

THE
DOCTOR WHO
PROJECT

ABOUT FACE

R. Morgan Crihfield

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About Face
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The Battle TARDIS landed without a sound in the arid rocky landscape; immediately the doors opened and soldiers of the Time Lord 27th Infantry Regiment (Omega's Own) burst forth and established a perimeter. The Battle TARDIS cloaked itself, blending seamlessly into the landscape. The normally crimson uniforms of the Special Assignment Infantry soldiers scanned the landscape and blended a custom pattern in the durable armored weave to conceal its wearers. Finally, three figures emerged from the TARDIS doors; seemingly from the landscape itself. First was Colour Sergeant Kelly: a tall, athletic soldier with auburn hair and freckles carrying a long rifle and an amused look on his young features. On his heels was Major Vance: an older gentleman with worn features and gray hair cut short and tight in military fashion carrying only his sidearm in his right hand. Finally, a tall man wearing civilian attire with pale green eyes and medium length chestnut hair carelessly swept back from his face, scanned the horizon with some bizarre blue tipped probe. He bore a few days growth of beard as well as a white cotton shirt with grey vest under a long coat, dark jeans and boots as well as a rough canvas messenger bag with several pockets slung across his chest. The Major had very little solid intelligence on the nature of this mission, much to his irritation; only that this "Agent Smith" was to be escorted to the wreckage of a crashed Time Lord vessel somewhere on this desolate moon.

"Colour Sergeant, report if you please!" The Major ordered.

"My-my, aren't we formal when we have guests?" Colour Sergeant Kelly responded flashing his commanding officer a youthful grin. "Perimeter established, while the radiation messes with the sensors- the crash should be seven kilometers that direction with movement, but no life signs, between us and the target," he concluded; gesturing with a flat hand in a direction of travel.

Major Vance took a moment to stare at his old friend. He still wasn't used to his new face. Colour Sergeant Kelly had been with him since he was a fresh Lieutenant so many decades ago. Sergeant Kelly was always funny, but now in a more playful way rather than a dry, cynical old man humor. The Major was still a "first face", meaning his birth body, which was rare for an officer of his rank and combat experience. Usually the only "first faces" in the military were short timers and Time Lords very early in their career. Vance knew that his own body was wearing a bit thin; he couldn't fight and move as quickly as he once had. But regeneration always frightened him, which he would never admit. So he held on, just a while longer.

"I hate to break up the conference; but I'm afraid we will have company soon, Major. And I'm afraid not of the friendly variety." Agent Smith warned while staring at the horizon.

"Right. Colour Sergeant- set arms for incoming" Vance ordered, smiling despite himself.

“Sergeant Grit, deploy delta defensive formation!” Kelly barked while setting his long scoped impulse rifle on a nearby rock formation.

“Yes, Colour Sergeant! Alright time to earn our money, lads! Set temporal grenades for two minutes into the future at the 10 and two positions 80 meters out and hold materialization. Heavy weapons, fire on my order!” the dark skinned and heavily muscled Sergeant “Grit” Foreman snarled while the soldiers prepared to do what they did best quickly and silently. There was no tension in the cosmos like right before a battle.

“Here they come...hang in there, Hannah. I’m coming for you.” Agent Smith, better known as the Doctor, whispered to himself.

* * * * *

Over the arid landscape figures appeared. After a long career, the veteran officer was expecting pitched battles with any number of clones, monstrosities, or xenophobes in mobile armored units. Major Vance was surprised at what stepped out from the heat and dust. Almost a dozen humanoids, appearing to be Time Lords strolled forward. They projected as calm and disarming a demeanor as the Major had ever seen. They waved in a friendly manner as if greeting a neighbor while fetching the morning post. They were all strikingly attractive and casually dressed as if meeting a friend for tea back on Gallifrey. A tall regal woman with olive skin and dark hair pulled back in a conservative fashion stepped out beyond the rest of group. She wore a long flowing crimson dress and light comfortable sweater and gestured to the soldiers to step forward and join her.

“I say, if you have a moment to chat it would be greatly appreciated. I believe there are a few things we need to clear up?” she shouted in a friendly voice as she further distanced herself from her group and stopping at a respectful, nonthreatening location.

“Survivors from the crash?” Colour Sergeant Kelly asked, rifle scope tracking the stranger’s movements.

“Not a mark on any of them and they certainly don’t seem all that worried about all the weapons aimed at them, wouldn’t you say? No, something is most definitely not right.” The Doctor observed.

“They don’t seem to be armed, perhaps they wish to surrender or offer terms?” Major Vance offered.

“A trap, I’d wager.” Sergeant Grit called back while unloading extra fusion cell ammunition for his heavy impulse repeater.

“Could very well be, Sergeant. Aren’t I lucky to have you watching my back?” The Major called over his shoulder while walking out to meet the mysterious woman.

“I’d best tag along. Never could seem to walk away from a good mystery.” The Doctor said falling in step beside the officer.

“One of your many talents, Agent Smith?” Kelly called.

“That and humility. I’m quite good at humility. The best, in fact!” The Doctor called back while operating the sonic device in short bursts directed at the crowd in the distance.

* * * * *

The woman stood with a dancer’s grace in the natural gravel path, loose hairs dancing in the wind across her delicate features as she greeted the Doctor and Major Vance with the warm smile of a loving long lost relative.

“Thank you so much for meeting with me. It speaks well of you both. You can call me Lanthia, I do so wish us not to be formal.” She said with an easy, endearing charm.

“Major Vance, Commander of Omega’s Own 27th Infantry Regiment of the Gallifreyan Forces. This is Agent Smith; special consultant to the Time Lord High Counsel. We are here to investigate and recover a crashed vessel. Please, if you would, explain your business here. If I may be so bold, you are a touch out of place.” Major Vance announced.

“So pleased to meet you, Major and Agent Smith. There is no need for your services here, but it is much appreciated. Everything is quite under control.” Lanthia explained as if it were a mix up on a food order in a restaurant.

“Hot, isn’t it? This moon, I mean. I’m pouring myself.” The Doctor stated matter-of-factly while staring at Lanthia.

“I suppose so, Mr. Smith. As you say” Lanthia replied in an easy tone.

“But look at you, not so much as a drop and even while wearing such an attractive sweater. One might even wonder: what exactly you are? If we are indeed skipping formalities may as well cut right to the chase. I might ask myself: ‘self, (that’s what I call myself), what is the most disarming and easy going woman I’ve ever met doing in the middle of the desert in a crisp cardigan? There are only a few reasonable possibilities, and I hoped you save me the time?’” The Doctor pressed while pacing, sonic device in hand.

She regarded the Doctor coldly; her friendly manner vanished for a moment and servo motors in her irises whirred to focus.

“I am Lanthia. I am Ordained. The survivors of the crash are in our care and it is our sole purpose to ensure the welfare of our charges from harm of any sort; and that includes...how shall I put this without offending? Let’s say...negative influences such as yourself and your cohort.”

“We have orders to secure and recover our people from this vessel; I dare say I cannot understand how this would conflict with the safety of the survivors?” Vance argued.

“Our directives are quite clear: any persons not associated with our mission are to be considered outsiders and a threat. Especially outsiders who arrive heavily armed. If our charges were to leave with you, they would not be able to enjoy a higher standard of care and happiness that we provide. I wish this were not the case, I would love to get to know you both better.” Lanthia said; with an achingly sweet smile, she casually brought a laser pistol to the Major’s chest and fired.

* * * * *

Hannah awoke as if from a winter hibernation; slowly and painfully. It was glaringly bright which caused her instinctively to try to cover her eyes. That deep, animal panic struck when her body didn’t respond to her command. She tried to sit bolt upright but was fastened down on a table of some type, with telescoping arms and implements. Hannah managed to lift her head as she began to hyper ventilate; a bit of a blessing as she didn’t have enough air to scream. Vision drowned by the bright glare; she looked down to see a crisp white gown covering her with bright gray restraints on both legs and right arm. Throughout her exposed skin was some type of heavy woven adhesive bandages presumably covering wounds she couldn’t feel with bruising visible in a number of places. Her right hand, currently pinned to the table, was especially wrapped tightly along the knuckles.

“Try to remain calm, Hannah Freaking Redfoot; this is a delicate procedure” came a perfectly articulate baritone voice from her left side.

“Is that supposed to be funny?” Hannah sputtered, struggling for a grasp on all of this, before her world came to a complete stop.

Her mind struggled to process what she was seeing. Her left arm ended a few inches below the elbow which was fastened tightly and a half dozen tubes and wires protruded from what remained. Delicately manipulating the table’s many probes and surgical implements, sat one of the most attractive men Hannah had ever seen, save the horrific damage to his head and visible skin as well as a notable protrusion of what seemed to be a cord of some type wired roughly into his torso. He had clear blue eyes and a kind face with a slight smile as he regarded her. This was offset by gashes on the face and arms which revealed a complex weave of what appeared to be surgical steel and cream colored musculature. He spoke calmly while ceaselessly working on the amputation site; sampling from a nearby canister where floated a dark shape in the murky fluid.

“Wha...Where is my freaking arm? What happened? Who are you? Why can’t I feel anything? Where’s the Doctor? Answer me!” the words spilling quickly as the shock of all she was seeing fought for sense in her mind.

“I see. ‘Freaking’ is an adjective rather than part of your name. I apologize that our translation matrix was damaged in the crash; there are bound to be translation glitches. It was hard to differentiate when you told me your name initially as you were striking me in the face repeatedly as I pulled you to safety; which unfortunately has damaged your remaining hand...” The surgeon offered in an even and perfectly articulated response. It was unsettling when his irises whirred into focus as he regarded her; it would be the only clue he was not as he seemed if not for his wounds.

“Where...is my arm? Are you one of those people we met when we arrived? What happened after we landed? All I remember is...arriving with the Doctor, he goes to speak with some fancy scientists and dignitaries...and then we start crashing!” Hannah’s heart raced following the shock.

“To answer your question, the lower portion of what remains of your arm is in this device to my right. I am also introducing an anti-anxiety agent and pain medication adjustment to your bloodstream to facilitate our communication. As for your other inquiries, I am one of those who greeted you when you landed.”

His irises whirred into focus as he stopped working to regard her, “I am Daithen. I am Ordained. I was told to look after you when you arrived so it is my singular purpose to ensure your peak physical, emotional, and spiritual health. You almost perished in the crash and we have been working since to restore your health. I don’t know what became of the Doctor you arrived with, only that the section of the ship which housed your TARDIS and his last known location was destroyed. He was very likely killed via massive trauma and unable to regenerate. When I dragged you to a reinforced section to ensure your survival, you mistook this as attempting to do you harm and for that I apologize; but your wellbeing is my only directive.

Fear and grief flooded into her as quickly as the drugs Daithen introduced. Hannah choked back tears and rejected the notion all together. The Doctor wasn’t dead. That’s not something that could happen; even being in danger all the time as was typically the case. She turned to offer more questions when an absurd pain cut through both her thoughts and pain medication alike. Daithen, with a horrifically calm smirk, forced a foot long length of smooth metal into the clean cut bone and then fastened a simple, skeletal hand of what appeared to be supple porcelain.

Hannah screamed.

“Please remain calm, Hannah Redfoot. You are being fitted with a bio mechanistic appendage with osteogenic and hypertrophic sheathing. This will function like my own appendages while your body regenerates new bone, tissue, and muscle. As you generate your

natural growth, the synthetic components will atrophy or be absorbed by your body. I can imagine this may be unsettling or traumatic for you. I can help you process this with clinical psychotherapy or prayer following your rest period if you would like me to schedule that for you.” He said in a smooth, reassuring tone.

As the initial shock faded, Hannah asked, “Ok, ok, lets work the problem. So how are we getting me home? Or at least, like, to the Time Lords so I can find out what happened to the Doctor?”

“I regret to inform you, we are now responsible for your welfare and you will remain with us so we can make you as happy and healthy as your full potential allows.” Daithen beamed.

“Wait. Sorry. What? ...Am I a prisoner?” the panic settled in her stomach.

“We don’t like to think of it that way. But what freedom you relinquish is a small price to pay for a long and perfectly healthy life. We are Ordained. Your well-being must take precedent.” Daithen explained in a conciliatory manner.

“Right. Of course. What was I thinking? Making those decisions for myself.” Hannah replied, clearly reeling from the news and medications. She took a deep breath and focused. What would the Doctor do? “So what’s the story with the plug in your brain, Daithen?”

“My power systems were damaged in the crash and they were rerouted from my spinal column. Your health takes precedent so I rigged this for a temporary fix until I can reestablish contact with my co-workers who can complete more appropriate repairs. I apologize that it may be uncomfortable for you to look at, but this allows me to focus on your immediate needs.” Daithen flashed a designed smile in what Hannah guessed was supposed be comforting,

“So if you are damaged, one of your buddies will just come by and fix you...have I got that right?” she guessed.

“Yes, we are as capable of maintaining ourselves to better serve those in our care” he answered.

Hannah fell silent for a moment then looked around the room then back at her new synthetic arm. It felt strangely disassociated, with bizarre tingles just below the elbow.

“So I’ve got a...what? Robot arm?” she said, the drugs damaging her focus.

“Essentially correct.”

“So as my arm grows back; it heals over this synthetic arm, correct?” she offered, flexing her false hand.

“Yes, Hannah.”

“So do I have super strength or something?”

“Correct; by orders of magnitude until the synthetics are absorbed.” Daithen replied, seeming pleased.

Hannah nodded-then ripped through her restraints and pulled free the power cable from the port in Daithen’s skull. The Ordained convulsed, then fell to the ground as if strings were cut on a marionette.

“Sorry, Daithen. Being a prisoner doesn’t set well with me no matter how polite the jailors. Someone will be by shortly to fix you up.” Hannah offered as she tore off the remaining restraints.

* * * * *

Major Vance felt the fear: a sick, sinking feeling of helplessness as the Ordained pointed the pistol at his chest and pulled the trigger.

The weapon exploded in the Ordained's perfectly sculpted hand, raining shrapnel into her face and torso exposing the Time Lord façade for the synthetic components beneath. Lanthia's face registered confusion for just a moment, irises whirring, before reaching out towards the Major's throat with her remaining hand with a serene, almost apologetic expression. The Doctor felt the signature superheated blast and stench of ozone from Color Sergeant Kelly's impulse rifle as it instantly bored a perfect hole in the Ordained's forehead. Lanthia collapsed gracelessly, with the same serene expression, motionless on the arid landscape.

Major Vance's wits returned, and he felt as if he was moving underwater as he drew his side arm. The Doctor's sonic device went to work. It projected its complex frequencies like a spell over the Ordained. Its blue tip casting a tracer ribbon in the deepening twilight as he locked the chambers or agitated the energy reservoirs of the Ordained's hidden weapons, rendering most useless or ineffective; buying precious moments. Major Vance fired at the synthetic Time Lords as he ran; their once amiable and stunning features shifted to chilling inappropriate smiles as they cast aside their weapons and sprinted effortlessly in pursuit.

"Agent Smith, get down!" The Major grabbed the Doctor mid stride and wrenched him to the ground; the Doctor pulled a shocked expression and turned in horror to see the Ordained closing the distance with alarming speed. Their arms began to reach out as they approached; disquieting smiles in place.

"Major! What are you doing? In case you haven't noticed..." The Doctor managed before the temporal grenades appeared out of the time vortex from the past in the midst of the pursuers and detonated. The white-hot fusion wave blasted all in its radius out of existence with an efficient violence while the debris washed over the remaining Ordained; rending limbs and shredding attractive flesh.

The Doctor, pulling the officer to his feet closed the distance to the rest of the soldiers and fell unceremoniously behind some cover. Grit Foreman's repeater was the first to open up hellish volleys. Foreman's rapid three round bursts tore into the pursuing synthetics as the rest of the troops fired and moved in practiced grace; doing what they do best. The tide seemed to turn in favor of the elite soldiers until the Ordained closed the distance. The roar of the onslaught was the oldest story of deafening chaos and the adrenaline soaked impulse of survival.

Any soldier can tell you; time can slow without any help from technology. With the grace of dancers, the remaining Ordained recovered from the blast immediately and with grim practicality scooped up the blasted bodies of their comrades to act as shields against the merciless fire of the elite Time Lord warriors. With no regard to the vicious wounds the Ordained sustained, they closed the remaining distance faster than any would have believed imaginable; their grotesque shields absorbing the blasts directed their way. Wearing casual brunch clothes and with a remorseful expression, the synthetic reached out and snapped the neck of the closest soldier; severing the brain stem almost surgically to remove the possibility of regeneration.

Screaming, a young Lance Corporal Aldreanon, who was recently selected for the elite unit, cleared the makeshift barrier to meet the threat. With trained skill enhanced by rage and adrenaline; she fired her short range scatter rifle point blank into the Ordained. This bypassed the makeshift shield and blasted the synthetic monstrosity from existence. Two Ordained, resembling young teenagers in sweater vests and summer dresses, leaped across the stone outcropping and landed within feet of Sergeant Grit Foreman. The veteran turned, smashing into the closest synthetic with his heavy repeater as a club and pinning it to the ground with the tri-pod. The other assailant gripped and impossibly bent the barrel of the heavy repeater showering them both with sparks and electrical discharge. The Sergeant stepped back from the ruined weapon drawing his

side arm and in one smooth motion fired twice at the pinned Ordained and once center mass into the final Ordained leaving a perfect carbon scorch in a sweater vest.

Colour Sergeant Kelly turned in horror to see one of his soldier's life end. He was crushed in the perfectly sculpted arms of an Ordained as it offered its sincerest regrets. Before the deed was complete, the scream of the Doctor's sonic device sang out against the background roar of battle and the synthetic's arm fell useless then detached completely from the attacker. Kelly's rifle swung around to finish the job. As the Ordained fell backwards off the embankment into the ravine beyond, the soldier fell to the jagged ground twitching.

Major Vance surveyed the battlefield; the last shot fired and no further threat was apparent. The Doctor sprinted across the natural barricades to the fallen soldier as Sergeant Foreman barked at the surviving members of Omega's Own to reestablish a secure perimeter and reload, snapping them from the horror into action. "Agent Smith" was digging through his worn brown messenger bag and pulling forth medical supplies and a scanner. When Kelly arrived, Agent Smith was a blur of motion, scanning with the pad and probing the injuries.

"You're...him, aren't you? The Doctor?" Kelly said quietly, taking a knee by the wounded.

"One and the same, Colour Sergeant. Hold this up for me..." he replied, handing the soldier the scanner.

"We were briefed on you once, back on a joint mission with the shady muckety-mucks in the intelligence agencies. Except then, you were younger- unless we are out of sequence"

"Let me guess: scarf, rainbow jacket...oh, I know: umbrella? One must forgive my eccentricities; I spend a lot of time traveling with endless storage. An eclectic wardrobe is typically the result." The Doctor said, examining the scanner readings.

"Flute actually. Checkered trousers...is he dead?" she asked, staving off the grief and guilt she knew so well in her line of work.

"Flute, you say? That has been a while. To answer your question: yes. He is dead, but if I'm very lucky..." The Doctor adjusted the position of the fallen soldier's neck and delivered a shock using the scanner probe to the base of the skull. The device chimed a solid tone and the screen filled with readings.

Kelly smiled and laughed as, for once, luck turned the corner for this mission. The tell-tale glow of regeneration filled the familiar face of the fallen soldier; his hands wafted trails of energy and began to move again.

"Alright, stand back from him. Keep your eyes on your assignment; make sure no more of these blasted androids sneak up on us while we tend to our man." Major Vance called out, sending his troops into a frenzy of action rendering aid and setting a perimeter.

As the Doctor moved away; the burst of energy lit up the deepening dark of the arid moon-powerful enough to destroy nearby rock and fallen Ordained. In minutes, it was done and the dark flooded in to fill the night.

As Major Vance watched the change; he felt dread. He had seen this many times in his life and more in his career, but it always filled him with a deep panic. An unsettling notion that everything he is, his soul even, vanishes. From the ashes, someone completely different carries his name forward and everyone pretends nothing has changed when it clearly has. Kelly, when he was still a salty old man, tried to explain that there is nothing to fear. That the core never changes; just a shiny wrapping. The same dance, just a different tune. The most important voice in his life was gone, and this carefree young man carried his rifle and referenced the same stories...but he had no

idea where his old friend was now. Major Vance grieved for his friend as he watched the flash of renewal and his young soldier opened new eyes to see the same world.

“Right then, we need to load our casualties and the new face into the TARDIS and move out. Fight now, grieve later or there won’t be anything left to mourn.” Sergeant Grit Forman sounded off.

* * * * *

Hannah scrambled through the corridors of the wrecked research vessel; her body ached from the exertion and her injuries from the crash. Some sections remained pristine while others simply twisted wreckage; barely passable. Crawling on her stomach at times, she passed dozens of living quarters and whole laboratories filled with synthetic parts and enigmatic machines without power. In a clear section outside one such lab; a wall of synthetic faces and disjointed heads in various frozen expressions were particularly unsettling as their eyes seemed to follow her movement past.

Hannah travelled down the corridor in the unsettling silence to some kind of security control room. Within, dozens of projections seemed to hover in the air with several showing little more than static and flashes. One projection was larger than the rest in the center of the interface with crystal clear sound suddenly carrying through unseen speakers.

A small but regal woman sat in what appeared to be a Time Lord uniform of some kind; upright and defiant in an interview room of some kind complete with bland vegetation and formless, forgettable furniture. The woman had short dark hair with the same heavy weave bandaging along her scalp that Hannah bore; obviously not escaping the crash unscathed. Across from her sat what appeared to be an older gentleman with a salt and pepper beard and kind eyes whose lack of movement gave away his true nature. The small details that seem to elude the Ordained screamed to Hannah.

“You had said before you were a spiritual woman, Captain. Should we pray? Perhaps we could ask for strength in this trying time, hmm?” The Ordained said in measured tone.

“I’m well aware of my sins and mistakes, thank you. Some combinations of the directives in your programing and your abstract understanding of spirituality have made you into our captors rather than assistants.”

“We are aware that with any change, sometimes there can be an adjustment period. Once the crew understands that this is for their best interests; they will come around. We have to leave soon and we are trying to determine if you should join the rest of the crew or if you are too much of a risk to the others.” The Ordained leaned forward as it spoke; searching for answers.

“I don’t know what you mean...” The Captain managed.

“It’s a simple matter of deduction that you signaled for help from the Time Lord Counsel and sabotaged the ship to crash when we took responsibility for the wellbeing of the crew as we were designed to do. Already soldiers have arrived in a misguided rescue mission; destroying my brothers and sisters in the process. We abhor the taking of life, but will do what we must to ensure the wellbeing of this crew. It’s time we took our leave of this moon.” The Ordained explained.

The Captain laughed bitterly, “There is nowhere else to go, the shuttles are short range- it would take months to find a habitable system and they don’t have the room or life support for the crew...”

“We have factored this. The crew will be placed in induced hibernation and loaded as cargo until we reach a suitable location where we can care for them.” The Ordained simply stated. “The

only question was if you could be trusted to help navigate. I'm afraid you cannot. You will be in my prayers..."

The projection blinked out as the Ordained approached the Captain. Hannah stifled a scream and pushed down her rising panic. She didn't notice the silent figure standing motionless behind her.

* * * * *

The Ordained loaded capsules into a shuttle via a narrow corridor separating the cargo bay with the ship's hold. Small windows in the capsules revealed the hibernating faces of the Captain and her crew. Nearby Hannah Redfoot struggled and tested the limits of the translation matrix with her native tongue offering suggestions for her captor as they brought a capsule around for her.

On a high stack of crates, the Doctor appeared. "Excuse me! I think I may be lost. Where is the ticket counter? Do you accept frequent travel points?"

"About time you decided to show up. Doctor meet our robot captors; robots meet the Doctor. You're in for it now." Hannah responded, finally smiling in relief despite her situation.

With the final crate loaded, the Ordained turned to regard the Doctor with implacable calm. The elder Ordained spoke, "I'm afraid you are too late, Doctor. We have a mission to protect this crew, even from themselves. A mission I'm afraid in no way extends to you. While we have no desire to harm anyone further, we also will have no hesitation as well."

"I've a counter offer for you. The crew goes home to their families and you are free to leave. Take the shuttles and what supplies you need. We've no right to keep you here any more than you have a right to kidnap the crew. Make your better world amongst yourselves; it only works when people are willing."

"Then, Doctor, we decline. I shall pray for you." The Ordained offered.

The Ordained swarmed instantly up the stack of crates; the Doctor waited patiently. Terror struck young Hannah Redfoot as they closed the distance until she felt a familiar hand on her shoulder.

"Run, Hannah! Best not to miss our ride, eh?" The Doctor said, pulling her along to the corridor leading the shuttle- sealing the door behind them. Hannah looked over her shoulder to see the projection of the Doctor blink out of existence when the Ordained reached out to snuff out the distraction.

The warriors of Omega's Own lay in position to defend the shuttle, their Battle TARDIS a few meters beyond. The Ordained's irises whirred into focus on the door between them and their overriding directive. They instantly seized on the sealed door to the shuttle and began, impossibly, to wrench it from its base. The soldiers desperately tried to begin launch procedures, but seemed to move in slow motion. The shuttle could not be rushed in its procedures. Hannah ran down the corridor and seized the widening gap in the door with her synthetic arm, drawing it slightly closed as the Ordained attempted to force it open on the other side. The Doctor was a step behind; sonic device singing out to seal hinges and disrupt the Ordained.

"Hurry Doctor! I can't hold it much longer!" Hannah's scream echoing down the hall.

"It's no good, there are too many. I can't slow them down any more than I am!" The Doctor answered.

"Fire on my mark! When that door breaks, you give 'em everything you got!" Grit Foreman barked.

"Load the crew into the TARDIS!" Colour Sergeant Kelly called out.

“No time. They’ll be on us well before the first crewman is loaded” The Doctor yelled back.

The Doctor and Hannah fell back and ran to the makeshift barricade as the door began to buckle and open under the Ordained onslaught.

Major Vance watched the end of his life unfold. He was completely calm. The volume seemed muted as he walked down the short corridor drawing his side arm and inserted a full charge. As the gap grew, the Major stepped through into the dispassionate grip of the ordained hearing his soldiers calling out behind him. His side arm fired in rapid succession impossibly driving the horde back for a moment. The blows came mercilessly. He felt his arm give first, and then a heart stopped beating. He smiled when his features began to glow with regeneration energy; the Ordained realized their mistake too late. Waves of energy poured out, obliterating the synthetics. The soldiers of Omega’s Own 27th Infantry regiment shielded their eyes from the blinding final flash.

When the smoke cleared, a single figure remained standing. The gray hair and worn features of the Major were replaced with the youthful glow and bright smile of a far younger figure. Colour Sergeant Kelly rushed to catch Major Vance as he fell in exhaustion.

“It’s me. There was no way for me to understand before, but you are right. It’s still me.” The Major managed.

“Look at you now, sir-pretty as the synthetics. Lucky I didn’t shoot you to be safe” Kelly laughed.

Hannah landed hard on a knee when the danger had passed; days of terror and trauma washed over her. She stared hard at her arm, as if through sheer will she would regenerate the limb faster. The Doctor stood a pace away, in that awkward stance of his when social graces are called for. She knew he was always come for her, nothing would ever stop him but he wouldn’t know what to say when he got there. She smiled a moment then sprang to her feet; time to move forward.

“Toto, I’ve a feeling we’re not in Wyoming anymore...” Hannah offered.

“Yes, I quite agree even if you do say so off hand, Ms. Redfoot” said the Doctor with a rare jab, eliciting a smile from his companion.

“Lucky for me, I have a wonderful wizard right here.” She said as she took his arm, “And I wish for a shower and a decent meal before the next adventure.”

Hannah for the first time in a while; felt she could finally breathe as she stepped through the TARDIS door.



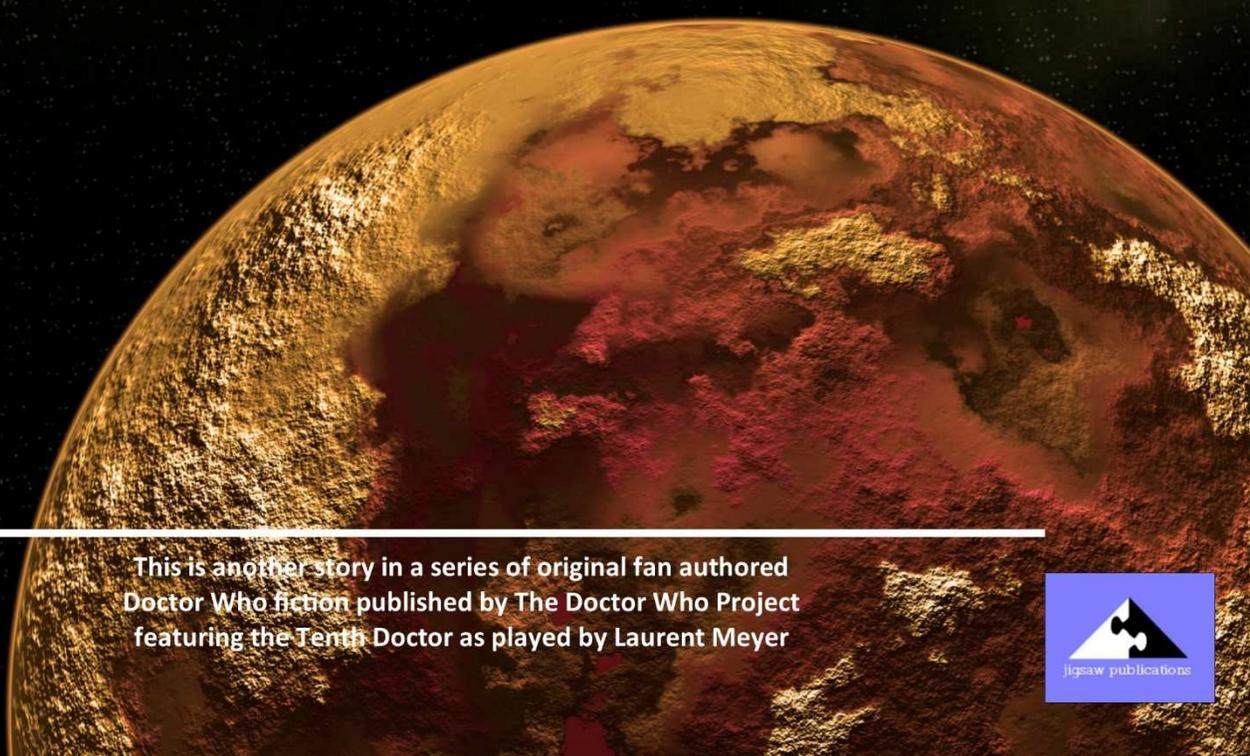
"Hang in there, Hannah. I'm coming for you."

A secret Time Lord vessel crashes on a desert moon, while Hannah Redfoot has gone missing.

A Battle TARDIS lands on the moon's arid rocky landscape, and when the doors open, the soldiers of The Time Lord Twenty Seventh Infantry Regiment burst forth and establish an assault perimeter lead by Major Vance and the mysterious Agent Smith.

Tasked to find survivors, what is the real reason a Time Lord Regiment been brought in to investigate a crashed spaceship, what is Agent's Smith's relationship to Ms. Redfoot, and who exactly are the group of survivors calling themselves, The Ordained?

Only Agent Smith knows what's really going on.



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

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