick up the rug and take that! You've left loads of it behind.

The Doctor reaches the upper deck and he tosses the debris over his shoulder into space, where it explodes.

Sue: I expected him to bowl it like a cricket ball. Oh well. And Tegan's cabin must be on fire right now, they left so much of it behind.

The Doctor travels to Wrack's ship in his TARDIS.

ENLIGHTENMENT

Sue: And he manages to land it on a sixpence. If he was William Hartnell, he would have wet himself just then.

Wrack threatens to throw the Doctor into space – with a little help from Turlough.

Sue: He'll never fit through that hole. They'll be lucky to get his leg through it.

Tegan watches helplessly as two figures are ejected into space. And then she mourns her fallen comrades.

Sue: Is she mad? They just disappeared into thin air so they must be Eternals. It's not that hard to work out, chick.

Two Guardians are bickering in the Buccaneer's stateroom...

Sue: It's an interesting argument, but it's very black and white.

When the Doctor and Turlough arrive to claim their prize, the Black Guardian sends Striker and Mariner back to the echoing void for coming second.

Sue: Aww, that was really sweet. And in Tegan's case, probably more effective than a restraining order.

Turlough has a tough decision to make, a huge diamond or the Doctor.

Sue: Yay! I knew he'd come good in the end.

The Doctor realises that Enlightenment wasn't the diamond, Enlightenment was the choice.

Sue: Exactly. I couldn't have put it better myself.

The White Guardian warns us that as long as he exists, the Black Guardian exists.

Sue: He'll be back. I don't think he'll be any real threat, but he'll be back.

The story ends with Turlough requesting a lift back to his home planet.

Sue: The Doctor's thinking to himself, "Oh no, not Earth again".

Me: I'm sure he knows that Turlough is an alien.

Sue: Prove it.

The Score

Sue: That was excellent. The script, the acting (well, apart from you know who, obviously), the direction, the design, the music – everything came together. I loved it. It dragged a bit in Part Three, and the Black Guardian subplot was a bit silly, but if this story teaches us anything, it's this: Hire More Women.

9/10

Me: Would you like to see the special edition of *Enlightenment*?

Sue: Special edition?

Me: Yes. It's got new special effects, a 5.1 surround sound score, and it's in

widescreen. Oh, and there's less Leee John in it. **Sue**: So why didn't we watch that in the first place? **Me**: Because fandom would have lynched me.

Purists should probably look away now...

Sue: I love the 5.1 theme tune. All those extra whooshes are marvelous. And it's in widescreen, too! Yeah, this is brilliant.

We skip to the bit where the cliffhanger to Part One would have been.

ENLIGHTENMENT

Sue: That looks so much better. Not only that, I think it lasts a little longer so we can really take it in.

And then I skip to the bit where the ship almost collides with a planet.

Sue: That was a lot clearer. In the original, I thought they'd actually hit it. This is so much easier to follow. And it looks nice, too. And I love the music. The 5.1 surround sound pulls you into the action. And because the director had a say in this edition, I think it deserves to be taken seriously.

We skip to Turlough being rescued with a CGI net.

Sue: If we'd watched this version instead, I probably would have given *Enlightenment* a 10.

COMMENT: "I do a pub quiz every Tuesday night in the next village to me and Tony Caunter is a regular player. He's not afraid of the liquor *they* serve. And he hasn't given me they key to the storeroom either, dammit." – Paul Greaves

* THE KING'S DEMONS

BLOGGED: 14 October 2012

Part One

Before you ask, yes, Sue knew The King's Demons was only two episodes long. In fact, she could barely contain her excitement.

Sue: I'm especially looking forward to visiting Turlough's home planet so we can get to the bottom of where he comes from, and what he was doing in that bloody school.

The story begins on 13th century Earth.

Sue: Turlough's home planet isn't what I was expecting. They seem to be stuck in the Middle Ages.

Incredibly, Sue doesn't try to compare the opening scene to Game of Thrones. I'm very disappointed.

Sue: At least the incidental music sounds appropriate this week. That's something.

The feast suddenly turns sour when an argument between King John and a nobleman named Ranulf results in a duel between Ranulf's son, Hugh, and a very fiery Frenchman.

Sue: This is Earth, isn't it?

Me: Yes.

Sue: Does that mean they're going to do a proper historical again? You

know, without any silly aliens running around?

Turlough doesn't seem to care that the TARDIS has landed on Earth again. In fact, he never mentions his home planet once.

THE KING'S DEMONS

Sue: So why did he bring it up in the last story? What was the point?

In other news, Tegan has changed into her third costume in as many years.

Sue: Can we turn the contrast down a bit? Her outfit is blinding me.

The Doctor and his companions arrive in the middle of a jousting tournament. King John welcomes them as his demons.

Sue: He's very calm, considering what's just happened. I thought he'd want to burn them at the stake or something.

The Doctor decides to stay for a bit.

Sue: At least the Doctor shut the TARDIS door behind him. He's learning.

The Doctor takes a seat next to the King and we are treated to a thrilling duel between Sir Gilles and Hugh. Hugh is unseated from his horse and Sir Gilles moves in for the kill.

Sue: If this was *Game of Thrones*, he would slice his bollocks off without a second thought.

Finally!

Sue: They must be freezing to death out there. Especially Turlough. I think he's coming down with hypothermia, bless him.

The actor who plays Ranulf eventually rings a bell.

Sue: His voice is *very* familiar.

Me: He is pretty famous.

Sue: It will come to me eventually. His beard doesn't exactly help.

Hugh (who reminds Sue of a young Hywel Bennett) turns against the

Doctor and his friends.

Sue: You ungrateful cunt. He just saved your life!

Me: Do you recognise the actor who's playing Sir Gilles?

Sue: No. He isn't French, though. South African, maybe, but definitely not

French.

And then Sir Gilles appears in a close-up...

Sue: He has a very rubbery face. Hang on, I think it actually is made from rubber. Wait a minute... I know that style of overacting... It's the Master!

Me: Is that a question or a statement? **Sue**: No, it's definitely him. I'm positive!

Sue is on a roll, because a few seconds later she manages to recognise Ranulf, too.

Sue: He used to sell life insurance to the over-50s in the ad-breaks during *Countdown*. I think you got a free pen or a carriage clock when you called him.

Me: Yes, that's exactly what Frank Windsor is best known for. Well done, you.

King John is acting very strangely indeed.

Sue: The king has been hypnotised by the Master. It's so obvious.

Tegan wants to leave. That's twice in two stories, now.

Sue: We haven't even reached the first cliffhanger yet! What kind of companion are you?

Ranulf's cousin, Sir Geoffrey, arrives at the castle on horseback.

Sue: I must say, this looks very nice. Very Robin Hood. Wasn't Robin

THE KING'S DEMONS

Hood a big thing back then?

Me: Robin of Sherwood came out the following year. Were you a fan of

that?

Sue: No, I had a life. **Me**: But it was on ITV.

Sue: Gary probably watched it then.

Four guards are sent to collect an Iron Maiden from the dungeons.

Sue: That's the Master's TARDIS, you know. I could write this rubbish.

Back in the hall, King John entertains his guests with a song.

Sue: Who let Jethro Tull into the building?

I'm a little drunk so I decide to sing along.

Sue: What's this song about?

Me: Killing Muslims.

Sue: It's a nice tune, but he really needs to work on the lyrics.

The Doctor and Sir Gilles get into an argument.

Sue: How can the Doctor fail to recognise his arch-enemy? It's

preposterous! Look at him!

Me: Listen to him!

The Master's accent is getting riper by the second.

Sue: (As Inspector Clouseau) Do you have a license for your minkey?

The Doctor and Sir Gilles have a sword fight.

Me: Of course, this isn't the first time the Doctor and the Master have gone at each other with swords.

Sue: Yes, I remember. That fight was a lot better than this one. Jon Pertwee ate a sandwich in the middle of it, and he didn't give any to Jo. I'll never forgive him for that.

The episode concludes with the Master finally discarding his disguise.

Sue: BORING!

Part Two

The Doctor takes the Master's Tissue Compression Eliminator away from him.

Sue: Shrink the fucker! What are you waiting for?

A tense stand-off ensues.

Sue: If I were Tegan, I'd walk up behind the Master and cut his head off with my sword. And then I'd say, "That was for my auntie!"

The king's men place the Master in the Iron Maiden. However...

Sue: I knew it was his TARDIS. The Master is taking the piss!

The Master's TARDIS materialises in the dungeon where Turlough is being held.

Sue: Turlough's thinking: "How many guys dressed in black has the Doctor pissed off over the years?"

Meanwhile, the Doctor is knighted.

Sue: If that isn't a real king, does it still count?

The Doctor decides to keep the Master's TCE.

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Sue: If you had a device that could shrink things, you wouldn't stick it in your trousers. It might go off in your pants.

Sue isn't engaging with The King's Demons, and she thinks she knows why.

Sue: It looks great – the sets are fantastic – and it's directed very nicely too, but the plot isn't doing anything for me. It's just a tedious runaround in a castle.

However, just when the boredom threatens to overwhelm her, she is introduced to Kamelion.

Sue: Well, I didn't expect *that*. Its design is fabulous. It looks like a glamorous crash test dummy. Fucking hell, it actually moves! I bet that didn't come cheap.

Kamelion can transform himself into any person his user wishes.

Sue: And he's got man boobs!

The Doctor believes that Kamelion has a mind of his own, but the Master is adamant the robot won't turn on him.

Sue: Are you insane? Everybody turns on you!

The Master wants to become the Emperor of Chaos.

Sue: That sounds like a really depressing job title to me. How could you run an empire based on chaos? No one would do what you told them. He hasn't thought this through, you know.

The Doctor forces Kamelion to take on Tegan's appearance and Turlough ushers 'her' into the TARDIS as he brandishes a sword like a maniac.

Sue: I love Turlough. He never does anything by halves.

The Master is furious.

The Master: Mediaeval misfits!

Sue: Stupid scriptwriter!

It doesn't take long for Kamelion is get his feet under the TARDIS console.

Sue: Is Kamelion a companion? **Me**: It certainly looks that way.

Sue: No way! How's that going to work?

Me: Wait and see.

Sue: Actually, they could get a different actor to play him each week.

Tegan isn't very happy with this arrangement.

Sue: Come on, Tegan, just take it back to your room and think *really* hard about Simon Le Bon.

The Doctor has had enough of Tegan's bleating and he threatens to take her home.

Sue: You can't blame the Doctor; she really is a stroppy cow. And if by some miracle he does end up missing her, he could always ask Kamelion to impersonate her. Sorted.

The credits roll.

Sue: So that was the end of Peter Davison's second season?

Me: Yes. Sue: Oh...

The Score

Sue: They rushed that. I think they were desperately trying to pad out the season, and they just threw that together when time was running out. The

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performances were okay, and the sets and locations were very nice, but it didn't go anywhere. Who cares?

4/10

COMMENT: "I am only sorry [your song] is played on the guitar and not upon the lute. It would be heavenly with harmonies from Gary and Nicol and I should be thrilled to hear how Susan would sound with a sackbut behind her. Perhaps dear Neil and a friend could join in and create a truly pentatonic version?" – Auntie Celia

NOTES: Because it seemed like a good idea at the time, Sue sang her final score in the style of a medieval madrigal:

I'm gonna sing my final score
Looked all right but the plot was poor
The Master's plans get on my tits
But the sets looked good so I'll give it a five
You can experience the full horror here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xU4N2hM-tqo.

ATHE FIVE DOCTORS

BLOGGED: 18 October 2012

We watched the original broadcast version of The Five Doctors. Unfortunately, I couldn't source an off-air copy with the Children in Need ticker running across the bottom of the screen. I hope this doesn't invalidate the science at the heart of this experiment.

Nicol: I'm not watching any William Hartnell with you. You can forget it.

Me: Be patient, Nicol.

Sue: Don't worry, Nic. Neil says it's only one episode. We can watch

University Challenge as soon as this has finished.

The Five Doctors begins with a rousing speech.

Sue: Well, that was poignant.

Me: Do you remember where it comes from?

Sue: Of course I do. It's from a William Hartnell story. And it must have been important because they actually gave him a speech. That would have

been risky.

Me: It was when he left Susan on Earth.

Sue: Oh yes. That was so sad, I can almost remember it.

We are then thrown into the modern title sequence.

Nicol: Are there really going to be five Doctors in this?

Me: Well...

Sue: I'm excited!

The Doctor shows his new TARDIS console off to Tegan.

Sue: How many buttons? **Me**: I thought you'd like it.

Sue: It looks like something made by Amstrad. I think I preferred it when

it was a little rough around the edges. It's a bit too swish, now.

At least Tegan looks a lot better.

Sue: That's probably Tegan's best outfit so far, although that's not saying very much.

Turlough is outside, drawing landscapes of the Eye of Orion.

Nicol: What's he still doing there?

Sue: He's one of the good guys now, Nic.

Nicol: Doesn't he want to kill the Doctor any more? Did they ever sit

down and discuss that?

Sue: No, Nicol, they're men. It's all unspoken and beneath the surface

with men.

Nicol: I would have kicked him out. I don't trust him.

Elsewhere, a black-gloved hand is clearly up to no good.

Sue: Is it the Master?

You could have put your mortgage on that.

Nicol: Oh look, it's William Hartnell. In colour!

Sue: No it isn't. It's a stand-in. Oh dear. Why are they doing this?

The First Doctor is kidnapped by a flying triangle.

Nicol: Death by PowerPoint.

And then the black-gloved hand places a figurine of the First Doctor on a brightly lit table top.

Sue: You've got a doll just like that. Yours is better, though. Forbidden Planet didn't have their act together back then.

Nicol: Are they going to play a game of *Doctor Who* Subbuteo on that table?

The Second Doctor arrives at UNIT HQ.

Sue: Blimey, he's aged a bit. Hang on a minute... This isn't possible.

Me: What do you mean?

Sue: That isn't his Brigadier. He's arrived in the wrong order.

Nicol: He's a time traveller, mother! Even I know that.

Sue: But he normally turns up in the right order. This isn't right.

The Fifth Doctor suffers an attack of cosmic angst.

Sue: I can see a little cottage in that valley. It looks lovely. I wonder what the property prices are like on Orion...

More pieces are placed on the board.

Sue: Those things are a bastard to dust, you know.

And then

Sue: It's Jon Pertwee in Betsy! I bet the fans went mental when they saw this!

The Doctor is kidnapped by the malevolent isosceles triangle of doom, and another collectible figurine is placed on the table.

Sue: Where's his car gone? Shouldn't he be sitting in a little model of his car?

Meanwhile, in Croydon...

Sue: Sarah Jane!

Nicol: K9!

Sue: I can't keep up with this. We should be playing *Doctor Who* Bingo. Two more companions and I've got a line. Ooh, I love Sarah Jane's handbag. Don't you, Nicol?

nandbag. Don't you, Nicon

Nicol: Yes, it's very nice. I'm not keen on her coat, though.

Sue: Sarah Jane never had any dress sense.

Sarah decides to leave K9 behind as she heads for the shops.

Sue: If this is a celebration of everything *Doctor Who* is best known for, I'm not surprised K9 has been left behind. Typical!

We drop in on the Fourth Doctor as he's punting on the Cam.

Sue: Tom's very good in this. It looks like he's well up for it, thank God.

The Fourth Doctor and Romana are swallowed by the triangle of doom.

Sue: They'd better make a little model of his boat.

Sarah Jane is kidnapped, too.

Sue: Is this thing going to take all the Doctor's companions? Even Adric? We'll be here all day.

At least Sue is warming to the new TARDIS console.

Sue: You know the thing that goes up and down...

Me: The time rotor.

Sue: Yes. Well, this one is a lot steadier than the last one. I like it. It looks

like it means business.

And that's not all:

Sue: I like the music, too. I like it when they put the *Doctor Who* theme tune in the middle of the incidental music.

Nicol: Oh, mother! What has happened to you?

Before we can catch our breath, we find ourselves on...

Sue: Gallifrey!

President Borusa is now in charge.

Sue: It's whatshisface from Dad's Army.

Me: It isn't John Le Mesurier, but thanks for playing.

The Master (aka "the thin Ricky Gervais") has been summoned to Gallifrey. The High Council want him to rescue the Doctor.

Sue: What an excellent twist. Does this mean it can't be the Master

playing with those toys? Or is this a double-bluff?

Me: It must be somebody else. I wonder who it could be...
Sue: It's the Black Guardian. It's his gloves that give him away.

The First Doctor finds himself in a metallic corridor.

Sue: It's a decent likeness, I suppose. They're just about getting away with

Nicol: His mannerisms aren't right.

Me: And how the hell would you know that, Nicol?

Sue: Oh look, it's Susan! The real one! My, she's grown up... She looks like

Valerie Singleton.

The Doctor and Susan are chased by a Dalek.

Sue: BINGO!

But the Dalek ends up shooting itself. Stupid Dalek.

Sue: The laser beams were rubbish, but this is fantastic.

Nicol: Yeah, it's not bad, actually.

They're referring to the Kaled mutant that's thrashing around in the Dalek casing.

Sue: They must have thrown some money at this. The new series couldn't have done it any better than that.

Nicol: So are there old monsters in this as well as old Doctors and companions?

Me: Yes.

Sue: I hope the Cybermen are in it. And the Yeti. You have to have a Yeti.

The First Doctor and his granddaughter have been transported to the Death Zone on Gallifrey.

Sue: What kind of planet has a Death Zone? That's a bit weird.

The Second Doctor and the Brigadier find themselves in the same location.

Sue: Patrick Troughton's wig reminds me of the very first hair cut I ever gave someone. It was for my friend Tucker. I may as well have stuck a bowl on her head. She didn't forgive me for weeks.

Sarah Jane is also wandering around the Death Zone when she loses her footing in the fog and careers down a gentle slope (and that's being generous). Nicol and Sue are too stunned to say anything, but when the Doctor arrives to rescue Sarah, I can't shut them up.

Sue: He's going to kill her. If he accelerates too quickly, he'll drag her face into that rock. It's a health and safety nightmare.

Nicol: She could walk up that!

Sue: It's ridiculous. Talk about making a mountain out of a molehill. Who

directed this?

Me: Peter Moffatt.

Sue: Oh, for fuck's sake.

Sarah is amazed to see the Third Doctor instead of the Fourth (at least we think it's amazement, it could be disappointment).

Sue: Everything is in the wrong order. I'm sure they shouldn't be allowed to do this.

Nicol: Didn't she just tell him that he would end up looking like Tom

Baker? Is that allowed? **Me**: It's timey-wimey.

The First Doctor and Susan stumble across the Fifth Doctor's TARDIS.

Sue: Why didn't they see the TARDIS five minutes ago? That really is shoddy direction.

Me: It's a celebration of bad peripheral vision in *Doctor Who*.

Sue: Fuck off, Neil.

The First and Fifth Doctors join forces.

Sue: Shouldn't they blow everything up when they touch each other? I'm confused...

The Doctor explains that this only happens in the gravest of emergencies.

Me: And anniversary celebrations.

When the First Doctor sends Tegan away to make some tea, the Fifth Doctor quickly sends Turlough to help her before she knocks his previous self's block off.

Sue: I like that. It shows us how the Doctor has changed over the years. It also reminds me that he used to be a sexist git.

The Master is sent to the Death Zone to rescue the Doctor via an openended transmat beam.

Sue: Why is he suddenly wearing a cloak? Where did he get that from? **Me**: The transmat has a cloaking device.

Meanwhile the TARDIS crew are enjoying some light refreshments.

Sue: It's a bloody cocktail party. They were only supposed to make some tea! They'll be too pissed from drinking piña coladas to do anything constructive now!

Nicol: They should be playing *The Girl from Ipanema* in the background.

Meanwhile the Third Doctor and Sarah are driving down one of the Death Zone's perfectly tarmaced roads.

Sue: Hang on... Where's Tom Baker gone?

Nicol: Something went wrong with his triangle. Pay attention, mother.

Sue: So Tom Baker isn't in this?

I pause the DVD.

Me: He didn't want to do it.

Sue: But I just saw him. Did he walk off in a huff or something? I don't

remember seeing that bit on the river before.

Me: They used a clip from Shada. You know, the story they never finished.

Sue: Oh, that.

Me: In fact, that scene was written by Douglas Adams.

Nicol: I thought it was good.

Sue: So Tom refused to do it, did he? What a bastard.

The Third Doctor and Sarah bump into the Master.

Sue: This is weird. It doesn't feel right. It's making me feel sad.

Laser bolts start raining down from the sky and both Time Lords are forced to make a run for it.

Sue: The Master is running faster than the Doctor is driving!

When we cut back to the Doctor, we see that Bessie has taken a direct hit.

Sue: They killed *Betsy*!

Me: Bessie. Show some respect, love.

Sue: I never really liked that car. It was a toff's car.

Meanwhile the Second Doctor educates the Brigadier about Rassilon, the greatest single figure in Time Lord history.

Me: Rassilon was played by Timothy Dalton when David Tennant was the Doctor. Do you remember that? It happened just before he regenerated.

Sue: Yes. They were the days...

Me: Are there any old monsters you'd like to see in the Death Zone? **Sue**: The Yeti, obviously. Autons would be nice, too. Oh, and some Ice Warriors. Oh, and maybe a giant snake.

When Tegan and Susan spot a phalanx of Cybermen coming over a hill, they make a run for it. Unfortunately, Susan snaps her ankle on some shrubbery.

Sue: How the fuck did she trip over *that*? **Me**: That's Susan's party piece, remember?

Someone on Gallifrey is misusing the Death Zone. Even more than usual, that is.

Sue: It's either the Black Guardian or Colin Baker. I don't think it will be Omega because it's too soon for him to be back. Maybe it's the Toymaker. He is making toys, after all. Or it could be the Monk.

Me: Unless, of course, the Monk and the Master are the same person. Shall we pause the DVD and chat about that possibility for a couple of hours?

Sue: No, I'm fine, thanks.

The Cybermen plan their next move.

Sue: At least the bad weather lends the scene some much-needed atmosphere. However, it's completely accidental – this isn't down to the director at all.

The Doctor escapes to the Capitol, which leaves the Master no choice but to forge an alliance with the Cybermen. What he doesn't know is that the Cybermen plan on killing him as soon as they get what they want.

Sue: The Master has been betrayed and he hasn't even done anything yet! That has to be a new record.

Sue points at the Raston Warrior Robot.

Sue: That's scary. I like that. Is this new? It isn't an Auton, is it?

Me: No, it's a new monster.

Sue: Thought so. I wouldn't have forgotten that in a hurry. Nice arse.

Back at the Capitol, it's revealed that the Castellan is the traitor. As the chancellery guards escort him away, Borusa authorises the use of a mind probe and the Castellan practically shits himself.

Sue: (Laughing) This is supposed to be a pantomime, isn't it?

We hear the Castellan scream off-camera.

Sue: They didn't waste any time, did they? They must have had a mind probe waiting for him in the corridor.

Back in the Death Zone, the Second Doctor and the Brigadier are being menaced by a Yeti.

Sue: HOUSE!

The beast corners them in a cave.

Sue: Just play your recorder at it!

The Cybermen advance on the Third Doctor and Sarah...

Sue: They aren't very nimble, are they? That one almost slipped on some slate

But this is the least of their worries.

Sue: Bloody hell, look at that! This is brilliant!

The Raston Warrior Robot makes short work of the Cybermen.

Sue: I love it. I just wish his poles were a bit shorter. I don't see how he keeps them up his arms like that. There's no room for them.

Me: Maybe he runs over to his cave to get another spear and then he runs back to throw it. Because he's quantum locked, you can't see him when he's running backward and forwards.

Sue: Bullshit.

Nicol threatens to retire for the night.

Me: Stick around, Nic. There's a maths riddle coming up later.

The Third Doctor uses the robot's equipment to lasso a zip-line to one of the Dark Tower's turrets.

Sue: No fucking way! I can buy just about anything in *Doctor Who* but I don't buy that. And why is Sarah Jane so hysterical? She never used to be this bad. Get a grip, woman!

Turlough and Susan are forced to watch as the Cyberman attach a bomb to the TARDIS.

Turlough: Big, isn't it?

Sue: I bet that's what he says to all the girls.

The Master leads the Cybermen to the Dark Tower.

Sue: Did the Master just have a stroke? Either he was having a stroke or he was trying to hold back a fart.

The Master shows the Cybermen how to cross the Electrified Chessboard of Rassilon.

Sue: That wasn't suspicious at all.

The Cybermen follow, only to be sliced to death by laser beams.

Sue: The direction is a joke. It makes no sense!

With the Cybermen disposed of, the Master demonstrates the safe path across the board once again.

Sue: The Doctor can't jump like that! He'll break his hip!

Before he departs, the Master leaves a tantalising clue: it's as easy as pie.

Sue: I think he means Pythagoras.

Nicol: Mother!

The Doctor realises that the Master is actually referring to the Greek letter Pi.

Nicol: 3.141592.

The Doctor manages to recite two digits more than Nicol before skipping crosses the board.

Nicol: I don't get it. He just walked across it! What the...?

Me: Don't worry, Nicol, fans have tried to make sense of that for the last 30 years.

Nicol: Can I go to bed now?

Sue: That scene was a disaster. The director clearly didn't understand what was supposed to be happening, but they went ahead and shot it anyway. The Doctor should have walked on the third square, then the first, then the third

Nicol: Fourth.

Sue: Whatever. It isn't rocket science, you know!

Deep inside the Tower, the Third Doctor encounters some very familiar faces indeed. Well, sort of...

Sue: Mike Yates! Liz! No, wait, that's never Liz. No, hang on... Yes, it is her. At least I think it's her. So where's Benton?

The First Doctor gives Tegan a quick pep talk.

Sue: He should mess his lines up a bit. That would make it seem more authentic. He's too good an actor. Actually, I think I prefer him to William Hartnell. Is that bad?

The Second Doctor comes face to face with his own phantoms.

Sue: Why is Zoe dressed in bubble wrap?

But the Second Doctor sees through the deceit.

Me: Did you spot the continuity error?

Sue: No.

Me: How does the Second Doctor know that Zoe and Jamie's memories have been wiped? That hasn't happened yet, because if it had happened, he would have regenerated by now. So you know what that means, don't you?

Sue: What?

Me: The comments section will be full of people talking about Season 6B

instead of The Five Doctors. It will be torture!

Sue: I don't see how I'm supposed to remember this stuff if the writer can't. I thought they had Ian Levine to deal with this kind of thing? Where

the hell was he when this was going on?

Back in the Capitol, the Doctor is playing the Harp of Rassilon.

Sue: Does he play the *Doctor Who* theme music on it? That would be

funny.

Me: No it bloody wouldn't.

The First Doctor is, appropriately enough, the first incarnation to reach the Tomb of Rassilon.

Sue: Please let him bump into Ian. Please.

When the Doctor is joined by his future selves, his companions huddle together for a quick chat.

Sue: This is what it must be like in the bar at a *Doctor Who* convention.

Meanwhile the Fifth Doctor confronts the story's real villain - Borusa.

Sue: Oh, I didn't expect that.

Me: Are you joking? How many suspects were left?

Sue: I thought it was going to be somebody better than that. We've never

seen this person before.

Me: Yes we have. It's Borusa!

Sue: I don't remember him.

Me: He's regenerated three times.

Sue: No wonder I can't keep track of him.

Me: He was the Doctor's teacher at the Academy.

Sue: Oh yeah... But he was nice, wasn't he?

Me: Yes, hence the massive twist.

Sue: I like the way he wears kinky bad guy gear when he's up to no good.

Borusa wants the secret of immortality.

Sue: I thought Time Lords were already immortal?

Me: No, they can only regenerate 12 times.

Sue: Yes, but they offered the Master 12 more earlier, so that means they

must be able to top-up if they ever run out, doesn't it?

The last truly immortal Time Lord was Rassilon himself.

Sue: So where the hell is he, then? It didn't do him much good, did it? He's got a fucking tomb!

Borusa explains his insane plan to the Doctor.

Sue: His game has some really stupid rules. It's even worse than *Monopoly*. And if he wanted the Doctor to reach the Dark Tower, why did he put so many obstacles in his path?

The Fifth Doctor falls under Borusa's spell.

Sue: You must have hypnotism in a Doctor Who special. It's the law.

Four incarnations of the Doctor will have to join forces to overcome Borusa's will. Sue sighs.

Sue: This is where I miss Tom Baker. It doesn't feel right, him not being there. The band isn't back together. Not really. It's like Pink Floyd without Roger Waters.

The mighty Rassilon appears.

Sue: It's the genie from Aladdin! If he gives them three wishes, one of

these Doctors is going to be very disappointed. **Nicol**: It's not exactly Timothy Dalton, is it?

Me: Are you still awake, Nicol?

Nicol: Barely.

I ask Sue if she notices anything odd about the Tomb of Rassilon.

Sue: Yeah, there's a panel missing. Did the BBC run out of time? That's funny.

Borusa ends up spending the rest of eternity as a Stone Relief of Rassilon.

Sue: What a fabulous comeuppance. I should have seen that coming. So what happens if more Time Lords reach the tomb? Is there room round the back for more?

Rassilon returns the Fourth Doctor to his own time stream.

Sue: Was that from Shada as well?

Me: Yes.

Sue: That means we can never watch it. Because this story wouldn't make

any sense if we did. What a pity.

The crisis averted, the Doctors get down the important business of insulting each other. The Third Doctor even refers to his former self as a scarecrow.

Sue: That's rich coming from Worzel fucking Gummidge!

The Third Doctor introduces Sarah Jane to his fifth incarnation.

Sue: (As Sarah) Can I stay with this one for a bit, please? He's gorgeous.

The TARDIS separates and disappears.

Sue: Nice Quantel overlay slice effect, there.

When the Doctor is given the presidency of Gallifrey, he quickly passes the responsibility to Chancellor Flavia.

Sue: That's funny. We worked for a woman called Flavia for years.

Me: Don't remind me.

In the console room, the Fifth Doctor tells his companions that he's decided to run away from his own people in a rackety old TARDIS. After all, that's how it all started.

Sue: That was the first big close-up in the whole thing. Unbelievable...

The credits roll.

Sue: I like the way they've used the old music. It takes me right back.

Me: Well, it has been a couple of months since you last heard it. You must

be overwhelmed by nostalgia.

Sue: Sshh! Nicol's asleep.

The Score

Sue: That was fun. The plot was a bit silly, and the direction was appalling, but I enjoyed it. As a *Doctor Who* story it left a lot to be desired, but as a celebratory romp, it definitely did the job. It probably helps if you're drunk, though.

7/10

Me: Would you like me to show you the Special Edition? It's got new special effects and a 5.1 soundtrack...

Sue: No. You had your chance. I'm not going to watch anything twice. I don't care how much I enjoyed it, I've got better things to do.

COMMENT: "I love how the comments section is being referenced more and more in the blog itself, like some kind of Bidmeadian recursion." – Kale Sy

NOTES: Watching *The Five Doctors* with Sue and Nicol was one of the happiest moments of my life. No kidding. And of course we watched *Shada* in the end (see Volume 5). And no, it didn't make any sense.

SEASON TWENTY-ONE IT'S TRAGIC, BUT IN A GOOD WAY



This illustration funded by Joe McIntyre

**** WARRIORS OF THE DEEP**

BLOGGED: 24 October 2012

Part One

Sue: Are we underwater this week?

Me: Yes.

Sue: Good. (Singing) Stingray! Stingray... Dudda-der-da-der-da-Stingray!

Me: Okay, settle down.

On a sea base in the year 2084...

Sue: Nice set. It's huge! I like it when they build the set on two levels. There's plenty of movement, too. Yes, it's very nice indeed.

It isn't long before we meet some old friends. Or is it enemies? I can't keep up.

Sue: It's the Ice Warriors!

I sigh.

Sue: I don't know! They definitely look familiar, though. It'll come to me eventually.

Meanwhile, on the TARDIS, the Doctor and Turlough are having a man-toman chat.

Sue: I don't like Peter Davison's hair. It's too short. There's nothing to grab hold of.

The Doctor decides to give Tegan a taste of Earth's future.

Sue: Why bother? She'll only moan about it when she gets there. She's just

like you in that respect, Neil.

At the same time, the Silurians are preparing to defrost their relations.

Sue: Ah, yes, they're Sea Devils. I remember them now.

Me: They are not Sea Devils!

Sue: Then what the fuck are they?

Me: Silurians!

Sue: Okay, calm down. They all blend into each other after a while. Have

their third eyes always lit up like that when they talk?

Me: No, that's new.

Sue: I thought so. Is it so we know who is talking? That's clever.

Tensions are running high on the sea base.

Sue: Who designed their costumes? Was it Michael Jackson?

The base's sync operator is a nervous man named Maddox.

Sue: He reminds me of a young Mark Gatiss.

Me: Are you insane?

Sue: It's his lip. It's uncanny.

A crew mate named Karina discusses Maddox's inability to do his job properly.

Sue: This actress isn't very good. This reminds me of one of those old stories from the '60s where you had lots of incomprehensible foreign accents on a base. I hope the Sea Devils kill her first.

The sea base's medical officer, Solow, seems to be working in cahoots with an officer named Nilson.

Sue: It's Greg!

Me: Yes. What would Greg do?

WARRIORS OF THE DEEP

About five years ago, Sue and I watched every episode of the original 1970s series of Survivors. And we didn't even blog about it. Yes, I know! Anyway, Sue became obsessed with Greg Preston, as played by Ian McCulloch. In fact, Greg was such a hero to Sue for a short while that whenever she was faced a difficult decision, she'd always ask me, "What would Greg do?"

Sue: I can't believe you didn't tell me that Greg was in this. I've missed Greg.

However, when it comes to identifying Solow, she's completely hopeless.

Sue: That's Ingrid Pitt? The Ingrid Pitt? The one with the enormous tits?

Me: Yes.

Sue: Well, she's not doing herself any favours in *that* outfit.

And speaking of outfits...

Sue: Why is Tegan walking around in a beach towel?

Maddox is hooked up to the Sea Base's missile computer.

Sue: He needs this job like a hole in the head.

The Base is placed on Yellow Alert.

Sue: This isn't the time for a quick game of *Asteroids*!

When the simulation comes to an end, Sue makes an important observation:

Sue: Manscara is rife in the future. I can't believe Greg is wearing make-up! That can't be right. No, that's not right at all.

The Silurians continue to plot and scheme, but Sue can't understand a word they're saying.

Scibus: The temperature level inside is below the range of the sensors. **Sue**: Yeah, and your voices are below the range of my hearing. Speak up!

When the TARDIS is shot down by a security satellite, it materialises on the sea base. As the Doctor and his companions explore their new surroundings, they stumble across a chemical store filled with canisters of hexachromite gas, which is lethal to marine and reptile life.

Sue: That gas will come in handy later. It's just a hunch I have.

Maddox is taken to Solow's psycho-surgery unit with a suspected nervous breakdown.

Sue: Isn't a sync operator just a fancy name for a washer-upper? You know, like a hygiene technician is actually a cleaner.

Nilson wants to recondition Maddox so he asks the base's commander, Vorshak, for the programming disc.

Sue: I like the guy who's in charge. He has a very reassuring voice. He reminds me of Jean Luc Picard. I keep expecting him to say, "Make it so!"

Nilson is told to take care of the disc; if it falls into enemy hands, the consequences could be catastrophic.

Sue: What would Greg do? Well, he wouldn't cake his face in girly makeup for a start, that's for sure. Actually, he'd probably take the disc and make some soap out of it.

When Vorshak leaves them to it, Solow and Nilson programme Maddox to follow their commands.

Sue: At least they're making an effort and they aren't just hypnotising him like every other villain does. This actually looks complicated.

WARRIORS OF THE DEEP

Turlough calls for a lift, but his actions trigger the sea base's alarms. The Doctor chides his companion for being so stupid.

Sue: Sarcastic bastard. Why doesn't he brief them on this kind of thing *before* they leave the TARDIS? He should put a quick PowerPoint together on what they should look out for. A little bit of risk assessment never did anybody any harm.

The Doctor creates a diversion by overloading the Sea Base's nuclear reactor. After all, what possible harm could it do?

Sue: What the hell is he doing? That is the stupidest thing I've ever seen the Doctor do! Has he lost his mind?

The Doctor is attacked by a security guard (quite right, too) and he ends up tumbling into a pool of water.

Sue: Ooh, that was good... I'll give him an 8.5 for his technique, but I'll have to knock some marks off for the splash.

Tegan wants to rescue the Doctor, but Turlough stops her.

Sue: *WHAT*? Is Turlough still trying to kill the Doctor? He's only been in the water for a few seconds, and the Doctor can hold his breath for HOURS. Everybody knows that!

The credits roll.

Sue: Stupid cliffhanger. I'm sorry, but I haven't a clue what anybody is up to. But it's not bad, I suppose. The sets are very nice.

Part Two

The Doctor falls into the pool again during the recap.

Sue: I still don't buy this. He fell into some water. *So what?* Is it made from acid or something?

The Doctor, who is perfectly fine, swims to an underwater hatchway.

Sue: That was pretty good. That had a James Bond vibe to it.

Tegan and Turlough decide to return to the TARDIS.

Sue: They don't look that upset given that the Doctor's supposed to be dead. I'm surprised Tegan didn't hang around to see if he regenerated or not. I also think Turlough just wants a time machine for himself. He's very shady.

The Sea Devils begin to stir...

Me: Do you remember the Sea Devils, Sue?

Sue: Yes, I think so.

Me: They used to walk around in string vests. They've gone all leather,

now.

Sue: Well, it's the '80s, isn't it? You can't really blame them.

The Doctor makes it back to dry land.

Sue: This is a classic corridor story, isn't it? They built some really nice corridors and now they're going to use them. Relentlessly.

The Doctor begins to remove his wet clothing as we cut to a scene featuring a Sea Devil.

Sue: Hey! Don't cut there! Go back!

The lead Sea Devil, Sauvix (which Sue mishears as Cervix), reports to the Silurians.

WARRIORS OF THE DEEP

Sue: Oh yes, I remember this lot. They looked a lot better the first time round. Their shoulder pads are too extreme. Even Joan Collins wouldn't be seen wearing that.

A sea base worker named Preston decides to search for the Doctor.

Sue: I like the base's spiral staircase. It reminds me of the American *Big Brother* house. I bet she's just come from the Head of Household room and decided to use the Power of Veto.

If you don't watch the American Big Brother, trust me, that was quite funny. Anyway, Preston and her team walk straight into the TARDIS.

Sue: Oh, for fuck's sake! Lock the fucking doors!

Meanwhile the Doctor arrives on the sea base's bridge.

Sue: That costume does nothing for Peter Davison's arse. Just saying.

A Silurian craft takes off from its hidden base.

Sue: I like their little submarine. It has the face of a dolphin. Actually, the design is rather good in this story. The sea base set is great.

Me: You don't think it's over-lit?

Sue: Not really. You want to see where you are going, don't you? You don't want to trip over anything when you're at work.

Me: Have you been on a Health and Safety course, recently?

Sue: The only thing I don't understand is why so few of the crew are wearing helmets. If any water came in, only the guards would survive.

Nilson and Solow are ready to activate Maddox.

Sue: If you loved me, Neil, you would have told me that it wasn't really Greg, and that he just looked like him. This is ruining everything for me.

The Silurians unleash the dreaded Myrka. Yes, dreaded.

Sue: Why do I know that name? Have we seen the Myrka before?

Me: No.

Sue: Are you sure? I've definitely heard that name before. Are you

absolutely sure we haven't seen a Myrka before?

Me: Well, when we went to see Toby Hadoke's *Moths Ate My Doctor Who Scarf* at Stockton-On-Tees Art Centre in 2008, and we were having a crafty cigarette outside the venue, we ended up talking about the Myrka to a complete nutter for 30 minutes.

Sue: Toby isn't that much of a nutter, is he?

Me: No, this was a different nutter.

And then, after all that build-up, the Myrka finally puts in an appearance.

Sue: Oh dear.

At least there's something to take her mind off it.

Sue: That door is even worse than the monster! Is it made from

marshmallow?

The Myrka breaks through the bulkhead doors.

Sue: I'm surprised it didn't eat its way through.

The credits roll.

Sue: That was terrible.

Me: You know who's to blame, don't you?

Sue: The writer? The special effects department? The producer?

Me: Margaret Thatcher.

Sue: Why? Is the monster supposed to be a metaphor for Thatcher? I don't

get it.

WARRIORS OF THE DEEP

I explain how Thatcher's decision to call a snap election in 1983 forced Warriors of the Deep to be rushed into production, with regrettable consequences.

Sue: Add it to her list of crimes, the bitch.

Part Three

Sue: This hasn't improved any since yesterday.

Me: This story's nickname is *Warriors on the Cheap*.

Sue: I'm not surprised. I don't understand why they need this stupid Myrka thing. They've already got the Silurians and the Sea Devils. How

many monsters do you need?

The Myrka menaces the Doctor and Tegan.

Sue: What's it waiting for, exactly? Is it having a little dance?

The Doctor throws an ammunition magazine at the Myrka and the resultant blast blinds the beast.

Sue: They should have blinded the audience. That would have been more merciful.

Turlough storms the bridge.

Sue: I love Turlough. He always gives it 100 per cent. He's great. I don't care if he turns out to be a bad guy, I just like having him around.

Sadly, the harsh lighting is showing up even more flaws than usual.

Sue: Does Greg have a bald patch? I wish you hadn't shown me this, Neil. I wanted to remember Greg as he was, in his rugged jumper and blue parka, not as a Michael Jackson impersonator with bad hair. I hate you, Neil.

It's fair to say Sue finds it a struggle to say anything positive about Warriors of the Deep.

Sue: At least the music isn't medieval. Will that do?

The Sea Devils enter the base.

Sue: It's just like the opening to *Star Wars*, but with really slow turtles instead of stormtroopers.

The Sea Devils' helmets are a cause for concern, too.

Sue: They look like samurai turtles, which means there was obviously a copyright issue and they couldn't dress them as ninjas.

Nilson and Solow decide to use the Sea Devils as a distraction.

Sue: Greg is just a few short steps away from wearing as much eye make-up as Ingrid Pitt. Actually, that's not entirely fair. Everybody was at it in 1984. I was a hairdresser when this went out and people came into the shop with zig-zag make-up on all the time.

Me: Did anyone ever ask you for a haircut like Ingrid Pitt's?

Sue: Funnily enough, they didn't. And I would have been fired if I'd agreed to try. There isn't enough hairspray in the world. No wonder the ozone layer is fucked.

Ingrid takes on the Myrka single-footed.

Sue: Ingrid Pitt's shit. I've seen episodes of Mystery Theatre Science 2000

(sic) with better special effects than this.

Me: Have you never seen Rentaghost?

Sue: No. Why?

Me: It doesn't matter. Let's not make things worse.

The Sea Devils attack.

WARRIORS OF THE DEEP

Sue: The Sea Devils are using those little fans that menopausal woman carry around with them.

The Myrka attacks the Doctor and Tegan.

Sue: Look at it dragging its fat arse around that corner. It's pathetic. And

why are all the aliens moving at a snail's pace?

Me: You're right, there should have been a quicker way.

Sue: I've just noticed the crew have triangular zip compartments on the back of their suits. How is that pouch useful, exactly? If you tried to put your pen in there, you'd end up breaking your arm. It's ridiculous!

Nilson and the Doctor engage in some fisticuffs, but Nilson gets the upper hand and drags Tegan away at gunpoint.

Sue: Never mess with Greg, even if he is wearing eye shadow.

Tegan pushes Nilson into the dead Myrka.

Sue: He's got green paint on his jacket now.

Me: Are you sure? Maybe it's slime.

Sue: It's fucking paint! Look!

The Doctor disorientates Nilson with a blast of ultraviolet light. Nilson wanders blindly into some Sea Devils, and they shoot him.

Sue: Why are they shooting at Greg? He works for them, doesn't he? **Me**: Haven't you been paying attention? He doesn't work for the aliens, he

works for the other side! **Sue**: What other side?

Me: I don't know! China, maybe?

Sue: China! What the hell are you talking about?

Me: It's not specified in the script. It's described as another power bloc. It would have been the Russians in 1984, but it could be the Taliban in 2084

for all I know.

Sue: The Taliban wouldn't let you wear eye shadow like that.

Me: Anyway, it doesn't matter now. Greg's dead.

Sue: WHAT? So he didn't make it to the final episode?

Me: No.

Sue: The lucky bastard.

Part Four

As the Doctor is about to be shot by a Sea Devil, he wonders if they've met before.

Sue: I don't want to appear racist, but how can he possibly tell? They all look the same to me.

Turlough has been locked in a bedroom.

Sue: I've just noticed the crew beds are covered in bubble wrap. How do they get any sleep? They must be popping all night.

As the Silurians and Sea Devils gain control of the bridge, Sue notices the Sea Devil with the lopsided head. Of course she bloody does.

Sue: Is that Sea Devil in the background having a nap? It must be tiring work, I suppose, killing humans.

Tegan wants to rescue the Doctor but Turlough would rather save his own skin.

Sue: I really like Turlough. He's got hidden depths to him. There's still a lot to learn about this character. He's fascinating, if you ask me. And he's played by a great actor, too, which definitely helps. I don't know why he didn't keep it up.

The Silurians hope to trigger a nuclear war between two human power blocs.

WARRIORS OF THE DEEP

Sue: Isn't that what Greg wanted to do? They should have joined forces. They could have saved themselves a lot of time and effort.

The Doctor begs the Silurian leader to reconsider.

Sue: I wish the Doctor would change out of his plastic sack. Are his proper clothes drying somewhere in the base? I hope his jumper hasn't shrunk.

A Sea Devil accidentally kills itself when it ruptures a canister of hexachromite gas.

Sue: The direction is appalling. Everything is flat. It feels very old-fashioned and claustrophobic. I want to see a big battle outside, in the sea. But that's not going to happen, is it?

The Doctor is faced with a moral dilemma.

Sue: Just kill them. There's only a handful of them left, and there are billions of people on Earth. It's hardly a dilemma, is it?

Ichtar proclaims that everything will be over soon.

Me: Thank God for that.

Sue: Actually, I'm enjoying the last episode. The concept isn't that bad. I just wish it had some atmosphere.

When the missile run commences, the base's lighting is suddenly subdued.

Sue: This is how they should have lit this story from the very beginning. It's a million times better already. You can hardly see a thing.

Vorshak refuses to be held responsible for the destruction of his own people.

Sue: He's not a great actor, is he? He should sound more desperate than

that. He sounds like he's reciting his shopping list. And you'd expect him to put up more of a fight, surely? He had his hand out ready to do the deed long before the Sea Devil forced him into it. That was lazy direction and bad acting. A fatal combination.

Tegan revives a Silurian, but as soon as her back is turned, he tries to murder her.

Sue: There you go, kids. Remember never help your enemy – they'll just shoot you in the back.

The Doctor tries to stop the launch.

Sue: I need something visual in order to follow this. It's not enough for me to just stare into Peter Davison's dreamy eyes... Actually, forget I said anything.

The Doctor stops the missiles in the nick of time, although it clearly took a great deal of effort.

Sue: Finally, some decent eye make-up.

Unfortunately, all the supporting cast are dead. There should have been another way.

Sue: The Doctor is genuinely upset. I think he might have a little cry. Bless him

Me: I have a confession to make.

Sue: Don't tell me there's a special edition with a CGI Myrka.

Me: No. I stopped watching Doctor Who after Warriors of the Deep Part

Three.
Sue: What?

Me: For four years.

Sue: You'd have been, what, 14? It's understandable, I suppose. Hormones.

Girls...

WARRIORS OF THE DEEP

Me: The Myrka.

Sue: You should have stayed for Part Four. You never know, you might

have changed your mind.

The Score

Sue: The two episodes in the middle were dreadful, but it pulled itself together for the last episode. I thought some of the concepts were pretty good, but there were far too many monsters, not enough variety in the locations, and the direction was poor. Peter Davison was very, very good, though. Even if he did look like a sack of potatoes.

4/10

COMMENT: "(The Myrka) looks good in Big Finish's *Bloodtide*. Where it just roars and is in audio." – Marty

NOTES: When I'm on my death bed, and I look back at my life, I suspect the fact that Faber & Faber released a book where I described the Myrka as a "floppy green waddlefuck" will definitely be a highlight.



Part One

Sue: I like this story already. We're outside and we're on Earth. That's just the way I like it.

Sue immediately recognises the actress playing Jane Hampden.

Sue: Oh, it's Polly whatsherface from *The Liver Birds*. We have the complete set, now.

Jane watches as a group of men in Civil War armour ride by on horseback.

Sue: Has she fallen through a hole in time? She seems to be handling it rather well if she has. Either that or the costume department have completely fucked up and she's supposed to be from the past.

Jane admonishes Sir George Hutchinson for his Cavalier attitude.

Me: Do you recognise him? **Sue**: Yes. It's Jason King.

Me: Jason King in *Doctor Who*? Don't be daft. I'm not surprised you don't recognise him with that wig on, though. It's Denis Lill. He was in *Survivors*. He was the one who wasn't Greg. He was also in *Image of the Fendahl*, but he didn't have a lot of hair in that.

Sue: Is *Doctor Who* where all the old *Survivors* come to die?

She also recognises Glyn Houston. Well, sort of.

Sue: He's dead famous, too. He's been in loads of things. Including *Doctor Who*, I think. This story has a good guest cast.

THE AWAKENING

Meanwhile, in the space-time vortex, the Doctor and Turlough are fiddling with the TARDIS.

Me: Have you noticed something missing from the TARDIS recently?

Sue: Erm... A hatstand?

Me: No, the hatstand is over there in the corner.

Sue: A nice *chaise longue*?

Me: No, it's much more important than a chair. Come on, what's missing

from this scene?

Sue: I have absolutely no idea.

Tegan has somehow convinced the Doctor to take her to see her grandfather.

Sue: Don't tell me: Tegan's grandfather also gets killed by aliens? Tegan's family is cursed. I'd give her relations a wide berth, if I were her. And why would she use a machine that can travel through time and space to visit someone she could have seen by taking a bus or a train in her own time? It's a waste of the Doctor's resources.

The Doctor and his companions explore a disused church.

Sue: I bet the altar is the Monk's TARDIS. I'm right, aren't I? **Me**: Wait and see.

Tegan learns that her grandfather has gone missing ("Now there's a surprise!"), which prompts her to run away. Alone and out of breath, she holds her handbag up to her face for comfort.

Sue: Eh? What is she doing? Does she like the smell of leather when she's stressed out?

Sir George tells the Doctor that he must take part in the village's war games.

Sue: It's all gone a bit *Wicker Man*, now.

Meanwhile Tegan is confronted by a ghostly apparition.

Sue: Is the topless guy Tegan's grandfather? I can see why she was in a hurry to visit him, now. He can't have long left.

The Doctor chases a disfigured man through the village.

Sue: How did he get that far away so fast? Is the director on crack?

When the Doctor follows this man into a church, he is attacked by psychic forces.

Sue: Either this place is haunted or they have a really powerful stereo system. Which means it's definitely the Monk.

A young man breaks through a stone wall. His name is Will Chandler.

Sue: Is he the new Adric? Does Tegan stay behind at the end of this story, and does the Doctor travel with two boys? That would be... different.

And then Sue has a brainwave.

Sue: I bet this boy is Tegan's Great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, and if he dies, she won't exist. Am I close?

It turns out that Jane would have been the Queen of May if Tegan hadn't turned up out of the blue like that.

Sue: So there's only one woman in the whole village? How does that work, exactly?

The Doctor takes Will to a graveyard so he can prove to the boy that he's traveled forward in time.

Sue: Forget the bloody gravestones, show him that massive electricity

THE AWAKENING

pylon in the background!

Willow makes Tegan put on a special dress.

Sue: That's Tegan's best outfit yet. She ought to keep that one.

Meanwhile the crack in the church wall opens even wider.

Sue: Ooh, I got a little shock, then.

We spy a large green eye before the screen is filled with dark, thick smoke, which the Doctor then proceeds to walk towards.

Sue: I can tell you one thing – this monster is rubbish. If it was any good, the cliffhanger wouldn't have ended with the back of Peter Davison's head.

The credits roll.

Sue: It's atmospheric, which is nice, but this plot isn't doing anything for me at all.

Part Two

Sue isn't impressed with the Malus.

Sue: It looks like something you'd see on a ghost train at a fun fair.

And when Doctor and Will are confronted by a ghostly Cavalier...

Sue: Now it's turned into *The Pirates of the Caribbean* ride at Disney World.

Turlough is apprehended by a soldier on the village green.

Sue: This is getting a bit out of hand for a role-play game.

Me: I wonder what their safety word is...

Sir George admires the new-look Tegan.

Sue: He's taking this game a bit too seriously, if you ask me. Can you imagine what he'd be like if he ever saw *World of Warcraft*? He'd never leave the house!

Turlough is locked up with Tegan's grandfather.

Sue: That's a nice doer-upper. In fact, this whole village is lovely. Apart from all the weirdoes, of course.

Wolsey has a change of heart and he arrives at the village green with a fake Tegan made from straw.

Sue: Here's a much better idea: just don't turn up at all!

The Doctor isn't very happy when he returns to the TARDIS and discovers Tegan didn't close the doors properly.

Sue: Don't get me started on that!

Me: Are you sure there's nothing missing from the TARDIS?

Sue: I don't know. Is it his little porch? Has that gone?

Me: No.

Sue: I don't know. What is it? I bet it's some stupid detail on the TARDIS

console that only a fan would notice.

Me: Forget it. It doesn't matter.

A tiny Malus is growing on the TARDIS wall.

Sue: Just knock it down with a broom.

The Doctor defeats the Malus by pressing some buttons on the console.

THE AWAKENING

Sue: What is it with *Doctor Who* and vomiting monsters? It's a really gruesome trend.

Me: It could have been worse – it could have come out the other end.

Sir George is possessed by the Malus, but Will manages to overpower him and kill him.

Sue: He tripped over a fairground attraction. I'm pretty sure he could have survived that.

The Malus isn't very happy.

Sue: So what? What's he going to do about it? He just sits behind a wall and moans a lot. He's not exactly in the same league as the Weeping Angels, is he?

Everybody races back to the TARDIS.

Sue: The villagers are taking the interior of the TARDIS in their stride. That place must be really fucked up if this is normal for them.

Tegan is finally reunited with her grandfather.

Sue: Will he ask her if she was responsible for his daughter's death, do you think?

The episode concludes with a long-winded conversation concerning tea.

Sue: There are only two episodes and yet they still had to pad it out. That is unforgivable. And how many fucking companions has the Doctor got now?

Me: I don't know. You tell me.

The Score

Sue: That was rushed. I liked the locations, the acting, and the sets, but the plot wasn't good enough. It was hard to give a shit about any of the characters. And I can't believe I'm saying this, but I think it would have worked better as a four-parter. The direction wasn't great, either.

3/10

COMMENT: "I wonder if Solon was actually the War Lord and only learned about Morbius from the War Chief...?" – Solar Penguin

NOTES: This was the point in the blog where moderating the comments became a full-time job, mainly because practically every single one of them was wildly off-topic. Or as John Williams so eloquently put it at the time: "Why don't you all just stop hijacking the comments of every blog entry with this boring and pointless load of horseshit? Either shut up about it or fuck off somewhere else and talk about it there." Happy days! Oh, and it's Kamelion who's missing from the TARDIS. Obviously.



Part One

Frontios begins in a mine.

Sue: Ooh, mining. We haven't had a mining story in ages.

A man is examining some ore samples when the ground suddenly gives way beneath him.

Sue: Are we supposed to see his finger wiggling about under the soil, or is that a mistake?

Chief Orderly Brazen calls for his men to evacuate the mine before it collapses.

Sue: He's famous. I don't know what I've seen him in, though.

Me: Did you ever watch The Onedin Line?

Sue: No, we would have been watching whatever was on ITV at the same time. Whoever he is, he's a terrible actor. If they're mining for ham, they've definitely hit the mother lode.

Meanwhile, on the TARDIS...

Sue: Why is Turlough urinating against a wall?

The Doctor is spring cleaning.

Me: Have you spotted what's missing yet?

Sue: Oh for fuck's sake, not this again. No, I haven't got a fucking clue, Neil. Is there something missing from the thing that goes up and down?

Me: It doesn't matter. Forget I said anything.

Before Sue can argue, the TARDIS encounters a Boundary Error. In other words, it's drifted too far into the future.

Sue: How far is too far, exactly? Is this the end of time? That sounds exciting.

Turlough can't wait to tell Tegan that colonists from planet Earth took refuge in the Veruna System to avoid imminent collision with the sun.

Sue: Do you think Tegan and Turlough ever got it together between episodes?

Me: They did in my fan fiction. I had a story published in a Big Finish book once, where I somehow managed to concoct a scene where Turlough bought Tegan some lingerie.

Sue: Of course you did, dear.

Incredibly, Tegan's new outfit doesn't raise so much as an eyebrow.

Sue: Tegan looks like she's dressed for a night out in an '80s disco. I used to have a leather skirt like that.

Me: Fuck off!

Sue: I did. Mine came with a stainless-steel chain across the waist. It was very trendy. Completely impractical for hostile alien environments, but I never had to deal with that. Unless you count Gateshead, of course.

Brazen tells the chief scientist and medical officer, Mr Range, that he intends to shut down the colony's research room.

Sue: There's no ambient sound. That's odd. I'd expect some background hum at the very least.

Me: There's a good reason for that. **Sue**: Have they crashed on the planet?

Me: Yes.

Sue: So this is a bit like *Lost*? **Me**: It's exactly like *Lost*.

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Sue: The location is pretty bleak, but it's not bad considering they're stuck in a studio. I'm not convinced about the pan pipe music, though. Unless Enya is a member of the ship's crew.

The colony is led by a young Plantagenet.

Sue: He's not very good, either. He thinks he's doing Shakespeare in the park. The sets are incredible, though. They're trying really hard with the meagre resources they've got, I'll give them that.

I tell her how the original designer assigned to this story suffered a nervous breakdown and another designer had to step in at the last moment.

Sue: Why did the other designer have a nervous breakdown? Did they see the programme's budget?

The Doctor and Plantagenet meet each other for the first time.

Sue: Wow. Peter Davison was really passionate in that scene. That's exactly what we need – more passion. He's very comfortable in the role, now. It's taken him long enough, mind.

Tegan and Turlough set off to find some battery acid.

Sue: Could Tegan have chosen a less appropriate costume for this story? She looks like she's touting for business.

Me: Well, you should know. You used to wear a skirt like hers.

I get two cushions in the face for that.

Tegan and Turlough are joined by Range's daughter, Norna, but Sue doesn't recognise Lesley Dunlop, and claims never to have seen the sitcom May to December. "That's a shame," I say, "the show's premise is a bit like our own relationship." I get another cushion in the face. Sue has now run out of cushions, thankfully.

Sue: She's got Nik Kershaw hair.

The trio make it to the top of the crashed colony ship.

Sue: Why didn't they key out the white background? Did they forget to do it? They could have chromakeyed some clouds in at the very least.

Frontios is suddenly bombarded by asteroids and then, completely out of the blue... the TARDIS has been destroyed.

Sue: Well, there's definitely something missing now.

The credits roll.

Sue: I really enjoyed that. Some of the acting was a bit ropey, but the sets are brilliant and the plot is quite interesting. Stick the next one on.

Part Two

Me: Do you believe that the TARDIS has been destroyed, leaving only a hatstand behind?

Sue: No, and I don't think the Doctor believes it, either. He's taking it on the chin so I'm not really worried about it.

Turlough brandishes the TARDIS hatstand like a weapon.

Sue: That's funny *and* clever. I'm not sure I like the Doctor condoning threatening behaviour, though, even if it is a joke.

Turlough turns the hatstand towards Plantagenet and the leader collapses to the floor in agony.

Sue: See, it's backfired. Now they'll think Turlough killed their leader! This always happens!

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The Doctor treats Plantagenet's wound.

Sue: The Doctor spends most of his time being a proper doctor in this story. I like it.

The Doctor admits he saved Plantagenet's life with a home-made defibrillator, just as long as nobody tells the Time Lords.

Sue: Eh? He usually saves whole planets, why would they care about this? He hasn't broken the laws of time, has he? I'm confused.

Brazen believes Mr Range is responsible for spreading rumours about unexplained deaths in the colony.

Sue: Dear, oh dear. He's terrible. I'm glad I never saw *The Onedin Line*, now.

When no one is looking, Plantagenet is sucked into the ground.

Sue: Great idea. Shit special effect.

The Doctor decides to investigate the mine. He asks Mr Range to remain topside because these sorts of adventures depend on a well-manned home base.

Sue: That reminds me, I need to buy some new drill bits.

Turlough and Norna explore the interior of Frontios, where living creatures are hidden in the walls.

Sue: Ooh, that gave me a shock!

Me: Seriously?

Sue: Yes, what are they? Giant slugs?

Me: Giant slugs in *Doctor Who*? Don't be ridiculous.

Turlough has a nervous breakdown.

Sue: He's such a brilliant actor. Look at him go! He always gives it everything he's got.

The Doctor is captured by the Tractators.

Sue: They're not slugs, they're witchetty grubs. I hate insects like this.

They give me the creeps.

Me: The Tractators are based on woodlice. Like many boys my age, I've

tortured a few woodlice in my time.

Sue: Neil!

Me: Don't worry, I grew out of it. I moved into conducting post-mortems

on dead sticklebacks instead.

Sue: I worry about you sometimes.

The credits roll.

Sue: I'm really enjoying this. The Tractator things are *very* creepy. Yeah, this isn't bad at all.

Part Three

Me: This is our 600th episode!

Sue: We should probably have a dance. We haven't danced in ages.

Me: Did you ever think we'd reach 600 episodes?

Sue: I did. I'm not sure you did, though.

Turlough is still freaking out.

Sue: I don't know why he's in shock. He's seen a lot worse than this, hasn't he? I thought he must have seen his new girlfriend get killed, the way he's going on about it. Great performance, though.

The Doctor and Norna are held prisoner by the Tractators until Tegan

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manages to rescue them. The Tractators panic and run/shuffle off.

Sue: Oh dear. That looked ridiculous. I'm not scared of them any more. They look like they're disco dancing. What a shame.

Then the Doctor bowls them over.

Sue: This was a bleak and grim drama a minute ago, and now it's a stupid comedy knockabout. That was shit!

The Doctor makes a run for it but doesn't get very far.

Sue: What the hell is that?

Me: A tractor beam. Hence the name Tractators, I think. **Sue**: I could do without the pink Ready Brek effect.

Turlough dredges up an old race memory.

Sue: He's actually frothing at the mouth. I just keep thinking about Adric doing this scene. And that's even scarier.

Brazen argues with a man named Cockerill about the lack of public order on Frontios.

Sue: Oh great, two terrible actors are going at each other now. It's a shame because the ideas in the script are really good, it's just the performances that let it down.

Cockerill is thrown out of the colony for looting and is immediately attacked by a gang of retrogrades.

Sue: It's the colony's version of The Village People.

Meanwhile, Plantagenet is being held prisoner under Frontios.

Sue: They've put him in his own hamster ball.

The Doctor honestly believes he's seen the last of his TARDIS.

Sue: It's just been pulled underground, you berk! It's obvious!

The Tractators' leader, the Gravis, gloats about his plans for Frontios.

Sue: Oh no, they talk. They don't frighten me any more. They're just another generic *Doctor Who* monster I can barely understand.

Turlough wants to return to the Tractators' lair; Norna tries to talk him out of it.

Sue: What's with all the pan pipe music all of a sudden? It isn't very appropriate, is it?

M. P. H. I ... The second

Me: It's the *Love Theme from Frontios*.

Turlough gives Norna a two corpira piece. He tells her to blow through it for good luck.

Sue: Play the Love Theme from Frontios on it. Go on, I dare you.

Turlough descends into the darkness.

Sue: Blow through it, then! She hasn't blown through it. That's bad luck and now Turlough is going to die. What a bitch.

The episode concludes with a horrific twist.

Sue: Is that a decapitated head driving that machine? This is definitely not for kids!

The credits roll.

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Sue: The story is beginning to flag, but it certainly has its moments.

Part Four

The Doctor describes Tegan as a robot he managed to get cheap because the walk wasn't quite right. She is reliable though, and very good when it comes to financial planning and word processing.

Sue: She's really good at whingeing, too.

The Tractators are using the humans as replacement parts in their mining machines.

Sue: This is relentlessly grim. I bet this would have scared you if you'd seen it when you were a kid, Neil. Then you'd be scared of woodlice on top of everything else that terrifies you.

For the next five minutes or so, Sue doesn't say very much. She's been sucked into the story. Can you see what I did there? Oh, suit yourself.

Sue: Some of the ideas are very interesting. I like the way the aliens have misdirected the humans by making them stare at the sky instead of the ground. That's very clever.

Turlough is caught in a Tractator's gravity beam, and is only saved when Brazen and a gang of Orderlies beat the living crap out of it.

Sue: That was pretty brutal. I almost felt sorry for it.

Sue has mixed feelings when it comes to the Tractators.

Sue: I like their weird mouths, and if you lit them properly they could be really scary. But their little hands are very silly, and they shouldn't show their feet at all. If they came back today, they'd be great. They would curl up and roll at you. Trust me, it would be great.

Brazen sacrifices himself so the Doctor and his companions can escape.

Sue: He was a bit of a dick – and Turlough technically killed him by going nuts – but at least he came good at the end. A very strange performance, though.

The Gravis' plan becomes clear: he wants to turn Frontios into a spaceship.

Sue: That's quite an audacious plan for a half a dozen termites to pull off.

As Tegan wanders through the caves, she notices bits of the TARDIS scattered around the place.

Sue: Okay, I'm lost. How did this happen?

The Doctor tempts the Gravis into his console room and tricks the monster into reassembling the TARDIS with his superpowers.

Sue: So he's the Tractator's Obi-Wan Kenobi?

And then the Doctor dumps the Gravis on an unpopulated planet.

Sue: They could easily bring him back again. Just light him a bit better, give him some decent hands, and he'll be fine. Oh, and you might want to work on his voice so he has more gravitas.

Me: You've been dying to say that for ages, haven't you?

Plantagenet invites the Doctor to stay on Frontios and enjoy the new colony they're building.

Sue: Is he having a laugh? What could you possibly enjoy on a shit hole like this?

Me: I'm sure Turlough could think of something.

The Doctor asks the colonists not to mention his involvement with Frontios

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to any Time Lords who might drop by.

Sue: He never normally does this. What's the big deal? He interferes all the time.

The TARDIS dematerialises, but the episode isn't over yet. Our heroes are being pulled towards the centre of the universe!

Sue: That was a quick revenge! The Gravis isn't as stupid as he looks. Nice fake ending. They had me going there for a second.

The credits roll.

Sue: Eh? I thought you said this was four parts?

Me: I wasn't lying. The Gravis wasn't responsible for that.

Sue: Ahh, it must be the Time Lords, then. They've made such a big song

and dance about not getting found out, it must be them.

The Score

Sue: That wasn't bad at all. The design was excellent, the script was full of interesting and original ideas, and at least they're trying to do something a little bit different. Some of the performances were a bit dodgy, and the direction could have been better, especially when it came to the Tractators, but Peter Davison was really good. Yeah, I enjoyed that.

7/10

COMMENT: "What *does* happen to The Thing That's Missing From The Console Room during this story? I'd never thought about it before, but if the TARDIS is spread all across Frontios, where's The Thing That's Missing From The Console Room?" – Noodles

NOTES: My Big Finish lingerie-fueled fan fiction can be found in 2005's compendium *A Christmas Treasury*. I gave my only copy away out of

acute embarrassment, which is a shame because the last time I checked they were going for hundreds of pounds on eBay.

The Tractators still haven't appeared in the New Series, despite Sue daring the Moff to try.

RESURRECTION OF THE DALEKS

BLOGGED: 2 November 2012

Part One

I thought long and hard about which version of Resurrection to show to my wife. Should I make Sue watch the two-part double-length version transmitted by the BBC in 1984, or would the four-part edit that was originally planned by the production team be the better option? I went to Facebook and Twitter looking for advice, and the following exchange made me laugh:

John Williams: If you show her the four-part version, I'll petrol bomb your house.

Robert Dick: Show her the four-parter, but two episodes each night. And after Part Two explain to her why you insisted on watching two. **John Williams**: It's almost as if you want me to petrol bomb the house.

In the end, I decided to go with the two-part version. For the sake of the scientific accuracy, you understand. Nothing to do with my fear of John Williams (he knows where I live) or the opportunity to trick my wife into believing she might be in for an easy ride. No, of course not.

Part One

Sue: Hey, there are only two episodes. Shall we knock both out tonight?

I shrug my shoulders and say nothing.

Sue: Ooh, Daleks. It's always *Something of the Daleks*, isn't it? I'm surprised you didn't try to hide that from me.

Me: I've strung you along for the sake of a cheap gag too many times already. I'm going to be honest with you from now on.

Sue: There's a first time for everything, I suppose.

The story begins with the police gunning down people in cold blood.

Sue: What's going on here, then? Is it a dystopian future where the police

have a shoot to kill policy?

Me: It's either that or the IRA dressed really strangely in the 1980s.

The policemen even kill a tramp.

Sue: Hey! He was only smoking a rollie! Jesus, that's a bit harsh.

One of the survivors of this bloodbath is none other than...

Sue: Rodney Bewes! He's the last person I expected to turn up in *Doctor Who*.

Having said that, Sue is extremely pleased with this story's trajectory so far.

Sue: A decent director at last. You can tell by the camera movement, the angles and the lighting. This is in a different league to what we usually get.

The leader of this death squad is Commander Lytton. He is played by Maurice Colbourne.

Sue: Oh, it's him.

Me: Where do you know him from?

Sue: He was in that stupid *Gangsters* programme that you made me watch when we lived in the caravan. The one where they all turned to the

camera at the end and gave up. That one.

Me: Stupid? STUPID? That's even worse than what you said about

Snakedance!

A bell is tolling in the TARDIS.

RESURRECTION OF THE DALEKS

Sue: Oh no, it's the Doomsday Bell.

Me: Cloister.

Sue: Same thing. If you hear it ringing, it means things are going tits up.

Meanwhile, on a space station...

Sue: It's Rula Lenska! Why is she working in the Clinique store at

Fenwicks with the cast of *Thunderbirds*?

The Army turn up at the warehouse on Earth.

Sue: Oh good, it's UNIT. I feel safer already.

Meanwhile, the crew of the space station are chilling out on the bridge.

Sue: Is she smoking? You wait ages for someone to turn up with a tab in their mouth and then two come along at once. The same goes for ethnic minorities in this show. This story is very progressive when it comes to casting.

Me: I know. Letting a sitcom actor appear in straight drama was still a risky move back then.

The TARDIS materialises beside the river Thames in 1984.

Sue: Tegan could visit her relations. Unless they've all gone into hiding, of course.

The Doctor wants to investigate the source of the mysterious time corridor which ensnared his ship earlier.

Sue: Why is the Doctor carrying a scroll around with him?

Me: That's his hat.

Sue: Oh.

The location for this story meets with Sue's approval.

Sue: I assume it's really nice there now, although I bet the house prices are extortionate.

Me: Yes, a consortium of *Doctor Who* fans bought up all the property. You can't move for the fuckers.

The Doctor bumps into Stein outside the warehouse.

Sue: Rodney isn't a very good actor, is he? I think he's out of his depth in this. Where's Terry when you need him?

The space station is attacked by an alien battle cruiser. The invaders breach the airlock and... it's the Daleks!

Sue: That was an impressive entrance. Very iconic. The direction certainly helped.

At one point, a hand-held tracking shot is used to crank up the tension.

Sue: There are other directors who wouldn't have even bothered panning, there. The direction is excellent. It's little touches like that which make all the difference.

The Daleks release a gas canister and its impact on human physiognomy is horrific.

Sue: Not. For. Kids!

The crew of the space station are worried about the safety of their prisoner.

Me: Who do you think that might be?

Sue: Is it the Master? Don't give me that look. He works with the Daleks,

doesn't he?

The Daleks exterminate everyone who stands in their way.

RESURRECTION OF THE DALEKS

Sue: That Dalek just exterminated three people with one shot. Impressive!

The Doctor and his companions are interrogated by a bomb disposal unit who have been sent to investigate strange canisters in the warehouse. I'm sorry, but if you're pulling for Del Henney or Chloe Ashcroft here, you are shit out of luck.

It turns out the space station's prisoner is none other than...

Sue: Davros! How did I miss that? It's so obvious.

Me: I always thought it was a bit weird they didn't reveal Davros with a

big scary close-up. He's just sitting there in the background.

Sue: It's more frightening that way. The director has obviously thought

this through. It can't be accidental.

The antechamber leading to Davros' cell is flooded with poisonous gas.

Sue: The make-up is horrific. This episode is a bloodbath. It's complete carnage!

Sue admires the Dalek troopers' uniforms.

Sue: I like the Dalek hats. It's a good way for the Daleks to maintain brand awareness when they're out conquering the universe.

A Dalek appears in the warehouse on Earth via the time corridor. The Doctor tells the Army to aim for its eyepiece.

Me: My vision is impaired! I cannot see! My vision is impaired! I cannot see!

Sue: Shut up, Neil.

Me: Sorry.

The Doctor pushes the Dalek through a loading hatch and it falls to the street below.

Sue: It's a bloody good job another tramp wasn't standing outside when he did that. Great sequence, though. This is very exciting.

The Dalek Supreme promises to deal with the Doctor in due course.

Sue: His balls are too big.

Me: That's one way of putting it, I suppose.

Meanwhile Davros looks forward to taking his rightful place as King of the Daleks.

Sue: Davros is great when he goes into one of his rants. He reminds me of you when you're watching *Question Time*.

The Doctor searches for the Kaled mutant which escaped from its casing.

Sue: Peter Davison shouldn't walk around with a gun. That's not right.

Colonel Archer leaves the warehouse to call for reinforcements, but when he asks the local police for assistance, he ends up with a gun in his face.

Sue: How did they get away with that? Seriously, that's a terrible message to send to kids. Honestly.

Back on the space station, a technician named Kiston is making repairs to Davros' chair.

Sue: That isn't Dirty Den, is it? It can't be... Is it?

Me: HOUSE! Sue: What?

Me: Nothing. Yes, it's Leslie Grantham. This was his second acting job, I

believe. He hadn't been out of prison very long.

Sue: Incredibly, it turns out that hiring a convicted murderer wasn't the

worst thing the BBC did in the 1980s.

RESURRECTION OF THE DALEKS

The Doctor continues his hunt for the Kaled mutant, but he uncovers something else instead.

Sue: Aww, bless, it's a little kitten. Pop it in your pocket and take it with you. You could call it Adric.

The Doctor blasts a Kaled mutant to bits with his revolver.

Sue: That doesn't feel right. The Doctor shouldn't be Dirty Harry. He's surrounded by soldiers – let them do the dirty work.

Stein doesn't want to return to the Daleks' ship.

Sue: I've only just realised that Rodney Bewes is putting on a stutter. At first I thought he was fucking his lines up. I can't tell whether he's good or not now.

A soldier has been bitten by the Kaled mutant.

Me: Maybe Little Ted knows a song about alien viruses.

Sue: What the hell are you talking about?

Me: That's Chloe Ashcroft from Play School. You probably don't

remember her because you're too old.

I duck as a cushion sails overhead.

Sue: She looks like she'd rather be on Greenham Common.

At least Davros is glad to be out and about again after 90 years of mind-numbing boredom.

Sue: I know the feeling, mate, and I've only been doing this for two years.

I throw the cushion back at her.

Sue: I'm only joking. I wish they were all as good as this.

Lytton tells Davros that the Doctor's capture is imminent.

Davros: Excellent!

Sue: Seriously, who holds the copyright on that catchphrase?

Three Daleks prepare to enter the time corridor.

Sue: Even the Daleks have been choreographed. Who directed this?

Me: Matthew Robinson. He's new.

Sue: He's brilliant.

Me: Somebody should tell him that one day. He's very modest.

In fact, Sue is enjoying Resurrection of the Daleks *so much...*

Sue: I wish it was four parts instead of two.

The episode concludes as the Doctor and Stein arrive on the Daleks' battle cruiser in the TARDIS. But there's a twist: Stein is a Dalek agent!

Sue: NOOOOOO! Rodney, you b-b-b-bastard!

The credits roll.

Me: Did you enjoy that?

Sue: Very much. I don't understand why it felt so long, though. It can't

have been the direction. Maybe I'm just tired.

I tell her the truth. Not that I lied earlier. Not really.

Me: Don't blame me. Blame Torvill and Dean.

RESURRECTION OF THE DALEKS

Part Two

We are introduced to the space station's self-destruct mechanism.

Sue: It looks like a giant game of Frustration[™].

The Doctor is led to the Daleks' duplication room and made to lie on a bed made from bubble wrap.

Sue: Stand-by for some undignified popping.

POP! POP! POP!

Sue: I was only joking!

The Daleks show off the duplicates of Tegan and Turlough they made earlier.

Sue: Who would you make a duplicate of, Neil?

Me: I'm not going to answer that question on the grounds that it will

probably incriminate me.

Sue: I would make a duplicate of you.

Me: That's sweet.

Sue: Yeah, one that didn't make me watch *Doctor* bloody *Who*.

Tegan digs up a canister that has been buried inside the warehouse.

Sue: Why is the virus here on Earth in the first place? This bit doesn't make sense to me.

Me: I've seen this dozens of times and it *still* doesn't make any sense to me.

The Daleks want to send duplicates of the Doctor and his companions to Gallifrey so they can assassinate the High Council of the Time Lords.

Sue: Things have become very complicated all of a sudden. Where the hell

did that come from?

Stein fights against his Dalek programming.

Sue: I get it now. Rodney's performance almost makes sense. Almost.

She is certain of one thing, though.

Sue: Rula Lenska is bloody brilliant in this. She'd be a great companion. I hope she makes it out of this story alive. I love her blasé attitude to everything that's going on around her.

Tegan escapes from the warehouse but is immediately intercepted by Lytton's policemen. They also silence a beachcomber with a bullet, just to be on the safe side.

Sue: He wasn't even looking in their direction. Is that the most pointless

death in Doctor Who's history?

Me: Apart from Adric's, you mean? Possibly.

The Doctor is hooked up to the Daleks' brain pattern recorder.

Sue: The Doctor has a lot of fillings.

The policemen escort Tegan back to the warehouse.

Sue: They're going to charge her with soliciting.

The Dalek troopers shoot Rula Lenska dead.

Sue: NO! They can't do that. She's Rula Lenska!

Minutes later, Chloe Ashcroft bites the dust as well.

Sue: They're dropping like nine pins!

RESURRECTION OF THE DALEKS

The Doctor's ex-companions flash before his eyes, and Sue audibly reacts to the following faces: Adric ("Aww"), Romana I ("Ahh"), K9 ("K9!"), Sarah Jane ("Ahh"), and the Brig ("Yay!").

Me: Did you notice anything wrong with that montage?

Sue: No. Did they get the order wrong?

Me: No. Take another look at it.

I replay the scene.

Sue: Oh yes, someone's missing... There's no Leela. What happened to her?

Me: Ian Levine happened.

Tegan and Turlough are reunited.

Sue: Turlough can't take his eyes off Tegan's tits. There's one glance. And another. And one more for luck. Get a room!

And then the moment we've all been waiting for. A moment so gobsmacking, Sue will insist that we watch it again. And again. And again.

Sue: I can't tell if Rodney is brilliant or dreadful here. I really can't.

The time has come for the Doctor to finally pop a cap in Davros' ass...

Sue: No way. Let Rodney kill Davros instead. Don't get your hands dirty.

The Doctor and Davros face off. It's an electrifying scene and Sue doesn't have any fingernails left when it's over.

Sue: That was a great scene. That was fucking tense.

Sadly, it's about here that Sue finally loses her grip on the plot.

Sue: There's too much going on. I can't tell who's working for who any

more. I can't stand the confusion in my mind!

Two Daleks are sent to the warehouse to kill the duplicate soldiers.

Sue: Right in the balls. Nasty.

The last one to die screams his lungs out.

Sue: He was going for his Equity Card, there.

And the deaths keep on mounting up.

Sue: They're running out of cast members. Still, at least it simplifies the plot, which I don't understand. I'm just going along with it now. I still don't know which Dalek is which.

When Stein reaches the self-destruct chamber, he puts his hands on his hips and sighs.

Sue: Yes, this is the weirdest performance in *Doctor Who* so far. No doubt about it

Stein struggles to make sense of the controls.

Sue: This is you trying to use the washing machine, Neil.

Back at the warehouse, the Doctor uses explosives to destroy the Daleks.

Sue: He's too much like Rambo in this. I don't like it.

Davros unleashes his virus and the Daleks succumb to its effects.

Sue: Ooh, he's definitely excited!

In the heat of battle, Lytton kills one of his own men.

RESURRECTION OF THE DALEKS

Sue: Ooh, a red light in the face. Nasty.

The warehouse is steeped in death, thanks to the Doctor's decision to unleash another canister of the Movellan virus.

Sue: Maybe he's finally had enough of the Daleks after all this time. It's the only thing that makes any sense.

The Dalek Supreme appears on the TARDIS scanner screen. He claims to have control over an army of duplicates who have infiltrated key positions on Earth

Me: That explains the Tory government in 1984, then.

Stein is shot by a Dalek.

Sue: Rodney, you plonker!

But he still comes good by belly-flopping like a dead salmon onto the self-destruct button.

Sue: That was... different.

Lytton and his men walk off into the sunset.

Sue: Where the hell do they think they're going?

And then Tegan's snap decision to stay on Earth makes Sue gasp.

Sue: Oh no!

You could have heard a pin drop during the leaving scene. Until...

Sue: Don't tell me she's changed her mind again!

But she's too late this time and the credits begin to roll.

Sue: That was sad. I didn't like Tegan at all at first, but I don't want her to

leave now. It won't be the same without her.

Me: Excuse me, I think I've got something in my eye...

The Score

Sue: The script let it down. It was too complicated. It would have been on for a nine or a 10 if I'd followed the plot. It was needlessly complex. But it looked great, and the actors were really good, too. Even Rodney was entertaining. The direction, the music, and the sets – they were all brilliant. I really enjoyed it.

8/10

That's about six marks more than I would have given it. But who cares what I think?

Me: What did you think of the 45-minute format?

Sue: I think I preferred it. You can really get into it when you don't have

so many breaks.

COMMENT: "I CAN'T STAND THE CONFUSION IN MY WIFE!" – CJJC

* PLANET OF FIRE

BLOGGED: 7 November 2012

Part One

Sue: Ooh, we like Peter Grimwade, don't we?

Me: Yes, he's a very good director.

Sue: Excellent.

Me: But he didn't direct this.

Sue: Oh. Well, at least we're on location. That's good. This is a very

impressive quarry, actually.

Two men are traipsing up a mountain in their pants.

Sue: Blimey, he's got a big packet... Oh, no! It's Rodney Bewes again! In a

wig!

Me: Don't worry, it's not Rodney Bewes.

Sue: It isn't Eric from the Bay City Rollers, is it? Nothing would surprise

me any more.

Two men named Timanov and Malkon are discussing their god, Logar.

Sue: This definitely isn't filmed in Wales, so where are we? This is

gorgeous. And is that Jason King? **Me**: Yes, it's Peter Wyngarde.

Sue: He's gone overboard with the eye shadow.

Me: Do you like Peter Wyngarde?

Sue: I liked him as Jason King. Where the hell are we anyway? It's not

Jersey, is it?

Meanwhile, on the TARDIS, the Doctor is still het up about the Daleks when a plaintive electronic scream pierces the air.

Sue: What the ...?

It's Kamelion!

Sue: What the ...?

Me: That's what's been missing from the TARDIS all this time.

Sue: Oh yeah, I'd completely forgotten about him. So where has he been hiding? Has he been charging his battery for the last six weeks? And I

thought my iPhone was bad.

The TARDIS intercepts a distress signal from Trion as Turlough sabotages the ship.

Sue: Eh? Has Turlough gone bad again? Is the Black Guardian in this one?

Meanwhile, on Lanzarote...

Sue: It's... It's... It's...

Sue is pointing excitedly at Nicola Bryant.

Sue: It's Nev Fountain's girlfriend! **Me**: Yes, that's right, it's Nicola Bryant.

Sue: I'm not going to say anything about her American accent because I know it's not real. I know this because I've met her. She was lovely.

Peri is arguing with her stepfather, Howard.

Sue: I'll tell you something, though. Her American accent is definitely better than his.

Peri wants to travel the world.

Sue: She's very beautiful. Having said that, there's plenty of eye-candy for the mums as well. Howard can't act for toffee but he's very easy on the eye.

Peri handles a strange, alien object.

PLANET OF FIRE

Sue: That's a bit phallic. **Me**: Do you think?

Meanwhile, on the planet Sarn...

Sue: This is a strange Nativity play. There's too many shepherds. The actor playing the Chosen One is terrible, but I bet his parents are still very proud of him.

The Doctor and Turlough arrive on Lanzarote. The real Lanzarote. No, not Sarn. Yes, I had to explain this to Sue as well.

Sue: Ooh, I've just noticed that the Doctor is wearing an embroidered waistcoat. I'm sorry but I'm too distracted by this location to pick up on the usual details. I may as well be watching *Wish You Were Here* with Judith Chalmers.

Peri, who has been stranded on her stepfather's yacht, decides to take drastic action.

Sue: Oh, hello...

Me: I've been dying to tell you this for years, and now it will finally make sense. The thing is, I was the first person to tell the internet that Nev and Nicola were going out with each other.

Sue: Are you the sci-fi version of *Hello* or something?

Me: I wrote: "Nev will never have to watch Planet of Fire ever again".

Peri is drowning and Turlough notices her plight on the TARDIS scanner. He zooms in for a better view.

Sue: Yeah, go on, Turlough, get your lens right in there, you perv.

Bizarrely, Turlough isn't exactly thrilled by this distraction.

Sue: Turlough can be very selfish. I like that about him, though. It makes

him more realistic.

Turlough reluctantly decides to rescue Peri.

Sue: He's left the fucking TARDIS doors open again.

Turlough strips down to his pants and saves Peri's life.

Sue: So she jumped into the sea but she can't swim? Was that wise? Peri's not going to be completely thick, is she?

The Doctor is sitting in a bar when his detector beeps. He puts a handful of alien tokens on the table and runs off.

Sue: That reminds me of my favourite joke. An alien walks into a bar and the bartender says, "We don't serve aliens, you're not welcome here". So the alien says, "Can I stay if I buy a round of drinks for everyone?". The bartender eventually agrees, and when he's finished serving the drinks, he turns to the alien and says, "That will be £345, please." And the alien says, "Have you got change for a zonk?"

Me: You're very easily pleased.

Sue: That's why I married you, love.

Turlough carries a dripping wet, semi-naked Peri into his bedroom.

Sue: Be honest, Neil. Is this your favourite episode of all time?

Me: Yes, Kamelion really gives me the horn.

Turlough looks through Peri's belongings and he pulls out a Trion artifact.

Sue: Turlough's thinking to himself, "Jesus! What is she planning to do with *this?*"

Peri protests that she needed the money.

PLANET OF FIRE

Sue: Fucking hell!

Turlough tries – and fails – to hide this object from the Doctor.

Sue: Will we finally learn about Turlough's past in this story? I hope it's good. They've dragged it out longer than *Lost*.

Peri is having a nightmare. A nightmare about Howard.

Sue: Right, so she's been sexually abused by her stepfather. Is this for kids? *Is it?*

Kamelion transforms himself into Howard the sex-pest. But as the episode concludes he suddenly transforms into...

Sue: The Master. What a surprise.

She doesn't sound surprised at all. And then the credits roll.

Sue: There's a lot going on, I'll give it that. It definitely isn't boring. The locations are *very* nice.

Part Two

Sue: The Master has Gary Glitter eyes.

Me: What?

Sue: He does that thing with his eyes that Gary Glitter does. You know, that faked look of surprise he does where he knocks his head back and

raises his eyebrows. Just saying.

Kamelion-Master drags Peri onto the surface of Sarn, but some falling masonry knocks him out cold.

Sue: Well that's the Master dead, then. He couldn't possibly survive a crack on the head like that.

Me: It isn't the Master, it's a robot!

Sue: Oh yeah. Sorry, I forgot. It's complicated, this.

The Doctor questions Turlough about his past. Like, for example, why has he never mentioned his home planet before?

Me: Never mind that, why have you never asked him about it before? **Sue**: I've told you, Neil. They're men. Men never talk to each other. It's sad, really.

At least the location continues to impress the wife.

Sue: They should film every episode of *Doctor Who* abroad. It looks amazing. The BBC should have done the whole series as an off-shore taxbreak thing.

Peri reveals her full name.

Sue: What kind of name is Perpugilliam? And shouldn't her nickname be Perp? Why can't the Doctor travel with people with normal names? When was the last time he travelled with a companion who had a normal name? **Me**: That'd be Sarah Jane.

Sue: Bloody hell. He really needs to travel with a Bob or a Sharon.

Sue can't get a handle on the real Master's plan.

Sue: Why is he going to all this trouble? Why doesn't he just walk out of his TARDIS and do this himself? This robot is a lot more trouble than it's worth.

Me: You took the words right out of JN-T's mouth. Keep watching, this will all make sense eventually. Well, sort of...

Kamelion is struggling to maintain control of his form.

Sue: He can't stand the confusion in his mind.

PLANET OF FIRE

Sue thinks she recognises Barbara Shelley, which I find very hard to believe given her aversion to the horror genre, but we can both agree on one thing:

Sue: She's got a lovely voice.

Timanov hikes to the top of the volcano. He sits down, exhausted and panting.

Sue: Is he having a poo?

Peri slides down the volcano.

Sue: At least they found a decent slope for her. I feel sorry for Peri. She just wants to go Eurorailing.

Kamelion-Master is welcomed by Timanov.

Sue: He's really fallen on his feet. He didn't have to come up with any bullshit to convince them to follow him. How easy was that?

In the Hall of Fire, the Doctor tries to stop a volcano from erupting.

Sue: The person who did the make-up for this story wants shooting. Peter Davison is caked in mascara. This is not a good look for him.

But this is a small niggle.

Sue: The direction is good, the locations are good, the plot is keeping me interested and Turlough is running around in his shorts. What's not to like?

Turlough and Malkon compare scars.

Sue: Are they brothers? I bet they're brothers. At least Turlough's mysterious past is starting to make sense, now.

The Doctor and the Kamelion-Master meet.

Sue: Can he not just get rid of the Master once and for all? He must be doing his head in by now. He's definitely doing mine in.

The episode concludes with a good old ritual sacrifice.

Sue: That was a good cliffhanger. I'm really enjoying this.

Part Three

Sue: Turlough has nice legs. He should have worn his shorts in every story. But not the yellow socks. No man should ever wear yellow socks.

Before Malkon can intervene in the sacrifice, he is shot by a laser beam. He tries to warn the Doctor that Kamelion is the Master.

Sue: Hey! The Doctor just threw a blanket over his face when he

mentioned the Master.

Me: I know just how he feels.

The Master's connection to Kamelion is broken and Kamelion-Master transforms itself into Kamelion-Howard.

Sue: Why not change back into his normal robotic state? Wouldn't that make more sense?

Timanov can't believe his eyes.

Sue: Why are they walking around with giant hat pins?

Turlough confirms Sue's suspicions – he is Malkon's brother.

Sue: I expected the *EastEnders* drums to kick in for a second. It's not very good casting, is it? They look nothing like each other.

PLANET OF FIRE

The Master takes control of Kamelion again and Timanov is told to follow him. However, there's a condition.

Timanov: Where are the gifts? The Outsider always brings gifts from Logar.

Sue: He's just in it for the presents. He may as well be praying to Father Christmas.

Turlough shows the mark of Trion to the Doctor. He calls it the Misos Triangle.

Me: (*Singing Barry Manilow*) "The Misos Triangle, try to see it from my angle..." Sorry.

Sue: Turlough's emblem reminds me of the Superman logo. Turlough should make himself a superhero costume out of Lycra with that logo on his chest. He's definitely got the legs for spandex.

Peri enters the Master's TARDIS.

Sue: So the Master owns a black iPod and the Doctor owns a white iPod. Right, okay.

Kamelion-Master and Peri carry a large black box into the console room.

Sue: If I were Peri, I'd go with the Master. I'm sure he'd show her a good time. If he stopped trying to take over the universe, he could be a right laugh.

The Doctor and a native of Sarn named Amyand use the TARDIS databanks to identify who Logar is.

Sue: I hope the Doctor isn't auditioning for new companions. This one is rubbish. It's obvious that Turlough is going to leave at the end, which is a shame because I don't want him to go, but you can't replace him with this plank of wood, even if he does have a massive packet.

Peri and Kamelion-Master enter the heart of the volcano.

Sue: It isn't *You Only Live Twice*, but it'll do, I suppose.

The Master demonstrates the power of his tissue compression eliminator on some thermal suits.

Sue: You can do that to a T-shirt with nothing more than a washing machine, Neil. And why is it called an eliminator anyway? It hasn't eliminated anything, it's just made it smaller. He should call it his sonic shrinker.

Timanov agrees to follow Turlough, now that he's the Chosen One.

Sue: (*As Timanov*) But only if you've brought me a gift. I'm not doing anything unless there's a gift in it.

Sarn appears to be tearing itself apart so Turlough herds Sarn's elders into the TARDIS.

Sue: I hope there's plenty of toilets on the TARDIS. This lot will be crossing their legs any minute now.

Timanov remembers the first time he saw Logar.

Sue: He's very good. I think Jason King would be a better Master than the Master.

When the volcano erupts with numismaton gas, Timanov is overjoyed.

Sue: (As Timanov) Have you all written your wish lists for Logar?

The Doctor warns Turlough that if he's holding anything back from him, their friendship will be at an end.

PLANET OF FIRE

Sue: He hasn't been this stern with Turlough since he found out he was trying to kill him for three weeks.

Peri overcomes Kamelion and rushes inside the Master's TARDIS.

Sue: Good girl. She's got potential. Shame about the Benny Hill music, though.

The cliffhanger comes as a complete surprise. Yes, the Master is trapped in a hox.

Sue: What the fuck?

He commands Peri to obey him if she doesn't want to die.

Sue: He's not exactly in a position to make any threats. Just step on him!

The credits roll.

Sue: I'm suddenly interested again. I thought it was running out of steam but that's a great twist.

Part Four

The Doctor steps into the numismaton gas.

Sue: Does this mean he's topped himself up and he won't have to regenerate for ages? I'm joking. I know he dies in the next one.

Me: As far as Big Finish are concerned, the Fifth Doctor has hundreds of years worth of adventures between this story and the next. So maybe you're right.

Sue: They should turn this planet into a spa. They'd make an absolute fortune.

The shrunken Master falls out of his box.

Sue: What I don't understand is this: why isn't he dead? Tegan's aunt didn't run around like this when he shrank her.

It turns out that Turlough's people exiled him to a public school on Earth.

Sue: What a bizarre punishment. So it had absolutely nothing to do with the Black Guardian? That's disappointing.

The Doctor, Peri and Amyand trek across the barren landscape of Sarn.

Sue: They are getting the most out of this location. I can't blame them, though. It's brilliant. I just wish they'd get back to the plot.

Turlough sends a distress call to his own people.

Sue: He's pressing the buttons from an old telephone box. Is he going to reverse the charges?

We learn that Turlough's first name is...

Sue: Vislor? No wonder he never uses it.

Kamelion begs the Doctor to kill him. The Doctor obliges.

Sue: He didn't have to think about that very much. What a waste of time.

The Master uses the numismaton gas to restore himself to his regular size.

Sue: Just shrink him again! Shrink him, put him in his box, and then bury the box in the sand. Simple.

But something has gone wrong. The Master begs his fellow Time Lord to help him, but the Doctor stands back and lets nature run its course.

Sue: Oh, he's actually going to let him die. I'm shocked.

PLANET OF FIRE

The Master is consumed by the fire. And no, Sue doesn't pick up on the "your own...?" reference.

Sue: So is that it? Is the Master really, really dead? For good this time?

Me: Looks that way.

Sue: So I can't ask, "Is it the Master?" again? Ever?

Me: Well, I can't stop you.

Sue: I can't believe they finally killed him off. I'm relieved, actually.

The Doctor is cut up about it, though.

Sue: Peter Davison does that emotion really well. That's his trademark, that is.

Turlough leaves the TARDIS crew.

Sue: Turlough has been the most interesting companion in the series so far. I'll really miss him.

And Peri joins.

Sue: She was alright. It's very early days, but at least she's proactive and isn't a screamer.

Me: Well, Nev said...

Sue: I wouldn't finish that sentence if I were you, Neil.

The Score

Sue: I enjoyed that. The locations were great and it was one of the better Master stories, although I'm glad to see the back of him. Yeah, I'll give that a very respectable:

7/10

COMMENT: "Sue might have got her wish about Turlough if Mark Strickson hadn't put his foot down. JN-T wanted him in shorts the whole time (oh, and bald)." – Warren Andrews



BLOGGED: 9 November 2012

Part One

Me: You've seen this story before, Sue, 19 years ago. It was the first one we watched together when I moved in with you in 1993. Can you remember anything about it?

Sue: No. I do remember Genesis of the Daleks, though.

Me: We watched Genesis afterwards.

Sue: Well, it must have been good if I let you show me another one, but I

can't remember a thing about it.

Me: You didn't say very much at the time.

Sue: I was probably too busy thinking about you. We were still in our

honeymoon period.

Me: And Peter Davison was much too old for you back then.

I swat the cushion away and press 'play'.

Sue: Robert Holmes – he's the man. This is going to be good.

Last week's location has convinced Sue anything's possible.

Sue: Are they shooting this in Death Valley?

Peri and the Doctor explore the surface of Androzani Minor.

Sue: This wide shot is unusual. I don't think we've ever had a scene quite like this before.

Deep within the blowholes of Androzani, a Magma Beast is stirring.

Sue: Oh dear. At least it moves quickly and the camera didn't dwell on it

too much. They almost got away with it.

Peri falls into a Spectrox nest.

Me: BOING!

Sue: That wasn't supposed to happen, was it?

Me: Maybe Spectrox is really bouncy. It's possible, I suppose.

The Doctor tells Peri why he walks around with a stick of celery pinned to his coat.

Sue: Right, so his celery turns purple later. And then he dies. They wouldn't bring that up if it wasn't important.

It doesn't take Sue very long to appreciate The Caves of Androzani's unique style.

Sue: Who directed this? Me: Graeme Harper. Sue: He's very good.

Me: He's the only director from the classic series to work on the new

series as well.

Sue: You can see why they brought him back. He's in a different league to

some of the others.

Meanwhile, on Androzani Major, Morgus is informed that two gunrunners have been caught, the spineless cretins.

Sue: Was he supposed to look straight down the camera lens like that? Because it doesn't work. It turns the whole thing into a pantomime. I like his nervous twitch, though.

The Doctor and Peri meet Salateen.

Me: Do you recognise him?

THE CAVES OF ANDROZANI

Sue: No.

Me: Did you ever watch the sitcom Sink or Swim? He played Peter

Davison's brother.

Sue: No.

Me: His brother is very famous.

Sue: Peter Davison? **Me**: No, in real life.

Sue: Rodney from Only Fools and Horses?

Me: Gene Hunt.

Sue: There's no need to swear.

General Chellak gives Morgus a call.

Sue: He reminds me of David Seaman in a shell suit.

Morgus isn't happy with the progress in the war against the terrorist Sharaz Iek.

Sue: He's got a Francis Rossi ponytail.

When we first meet Sharaz Jek, it's via a huge close-up.

Sue: It's Scorpius from *Farscape*.

The Doctor pleads his innocence to Chellak and Salateen.

Sue: Are Peter Davison's flies open?

Me: No, it's just the cut of his trousers. Why are you staring at Peter

Davison's crotch? Oh. Stupid question. Forget I asked.

Morgus shares a lift with his assistant, Krau Timmin.

Sue: That's a very cramped lift. This could be borderline sexual harassment. Either that or he's having an affair with his PA.

Peri realises they are the falls guys. The Doctor tells her to speak proper English.

Sue: Yes, speak with an English accent, please. That would be a brilliant idea. It's a shame – she's a really good actress but the accent makes her sound a bit whiny. I'm sure I'll get used to it, though.

Jek's hairy hands caress Peri's features on a monitor screen.

Sue: Is it Richard Keys?

That has to be my favourite moment in this experiment so far.

Sue: This is shot very differently to anything we've ever seen before. You don't get that many dissolves in your average *Doctor Who*. This cell is beautifully lit, too. It's oozing atmosphere. The music is excellent as well.

Me: Do you remember any of this yet?

Sue: Not a thing.

The Doctor and Peri are taken out and shot.

Sue: What the...?

Me: That's it. The Doctor regenerates in the next episode.

Sue: What about Peri? **Me**: She's dead too.

Sue: She isn't! I know she's in *Doctor Who* for a while. Our friend John Paul named his cat after her, and he wouldn't have done that if she was

only in it for five episodes. He isn't that stupid.

The credits roll.

Sue: Great start. Very stylish. Now I understand why you showed this to me 19 years ago.

THE CAVES OF ANDROZANI

Part Two

Sue: Oh, I get it. They weren't real machine guns. They were firing little lights at them instead.

Chellak sends the only witness to his botched execution attempt on a deep penetration mission.

Sue: Sounds painful.

And Sharaz Jek definitely has the hots for Peri.

Sue: There must be a good reason for this character to wear a mask. Is he

the new Master?

Me: You said you wouldn't ask me that again.

Sue: I don't believe anything you tell me. Is he the new Master?

Me: No!

Sue: Be honest – is the Master in this story?

Me: Just... shut up. **Sue**: I knew it.

Me: It's not the fucking Master! Okay?

Sue: Whoever it is, he's definitely into S&M. Or a really big fan of Kiss.

The Doctor and Jek size each other up.

Sue: Snog him! You know you want to. **Me**: You're not taking this seriously.

Sue: That doesn't usually bother you. No, it was a great scene. The

direction is superb. It's very tense.

Jek tells the Doctor that Spectrox is the key to eternal youth.

Sue: So what does he want it for? Surely it would be wasted on him. He doesn't even shave his hands.

Having said that, she's really impressed with Christopher Gable.

Sue: He has an amazing voice. It's a very powerful performance.

But all good things must come to an end, and the episode concludes with the return of the Magma beast.

Sue: What a shame. It was going really well and now it's... well, it's a bit shit.

Part Three

Sadly, the Magma Beast doesn't improve overnight.

Sue: No, that's definitely not good. That's the complete opposite of good. Oh dear.

Thankfully, its appearance doesn't last very long and Sue settles down again. In fact, she's clearly engrossed in the plot, and is much quieter than usual as a result. Which suits me just fine.

Jek slaps the Doctor across the neck.

Sue: Hey! Steady on! You can't do that!

But Jek only has eyes for Peri.

Sue: What is he going to do with Peri now that he's got her? Is he just going to stare at her all day?

Sometimes my wife can be very naive.

Sue: It's very intense, isn't it? I haven't got any fingernails left.

Unfortunately, Peri's condition is getting worse.

THE CAVES OF ANDROZANI

Sue: She looks like you, right now.

It's true, I'm currently suffering from the second stage of man flu. It's the stage where you look like shit and can't help feeling sorry for yourself.

Sue: Nicola's really good in these scenes. I really feel her pain.

The Doctor is taken to Stotz's ship.

Sue: Look at that lovely pink lighting. Any other director and this place would be brilliant white and over-lit. This is very cosy.

Morgus and Stotz are in cahoots.

Sue: How bleak is this? Are there any good guys?

Morgus breaks the fourth wall again.

Sue: It's annoying me, now. It's treating the audience like idiots. It doesn't need it.

The President of Androzani meets with Morgus.

Sue: The president is a fool. He's falling into the bad guy's trap.

Me: You can say that again.

Morgus pushes the president down a lift shaft.

Sue: Health and Safety legislation on this planet is a complete joke.

Sue continues to praise Graeme Harper.

Sue: This is on a different level. It's proper telly, this.

The Doctor is dying.

Sue: I can't believe he has to regenerate because he stung himself on some stupid nettles.

The episode concludes with the Doctor on a collision course with destiny.

Sue: Excellent. It doesn't get much better than that.

Part Four

Sue: Do you think Peter Davison wishes he hadn't left the programme at this point? Everything seems to be coming together for him at the end. He should have stayed a bit longer.

As the Doctor escapes from the gunrunner's spaceship, bullets pepper the ground.

Sue: Wow. Look at that!

Krelper is determined to shoot the Doctor dead.

Sue: He wiggles his arse when he shoots his gun. It's endearing. It might also explain why he can't shoot straight. This lot can run guns but they can't aim them.

The Doctor almost gives up.

Sue: This is getting desperate.

But he soldiers on. He must find Peri.

Sue: Aww!

The Doctor enters the caves again.

Sue: Where's the monster?

THE CAVES OF ANDROZANI

Me: Forget about the monster.

Sue: I can't just forget about it. Where's the monster?

Morgus will sell anyone out for a quick buck.

Sue: What a cunt.

Chellak enters Jek's hidden base. He even manages to pull Jek's mask off.

Sue: When we finally see his face, it had better be worth that reaction. He shat himself!

General Chellak is killed by a mud bath.

Sue: Oh no, I really liked him. In fact, he was the only one I liked.

Morgus is deposed by Krau Timmin.

Sue: Moneypenny has taken over. Excellent. But he hasn't got anything to lose now. This could get very nasty.

Stotz kills his colleagues in cold blood.

Sue: What a bastard. He even laughed at the end. Who am I supposed to be rooting for again?

Jek directs the Doctor to the antidote.

Sue: He's quite nice. For a sex pest.

Doctor heads deeper into the caves.

Sue: I finally remember this episode!

Me: Really?

Sue: Yes, I remember this terrible special effect of the Doctor in the caves.

I definitely remember that. Isn't that funny? **Me**: Do you have a problem with it now?

Sue: No. It doesn't really bother me.

The Doctor milks a hat

Sue: Drink it, then! What are you waiting for? Is he cured now?

Morgus reaches Jek's base and Jek tears off his mask.

Me: He's no Nev Fountain.

Sue: He's no Jeremy Kyle, either. Look at me! Look at me!

Sue gasps as the death toll mounts: Morgus, Jek, Stotz...

Sue: It's just like *Reservoir Dogs*. In space.

Sharaz Jek is fatally wounded. He falls into an android's arms.

Sue: Aww, he only wanted a cuddle. I feel sorry for him.

The Doctor carries Peri back to the TARDIS.

Me: Let's agree not to say anything until this episode ends. We can watch

it twice, if you like.

Sue: But... Me: Shush!

And that's what we do. And when it's over, I turn to Sue (which takes a lot of courage because my bottom lip is still quivering).

Sue: That was really sad. The music was excellent.

Me: Shall we watch it again?

I rewind the DVD.

THE CAVES OF ANDROZANI

Sue: It was very heroic of the Doctor to give up his life for someone he barely knew. A bit pointless, though. He had plenty of time to drink some of that milk before he dropped it. I bet he'll kick himself later.

Peri cradles the Doctor in her arms.

Sue: Does anybody actually look at Peter Davison during this scene instead of Peri's tits?

The Doctor must regenerate. However, it feels different this time.

Sue: Is it different because of the poison?

As the Doctor is haunted by visions of his companions, Sue can't understand why Peri has backed out of shot. And that's not the only thing she doesn't understand.

Sue: Kamelion shouldn't be there. He wasn't a real companion. You may as well have the sonic screwdriver floating over his head. And Kamelion looks like David Bowie's Laughing Gnome, which isn't good, either.

The Doctor's last words are "Adric?"

Sue: He still feels bad about it, doesn't he? If I had to sum up this regeneration in one word it would be tragic. But in a good way.

The Doctor regenerates and Peri is rendered speechless when the new Doctor asks her if she was expecting someone else.

Sue: Well, I certainly wasn't expecting Art Garfunkel!

Cue credits.

Me: First impression of Colin? **Sue**: (*As Colin*) Change, my dear?

Me: No, I mean, what do you think of him so far?

Sue: He's okay. Bring him on.

The Score

Sue: It's either a nine or a 10...

The tension is killing me.

Sue: Hmm...

She's definitely doing this on purpose.

Sue: Okay, I've got two problems with it. One: the stupid monster. And not just because it looked rubbish, it was pointless, as well. If they hadn't bothered with that monster, they would have had more time to fix the other things I didn't like, like that bloke who constantly looked down the camera lens. It spoilt it. It took me out of the drama.

Oh, for fuck's sake.

Sue: Everything else – the direction, the acting, the script, the music, the lighting, the costumes – fabulous. But it wasn't perfect.

9/10

I tell her that The Caves of Androzani *was voted the best* Doctor Who *story of all time in a poll in 2009.*

Me: Blink came second.

Sue: Are they having a laugh? Fans really think that was better than *Blink*? Ha! That's funny. Bloody fans.

COMMENT: "You know what the crappiest part of the Magma Beast actually is? They gave it a sodding CLOAK." – Dave Sanders

THE DAVISON YEARS BLOGGED: 12 November 2012

As luck would have it, a few days after Sue watched *The Caves of Androzani*, Peter Davison was slated to appear at a convention in Newcastle to discuss that very story. And what better way for her to engage with the programme, I thought, than to ask Peter Davison a question about it! And that's how Sue ended up asking him, "What's your first line in the 50th anniversary special?"

Peter looked crestfallen, as if this was the first time he'd realised he hadn't been booked to appear in the $50^{\rm th}$ anniversary special. And everybody laughed.

We didn't think very much about it at the time – we were far too busy having nightmares about John Levene (this occurred at the same *Doctor Who* convention where Sue accidentally spilt a pint of Guinness over Benton) – but a year later, as we headed to London to live blog the anniversary special for *The Guardian* (which I'll cover in Volume 8), we heard Peter plugging his own contribution to the celebrations on Radio 2 – *The Five(ish) Doctors Reboot* (which we will also blog in Volume 8; seriously, Volume 8 is going to be ace!)

When Peter was asked what inspired him to make his own film, he said he came up with the idea a year ago after someone at a convention asked him what his first words were in the 50th anniversary special, and how it suddenly dawned on him that he wasn't actually in it. The rest, as they say, is history.

So there you have it. Sue made Peter Davison feel sad, which in turn resulted in one of the funniest things Colin Baker's ever been associated with. Isn't it weird how things turn out?

All of this was captured on a podcast (which you can still listen to here: https://soundcloud.com/wifeinspace/wife2) where I let our readers quiz Sue about Peter Davison's tenure as the Doctor (in between the daft songs, almost knocking over Leela and spilling a pint over Benton):

Lord Dalek (not his real name): Now that you've decided Malcolm

Clarke is the best composer working for the Radiophonic Workshop during this period, does it make you re-evaluate the position you took on his classic 1972 score for *The Sea Devils*?

Sue: I don't know who this guy is. Malcolm who?

Me: Malcolm Clarke. He did the music for Earthshock. You know,

KLANG! KLANG! KLANG! **Sue**: Oh yeah, I liked that.

Me: But you didn't like the music to The Sea Devils very much. So would

you go back and watch The Sea Devils?

Sue: Absolutely not. **Me**: Right answer.

Dave Sanders: If you had your own Kamelion – one which actually worked – and it was prepared to turn itself into one person for you – any

person at all - who would you choose?

Sue: Er...

Dave: PS: Someone other than Michael Bublé, please.

Sue: Probably a handyman. **Me**: Just *a* handyman?

Sue: Any handyman. Somebody who could do a bit of gardening, or DIY.

Because my husband doesn't do that.

Me: That makes me feel bad. You're supposed to come up with a fantasy character, not some bloke you can meet down the road.

Simon Harries: I have two questions and the first is for Neil: which of Sue's comments and scores for the Peter Davison's stories have surprised or shocked you the most?

Sue: I know this. It's *Shada*. No, *Shakedown*... **Me**: We haven't done either of those, Sue...

Sue: No, it's Snakedance. Sorry.

Me: Yes, that's true. Snakedance is a nine out of 10 and you gave it a five.

Sue: Well, in my opinion, that's what it was worth.

Me: Was it worth us sleeping in separate beds that week?

Sue: Absolutely.

Simon Harries: And here's my second question, which is for Sue: you've pointed out a couple of times now that Peter Davison is very easy on the eye, so I wondered, what would be the plot of your fantasy episode of

THE DAVISON YEARS

Doctor Who starring Peter Davison?

Sue: Probably one where he just walks around with his negligée on all day.

Me: Negligée?!

Sue: You know, that smoking jacket thing he wore?

Me: His paisley dressing gown?

Sue: Yeah, his paisley dressing gown. I don't know, I'll have to think about

this when I'm in the right mood. It's a bit personal, Simon.

Andrew T Smith: Do you have a pre-nuptial agreement, and will it stand

up in court?

Sue: No, but we should have got one!

Me: Too late now. Do you think our marriage is stronger as a result of

this? **Sue**: Erm...

Me: That's obviously a no.

The next day, I decided to see how much of the Peter Davison era had made a lasting impression on her.

Me: Which story, according to Peter Davison, had the worst production assistant of all time?

Sue: Erm...

Me: He told you this yesterday at his panel.

Sue: I wasn't listening because I was feeling anxious about asking him a

question.

Me: It was *Four to Doomsday*. He was a bit catty, wasn't he?

Sue: (*Laughing*) Yeah, he was a bit. **Me**: What disease did Nyssa have?

Sue: Lezzers.

Me: Nearly. Okay, I want you to name one script editor who worked on

Doctor Who during Peter Davison's era?

Sue: Robert Holmes.

Me: No! (*Of course, looking back, she's technically correct; blame my badlyworded question.*) Come on, you've got plenty to choose from.

Sue: This is implying that I read the credits. This implies that I care about

this. I'm sorry but I have no idea.

Me: Okay, then, so what does the H in Christopher H Bidmead stand for?

He's one of the script editors, by the way.

Sue: Now that you've said it, it's obvious. Erm... Christopher H... Harry?

Me: It's Hamilton.

Sue: Why is that important?

Me: It isn't. What is Peter Davison's real name?

Sue: I know this. It's Moffett.

Me: Who composed the KLANG! KLANG! KLANG! music?

Sue: Somebody or other.

Me: We only spoke about this yesterday.

Sue: It just proves that it's information I don't need to know. Or want to

even think about.

Me: I'll give you his first name. Malcolm...

Sue: Robinson.

Me: Did JN-T and Eric Saward get on with each other (he's another script

editor, by the way)?

Sue: No.

Me: Can you mend people?

Sue: No. YOU CAN'T MEND PEOPLE.

Me: Can you sum up Peter Davison's Doctor in three words?

Sue: Sensitive, sexy and... solid.

EXTRAS PETER DAVISON'S TIGHT PANTS





This blog originally appeared in the Kickstarter-exclusive ebook The *Wife Versus Everything Else Volume 1* and was commissioned by Matthew Trulock.

Me: What do you know about *The Tomorrow People*, Sue?

Sue: All the children were blonde. **Me**: That's *Children of the Damned*. **Sue**: In that case, I don't know.

Me: Yes, you do. You've seen the American remake.

Sue: I have?

Me: Don't you remember? Telepathic teenagers living in a subway station

with a sentient overhead projector named TIM. Ring any bells?

Sue: Not really.

Me: Pretty young men running around with no shirts on? No?

Sue: Oh, yes. It's all coming back to me now.

Me: Anyway, we're not watching that, we're watching an episode from

1975 instead.

Sue: So I won't see any topless men. Is that what you're saying?

Me: Well...

A Man For Emily 1: The Fastest Gun

In a spaceship that looks suspiciously like an egg box, a young man dressed in cowboy boots, some exceptionally tight underpants, and not much else, frankly, is enjoying a snooze.

Sue: Oh, hello...

She doesn't recognise the actor playing Elmer at first.

Sue: Am I supposed to recognise him?

Me: Do you want to see it again?

Sue: Go on, then. You've twisted my arm. I won't know what his name is,

though. You know what my memory is - FUCKING HELL!

It's Peter Davison.

Me: Don't get too excited, love. He's just a boy.

Sue: His hair is a problem, but I could have fixed that.

Before I can tell her Peter Davison is wearing a wig, the programme's iconic title sequence kicks in.

Sue: (*Trying to sing along*) I like the music.

Me: It's Dudley Simpson.

Sue: Is it really? It's the most melodic thing he's ever written.

Me: Did you notice the foetus at the beginning? You don't see that many

foetuses on children's television.

Sue: It's terrifying. Especially that hand. Bloody hell, this is a bit fucked-

up, isn't it?

Elmer is rudely awoken by his sister Emily (aka Sandra Dickinson).

Sue: Wasn't Peter Davison married to her in real life?

 \mathbf{Me} : Yes. Their daughter will grow up to marry David Tennant. How weird

is that?

Sue: I feel like we're about to watch a sex tape. I mean, what is this room supposed to be, anyway? It looks like an S&M dungeon. Probably.

When Elmer is fully dressed (sorry, Sue), Emily takes him to the Momma. Sue is dumbstruck as bowls of guacamole, 'tickling boots' and Peter Davison being forced to lick his sister's high-heeled leather stilettos vie for her attention.

THE TOMORROW PEOPLE

Sue: Bloody hell. Are the Tomorrow People like this all the time?

Me: They aren't the Tomorrow People, Sue.

Sue: Thank fuck for that!

Later, in the Tomorrow People's secret London Underground base...

Me: These are the Tomorrow People, Sue.

Sue: Oh. I feel like I've gate-crashed a school disco. (*Pointing at John*) Isn't he a bit old to be hanging around in a youth club? (*Pointing at Tyso*) And her hair is a right mess.

Yes, Sue thinks Tyso is a girl. Anyway, the Tomorrow People's supercomputer doesn't recognise the alien ship that has entered Earth's orbit.

Sue: TIM is basically Zen, but not as moody.

Me: Or HAL, but not as psychotic.

Sue: Or my sat nav, but not as portable.

The Momma and Emily discuss gender politics.

Sue: The mother figure reminds me of that woman in the stupid

programme with the puppets.

Me: Pipkins?

Sue: No, the other one. The one with the terrible movies.

Me: You mean Mystery Science Theatre 3000.

Sue: Yeah. That one. I've also worked out why these idiots are speaking American. It's because they hired Sandra Dickinson and they thought it would be easier if they got Peter and his mum to talk like her. It's obvious when you think about it.

The aliens have actually tailored their speech, clothing and mannerisms to fit Wild West stereotypes because they've been intercepting TV signals from Earth

Sue: It's not exactly Firefly, though, is it? And thank God they didn't

intercept any transmissions from the Playboy Channel.

As John and Elizabeth are left to flounce around outside the aliens' spaceship – brought vividly to life via some of the worst CSO ever committed to videotape – Sue comes to a conclusion.

Sue: This is, without a doubt, the most fucked-up thing you have ever made me watch, Neil. And you made me watch *Blake's 7*.

Me: I don't know what to say. Will sorry do?

Sue: Why don't they just teleport onto the fucking ship? What is their

plan, anyway? Who are these people?

The Momma monitors these events on her spherical television set.

Sue: You could buy those TVs in *Rumbelows*. I remember there was one in their front window for *years*. It was state-of-the-art, but no one could afford it. Not up here, anyway.

Elizabeth ends up on the alien ship; the Momma and Emily are thrilled when she turns out to be a woman.

Sue: Are they opening a brothel up there? WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON, NEIL?

The aliens are running dangerously low on guacamole and Elmer is sent to Earth to search for avocados.

Sue: Nice product placement for Guinness, there. I bet they didn't pay a penny for that.

Elmer strolls into a greengrocer's.

Sue: It's Peter Davison I feel sorry for. I'm surprised he worked again after this. This is enough to put anybody off acting for life.

THE TOMORROW PEOPLE

Elmer tries to walk off with an armful of fresh fruit and fish, and when the grocer intervenes, Elmer shoots him dead.

Sue: Bloody hell!

There's blood everywhere. Two old ladies applaud wildly, believing they're on Candid Camera.

Sue: What the hell? This is a bit grim all of a sudden.

Me: This was broadcast on a weekday afternoon. This was proper kids'

telly.

Sue: No way! But... But they can't do that!

TIM tells the Tomorrow People that Elmer has gone postal.

Sue: It's basically Hungerford out there, kids.

Me: Yeah, so don't forget to wrap up warm when you go out.

Stephen jaunts to the scene of the crime and fixes the dead grocer's wound.

Sue: So they can bring people back from the dead, as well? Is there

anything the Tomorrow People *can't* do?

Me: They struggle to make tank-tops look good.

Elmer heads for the pub.

Me: The landlord's cat is definitely dead now.

Sue: Stop it.

And then Sue's jaw hits the floor when the Momma decides to touch herself inappropriately. I'm not making this up. It's essentially Fifty Shades of Grotbags at this point.

Sue: I take it back. They *did* intercept transmissions from the Playboy Channel.

Me: I think I'm going to be sick.

The only way the Tomorrow People can get Elmer safely off Earth is to make him stand on a doozlum pin. And yes, that's as stupid as it sounds.

Sue: For a bunch of telepaths, they don't half like to hear themselves talk.

TIM locates Elmer just as the Tomorrow People are about to tuck into a plate of tasty beef burgers.

Sue: I don't think that was scripted. I think they were running out of time so they decided to have their dinner while they were still filming the episode. Something to do with child labour laws, probably.

Stephen and John jaunt to the pub that's being terrorised by Elmer. It's fun for the whole family!

Sue: Is this supposed to be funny, Neil? Because it's quite bleak. I think it's trying to say something profound about the effects of watching too much violence on television. Which is a bit rich given that we've just seen a shopkeeper with a hole in his stomach.

The episode concludes when the police apprehend the baby-faced murderer before he can kill any more "galoots".

Sue: The credits are very trippy. Which makes sense, I suppose, because you'd have to be off your tits to follow this rubbish.

A Man For Emily 2: Here We Go Round the Doozlum

The Momma and Emily go nuts when they discover Elmer has been arrested.

Sue: This is dreadful, Neil. It's the screeching that's killing me. How did

THE TOMORROW PEOPLE

Peter Davison put up with this in real life?

TIM explains that Stephen "reanimated" the dead greengrocer killed by Flmer earlier

Sue: So one of their superpowers is they can turn you into a zombie? So what happens to that greengrocer now? Does he live forever? Is he like Captain Jack? Will he start eating people?

Tyso heads to the police station where Elmer is being held, armed with a box of bees. When the police are attacked by the insects, one of their number shouts, "Bees!" just in case there's any confusion about what's happening. And then Elmer's jailbreak turns into a protracted runaround, complete with speeded-up comedy pratfalls. Sue sings 'Yakety Sax' as I bury my head in my hands.

Sue: Look at the size of those potholes. They're proper 1970s potholes, them.

Me: They'll be slipping on white dog poo next.

John leads the police on a car chase so slow, a cyclist inadvertently becomes embroiled in it. When the excitement becomes too much for the audience to bear, John jaunts to safety.

Sue: I'd love a Land Rover Defender like theirs.

Me: Are you absolutely sure that's a Land Rover Defender? You know what happened when you misidentified a Land Rover on our *Doctor Who* blog. I still get emails about that.

Sue: Okay, I'd love a four-wheel drive like that. That should shut the cunts up.

Stephen and Liz search for Elmer's doozlum pin in a nearby field.

Me: That cat is definitely dead now.

Sue: STOP IT!

Stephen accidentally steps on the doozlum pin and is transported to the aliens' ship instead. Emily and the Momma torture him with aggravated slapstick.

Sue: This is a bad panto.

Me: Oh no it isn't.

Sue: Oh yes it fucking is.

Me: This isn't a typical *Tomorrow People* story.

Sue: So why are we watching it, then?

Me: A semi-naked Peter Davison was simply too irresistible to pass up, I

guess.

Sue: Well, it wasn't fucking worth it. Couldn't you have shown me a picture of a semi-naked Peter Davison and then put a good episode on

instead? This is torture!

Elmer is transported back to his ship, and it looks like everything will be wrapped up nicely. The only problem is they've still got an episode left to fill.

Sue: Please, for the love of God, end it there!

John jaunts to the aliens' ship in a desperate attempt to string things out. He is immediately threatened with rape.

Sue: Whoever wrote this rubbish was shit-scared of women.

Me: The Momma is squeezing Elmer's banana. How's that for symbolism?

John escapes from the aliens' clutches, but it's too late – Emily has the horn (and we're not talking about her trombone). The Momma orders Elmer back to Earth so he can find a mate for his sister.

Sue: What the fuck? No amount of naked Peter Davison is worth this, Neil.

Elmer returns to the pub he terrorised a few hours ago. It's open for business, of course.

THE TOMORROW PEOPLE

Sue: The staff should be in counselling instead of pulling pints like nothing happened. I suppose people were a lot harder in the 1970s. They just got on with it.

The Prime Minster calls TIM to complain about Stephen's decision to flaunt and jaunt.

Sue: So the Tomorrow People work for the government?

Me: No, they don't. But the Prime Minister comes to their base for milkshakes now and again. He's basically their dad, and he bollocks them when they get into trouble with the police. It's complicated.

Sue: It's fucking stupid.

Elmer activates the pub's jukebox and forces the landlord to dance.

Sue: Oh no. Is he dancing to Gary Glitter? **Me**: Oh God. Just when you thought this couldn't get any worse.

It isn't Gary Glitter – it's Kenny (the band, not the Tomorrow Person) with 'The Bump', which resulted in a short-lived dance craze which Sue remembers fondly (and even demonstrates). And, as an extra special bonus, according to the band's Wikipedia page, none of the members have been arrested recently. So that's good.

Sue: This is ridiculous. You wouldn't catch Doctor Who wasting his time on these idiots. This would be beneath him.

The police storm the pub and arrest Elmer. Hang on a minute, that's how the first episode ended!

Sue: ARGHHHHHHH! Make it stop!

A Man For Emily 3: Shotgun Wedding

Sue: This title sequence doesn't suit the show. It should be more like a sitcom. Something light and fluffy. It should prepare you for what you're actually going to see. This makes it look like *The Tomorrow People* is a programme about serial killers who prey on small children. The music is brilliant, though. It's completely wasted on this drivel.

Elmer is released from jail, but he forces John onto the doozlum pin, who is transported to the alien ship instead. John is greeted by Emily and the Momma, who are dressed as majorettes. Because this programme isn't fucked-up enough.

Sue: John looked directly at the camera, there. It's as if he's pleading with someone to get him out of the programme. His agent, probably.

John tells Emily that she really isn't his type.

Sue: Now there's a surprise. I never would have guessed.

The Momma explains how the aliens' reproductive system works.

Me: This is the closest I ever came to having someone explain the birds and the bees to me while I was growing up.

Sue: Why doesn't that surprise me, either?

When John refuses to comply with Emily's demands, she activates his tickling boots.

Me: Even the Chuckle Brothers would have thought twice about this. **Sue**: I'd say it was for kids – really young kids, mind – but how can a programme that's this obsessed with sex be for kids? God, the 1970s were a dark time.

Me: I can't believe you didn't watch The Tomorrow People, Sue. You were

THE TOMORROW PEOPLE

13 years old at the time. You were its target audience! And it was on ITV. I

thought you were allowed to watch ITV?

Sue: I was probably too busy clawing my own eyes out.

Stephen escorts Elmer to the Tomorrow People's secret base.

Sue: Where is this place, anyway?

Me: It's a disused London Underground station.

Sue: Oh, so it's like Torchwood, then?

Me: Well, they don't own a pterodactyl, but yes, sort of.

Sue: It can't be a coincidence; Russell T Davies must have loved The

Tomorrow People.

Me: Well, like I said, some of the episodes are quite good.

Sue: Don't keep reminding me!

Elmer tells the Tomorrow People everything they need to know about the aliens, including the fact that the females eat their man-boys once they've finished with them.

Sue: As bad as this is – and it's really bad – Peter Davison is still very watchable. He's easily the best thing in this. Oh look, he's tickling TIM's balls.

Back on the alien ship, Emily snaps at John's little finger.

Sue: I bet it won't be his finger she bites off first.

And then Sandra Dickinson channels Shirley Temple ("The good ship Cosmic Eye" – really?) before farting like a trombone. No, wait – it's the Momma playing an actual trombone. Phew.

Me: We're through the looking glass now, people.

Sue: Oh, we went through that hours ago.

John puts Emily across his knee and spanks her.

Sue: This is shocking. I don't know what else to say. I feel numb.

Me: I grew up with this programme, Sue.

Sue: That explains a lot.

John offers the ship's occupants a new life on Earth.

Sue: Stick them in Butlins; they'll fit right in.

Instead, the Momma becomes a fishmonger (because she sounds like a fishwife) and Emily begins working in a bar (because she looks like a young Barbara Windsor).

Sue: Get outta my pub!

But what about Elmer? What job could he possibly do on Earth?

Sue: If he gets a job as a vet, I think my head will explode.

Elmer becomes a traffic warden instead, and the episode ends with him writing a ticket for the Tomorrow People's jeep Land Rover four-wheeled drive.

Sue: Wah-wah-wahhhh!

But the biggest laugh of the evening is saved for the credits.

Sue: Scientific advisor? SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR?!

The Score

Sue: Good grief. That was dreadful. In fact, I think it's probably the worst

thing you've ever made me watch. And you made me watch...

Me: Blake's 7. Yes, I know.

Sue: I was going to say Broadchurch.

THE TOMORROW PEOPLE

1/10

Me: Generous.

Sue: I would have given it less if it wasn't for Peter Davison. Peter Davison

is great in everything. Even shit like that.

GREAT AND SMALL

BLOGGED: 23 January 2017

Hair of the Dog

Sue: So is Peter Davison in this episode, then?

Me: Well, it'd be pretty stupid of us to watch this for a book about Peter

Davison if he wasn't.

Sue: That's why I'm asking. I know what you're like, Neil.

Me: Don't worry, love, he's definitely in it.

Sue: So why did you choose this episode? Have I seen this one before? **Me**: I don't think so. We stopped at the second season when we started

watching them together a few years ago. This is from the third.

Sue: Why did we stop watching them?

Me: Probably because we didn't do it in public and people weren't egging

us on.

Sue: Oh, right. Maybe we should...

Me: NO!

As Siegfried and Tristan Farnon drive towards Darrowby, they narrowly avoid knocking over a hobo and his dog.

Sue: Oh no...

Me: What's wrong?

Sue: I think I know why you chose this episode. **Me**: Good. I don't know why you're upset, though.

Sue: Yeah, right. You've picked this episode because that dog dies at the

end. I'll end up crying, and then you'll make fun of me.

And to think I thought she'd recognised Patrick Troughton as the hobo, Roddy. Although, to be fair, he is hidden by an unkempt beard, mad scientist hair and a thick Yorkshire accent.

ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

Sue: That's never Patrick Troughton!

Me: It is. Honest.

Sue: Oh yeah, so it is... He's very good, isn't he? He's definitely nailed the accent. Did he give Peter Davison any advice about playing the Doctor, do you think?

Me: I don't think Peter had been offered the part when they filmed this episode. Although he did later on. He told him to leave *Doctor Who* after three seasons.

Sue: So it's Patrick Troughton's fault Peter left when he did? And we got Colin Baker? You can go off a person, you know.

Me: Anyway, now you know why I chose this episode – you get two Doctors for the price of one.

Sue: Fair enough. But if his dog dies at the end, I'll fucking kill you.

The next morning, Tristan, Siegfried and James Herriot settle down to breakfast together.

Sue: So what do you want me to talk about while we watch this? Because I could talk about that cabinet behind them for hours.

Me: I was hoping you'd concentrate on Peter Davison. You know, for a change.

Sue: The thing is, Neil, he's a bit too young in this. Maybe it's my age or something, but I think I fancy James Herriot more.

Me: You fancy Christopher Timothy?

Sue: Ten years ago I would have fancied Peter Davison, but right this second? Yeah, probably. Why are we even talking about this? Who cares?! **Me**: Well, I do, for a start. So how old will you be when you start fancying Robert Hardy?

Sue: (*Checking her watch*) Probably by the time we've finished this.

Their housekeeper, Mrs Hall, is called away to look after her sick relatives and it's down to Tristan to keep on top of the housework.

Me: Can you see why they chose Peter to play the Doctor based on his performance as Tristan?

Sue: Well, he is wearing a tank-top like Sylvester McCoy's, but apart from that, no, not really. He's a bit of a wimp in this. He's still a great actor, mind, but Tristan doesn't half whine. Ooh, there's some lovely pitch pine in the background, there...

Siegfried's first patient of the day is... a monkey.

Sue: What the fuck?

The monkey isn't even a subplot.

Sue: So were there a lot of monkeys in Yorkshire in... What year is this? **Me**: It's 1938, I think. And yes, all the monkeys from Hartlepool ran away to Yorkshire to avoid being hanged as French spies. Everybody knows that.

James tells Siegfried he envies Roddy's hobo lifestyle, and how living out of a pram could have its upsides.

Sue: It was a simpler time back then, when people actually admired tramps. These days he'd be hounded out of the village as a benefits cheat or something.

Later that night, James' wife, Helen, chastises him for working late once again.

Sue: She definitely isn't getting any. You can tell by the way she threw that slice of bread at him. No wonder he secretly wants to leave her and live out of a pram.

The next morning, Tristan is faced with a mountain of chores to complete.

Sue: What is it with Peter Davison and tight underpants?

Me: What?

Sue: Look at him! You can see his pants through his trousers again! Are

ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

you blind?

Me: Funnily enough, I wasn't looking at Peter Davison's arse. Sorry.

Sue: I'm sure it can't be good for his sperm count...

James is tasked with treating a cow with "a pea in her titty".

Sue: This is what will happen to Peter Davison if he doesn't change his underpants.

Meanwhile, Tristan accidentally floods the kitchen, because he's too busy berating the local butcher for selling them fatty meat, to keep his eye on the sink.

Sue: This is what happens every time I leave you to look after yourself. A total fucking disaster.

Me: You're actually comparing me to Peter Davison?

Sue: No, I'm comparing you to Tristan, who's a bit of a twat.

James can't control the cow with the pea stuck in its titty, but, luckily for him, Roddy is on hand to save the day. He offers to buy him a pint, but the hobo doesn't drink or smoke.

Sue: He is a serial bigamist, though.

James admires Roddy's free-and-easy attitude.

Sue: I think James has a man-crush on Roddy.

Me: It's a bit patronising, though, don't you think? Let's all be wistfully

romantic about the homeless guy on the zero-hours contract. **Sue**: Oh, stop being so cynical, Neil. Just for half an hour.

James takes a leaf out of Roddy's book and promises to give up alcohol.

Sue: Roddy hasn't had a bath or a shave in three years, either. I hope he doesn't start copying that too.

A fellow vet named Granville Bennett invites James and Siegfried for lunch at his place. However, when they arrive at his farmhouse, they discover he's turned it into a pub.

Me: The incidental music in this scene is bloody awful.

Sue: Who cares? Look at that lovely brickwork...

Granville immediately starts plying his guests with drinks.

Sue: It's Mad Men for vets.

Granville pours James a large gin with a tiny splash of tonic.

Sue: Cut to them wrestling on the floor naked.

And then, completely smashed out of their faces on champagne cocktails, they decide to go for a curry.

Sue: Oh no. I know what happens next. He's so pissed, he drives over Roddy's dog. I'm right, aren't I?

Granville's doomed attempts at controlling his car are accompanied by a comedy parp-parp soundtrack.

Sue: Hey! Drinking and driving is fun!

Thankfully, Granville decides to abort their trip to the curry house and they return to the pub to scoff their faces with hot dogs instead. I can only assume the local kebab shop was shut.

Sue: And now they're topping it off with pints of beer. Even Don Draper would have thought twice about that.

When an inebriated James returns to Skeldale House he is immediately faced with Tristan's attempt at a beef stew.

ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

Sue: This really is fucking brilliant. I can't believe we stopped watching these.

As James throws up upstairs, Siegfried bravely tucks into Tristan's meat feast.

Sue: This is hilarious. They are obviously having a competition to see who can talk with the most food in their mouths.

It turns out the meat Tristan used in the stew was meant for the dogs. But Sue's laughter is cut short when Roddy suddenly arrives at the surgery in a great deal of distress.

Sue: Oh no! They're all too pissed to save his dog! I hate you, Neil!

Roddy's dog has a pebble stuck in its throat, and it's up to Tristan and Siegfried to save the day. It's the most tense Sue has been throughout this book (including Earthshock).

Sue: I can barely bring myself to watch this, it's so realistic. Either that dog is a brilliant actor, or the BBC actually poisoned it.

She reaches for a cushion, but thankfully it's just for comfort.

Sue: Come on then, get it out! What are you waiting for? Argh!

Luckily, Siegfried performs a quick tracheotomy and Roddy's dog makes a full recovery.

Sue: I bet Roddy skips town as soon as he sees the bill.

The episode concludes with James nursing one hell of a hangover.

Sue: Yeah, I probably would, you know.

The Score

Sue: That was lovely. And no dogs had to die, either.

Me: All the monkeys got out alive too.

Sue: In fact, no animals died at all. That's quiet rare for this show. Thanks

for that.

Me: It's entirely accidental. If Patrick Troughton had appeared in an episode where an entire farm was struck down by foot and mouth disease, I would have made you watch that instead.

Sue: And I would have knocked a mark off for every animal that died, so it was the right decision.

10/10

A VERY PECULIAR PRACTICE

BLOGGED: 15 March 2017

This blog was originally commissioned by Jon Cole for the Kickstarterexclusive ebook The Wife Versus Everything Else Volume 2.

A Very Long Way From Anywhere

Sue: I don't like the theme music very much. And what's this title sequence meant to be about? I thought this series was set in a university? It looks like a zombie film. Or there's been a nuclear explosion. Anyway, it doesn't tell me what the programme is supposed to be and the music is terrible.

Me: Don't you remember this? I know we've watched it together before. I think we borrowed some VHS tapes back in the 1990s...

Sue: I know it's set in a university, but I couldn't tell you anything specific about it. I definitely remember liking it, though, so I must have blanked-out the theme music. Which episode are we watching?

Me: The first one. That way we can watch them in order if we suddenly get into it again.

Sue: In public? **Me**: Absolutely not.

Sue: Oh, okay. We'll do it after All Creatures Great and Small.

Me: Fine.

hins.

Sue: And *Northern Exposure*. You bought me the box set for Christmas three years ago and we still haven't watched an episode. When will it be my turn to make *you* watch something?

Moving swiftly on, the episode begins with two nuns rooting through some

Sue: Are they mature students on their way back from a party?

Me: No, they're real nuns. You don't remember this series at all, do you?

Sue: So why are nuns going through these bins? **Me**: It's a metaphor for something. Wait and see.

Sue: It's a bad habit, that's for sure.

Me: I'm going to pretend you didn't say that.

The first person we meet is Jock McCannon.

Sue: Oh yes, it's all coming back to me now. He's always pissed, isn't he?

Jock uses an intercom to contact his colleague, Bob Buzzard.

Me: Who's that, Sue?

Sue: Bob. He just called him Bob.

Me: No, I mean, who's the actor playing him?

Sue: I have no idea.

Me: He had a famous dad.

Sue: Oh yes, of course. It's Patrick Troughton's son. I've met him, haven't

I3

Me: No, that was his other son, Michael. This is David. **Sue**: Patrick had so many families, it's difficult to keep up.

Cue Peter Davison in a car.

Me: Is he still too young to fancy?

Sue: A little. Is this before or after Doctor Who?

Me: After.

Sue: Well, in that case, I think I'm allowed to fancy him. **Me**: If it makes you feel uncomfortable, there's always Jock.

Peter Davison is playing Dr Stephen Daker.

Sue: So Peter Davison plays a doctor in this?

Me: Yes.

Sue: Wasn't he worried about being typecast? A vet, a Doctor, and then

another doctor... What did he play after this? A dentist?

A VERY PECULIAR PRACTICE

Stephen arrives at Lowlands University.

Sue: He should have parked his car closer to the main building. What an

idiot!

She isn't impressed with the university's Brutalist architecture.

Sue: What a dump. Where did they film this?

Me: Birmingham, I think. Sue: That explains everything.

Stephen encounters a sobbing man.

Sue: He must be one of the lecturers. That's how I usually finish my classes.

And then he accidentally stumbles into a young woman who's out jogging.

Sue: Oh yes, it's all coming back to me now. They end up shagging.

Me: Spoilers!

Sue: It's obvious! He's drooling all over her!

Sue can't believe that a university could afford its own medical centre.

Sue: We've got some people who are trained in first aid, if you can find

them before you bleed to death, but that's about it.

Me: So who do you go to if you catch a sexually transmitted disease? Sue: I have no idea, but I wouldn't go looking for [NAME REDACTED] -

they barely know how to apply a plaster.

When Stephen arrives at the practice, Jock mistakes him for a patient with libido problems. Stephen tries to correct the error (the line "No, I'm a real doctor" gets a belly laugh from Sue), but Jock assumes he must be a stripogram instead. It takes Sue a good five minutes to stop laughing at that.

Sue: If only!

When Jock realises Stephen has been appointed as the practice's replacement doctor, he tells him everything he needs to know about Lowlands University. Namely that it's being destroyed by swingeing cuts, apathy and neglect.

Sue: Nowt's changed. This could have been written yesterday. For example...

Me: Do you really want me to publish this in a book? **Sue**: Good point. I love my university. It's fabulous.

As Jock pours himself half a pint of whiskey, I remind her Graham Crowden almost played the Fourth Doctor (see The Horns of Nimon).

Sue: He'd have been good. You can see why they considered him. He's got crazy eyes, like Tom Baker. In fact, it's a miracle anyone ever considered Peter Davison for *Doctor Who*. I mean, just look at him. He doesn't have that... *thing*.

Me: Thing?

Sue: The thing that makes you say, "They'd be a good Doctor." He hasn't

got it. He's very easy on the eye but he doesn't have that thing.

Me: And yet you liked his Doctor.

Sue: Actually, I think I just liked Peter Davison.

Bob gives Stephen a tour of the practice.

Sue: How many staff does this place have? Our department doesn't have this many full-time staff!

Stephen meets Rose Marie and immediately puts his foot in it.

Me: I had such a crush on Rose Marie back in 1986.

Sue: Is this what first attracted you to radical feminists, Neil?

Me: Definitely. In fact, I think *A Very Peculiar Practice* is probably responsible for me wanting to go to university in the first place.

A VERY PECULIAR PRACTICE

Sue: And I bet you only watched this series because an ex-Doctor was in

it.

Me: Probably.

Sue: And if you hadn't gone to university, we wouldn't have met.

Me: That's right.

Sue: (Sighing) Doctor Who certainly has a lot to answer for.

Bob Buzzard oozes cynicism from every pore.

Sue: He's brilliant. Horrible, but brilliant. Because he gets all the best lines.

Stephen tells Bob he actually likes being a GP.

Sue: If Stephen Daker was my GP, I'd end up like you, Neil.

Me: I don't understand.

Sue: A hypochondriac. I'd be in and out of his surgery like a yo-yo.

Meanwhile Jock is busy with a patient – an overseas student with stomach pains. However, instead of examining her, he blames her condition on homesickness and stress.

Sue: I bet she's got appendicitis. I mean, I sort of like Jock, and he probably means well, but he's totally incompetent. He reminds me of [NAME REDACTED].

Me: You should probably stop doing that. We can't afford a good lawyer.

Stephen agrees to Bob's offer of a squash game and Bob gives him a jolly good thrashing.

Sue: Please tell me there's a shower scene... And Peter's wearing black underpants again.

Me: They're shorts, Sue.

Sue: Whatever. He loves tight pants, doesn't he? That would be a great

name for a band, actually: Peter Davison's Tight Pants.

Sue is treated to the next best thing, Peter Davison's Swimming Trunks.

Sue: Please tell me he's just pretending he doesn't know how to swim, because he looks like a dick. He looks like he's afraid to get his hair wet.

Bob completes his laps of the pool and leaves a clearly exhausted Stephen to finish.

Sue: Just wait a couple of minutes and then climb out. No one will ever know!

Stephen almost drowns instead. Thankfully, the pool's life guard – who also happens to be the woman he was drooling over earlier – saves his life.

Sue: For a moment there I thought he was pretending to drown so he could catch her eye, but he really is hopeless, isn't he? I don't remember him being such a wimp. I mean, this is pretty wimpy, even for Peter Davison.

Stephen is so grateful to be alive, he thinks Lowlands University is a wonderful place to be.

Sue: Really? I'd be halfway back to Walsall by now. I told you he should have parked his car closer to the main building. I mean, this has to be the worst first day ever.

But it isn't over yet, because later that night Stephen has to attend a party at the Vice Chancellor's house.

Sue: I've never been invited to my VC's house. Or any parties, come to think of it. I expect it's because people are worried I'll bring you with me. Yeah, that's probably it.

The VC's academic guests are a little eccentric, to put it mildly.

A VERY PECULIAR PRACTICE

Sue: This reminds me of...

Me: Let me stop you right there.

Sue: I'm just saying I've worked with some of these people. We both have. You can tell that the person who wrote this must have worked at a real

university. He did, didn't he?

Me: Andrew Davies taught English at the University of Warwick. **Sue**: Thought so. And I know someone who went to work for the

University of Warwick. She was... **Me**: Don't finish that sentence.

Stephen bumps into Lyn - the woman who saved his life at the pool - but he puts his foot in it again.

Sue: I'm sure they end up sleeping together. Although it's going to be a fucking miracle based on his performance so far.

Stephen is called away to deal with a medical emergency, the overseas student had acute appendicitis, after all.

Sue: Even I knew that, and I'm not a doctor.

After saving the student's life, Stephen decides to confront Jock.

Sue: This has gone a bit dark. I mean, Jock should be struck off. She could have died. Yes, he's very funny, but how many people do you think he's killed?

The episode ends with Stephen finally losing his patience with his colleague.

Sue: Finally, some backbone! Oh no, it's finished. Just as I was getting into it.

The Score

Sue: That was great. We should definitely watch them all.

9/10

Sue: I have to knock a mark off for the awful theme tune. Please, turn it off!

I pause the DVD.

Sue: I really enjoyed that. And you know what's really weird? I actually look forward to watching TV programmes made in 4:3 now. I blame you for that, Neil.

Me: What?

Sue: Well, most of the things you make me watch are in 4:3, and it reminds me of better times. Maybe it's because the world is fucked right now, or I'm just getting old, but I find that watching old TV programmes can be really comforting these days.

Me: That's nice. I think... Anyway, we've got one more thing to watch for

the book. **Sue**: Is it in 4:3?

Me: No.



This Children in Need special begins where Last of the Time Lords ends...

Sue: Why are we watching this, Neil? Not that I'm complaining.

Martha Jones leaves the Tenth Doctor to sulk alone in his TARDIS. However, just before it collides with the Titanic, the Fifth Doctor turns up instead. Cue titles.

Sue: Eh? What the hell is this?

Me: Can't you at least do the, "What? What?" thing?

Sue: Eh? What?

I pause the DVD so I can bring Sue up to speed.

Sue: I don't remember seeing this before.

Me: You were out that night. I must have shown it to you when you got

back, though.

Sue: Well, if you did, I can't have paid much attention to it, because I'm

sure I would have remembered it.

Me: This was back in 2007 when I didn't bother you with anything to do with old *Doctor Who*. We'd just moved out of the caravan and I was still plotting my revenge.

Sue: Is this a whole episode, then? **Me**: No, it's only eight minutes.

Sue: Is that all? You'll have me commenting on the trailers next.

The Tenth Doctor is thrilled to meet his former self, whereas the Fifth Doctor is simply baffled. Sue, on the other hand, has a stupid grin on her face.

Sue: Hang on... I thought you weren't allowed to touch yourself, and if you did touch yourself, the universe would explode. Or did I imagine that

rule?

Me: Either you're remembering the Blinovitch Limitation Effect or that's what they taught you at Catholic school. It's difficult to know for sure.

The Tenth Doctor explains away the Fifth Doctor's ageing on the time differential being shorted out.

Sue: EH? What? Oh, never mind. I don't care. This is brilliant.

The Fifth Doctor becomes increasingly agitated with the Tenth's verbal diarrhoea.

Sue: That's the angriest I've ever seen Peter Davison. **Me**: He wasn't this upset when Adric died, that's for sure.

The Tenth Doctor is fascinated with the back of his former self's head.

Sue: If it makes you feel any better, Neil, I still fancy Peter Davison even though he's losing his hair.

Me: And that's supposed to make me feel better, is it?

Sue: I'm just saying, don't worry about it. You look fine. From a certain angle. And even if you didn't, it doesn't bother me. Because if it did bother

me, I wouldn't still fancy Peter Davison. **Me**: Oh, in that case, thanks very much.

The Fifth Doctor accuses the Tenth of changing the TARDIS' desktop theme (which gets a huge laugh from Sue), and then he realises that two TARDISes are inexplicably sharing the same space in time, and the resulting paradox will cause an explosion the size of Belgium.

Sue: So the Doctors can touch each other, but their TARDISes can't. See, I definitely knew that.

The Fifth Doctor mistakes the Tenth Doctor for his biggest fan.

Sue: His biggest fan would have come dressed as him. I've actually seen

TIME CRASH

people do that, you know.

And then the Cloister Bell goes off.

Sue: Oh no. That sound means they're completely fucked. **Me**: Yeah, they should probably start using it on *News at Ten*.

The Tenth Doctor saves the day by remembering seeing himself saving the day in the past, in the future. Or as both Doctors – and Sue – proclaim, it's:

Sue: Timey-wimey!

The Tenth Doctor drops a bombshell - the Master has a wife.

Me: If he thinks that's surprising, he ain't seen nothing yet!

And then it's time for the Fifth Doctor to leave. But not before the Tenth Doctor tells him he was "his Doctor".

Sue: Aww. I'm actually choking up at this. This is so sad.

As the Tenth Doctor asks his former self to send his love to long ago, I notice that Sue's bottom lip is quivering. But then the Titanic slams into the TARDIS and everything returns to 'normal'.

Sue: Oh, I definitely remember that. So I must have seen this before! The Score

Later, once I've explained to her that there are actually two versions of the scene where the Titanic slams into the TARDIS...

Sue: In that case, I can't give it a score.

Me: Why not?

Sue: Because it isn't real.

Me: It's a bit late to start worrying about that.

Sue: I mean, it isn't proper *Doctor Who*.

Me: Of course it is!

Sue: It's a sketch for *Comic Relief*.

Me: Children in Need.

Sue: Are you sure? Because it was very funny.

Me: Yes, I'm sure.

Sue: Are you saying that if it was *Comic Relief* it wouldn't count? Is that how it works? Because while it was great and everything, and I really enjoyed it, it was just David Tennant trying to get in his father-in-law's good books, wasn't it? I mean, that bit when he tells Peter Davison that he was his favourite Doctor, he was just being David Tennant, wasn't he? The Doctor was right – he was a fan. It's sweet, but it doesn't count. It's just a bit of fun.

Me: Okay, but what did you think of Peter Davison? Do you think he managed to slip back into the role again?

Sue: Yeah, he was brilliant. He's a bit older, and a lot grumpier, but he was still the Doctor. What shocked me the most was just how young and bouncy David Tennant looked back then. *Broadchurch* has really taken a toll on him.

Me: Any last words about Peter Davison before we put this book to bed? **Sue**: Only that he's a great actor, and I bet he's a really nice person in real life too. I don't know why they thought he'd be a good Doctor Who, but he was, and I'm glad.

SUE'S SCORES

Castrovalva: Profound. 8/10

Four to Doomsday: *Tedious bollocks.* 1/10 **Kinda:** *I liked it, but I didn't understand it.* 7/10

The Visitation: Crap. 3/10

Black Orchid: Peter's right, it's rubbish. 2/10

Earthshock: Wow. 9/10

Time-Flight: *I'd like to give the captain one.* 1/10

Arc of Infinity: I've seen worse. 7/10 Snakedance: Nothing special. 5/10 Mawdryn Undead: Very, very good. 9/10 Terminus: Unintentionally hilarious. 3/10 Enlightenment: Hire more women. 9/10 The King's Demons: They rushed that. 5/10 The Five Doctors: It helps if you're drunk. 7/10

Warriors of the Deep: Too many monsters. 4/10 The Awakening: The plot wasn't good enough. 3/10

Frontios: I enjoyed it. 7/10

Resurrection of the Daleks: Complicated. 8/10 Planet of Fire: The locations were great. 7/10 The Caves of Androzani: Fabulous. 9/10

NEXT TIME

THE VALEYARD
THE MASTER
THE RANI
and JOAN SIMS

in

THE COURT JESTER: THE WIFE IN SPACE VOLUME 7

The Twin Dilemma to The Trial of a Time Lord

Foreword by Simon Guerrier

Autumn 2017



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