

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

FROZEN ASSETS



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The chain of mountains was coated in thick layers of snow, with more drifting down from the dark blue sky. A small mountain had already built up on the stacked police box roof of the TARDIS. At first, Tegan was grateful: an ice-bound wilderness made a change from the vastness of space, the lonely voids and nameless suns they'd been forced to endure of late. Cosmic wonders never held much appeal to Tegan to begin with—a night sky meant nothing more than a red-eye trans-Atlantic flight—and by now their novelty was decidedly wearing off.

Once again, the Doctor had let Adric steer the TARDIS to some random destination to take his mind off their previous misadventures. Their grim battle against the Terileptils in 1666 had unsettled all four of them—Tegan wondering if she would ever get to Heathrow Airport and resume her normal life, the Doctor struggling to build a new sonic screwdriver, Nyssa feeling isolated and insecure—but none had been more sullen than the young boy. Though navigating a broken time machine initially seemed a promising way to help Adric deal with his issues, the Alzarian mathematician hadn't shown much improvement, and blamed the Doctor for not taking the time to properly instruct him.

And, of course, as soon as he got out the door, the Doctor had decided that the bleak peaks and snowdrifts merited further investigation and he was making his way to a cavern visible from the foot of the nearest frozen hillside. The opening was roughly octagonal, but the ice made it impossible to tell if it was artificial or not.

Tegan, for her part, was lingering by the TARDIS doorway out of the awful, cutting cold. It was eerily silent on this planet, with the only noise being the others' footsteps crunching into crisp snow. The Doctor and Adric were just inside the mouth of the cavern opening, while Nyssa remained outside. Her two friends were wearing padded, bright silver parkas, which apparently made the atmosphere around them dense enough to breathe properly, if not keep out the chill. The Doctor, though, was defiantly wearing his usual cricketing rig. Seeing the beige frock coat and striped flannel trousers fluttering in the bone-chilling breeze made Tegan feel even colder, and his placid lack of awareness for the surroundings further infuriated her.

The Doctor had put on his wire-frame spectacles and was peering at what looked to be luminous scratches on the edge of the cave tunnel. "These markings are very familiar," he was saying, as much to himself as his friends. "I've seen them before somewhere, but where?"

How did he do it? Tegan didn't have the least interest in the Doctor's rhetorical question, yet when he left it hanging in the air, she felt compelled to approach him and answer it, if only to tell him off.

"Who cares?" grumbled Tegan, teeth chattering. "Can't we go yet?"

"Aren't you interested?" asked the Doctor.

"No!"

"It means this world could be inhabited, Tegan," Nyssa observed. "Possibly it retreated underground when the surface froze over."

"How very sensible of them," Tegan shot back acidly.

"Is it some kind of message?" asked Adric, examining the scratches.

"Probably a warning sign telling us to keep out and trespassers will be prosecuted," Tegan grumbled, turning to look out across the snow field spreading from the slope out to a glittering expanse of ice. It looked like a glacier that had probably been advancing for a million years, burying everything in its path as untold centuries went by.

"Tegan?" Nyssa shouted. "Tegan!"

Tegan spun around and saw Nyssa standing by the unrelieved whiteness of the slope.

The cave mouth had disappeared – and so had the Doctor and Adric.

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"Tegan! Nyssa!" shouted the Doctor at the solid wall. He and Adric ran their hands over the smooth surface that had filled the opening to the cave, looking in vain for an easy opening they could pass back through. It seemed to be a kind of translucent membrane shut across like a closing door, and beyond they could still make out their fellow travelers.

"They can't hear us," observed Adric grimly. He waved at the mute pair, but they did not react. "I don't think they can see us either. It's like that barrier the Terileptils used."

"Some kind of security shutter," the Doctor agreed. "We must have triggered it somehow."

"Surely, we can open it again?" said Adric, turning back to the markings on the wall.

"Perhaps. The question is, why was the door left open in the first place?" He scuffed his snow-caked running shoe over the stone ground. "It's not been open for long, or else there'd be more snow down here."

"So, someone else is down here," Adric said, completing the logical deduction. "They left the door open because they were intending to leave. And they probably know how to open it again."

"Yes," the Doctor said brightly, heading off along the tunnel. "I'm sure they'll be happy to let us out."

"What if Tegan's right and we're intruding?"

"Then the only way we can leave the premises is with their help," replied the Time Lord.

"Assuming they give us a chance. Not all aliens are so reasonable, Doctor."

"It's extremely easy to be cynical, Adric. They say cynics are never disappointed, but they seem resoundingly miserable in my experience. Ah, now what have we here?"

The tunnel, while gloomy, was still lit by the murky daylight refracted through the membrane from outside. Ahead of them, however, was a pale purple light illuminating a large chamber stacked with drum-like containers. Some had their lids open to reveal glittering baubles, while others were filled with packages. The room was even colder than the surface and deserted.

"What is this place?" asked Adric, looking around.

"Some kind of treasure chamber by the looks of things," the Doctor said, peering into the nearest open drum. "This has medical supplies, silicon crystals, precious stones and metals..."

Adric glanced at them. "They don't seem very organized."

"No. Like someone shoved everything they could into these containers."

"And leave them open?" Adric examined another of the drums. "Presumably, there's still enough room in these for more treasure. Why leave a place like this unguarded, with the doors open?"

The Doctor shrugged. "It doesn't make sense. Unless, of course, this isn't a treasure trove but some kind of pick-up point. Someone's bringing the treasure here to be collected."

"Thieves?" asked Adric, glancing around.

"Or, maybe they're the proper owners, moving house?" the Doctor suggested. "There's no reason to assume the worst whenever we find a pile of valuable goods piled high. We're in an open room where just anyone can wander in, after all."

"But if it's not treasure being stolen," said Adric, brow furrowed, "then it's been left here as a trap."

"Another cynical assumption," the Doctor tutted, before he was cut off by the metallic sigh of a door opening on the other side of the chamber. A door panel neither of them had noticed slid open, allowing a cloud of even-colder fog to billow outwards. "Although I'm worried it's one that may be proved right ..."

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"Cave mouths don't just disappear!" complained Tegan.

Knowing her friend's short fuse, Nyssa chose not to mention that not only had this cave mouth done exactly that, but it wasn't even the first one of these they'd encountered. However, the odds of another block-transfer-computed secret tunnel seemed unlikely, even for the kind of lives they live. "Possibly this is some kind of camouflaged security door."

"And there's no way to open it from this side?"

The Traken girl shook her head. "No sign of any entry coders whatsoever."

"And there probably aren't any on the other side, either; or the Doc and Adric would have opened it up by now."

"There might be another entrance," Nyssa suggested, but her voice betrayed her lack of optimism.

A breeze was blowing, whipping the powdered snowflakes into their faces. It wasn't so bad right now, but if it kept up, it wouldn't be long until the whole barren landscape was

plunged into a freezing blizzard. If they set off through the snow now, they might never get back.

* * * * *

The door appeared to lead to some kind of freight elevator, and two massive ape-like creatures in leather jerkins lumbered into the chamber. Each one carried two full drums as if they weighed nothing. "Ah, wonderful," the Doctor sighed. "Ogrons."

"Are they friendly?" Adric wondered.

"Don't bet your life on it," said the Doctor, raising his hands in surrender. "Brutal simian mercenaries. How they treat us depends on whom they're currently working for. Let's just hope whoever they're working for is reasonable."

"Come," grunted one Ogron to the other. "We have many crates still to move."

"Why do we always do heavy lifting?" asked the other. "Why don't others?"

"You are not smart enough," the first replied with a touch of cruelty. "Only smart enough to do this."

"Then why are you here with me?"

The first Ogron shrugged. "Must not be smart enough to think of that."

The mercenaries, somewhat sourer for this interchange, lumbered over to put their drums down with the others. They didn't seem to have noticed either the Doctor or Adric standing with their hands raised nearby, so the Doctor cleared his throat.

"Um, good morning! I'm the Doctor and this is Adric..."

The two Ogrons looked up with wide-eyed surprise, whooped and drew crude but nasty-looking handguns from their belts. "No intruders allowed!"

"It's all right, we're only here by mistake," said the Doctor soothingly.

"We actually want to leave here," Adric agreed.

The second Ogron activated his wrist communicator. "We capture intruders!" he barked.

"*Are the intruders armed?*" a hissing voice crackled from the speaker.

The second Ogron was bewildered. "They have two arms. Each. Four arms together."

The Doctor laughed. "An Ogron with a sense of humour—a definite first."

"*Do they have guns?!*" the voice demanded impatiently.

"No, no guns." The Ogron's tone was once again peeved, as if this was an irrelevant inquiry.

"*Do not harm them. Wait for me. I will come up and see them for myself.*"

"There's no need for any unpleasantness," the Doctor went on. "We're not going to hurt you."

"You cannot hurt Ogrons unless you drown us in blood when we rip you open!" growled the first Ogron angrily. "Intruders are bad! Ogrons *kill* intruders!"

"But your leader told you not to!" Adric protested. "Remember!"

"Ogrons will not kill intruders – yet." said the second Ogron. The simple statement was quite frightening.

The freight elevator hissed open once more and a tall creature stepped out, a completely different type of life-form to the two Ogrons. Adric couldn't even tell if it was wearing protective clothing or its ridged, armor-like covering was some kind of reptilian hide. A helmet covered its head, barring a semi-circular gap exposing its lower jaw – a scaly mouth filled with sharp teeth. The square lenses windows in the helmet acting as eyes glowed an evil shade of red.

"An Ice Warrior," the Doctor breathed. "This just gets better and better, doesn't it?"

The green-armoured creature brushed past the two Ogrons—even though they seemed intimidated by its presence.

"If you say so," said Adric, not knowing what an Ice Warrior was.

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Tegan pushed up the door control, sealing the chilly and the snow drifts out of the TARDIS console room. Her skin tingled from the soothing warmth within the time ship after the biting cold outside. The scanner screen showed the furious wind outside whirling the snow into a vivid white nothingness. "Same screw-ups, different planet," she surmised.

"Even if the Doctor and Adric get out of the mountain, they might never be able to find us!" Nyssa said despairingly, a despair that all too easily paralyzed her into indecision when no clear answer presented itself.

"Then there's only one thing to do," said Tegan briskly. "Just like when you and Adric saved the Doctor and me from the Terileptils".

Nyssa looked up sharply. "Tegan, you can't..."

"It worked, didn't it? Adric managed to get it to the right place, right time."

"Adric's not here."

"But you are! We've all been watching the Doctor's driving lessons, haven't we? And we just need to shift a couple of dozen yards that way!" Nyssa didn't comment that Tegan was indicating the wrong direction. "Come on, even I managed to start the TARDIS and land it once, even without someone giving me instructions..."

Nyssa felt her panic rising. "If we make just one mistake, the Doctor and Adric will be marooned here forever!"

"And if we do nothing, then so will we! And you know those two – by now, they're definitely in trouble!"

* * * * *

The Ice Warrior, who loomed over Ogrons and time travelers alike, gazed down at them. Its soft, hissing voice was deep and tinged with contempt for everyone around it, and it had the arrogance of someone used to immediate obedience. "So," it rasped, "these are our intruders?"

"Ah, yes, we really must apologize," said the Doctor, holding out a hand. "Adric and I were trapped in here when the surface entrance closed and we were looking for someone to..."

The Ice Warrior batted away the Time Lord's hand with its own clamp-like claw. "How did you find this place?" it demanded suspiciously. "Who told you we were here?"

The Doctor abandoned his charm offensive. "No one told us anything," he said calmly. "We arrived here entirely by accident and we're willing to leave you to finish..." He trailed off, pondering what he had stumbled upon. *Your theft? Your smuggling? Your house-moving?* "... whatever it is you're doing here."

"And what," asked the Martian slyly, "do you think we *are* doing?" In comic unison, the Ice Warrior and the Ogrons swiveled their heads to regard the Doctor and Adric imperiously.

"I haven't the faintest idea," the Doctor said brightly. "It seems to involve moving these containers, but it's none of our business I dare say. We aren't interested in stealing anything, and your two Ogrons will tell you we gave ourselves up instead of trying to use force."

"We have no weapons either," Adric pointed out. "Why would we try and rob you unarmed?"

"Exactly," the Doctor agreed. "We had no idea there was even life on this planet, let alone a Martian treasure trove like this..."

"You know our race and our cultures?"

"Well," said the Doctor obsequiously, "any educated space traveler knows and respects the Martian Empire and its warriors of ice. There aren't many races who've displayed such honor and sophistication..."

Adric could imagine the Ice Warrior's brain calculating furiously behind its red visored eyes.

"Indeed," it said at last. "The Ice Warriors are noble and respected warriors. I am *not*."

The Doctor's eyes widened. "Oh, really?"

"I am stealing from my noble and respected brothers, and the two of you..." It lifted the sonic disintegrator at its wrist significantly toward the Doctor's nose "...can identify us. Do you still expect your kind words and flattery to save your lives?"

* * * * *

Nyssa moved around the TARDIS console, hands hovering over the controls. "If I press this, this and that," she said, indicating a pair of levers in front of Tegan, "when you pull those two levers together, then we should be able to dematerialize without altering the time factor. Wherever we end up, it will be at the exact moment in time we depart."

Tegan nodded. "Gotcha. So, all we need to work out now is the direction bit."

"There are too many unknown factors," Nyssa said. "We need to compensate for orbital rotation, gravitational constants as well as avoiding materializing in any solid objects..."

"I thought there were fail-safes to stop that happening?"

"There are. Do we trust they're still working?"

Tegan grimaced. "Good point. Still, the Doctor's always going on about the TARDIS being telepathic and stuff like that. If we just, you know, focus our mind on sorting this mess out, maybe it'll help?"

"It can't hurt," agreed Nyssa. She held up her hands like a surgeon about to operate. "All right, I've set the spatial coordinates as low as I dare. We're not going far. Let's hope it's in the right direction."

Nyssa started poking the console, pressing buttons and flicking switches, until it was Tegan's turn. Both women held their breath as the central glass column began to rise and fall and the background hum deepened. A dizzying sense of momentum replaced the stillness, and that sensation of flight—albeit a flight through eternity—filled the timeless space. Carefully, Nyssa applied a fresh set of adjustments to the controls and nodded at Tegan, who returned the levers to their prior position.

Mere seconds after this movement started, the room fell still once more as the time rotor sank to a halt with a melodic chime. "There," Nyssa said, relieved.

Tegan twisted the lever to activate the scanner. It was still the frozen wasteland of before, but they were now in front of the mountainside. "Okay," she said, letting out a controlled sigh. "Just slightly too short a distance, but everything else was OK. We just do the same thing again and we'll be inside, right?"

"I can't think of any reason why not," Nyssa admitted, but that wasn't very reassuring.

They moved through the sequence once more. Again, a few seconds of dizzying momentum, as the central column rose and fell and then came to a halt. The scanner showed a long foyer with curved jade arches rising from the green stone floor like the ribcage of a giant animal. The walls between were marked with a motif of dark green discs, overlaid with bright red diamonds linked by horizontal lines, likely denoting circuits wired into the surface.

"Is that's what's inside the mountain?" asked Tegan.

"I suppose so," said Nyssa, checking the environmental displays. "The atmospheric mix is richer in nitrogen, but still breathable."

"OK, then, time to rescue those hopeless Pommies from whatever they've got themselves into..."

Tegan opened the doors and stepped out. If anything, it was even colder than out on the mountainside and the air had that hollow, spent tang, like the inside of a balloon. Ignoring the rising nausea in her gut, she moved along the foyer, her shoes clacking against the floor. One of these days she really would have to swap her air stewardess outfit, with its matching though entirely impractical heels, for something more practical.

"Doctor?" she called. "Adric? Hello?"

"They might have moved on from here," Nyssa said, also keeping her voice down. "You know I think this isn't actually a building inside the mountain range. It looks more like a spaceship."

"Weird spaceship. Mind you, we've seen weirder." A thought struck Tegan. "Nyssa, if this is a spaceship, how do we know it's actually on that ice planet? It could be on the other side of the universe!"

"Perhaps we should try reversing the coordinates?" Nyssa suggested. "At worst, we'll just end up back where we started..."

As they turned back to the TARDIS, they discovered their path was blocked by three massive alien creatures who, despite their bulk and hissing breaths, had with surprising stealth barred their escape. With military unison, they raised their clamp-like hands to show off the sophisticated inbuilt weaponry and aimed directly at the women's heads...

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"Listen, we've no connection with the authorities," the Doctor said placatingly. "Adric here is a pickpocket and I've been known to steal the odd TARDIS here and there, we're all thieves together."

"Then I have even less reason to let you live," the Ice Warrior hissed. "You may steal from me!"

"What? No honor amongst thieves? You have a very dim view on criminal fraternities..."

"Do we kill intruders now?" asked the second Ogron, sounding rather bored.

"Stick to your assigned tasks. Keep moving the containers," the Ice Warrior ordered. "Remember we have a deadline!"

"Yes, sir, Saardeel," grunted the Ogrons timidly and they shuffled off. "We have a deadline."

"You know, they'd probably work better if you gave them some warm clothing," the Doctor advised. "The Ogrons are very tough but this climate is hardly bringing out their best..."

"Ogrons are worthless," hissed the Ice Warrior. "I have used up several miserable specimens already penetrating the lower levels. Besides, you cannot leave here and no one else can enter. I can afford to take my time prolonging your agony."

"Agony? You're going to torture us instead of getting away with your loot?" said Adric scornfully. "Is this your first burglary, or are you just naturally stupid?"

The Ice Warrior got out a sharp gasp of rage. He took a large stride toward the young delinquent, but his smaller stature made him easily bob out of the way. The Doctor marveled that he could be so glib in the face of danger, but with each step Saardeel took, he wondered if Adric could stay nimble enough.

"He's clearly not used to playing with others," the Doctor agreed, pulling Saardeel's focus. "Lack of forward planning, always a fatal flaw in this business. Speaking of fatalities, killing your own helpers is hardly going to endear you to other mercenaries. No one's likely to work with you after this."

"I need no further robberies! This stockade will make me the richest being in this spiral arm!"

"Your riches will be wasted on a good lawyer trying to defend you in court," the Doctor predicted. "You don't really think you're going to get away with this, do you?"

"Of course, I do!"

"You've hired the only creatures in the galaxy as stupid as you for a raid on a well-defended stockpile of goods," Adric pointed out. "Chances are, you've set off every alarm here..."

"Twice," the Doctor added.

"And you've still not opened the door we closed accidentally."

"Or checked that we were alone."

"We could be the distraction for a whole platoon of heavily armed security forces," Adric went on.

"Who, needless to say, won't take kindly to finding you standing over our corpses," the Doctor added.

"Though right now they're probably destroying your own getaway ship to trap you here."

"You lie!" rasped the Ice Warrior.

Adric glared up at the green alien. He did not blink as he said, "Prove it."

The Ice Warrior's clawed hand shot out and clamped itself around the Alzarian's throat, lifting him off his feet as the Martian marched up the tunnel. Now furious, Saardeel reached the translucent membrane and hurled Adric against it.

Adric was braced for the pain, but not for the fact that the whole landscape was coated in fresh snowflakes and there was no sign of Tegan, Nyssa or the TARDIS. Even if it had been buried in a blizzard, he would have seen its lantern poking out of the snow.

They were gone.

The Ice Warrior grinned, a black tongue licking at the green lips in pleasure at Adric's dismay. "Where are your forces, you pint-sized mammal?" it hissed. "Where are the security teams? Do you think I chose to come here now at random? Those spineless cowards of the Hegemony are too busy helping the Federation feed the weak and sick and bereft to defend their own riches! I have been planning this raid for decades and no incompetent interlopers will stand in my way!"

At that moment, the Doctor leapt up onto the back of the Ice Warrior and tried to wrench him away from Adric. The Martian was surprised enough to turn around, but that was as far as the Doctor's luck held before he was dealt a blow heavy enough to render a human unconscious, and then a couple more hits that sent even a Time Lord sliding on his back down the tunnel.

"Pathetic," sneered the Ice Warrior. "You are barely worth obliteration! In your present condition, I prefer to leave you to the elements, which will claim you in short order." He stormed off back to the main chamber as the Ogrons returned with four more crates between them. "You two, hurry up! We must load as much as we can! We'll dispose of the witnesses later!" The Martian strode past them into the lift and descended to the lower levels.

The Doctor groaned and sat up. "Wait," he called to the Ogrons. "Listen, you've heard what Mr. Saardeel said about not wanting witnesses – that includes you! Why would he let you keep your share when it would be easier to kill you and keep it all?"

"We signed on to haul crates," rumbled one Ogron, frowning. "Not be killed."

"Me too," grunted his companion. "Our wives get angry if we're killed. Wives angry enough when we're alive. And I'd never question the wisdom of an Ogron wife. In other words," the Doctor reasoned, "it's in your best interests to throw your lot in with me and come out ahead? We're more than a match for one Ice Warrior, aren't we?"

"But Ogrons promise to work for Mr. Saardeel," said one doubtfully. "Can't go back on a promise."

"But he'll go back on his promise to you!"

"You do not know that." said the other, the petulant tone again rising in his voice. "You got proof?"

"I was so close." It was readily apparent that even the Doctor's extraordinary life span would not be long enough to reason with Ogrons. At least they too did not consider him or

Adric worth bothering about. He returned to Adric, slumped in a heap by the security door. He was black and blue from the Ice Warrior's rough handling, on the verge of passing out.

The Doctor unpinned the stalk of celery from his lapel and waved it under Adric's nose. The boy's powerful nose picked up the concentrated aroma and grimaced. The Time Lord grinned and patted him on the shoulder. "That's it, come on Adric, we've got to get out of here..."

As he helped the young Alzarian to his feet, the Doctor saw for the first time a line of Ice Warriors gathered on the other side of the sealed entrance. At a glance they appeared identical to Saarkeel, but carried long silver rifles and their leader had a purple sash around its tortoise-like middle to designate a higher rank. Even as the Doctor spotted the Martians, the shutter was melting away like dew and the cold winds from outside blew down the tunnel.

The Ogrons lumbered up the tunnel to investigate. They saw the Ice Warriors and went for their blasters, but the Ice Warriors raised their rifles and fired first. A barrage of concentric red-orange energy pulses sizzled through the air and the mercenaries crashed to the ground before they could even get off a shot.

The Doctor felt his mouth dry as the rifles were trained upon him and Adric. "Ah..."

"No, wait!" yelled a familiar voice and two figures broke through the line of armored reptiles.

"It's the Doctor and Adric!" shouted Tegan, rushing up to them. "Are you two OK?"

"All the better for seeing you, Tegan," said the Doctor, deciding not to qualify "for once".

"Adric, what happened?" asked Nyssa, concerned at his battered face.

"We got on the wrong side of a Martian burglar," explained the Doctor, glancing up at the other Ice Warriors present. "Probably not worthy of the name of Ice Warrior. I take it you've come here to arrest him?"

"Yes," rasped the leader. "Saarkeel was once one of us but forsook our sacred bonds and is now a traitor and a thief."

"And where do my friends here come into it?" the Doctor asked, indicating Nyssa and Tegan.

"We tried to land the TARDIS on this side of the cave mouth," Tegan explained. "Instead we ended up in their spaceship just as it was coming to land. Must've gone up instead of sideways. I let Nyssa do the talking about how we were just passing through and needed help. Turns out these guys are quite reasonable."

"You are free to go," the Ice Warrior leader croaked. "We shall deal with Saarkeel and the other mercenaries. They will all live to face trial, rather than the honor of death in battle."

The Doctor blew out his cheeks. "Well, better than mob justice, I suppose," he said as the Ice Warriors marched down the tunnel to confront the burglar. After a few moments, there was the furious flurry of many energy weapons being discharged, and then silence. "Yes, definitely not a master criminal."

"Are that lot really Martians?" asked Tegan.

"Yes. I know what you're thinking. Not little, not quite men, but definitely green." The Doctor's tone was reproachful.

"I suppose they'd think that was human propaganda." Tegan refused to be reproached. "Still, one out of three ain't bad," she said. "Better than you and the TARDIS."

"Speaking of which," said Nyssa, "we should probably leave now before any more questions are asked."

Adric gave a noise of agreement. His jaw hurt too much to speak as yet.

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Tegan unzipped her Atmospheric Density Jacket with gratitude. "Oh, thank goodness that's over. Good Ice Warriors, bad Ice Warriors, you risk hypothermia just chatting to them!" she said. "Wherever we go next, can it be somewhere warm for a change?"

The Doctor shrugged. "Well, that's for the pilot to decide. Adric?"

He rubbed ruefully at one of the bruises that had yet to heal. Even his rapid Alzarian metabolism would have its work cut out on this array of shiners. "No, Doctor, I've had enough for the moment. You can go back to flying the TARDIS."

"Are you sure?" the Time Lord asked with a childlike tone of disappointment. "You've made some good progress."

"But all the lessons have just been distractions from what's happened," Adric sighed. "Maybe I should concentrate on sorting all that out before trying to master the TARDIS."

Nyssa tried not to let her worry show. "Adric, you still can't believe it was your fault..."

Adric was already heading down the corridor. "I need some rest. That Ice Warrior nearly beat me to a pulp."

"Yes, perhaps it wasn't a wise idea to provoke him, Adric," the Doctor agreed with a slightly reproving tone. "He probably thought you had a death wish!"

Adric said nothing as he left. They had all been hoping for confirmation that Adric's depression hadn't gotten that bad, but the wordless departure left them feeling both somber and troubled. None of them spoke and when the Doctor set about dematerializing the TARDIS, the silence had become what Tegan could only describe as frosty...



It is shortly after the TARDIS has left the Great Fire of London, and Adric is only feeling more dejected and isolated from his fellow travellers. Arriving on an ice planet, the Doctor decides to take Adric's mind off his malaise by investigating a secret tunnel.

Before long, they are trapped inside and at the mercy of not one but two of the Doctor's deadliest foes, working together to pull off an unlikely heist. Meanwhile, Nyssa and Tegan attempt to move the TARDIS to help them but only fall afoul of other visitors to this world.

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