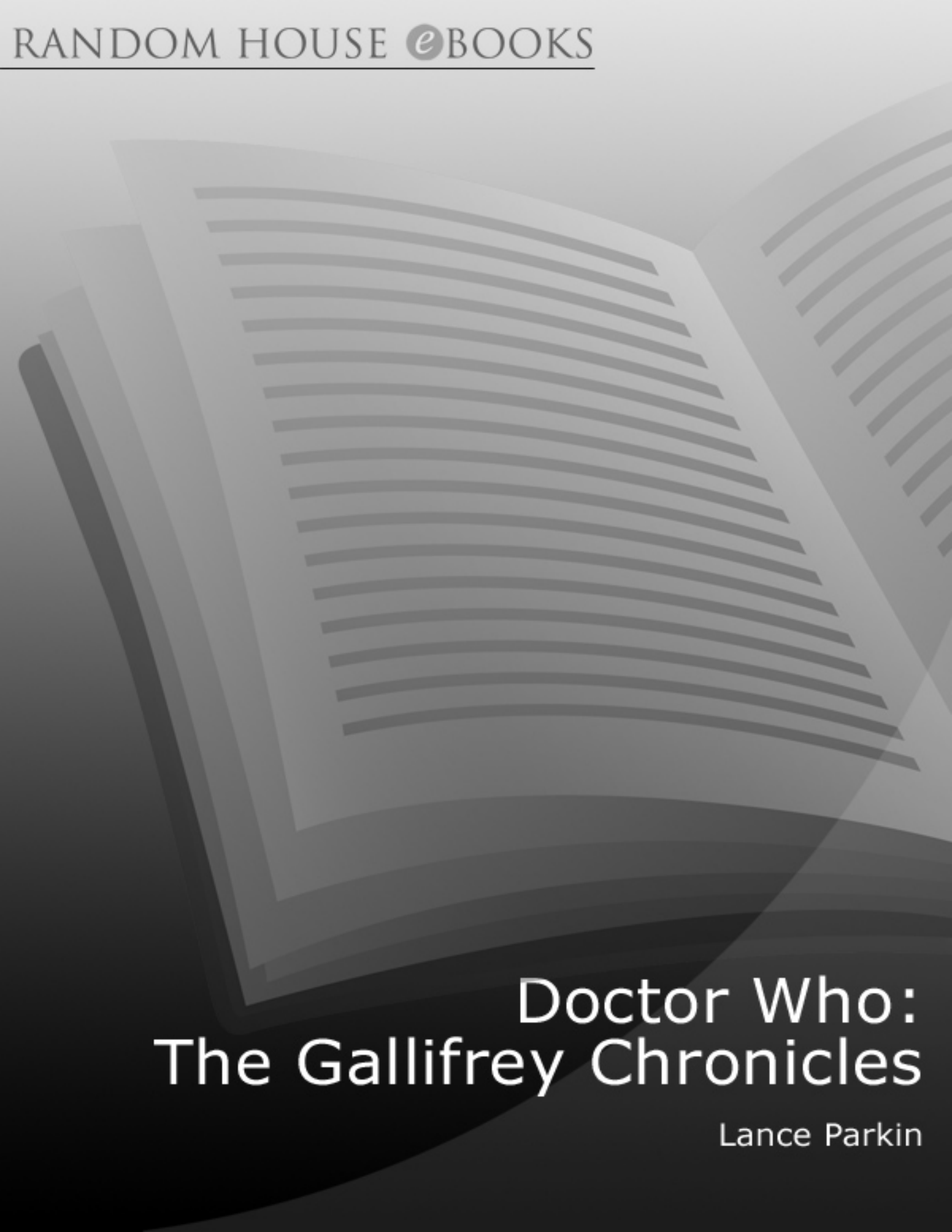


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# Doctor Who: The Gallifrey Chronicles

Lance Parkin

## About the Author

LANCE PARKIN has written a number of books and other things, including the first-ever original Eighth Doctor novel, *The Dying Days* (which is available for free on the BBCi site, and for rather more than that on eBay), and the BBC novels *The Infinity Doctors*, *Father Time* and *Trading Futures*. His most recent works are the science-fiction novel *Warlords of Utopia*, and (with Mark Jones) *Dark Matter*, a guide to the author Philip Pullman.

## About the Book

The Doctor's home planet of Gallifrey has been destroyed. The Time Lords are dead, their TARDISEs annihilated. The man responsible has been tracked down and lured to Earth in the year 2005, where there will be no escape. But Earth has other problems - a mysterious signal is being received, a second moon appears in the sky, and a primordial alien menace waits to be unleashed...

The stage is set for the ultimate confrontation - for justice to be done. The Doctor and his companions Fitz and Trix will meet their destiny. And this time, the Doctor isn't going to be able to save everyone.

# DOCTOR WHO

THE GALLIFREY CHRONICLES

LANCE PARKIN

**BBC**  
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To Brie Lewis

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*The Doctor never loses.*

Oh yeah, the whole concept behind [the album] came from Rick. He was into these books written by this crazy old guy. I guess you'd call it science fiction, but they weren't, not really. They were all about this broken-down planet. Real weird stuff with giant fallen statues and old temples, and eternal life and huge libraries. The people there existed in all times at once, that was their thing. We live in three dimensions, they live in four, that was how Rick explained it. That made them gods, but they were, y'know, very English, too. They'd fought all types of monsters in the past, but it hadn't worked out and they'd stopped all that. Forbidden it. One of them broke the rules, he went off and you never saw him again. Rick was always trying to get the rest of the band to read these things, but we weren't too keen. There were more than a hundred books in the series, yeah? There were like two or three hundred, and you couldn't just pick them up in the middle or anything. Danny tried to read one of them, I think, but I've never been much of a reader. I always preferred jamming over books, so I went along with what Rick said, y'know, while doing my own thing.

Interview with a famous rock guitarist, 1989

## Prologue

‘No doctors!’

That made a few of the relatives on the edge of the group jump, then look back at each other self-consciously. One of the aunts turned away, opened the window a little. The old man on the bed glared at her as the cold air drifted in, but said nothing.

Rachel was sitting by the bedside. The relatives were little more than silhouettes. Black outlines of people. Men in suits, women in tailored jackets, small, restless children in their Sunday best. She couldn’t see how many there were. Almost all of them, though. Crowding round.

Circling.

‘This is such a lovely house,’ another aunt said. She was standing at the window looking down over the lush, green garden.

‘Surprisingly large,’ an uncle agreed.

‘Too dark,’ a woman’s voice said.

‘Cluttered,’ another chipped in, to a general murmur of agreement.

There was a touch like a butterfly’s at Rachel’s wrist.

She looked down at the old man. Rheumy eyes stared back, unblinking. It had worn him out just lifting his hand. He’d heard every word.

‘Don’t let them destroy the books,’ he said, loud enough for everyone to hear. ‘They’re my life.’

There wasn’t much of that life left now. He twisted a little on the bed, the pain in his back surging for a moment, coursing through him. He opened his mouth, but no sound came out.

Rachel hadn’t known him that long, but in the last month he had clearly begun to fade. He was very old – how old the agency had never told her, but she’d always thought he was in his eighties – with thin white hair and thinner white skin. He had an aquiline nose and high forehead. He had beautiful blue eyes, even if they were a little watery today. He hadn’t stood for a long time, he barely even sat up now. When she’d first given him a bed bath, she’d been struck that he was smaller and lighter than she had thought.

She’d seen his picture on the inside of one of the dust jackets once. Before, there had been so much dignity.

‘A good innings,’ one of the grandsons said softly.

‘He was a friend of H. G. Wells,’ another whispered to his wife. ‘Wrote science fiction before it was even called that.’

‘Do you have any of his books?’

‘I *have* some of them, it doesn’t mean I’ve read them,’ the man replied, eliciting a guilty chuckle from a couple of the other relatives.

‘Not all of the new ones were published,’ the old man tried to explain.

‘No,’ the grandson said, sympathetically. ‘But that didn’t stop you writing, did it?’

‘Pen,’ the old man demanded.

Rachel passed him the blue biro and the notepad. A couple of the relatives glanced nervously at each other.

There was still time, after all, for him to change his will.

Once again, he tried to draw it. He started with a circle. Then a sort of broken figure-of-eight inside the circle, one with little swirls at the side. It looked vaguely Celtic. He gave up trying to get it right, again. This was the furthest he'd got with the shape for about twenty pages. He was nearly through the notepad. He could fit two, three or four circles on each page.

He dropped the pen. Rachel caught it before it slipped off the bed, and tried to hand it back. The old man refused to take it, or couldn't summon the strength.

'No,' he said.

Rachel smiled. 'You said it was always quite difficult to draw,' she said gently.

'Two hundred feet in diameter,' he said, angry with himself. 'Machonite inlaid in bone-white marble. A circle like that... should be. It filled the whole centre of the... the hall. The big hall. The one with hexagonal walls and statues the size of tower blocks. The... *damn it!* I want to get it right. When I close my eyes, I can see it all. But I can't even remember the name of the... I can't remember it. I was born there. Spent lifetimes there. It's *important*.'

The relatives were shifting their feet. Embarrassed by the outburst or worried that he had more life left in him than they'd thought.

The old man looked around, almost apologetic.

'I only wish I could remember the name,' he explained. 'I'm the only person on Earth who even remembers. Except... except I don't. You understand, don't you?'

Rachel made an attempt to look positive. But whenever he'd tried to explain this before, there had been just too much of it to get her head round. She thought he was sincere, that was the thing, but she didn't understand him.



‘I believe you, Marnal,’ she whispered. It was his pen name. Since the breakdown, he had insisted on being called that, although no one ever did.

He sighed, returned his head to the pillow. Screwed his eyes closed, wringing out a tear. Drew in a breath.

‘Now I don’t have the time. Lord, I wish I could remember the name.’

His head slipped back a little, his face relaxed.

Rachel watched him carefully for a minute, then held the back of her hand close to his nostrils, like she’d been taught. She placed a finger on the side of his neck and waited a whole minute. One of the relatives, a man in his thirties, looked at her, not daring to ask the question.

She nodded. ‘He’s gone.’

One by one, the relatives filed out. Most at least glanced back at him; one of his daughters made a show of kissing his cheek, inspiring his other daughter to do the same.

Then they had gone. Rachel imagined them all downstairs, perhaps taking a room each and sorting the contents into plunder and litter.

She turned back to Marnal. He looked even smaller and older than before. Peaceful, though. It felt like she should pray for him or something. Instead, she went over to the window and closed it. The garden was so colourful this time of year. A little overgrown, but with splashes of yellows, reds and purples among the dark green. Great trees. A couple of the younger children had already found their way outside, and were climbing them like nothing had happened.

‘Life goes on,’ she said.

Rachel turned back to the old man. His skin had some colour to it. She hadn’t expected that, but then she hadn’t known what to expect. None of her patients had ever died

on her before, not right in front of her eyes. She'd been told that dead bodies could do strange things.

There was something... the old man's skin was glowing. Ever so faintly, at least at first, but too brightly to be any trick of the light. She didn't think that was normal. It was like an overexposed photo now, his eyebrows and the exact lines of his nose and mouth bleached out.

She stared at the old man's face, and when it stopped glowing it was a young man's face.

Brown eyes snapped open.

'Gallifrey,' the young man said.

Notions of heroism have always been problematic, but now heroes appear quaint relics of an age when a white man could save the day just by walking into a room and imposing his moral values on the 'bad guy'. Following the attacks of September 11th 2001,<sup>13</sup> we all know the problems of the world aren't so easily defined, let alone solved. Heroism is not relevant to the current international paradigm, and seems out of context in domestic political situations. It is no coincidence that the 'heroes' of modern narratives, while often good family men and patriots,<sup>14</sup> are often troubled, flawed characters with fragmented, traumatic pasts,<sup>15</sup> endlessly condemned to nightmares and flashbacks of some loved one they couldn't save.<sup>16</sup> A post-modern hero,<sup>17, 18, 19</sup> then, is on a journey of self-examination and self-validation. He is darker than the world around him, condemned to enact a revenge fantasy that will merely restore the world to imperfect, pluralist normality for an indifferent general population,<sup>20</sup> rather than to spread his virtues to inspire a 'better society'. Rather than 'Holding Out for a Hero',<sup>21</sup> it is easy to conclude that most modern observers would actually find all the forms and attributes of traditional heroism old-fashioned and actively undesirable.

Extract from a book of essays by a prominent popular historian, 2003

## **Chapter One**

### **New and Missing Adventures**

The walls were meant to be soundproof.

Mondova had spent a great deal of time and money trying to block out the noises and sights of the vast city below. The terraces of his palace had been built miles high so that they enjoyed a cool breeze, not the mephitis that belched from the armament plants, germ foundries and war-robot factories which clung to the narrow streets. Here, although the air was thin, Mondova rose above the concerns of his subjects.

Now, though, as he stood on the edge of the very highest terrace, he could hear the loudspeakers telling people to stay in their homes. Worse, he could hear that those proclamations were being drowned out by cheering crowds. Laughter and insolence. Music was being played. Mondova hated music, and had banned it as his first act as monocrat, over two hundred years before. Slogans were being chanted. He could hear what sounded very like a vast statue being toppled. On this planet, there were only statues of one person. Was it the one in Victory Square, Mondova wondered, where he was holding a spear aloft in one hand, a peasant's head in the other? That was his very favourite.

'Crallan!' he yelled. 'Crallan, what in the name of the Seven Systems is happening?'

His chancellor ran into the room, already cowering, almost tripping over his dark grey robes.

‘My Lord Mondova.’

‘Where are my bodyguards?’

‘They’ve fled, my lord.’

‘Scum! I knew they would be unreliable. That’s why I had my Kyborgs built. Deploy them in the streets. Wipe out this resistance.’

‘The Kyborg legion changed allegiance to the rebels, my lord. That’s why the bodyguards fled.’

Mondova hesitated.

‘Then I have no choice. Call in the space fleet. Order them to atomise the city.’

‘The space fleet has gone, my lord.’

‘Gone? Gone where?’

Crallan shrugged. ‘We haven’t managed to figure that one out yet.’

‘It is the most powerful space navy in the galaxy. It has snuffed out stars, Crallan. Civilisations spanning whole sectors of space have surrendered at the mere thought I would launch my fleet against them. It has campaigned, unbeaten, for over two centuries.’

‘No longer, sir. It’s... gone.’

The cybernetic regulators of Mondova’s stomach skipped a track. He lurched at Crallan, grabbed him with one armoured hand, lifted him into the air.

‘We have to regroup. Gather those still loyal to me, bring them here to the sanctum! I’m not defeated, you hear me?’

He dropped Crallan, who picked himself up and dusted himself off. ‘Of course, my lord.’

‘Find my daughter,’ the monocrat growled, concerned with little else now.

‘I’m here, Father.’

She was so beautiful. The slits, folds and colours of her exquisitely tailored outfit contrived to make her long legs longer, the curve of her back more graceful, the blue of her skin more delicate, the white of her hair more vivacious. Her eyes burned with gold fire, just as her mother’s had done.

‘I have been persuaded of the error of my ways, Father. For twenty decades you have bullied your subjects, killed them on a whim, sent them across the universe to die in your name.’

It was impossible to see Mondova’s face behind the burnished-steel mask, so he didn’t seem to react as Crallan pushed his way past his daughter to flee the room.

The monocrat’s voice sounded calm, when it came. ‘Persuaded by whom, may I ask?’

She smiled. ‘He only arrived here this morning, but... he opened my eyes, Father. He showed me what was really going on in the city. He’s given the people down there hope.’

Mondova watched her carefully. There was defiance in those opened eyes. A joyfulness he’d never seen before.

He had lost her.

He toyed with the idea of reaching over and snapping her neck.

‘Who?’ he asked instead.

‘The Doctor,’ she said simply.

‘Doctor?’ Mondova roared. ‘Doctor who?’

A man stepped into the room. He was not an old man, but neither was he really a young man. His long face was oval, with an aristocratic nose and a full mouth. He had a high forehead, framed with long, dark-brown hair. His skin

was milky-pale. He wore a long, dark velvet coat that flapped behind him.

‘I think that’s my cue,’ he said, a little shamefaced. ‘There comes a time when you have to accept it’s over. It’s over, Mondova. Your power base is destroyed, your people have spoken. There’s no place in the universe for tyrants like you.’

Behind the Doctor were his companions.

‘Hi, I’m Fitz, this is Trix. Glad we caught you.’

Fitz was a scruffy, tall man in his thirties and Trix was a little younger, slim and elegant. They had grabbed Crallan, and were leading him back into the room.

The Doctor held up a small silver device, some sort of tool. It emitted a whirr so faint it could barely be heard.

‘No...’ Mondova managed, before gravity caught up with him.

The armour crumpled to the floor, the man inside sagging with it.

‘Too heavy,’ he wheezed.

The metal plates that cocooned him had been kept weightless by the generators. But now the mechanisms he had designed and built were broken, fused. The armour was just ordinary scrap metal. The Doctor was pulling it off him, piece by piece. Mondova looked down at his own bare arms and chest as the armour came clear of them, surprised to see how slight and pale he had allowed his body to become.

Finally, the Doctor tugged off the helmet. He held it up for a moment, looked into its empty eye slits. Then he tossed it over the edge of the terrace, to the city below.

The Doctor looked down at the naked old man at his feet.

Then he held out his hand, to help him up.

‘It’s over,’ he told him. This time, Mondova believed it.

An hour and a half later and very far away, a police box that wasn’t a police box sped through a place where there was no time and no space.

As with a book, you couldn’t judge the TARDIS from what it looked like on the outside. It appeared to be an old wooden police-telephone box with peeling blue paint, but (again like a book) inside it was far larger, more grand and complicated. And, as with the best novels, you couldn’t always tell where it was going. The TARDIS was a machine capable of travelling to any point in space and time. That alone would be enough to make it special, but what really made it unique was that it was the place the Doctor called home.

As with his ship, there was more to the Doctor than met the eye. He was an adventurer, a bookworm, a champion, a detective, an explorer, a father and grandfather, a historian, an iconoclast, a jackanapes, a know-it-all, a lord, a meddler, a nuisance; he was old, a physician and a quack, a renegade, a scientist, a traveller, a utopian, a violinist, a widower, a xoanon; he was youthful and he was a zealot.

One thing he wasn’t, though, was human. Two hearts beat in his chest. He’d lived for centuries, at the very least. The Doctor didn’t think much about his past; he rarely talked about it, even with his friends. He lived in the now, the only time that meant anything to someone who could spend yesterday in the far future and tomorrow in the olden days.

Now he stood at the central console, right in the middle of the cavernous control room, the very first room you’d come to if you’d just stepped inside the TARDIS. The console was hexagonal, the size of a large desk. Thrusting out from the centre right up to the ceiling was a powerful piston, encased in a glass tube. It rose and fell, pulsing with



blue light as it did so. The Doctor watched it, almost hypnotised. He was still wearing his frock coat. He would occasionally break away to start operating controls, check readouts and generally fuss about. He wasn't steering the ship, though, so much as trying to decide where it was heading.

The Doctor was smiling to himself. A tyrant toppled was always a good day's work. The planet Mondova had taken control of had been a beautiful world of orchards, sculpture and music. Now it could be all those things again. That would be for the people there to decide.

In another part of the TARDIS the Doctor's two companions, Fitz and Trix, were smiling too. They had also been celebrating the fall of Mondova and his regime. Unlike the Doctor, they had done this by going to Fitz's room, by downing a couple of bottles of wine they'd liberated from the monocrat's wine cellar, by turning up a record player and dancing, then by grabbing each other and kissing.

While they had known each other for some time now, and had both been living in the TARDIS all that while, it was the first time Fitz and Trix had done any of these things together.

'A day can be an awfully long time, can't it?' Trix noted, rolling on to her back, still a little breathless.

Fitz's head had ended up somewhere around her midriff. He mumbled what sounded like an agreement.

'What was that?' Trix asked.

Fitz's rather unshaven face emerged from the bed sheets. 'I said you've got a flat stomach.'

'Thank you. You could get one too, if you did a few push-ups.'

'When did you first think we would...?' he began.

'I hoped we might when you put the record on,' she said.  
'Really?'

Trix smiled. 'Really. Why, have you been holding a torch for me for months, or something?'

'No. Not like that. It was... it was this afternoon. When we were splashing around down in the catacombs. I thought that Kyborg had drowned you. When I saw you again, I realised then how much I'd missed you. How much you meant to me.'

Trix shifted, a little uncomfortable.

'Hell,' Fitz said quickly, sitting up. 'Look, if this was just a, y'know, a thing, then it's a thing. There's a lot of lust in there. On my part, I mean. Those legs of yours... they're long, aren't they? Not freakishly long, obviously. But, well, what I'm saying is that if you want to keep this superficial, then I'm a pretty superficial person.'

Trix smiled. 'I never doubted that for a second.'

'Good, cos I mean it.'

'What are you doing?'

Fitz pointed to the cigarette he'd just put in his mouth and turned his other hand to show her the lighter.

'I know what you're doing. What I meant was don't do it.'

'Not you as well. Does no one smoke in the future? Do you all just go straight to sleep?'

'I'm not from the future, I'm from the present. You're from the past, remember?'

Fitz smiled. 'Yeah. Old enough to be your dad. I need a ciggie. Even though this is my room, and my record player, and my bed, I'll go and find somewhere else to smoke. Happy?'

Trix sank back into the pillows. 'Ecstatic,' she assured him.

\* \* \*

All his memories had come flooding back.

Rachel had done what Marnal had asked: shooed the relatives away, explained that she'd made a mistake and that he'd got better, and that, no, they couldn't see him. It had taken over an hour to round them all up, convince them and herd them out to their Rovers, Audis and Lexuses. She'd gone back upstairs to find him in one of the many spare bedrooms.

'Time Lords are the ruling class of the planet Gallifrey,' Marnal began to explain. He vanished into the huge wardrobe, but his voice carried on. 'All Time Lords have increased cranial capacity, blood with a vastly superior capacity to carry oxygen compared with haemoglobin, a body temperature of sixty degrees, a respiratory bypass system, a linal gland, a reflex link...'

Rachel had started fidgeting halfway through the list, and had tuned out long before Marnal had finished.

'Most importantly, Time Lords have the ability to regenerate our bodies if we are mortally injured.'

'Are these characters in your books?' she asked.

'No,' he said coldly, returning from his journey with an armful of clothes. 'This is what I am. The Time Lords are my people. Shortly, I will be rejoining them. I have to look my best.'

He started pulling on a pair of trousers that were a little too baggy on him.

'They sound like your books, that's all. I read some of your stuff when I was a kid. All about the Time Lords and their adventures, that was you, wasn't it? I was never really into science fiction. I prefer real stuff.'

'That was "real stuff". That was my life. The early stories flowed so easily, I remembered some things, you see. But

there came a point where...' he paused for a moment, then started again. 'I wrote everything I remembered down. There were always gaps, but I had to keep going. I was the only person who knew anything about Gallifrey, you see. I couldn't ask. And I didn't even remember its name.'

He was wearing a frilly Mr-Darcy-style shirt now. Over that, he pulled on a dark-blue blazer. It was a peculiar ensemble. He hurried over to the mirror and examined himself, pudging up his face with his fingers.

'Um... This is all right, I suppose,' he said to himself. 'A little scrawny. A little young, but I'll grow out of that.'

He shrugged off the blazer and found himself a velvet jacket.

'And so what you did before... that was *regeneration*?'

'That's right. This' – he pointed down at his own body – 'is my thirteenth incarnation. The process renewed me, a surge of artron energy restored my damaged synapses. Gave me back all the memories I had lost.'

'You were suffering from post-traumatic retrograde amnesia,' Rachel said. 'It's rare, but it happens. In people, I mean.'

Marnal looked impressed as he discarded the jacket in favour of a light blue knee-length coat.

'I got my degree,' she reminded him. 'And because of that, I know that there's no such thing as a lindal gland or any of the other things you mentioned.'

'You saw me change,' Marnal reminded her. He was turning, admiring himself in the mirror. Then he threw away the coat, scowling at himself, and put the blazer back on.

'I've been thinking about that. It was a dark room, and I was on my own in there. It could easily have been a trick. You're one of the old man's nephews or something.'

Marnal turned to her, stared at her.

'You were the one that believed me,' he said, a hint of cruelty in his voice.

Rachel hesitated, thought about it for a moment. 'I do believe you,' she said. At the very worst, it was a harmless fantasy.

'Every word?'

'Every word.'

'It's all true, I promise you. The world you know is just one of an infinity of worlds.'

He took her hand in his, pressed it against first one side of his chest, then the other. A heart beat on each side.

'How are you going to get back?' she asked.

He pulled a small cube from his pocket.

'It was there all along, only I didn't know what it was.'

He pressed it to his forehead, screwed his eyes shut.

'There we go.'

He put the cube back in his pocket.

'A telepathic signal. The miracle of time travel is that whenever they receive my message, they can dispatch someone to this exact point. We won't have to wait.'

They waited.

The Doctor frowned and put down his book.

There was something there. He could hear it over the sound of the time engines.

He slipped out of the control room, through one of the many doors that led to the depths of the ship. He walked past the workshop and one of the smaller libraries, carried on down a winding corridor.

This was the corridor that led nowhere. You walked through a couple of doors, then after the last turn there

was another fifty paces to walk, then there was just a wall, covered in the same round indentations as most of the other walls. The Doctor knew that his time-space machine was very large, so large he hadn't been able to explore it all. But he knew this corridor well. He thought of it as the back wall of the TARDIS.

Sometimes, when his companions were asleep, he would come down to the back wall. The Doctor knew Fitz had discovered this place too. Fitz had never tried to discuss it with him. The Doctor didn't know if he'd ever heard the strange noises. If Fitz spent any time down here, he would have heard the scratching. Today was no different. He must have wondered if an animal was trapped on the other side. Or perhaps a person, their fingernails grown into claws over the centuries they'd been down here.

'Oh... Hi.'

The Doctor turned to see Fitz. His companion was wearing a tatty dressing gown, and had one hand stuck in his pocket. The noises behind the wall had stopped.

'Come down here for a smoke?' the Doctor asked.

Fitz removed the hand, and the packet of cigarettes that had been in there with it, from his pocket.

'Yeah... er... you weren't waiting down here to catch me, were you?'

'No. I often come down here.'

'You mind?' Fitz asked, taking out a cigarette. Then: 'I mean if you want one, then of course...'

The Doctor looked pained.

'Yeah, all right, just being polite.' Fitz lit the cigarette and took a draw from it to get it going. 'How did you know?'

The Doctor pointed to the pile of around a hundred cigarette butts on the floor. 'Elementary, my dear Fitz.'