

THE
DOCTOR WHO
PROJECT

The Shadow Emperor



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Published by Jigsaw Publications/The Doctor Who Project
Vancouver, BC, Canada

First Published 2006

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Typeset in Century Schoolbook

A TDWP/Jigsaw Publications E-Book

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Prologue

Darkness. Pain. Sounds. Voices.

“How is he?”

“What happened?”

“Is he dead?”

Another voice, cutting through the others. Strong. Commanding.

“Move back please, make him comfortable. Give poor Mr. Abbot some air. Now, I have sent my butler to summon a physician so I think it were best that we retire now.”

A babble of agreement and shuffling movement. Then the commanding voice again.

“A very good night to you all. I hope to see you next week. Thank you all for coming, rest assured Mr. Abbot will recover presently.”

A heavy door slamming. Footsteps approaching. The sound of a drink being poured. Then a new voice.

“Is he the one?”

“Indeed he is, Jenkins. I think this might be just the fellow.”

Laughter. Then darkness rose to overwhelm him totally.

“Happy birthday, Silver!”

Looking surprised but pleased, Silver sat down on the sofa in the console room and accepted the carefully wrapped gift from the Doctor. He beamed as she opened the envelope.

Inside was a card that the Doctor had made himself, obviously at some length. The picture showed a holographic Police Box that disappeared to reveal a flashing number 16.

Opening the card, she read the greeting.

To

Rachel (Silver)

Happy Landings On Your Birthday

From

The Doctor

“Oh, how thoughtful,” she exclaimed. “I didn’t even realize it was my birthday.”

The Doctor laughed. “As a Time Lord I have a constant awareness of time.”

“So I guess you never miss an appointment?” Silver replied, turning her attention to the wrapping paper.

“Well,” the Doctor responded, looking a little uncomfortable, “there is awareness and there is forgetfulness.”

Now it was Silver who laughed. “You’re saying you know the exact date and time, wherever we land, but you can’t remember if it is significant?”

“Something like that,” the Doctor said with a shrug.

Silver had now torn through the wrapping of her gift, to reveal a plain box. She opened it carefully and examined the contents.

“Oh wow, it’s a watch! Thank you, Doctor,” said Silver, offering her friend a delighted smile.

“And it’s not just any old watch,” he added, pleased at her enthusiasm. “It automatically adjusts to the local time of wherever we land. If we arrive at nine in the morning, eleven at night or half past teatime, the watch will reset itself.”

“Now I can have a constant awareness of time as well.”

“Exactly!”

But Silver had spotted a potential flaw in this otherwise perfect gift. “What if we land somewhere that has twenty seven hours in the day? Or maybe just eight?”

The Doctor, though, was still smiling. “The watch will recalibrate. The dial expands or contracts to accommodate the timescale of whichever planet, ship or station we encounter.”

“A gift for all occasions, then,” she said, the grin returning. She got up from her chair and unexpectedly gave the Doctor a kiss on the cheek. The Time Lord’s embarrassment was brief, interrupted by the sound of the TARDIS landing, as the time rotor slowed to a halt.

“Perfect. You can try out your new gift straight away.”

“Where are we?” Silver enquired as the familiar sound of landing echoed around them.

However, the Doctor was not forthcoming. He tapped the side of his nose conspiratorially. “Birthday treat,” he replied. “All I can tell you is that while it isn’t home, it is somewhere I hope you’ll enjoy just as much.”

So saying, he ushered Silver through the double doors.

* * * *

The TARDIS had materialized in the grounds of a large, old house, which Silver could see in the distance over the brow of a small hill. At first she thought the Doctor had brought her to a theme park but a glance across at the Time Lord showed he too was somewhat baffled by their surroundings.

“Off target again, Doctor?” she asked with a hint of sarcasm.

“Well, we’ve probably overshoot by a few miles. And possibly a few years. Not bad actually, all things considered.”

“Do you know where we are?”

The Doctor stood a while in thought. “That building looks familiar. I think we should make for it and seek directions.”

Knowing that the Doctor was unlikely to be dissuaded once he had decided on a course of action, Silver followed him up the hill. Barely had they made it halfway to the house, however, when a group of men appeared, running towards them: men with guns.

“Ah, soldiers,” the Doctor surmised when they were still some distance away. “I suggest we raise our hands. Slowly.”

Not wanting to get shot for her sixteenth birthday, Silver mimicked the Doctor and stood arms aloft, waiting for the soldiers to reach them. There were three in total, all carrying sophisticated rifles and wearing khaki fatigues. Despite the distance they had run, none was out of breath when they reached the time travelers.

“That’s what I like to see, co-operative prisoners,” the first one announced by way of greeting. “Now, what are you two doing here, this is a restricted area?”

“I’m very sorry, I didn’t know it was restricted,” the Doctor replied, sounding genuinely apologetic.

“Then I guess you missed the signs around the perimeter with ‘Restricted Area – Keep Out!’ on them?”

The Doctor nodded enthusiastically. “I expect that’s what must have happened.”

“Move, both of you,” the soldier growled, prodding the Doctor in the back with his rifle. “To the house, on the double!”

As they moved swiftly across the grass, the Doctor tried to maintain dialogue with their captors.

“Whom do I have the pleasure of addressing?”

“I’m Sergeant McNeill, but you can call me Sir - and believe you me, you won’t consider it a pleasure soon.”

Ignoring the implied threat, the Doctor pressed on. “I see from your insignia, Sergeant McNeill, that you and your colleagues are members of JADE.”

This caught the Sergeant’s attention. “What do you know of JADE?”

“I crossed paths with JADE not too long ago, in Hawaii. Tell me, Sergeant, are you familiar with Captain Connor Downs?”

“That’s Colonel Downs to you, officer in command,” McNeill snapped. “Are you trying to tell me you’re a friend of his?”

The Doctor considered for a moment. “Yes, I do believe I am.”

Sergeant McNeill snorted but otherwise remained silent for the rest of the march across the grounds.

* * * *

Captain Patel looked up from his desk as Sergeant McNeill entered his office and saluted smartly.

“What is it, Sergeant?” Patel enquired.

“Two prisoners, Sir, found wandering in the grounds.”

“Have you questioned them yet?”

“Not formally,” McNeill replied.

Patel frowned. “Then why are you telling me about them now?”

“Because one of them claims to be a friend of the Colonel.”

That caught Patel unawares. “Really? Well, I’ll speak to that prisoner first, then talk to the Colonel.”

“Talk to me about what?” asked a new voice from the doorway.

“Colonel Downs,” Patel acknowledged, standing and saluting with McNeill following suit. “Sergeant McNeill has arrested a couple of trespassers, one of whom claims to know you, Sir.”

Downs nodded. “And what is the name of this prisoner?”

“Just calls himself ‘The Doctor’, Sir,” McNeill responded.

“Now that is interesting,” Colonel Downs declared, raising an eyebrow slightly. “Well, Captain Patel, if you’re intent on talking to these prisoners, I think I’ll tag along.”

“As you wish, Sir,” Patel said, though his face betrayed his disappointment that he was not to question them alone.

“Carry on Sergeant,” Downs ordered cheerfully, falling into step behind the young soldier, Patel bringing up the rear.

* * * *

“Who are these JADE people?” Silver wanted to know. She sat on the bottom bunk in the cell, her feet barely touching the floor.

“I’ve encountered them once before,” the Doctor, reclining on the top bunk, replied. “It was in Hawaii, a couple of years ago, relative time. In all my travels throughout the universe I’ve found few things so firmly clamped shut as the conventional military mind such as I found in charge in Hawaii. That bigoted bully and I didn’t get along at all.”

“This Colonel Downs you mentioned?”

“Goodness me, no,” said the Doctor. “It was Downs that helped bring him to justice. Seems he got a promotion out of the deal. Nice chap, met him before that too.”

“So are they all soldiers?”

The Doctor’s head appeared over the side of his bunk. “I don’t know. All those we encountered were, but that was just a handful. JADE actually stands for Justice And Defence of Earth, so I assume they are not just soldiers.”

Before Silver could ask any more questions, the cell door swung open, to reveal Sergeant McNeill and a corporal who eyed the prisoners warily.

“Captain Patel wants to talk to you,” McNeill said gruffly, motioning for them to leave the cell.

“That’s all very well, but what if I don’t want to talk to him?” the Doctor countered.

“Then you get to spend the night in this *luxury* accommodation,” McNeill snapped.

“Very well, we’ll talk,” the Doctor decided, leaping off the top bunk and landing with cat-like grace. “Lead on, Macduff. Sorry – McNeill.”

Growling deep in his throat, Sergeant McNeill led them to the interrogation suite.

* * * *

The door to the interrogation room swung open, to admit the tall, bearded man and his young companion. As Sergeant McNeill followed them in, Colonel Downs stood grinning, his hand extended.

“Doctor! So it is you. How nice to see you again.”

As the two men shook hands, McNeill and Patel exchanged glances. It seemed that the prisoner had been telling the truth about knowing the Colonel. Turning to his Captain, Downs issued an order.

“Captain Patel, you are to drop all charges against these two immediately and process the paperwork for their release immediately. On my authority,” he added when Patel looked unsure.

“At once, Colonel,” Patel replied, ever the good soldier. With a nod to his superior officer, Patel rose and left the room, McNeill trailing in his wake.

“Now, where are Tamara and Grae?” Downs enquired. “And I don’t believe you’ve introduced me to this young lady.”

“Where are my manners?” the Doctor responded with a smile. “Rachel Silverstein, who prefers to be called Silver, by the way, this is Connor Downs, a Colonel now, if your Sergeant McNeill informed me correctly.”

Downs smiled at Silver. “A pleasure, Silver. Any friend of the Doctor’s is a friend of mine.”

“Likewise, I’m sure,” Silver replied with a grin.

“To answer your question, Grae left my company some time ago to travel on her own.” A dark cloud crossed the Doctor’s face. “As for Tamara, well, I’m afraid we lost her on a previous misadventure.”

Downs’ face fell. “Oh Doctor, I’m so sorry to hear that. I liked them both, but Tamara was especially full of life. Such a sad loss.”

“Indeed.” The ensuing silence was uncomfortable and soon broken by the Doctor. “So, your promotion?”

Downs welcomed the change of topic. “Thanks to you, actually. Bringing Arnolds to justice was a considerable coup for me and caused great upheaval within JADE itself. In the last couple of years the military aspects of the operation have been largely scaled back, with more emphasis now placed on intelligence and counter-invasion strategies. We’ve moved on a lot from the organization you met in Hawaii.”

“So it would seem,” the Doctor mused. “And you’re now heading up the British Section of JADE?”

“That’s right,” Downs replied proudly. “There are fewer than two dozen soldiers on site, but if necessary we can call on the regular army at a moment’s notice. I have a fair degree of latitude.”

“And I can’t think of anybody better suited to the job,” said the Doctor. “You’ll go far, Colonel Downs. Speaking of which, we have far to go ourselves. Landing here was an accident: we’re a little off course. Are we free to go?”

Downs frowned slightly. “Well, you can go any time you like, of course, but since you’re here, I wouldn’t mind a little advice on a matter we’ve been puzzling over for weeks.”

The Doctor was instantly intrigued. “If I can assist, you have only to ask.”

“Consider yourself asked.” Downs smiled again. “Now, allow me to introduce you to one of JADE’s *guests*.”

* * * *

The room was furnished in the manner of a Victorian sitting room. The sole occupant, appropriately dressed, was sitting in a winged armchair reading a leather-bound book. To one side a tea set sat on an occasional table. The pot and cup steamed slightly.

“Thomas Abbot,” announced Colonel Downs, as the three of them looked through the one-way window. “Found wandering aimlessly in the middle of Oxford Street five weeks ago. According to witnesses, he was nearly run over three times by passing traffic. After a short stay in hospital, he was transferred to us. He claims to have collapsed in the sitting room of a spiritualist in 1900, only to wake up here and now.”

The Doctor had been stroking his goatee throughout Downs’ commentary, while watching the man through the glass.

“Nut-job,” Silver volunteered. When the Doctor and Downs both looked at her, she shrugged. “Well, it’s a pretty far-fetched tale, don’t you think?”

“What, like flying through space and time in a Police Box?” the Doctor enquired mildly, raising one eyebrow at her.

“OK, point taken,” Silver sighed. “Possible nut-job.”

“I assume you want me to talk to Mr. Abbot?” the Doctor said, addressing Downs. “See if he really *is* temporally displaced, and if so return him home.”

“We’d be most grateful,” Downs replied. “As you can see, we’ve had to recreate the period in those two rooms. We’ve provided him with books and magazines of the time, which are not easy to find these days. The fixtures and fittings were even harder to get together. Clearly, we can’t let him outside, as you no doubt understand just as well as I.”

“Entirely,” the Doctor responded smoothly. “It must have been difficult for you, holding this man here without charge.”

Downs nodded. “It goes against all my principles, as you well know.”

The Doctor smiled, rubbing his hands together. “So, when would you like me to talk to him?”

“No time like the present, if that’s convenient for you.”

“Absolutely. Silver?”
 She shrugged. “Ready when you are.”
 “Then let’s get on with it, Colonel.”

* * * *

Thomas Abbot looked up as the door to his room opened. He saw the familiar face of Colonel Downs, who had been very kind throughout his ordeal, and two complete strangers.

“Mr. Abbot,” the Colonel said, “I would like to introduce you to the Doctor and his companion Silver.”

The Doctor advanced, a smile on his face and a hand extended. Abbot stood to meet him.

“A pleasure, Mr. Abbot,” he said as the two shook hands, his grip firm but not vice-like.

“Likewise,” Abbot replied. “Please call me Thomas.” He glanced across at Downs. “So am I to be subjected to more of these infernal tests, Colonel?”

Downs shook his head. “The Doctor isn’t that kind of doctor. His remit is rather more, ah, universal.”

Abbot looked downcast. “The only remedy that concerns me is one that will return me home.”

“Then I may be the perfect tonic,” the Doctor told him, his smile broadening. “Now, as the Colonel said, this is my friend and traveling companion Rachel Silverstein, Silver by preference.”

Abbot turned his attention to the other new face, which had escaped his notice thus far. As the Doctor’s words caught up with the evidence of his eyes, he was stunned into silence, his mouth working but no sound emerging.

She was unlike any young woman he had ever met. Her hair was jet black, with purple streaks running through it. She wore what appeared to be a black vest with a pattern of letters and symbols that made no sense to Abbot, dark blue trousers of some thick material and a jacket of two bold, clashing colors. Silver jewellery adorned her neck, ears and fingers.

Silver stepped forward, her hand extended. “Dude, this must be, like, a pretty heavy situation for ya?”

Abbot just stared, as if she had grown an extra head.

The Doctor glared at her. “Silver!” he said warningly.

She shrugged, grinning. “Sorry, just testing.” She winked at Abbot. “You passed, by the way.”

Abbot shook her hand weakly, still in some shock over her appearance. “Charmed, I am sure. But I confess that much of what you said defied comprehension – and your manner of dress...are you *foreign*?”

“American,” said the Doctor, as though this were explanation enough.

“Ah.” Abbot nodded sagely.

“Hey!” Silver protested. “There’s nothing wrong with being American!”

“Would I say such a thing?” the Doctor replied innocently. He returned his attention to Abbot. “Now, if I might just ask you a few questions?”

“By any manner of means,” Abbot responded, offering his armchair. But the Doctor waved it away, refusing to deprive Abbot of his seat, instead opting for a hard chair from the small dining table. Abbot seated himself back in the armchair and the Doctor turned his dining chair around, straddling it. Silver settled cross-legged on the floor nearby. Downs remained standing, ‘at ease’.

“Now, Thomas,” the Doctor began. “Please describe all that you remember before you found yourself here.”

Abbot cleared his throat with some ceremony and addressed the room. “Well, I had gone with my friend James Montgomery, and his wife Alice, to visit the noted spiritualist Jonathan Bartholomew, for one of his renowned séances.

“We drew up at his home in Islington at seven thirty in the evening. To my recollection, there were four others there assembled, none of them known to us. As we awaited our host in the library, I discovered that three of the four had visited Mr. Bartholomew before and they were extravagant in their praise of his talents.”

The Doctor held up his right hand, halting Abbot's recollection. "I'm not familiar with Mr. Bartholomew, still less his talents. Perhaps you might tell us how you became aware of them."

Abbot smiled thinly. "Mr. Bartholomew has been causing something of a stir these five years past. He claims to have preternatural insight into the realms beyond the world of human understanding, much to the consternation of both the church and the scientific community."

"So would you say that Mr. Bartholomew was famous, in his own way?"

"Notorious might be a better description," Abbot said. "I've heard tell he even has the ear of the Prince of Wales."

"Well I hope he gives it back," Silver interjected, earning a scowl from the Doctor.

"I don't recall young Ned being much of a spiritualist," the Doctor commented. "He always seemed much more sensible."

"In this matter, Sir, it would appear your experience far outweighs my own," Abbot admitted. "I must confess it was largely foolish curiosity on my part."

"Then pray continue," the Doctor said, eliciting an amused expression from Silver.

Abbot hesitated for a moment, composing his thoughts. "It was by the first strike of eight from the grandfather clock that Bartholomew made his entrance. As I recall it was a trifle vulgar, notwithstanding that his reputation as a master showman preceded him.

"He greeted everybody individually, offering libations from his bountiful cellars. My brandy was of excellent quality though: I must concede that. Our host regaled us with tales of his exploits in Rhodesia, though his descriptions of some of the native tribes' rituals were perhaps a little florid for the gentler sex. As the clock struck again, marking this time the quarter-hour, he bade us repair with him to the sitting room, where the evening's most fell activity was to be enjoyed.

"The room was somewhat ostentatiously appointed, being bedecked with myriad spoils of his escapades. We took our places at a round table in the centre of the room. When all were settled, Bartholomew dimmed the lamps and took his own seat.

"Per his instruction, we joined hands and closed our eyes. Bartholomew, all but opposite me and with Mrs. Montgomery to his immediate right, commenced a guttural chanting. Very shortly I began to feel warm and light headed. I regret my recollection becomes rather hazier hereafter."

The Doctor was frowning deeply as Abbot's tale came to a halt. He looked up at the man, his eyes burning with a fierce intelligence.

"What can you remember after that? Anything, any scrap, might be of vital importance."

Abbot paused in thought, clearly dredging his memory for anything that might help the Doctor.

"I do not remember falling from my chair, though I do recall lying on the carpet. The last thing I recall was a flurry of feet. Then, darkness. But I did hear things for a while thereafter."

"What did you hear?" the Doctor prompted.

"Voices. They were concerned about me. Then Bartholomew – I'm sure it was he – assuring the party that he had summoned help and that I had become overwrought and would presently recover. Firm hands conveyed me to the chaise longue, from where I soon hear the door close, and more conversation that I failed to discern."

"Anything else?"

Abbot frowned and was silent for some time. Then, "Yes! Bartholomew talking to somebody! Saying that *he*, presumably meaning myself, could be just the one they were looking for. Then laughter, Bartholomew's I think, heavy and cold." He shuddered. "And that is all before I woke up to madness."

The Doctor sat with his arms crossed on the back of his chair, his chin resting on them, as he considered what Abbot had told him, his gaze seemingly far away. He was silent for what seemed like an eternity, but was probably less than a minute.

Eventually he looked up, straight into Abbot's confused eyes. "Describe this Bartholomew for me."

"No taller than I, certainly," Abbot began. "A shade portly, but I'd wager there is more muscle than fat to his frame. Steel grey hair and clear, penetrating blue eyes. No older than the Colonel in

appearance, although a gentleman may appear considerably younger than he is, wouldn't you say, Doctor?"

A suggestion of surprise flitted across the Doctor's face, and then nothing, as he processed what he had heard. Finally, he gave vent a sigh of frustration.

"Mr. Abbot. Thomas. I have no idea how you came to be here." He glanced across at Downs, who had stood silent guard throughout the conversation. "Has the Colonel told you where you are?"

"Not exactly," Abbot replied cautiously.

Downs scowled. "Unfortunately, before Mr. Abbot was transferred to our care, a number of do-gooder doctors and so called medical professionals attempted to *persuade* him that trying to live 150 years in the past was 'not a healthy lifestyle choice'."

"Look, Colonel, I am a rational man, a professional ledger clerk of some repute in society. I am not given to crediting flights of fancy, like the outlandish and gruesome tales of Messrs Wells and Verne. I would thank you not to insult my intelligence further by suggesting such things of shadow and whimsy are manifest."

The Doctor and Downs exchanged glances, understanding passing between them. Turning back to Abbot, the Doctor spoke softly.

"Thomas, when you arrived in Oxford Street, you must have seen many things that seemed strange to you. How do you credit them?"

Abbot seemed resolute, but there was a slight twitch forming under his right eye. "I do not know where I was when I awoke, but it certainly was not Oxford Street, at least not the one within the city of London. How long I was unconscious and where I was transported in that time, I have no idea. But the notion that I was somehow sent forward a century and a half is frankly preposterous."

The Doctor smiled tightly, turning to Downs. "Could you possibly get a few of your men to bring the TARDIS into the building? It should be just beyond where Sergeant McNeill first encountered us in the grounds."

"Of course Doctor," the Colonel replied, leaving the room.

"Now, Thomas," the Doctor said, "I have something that might just change your mind about time travel forever."

* * * *

Half an hour later the TARDIS stood in the corridor just outside Thomas Abbot's rooms. The Colonel ushered the confused Abbot out into the corridor, followed by the Doctor and Silver.

"Would you sign this please, Doctor?" Downs handed the Doctor an electronic clipboard. "We have to account for Mr. Abbot and this form releases him into your care."

The Doctor smiled, accepting the device and stylus from Downs.

"Of course." He signed the form with a characteristic flourish. Handing the clipboard to a nearby private, Downs extended his hand.

"It's been a pleasure to see you again, Doctor."

"Likewise," the Time Lord replied, grasping his hand firmly. "Take care, my dear fellow."

"I shall," Downs grinned.

As the Colonel said his goodbyes to Silver, the Doctor took a small key from his waistcoat pocket and unlocked the TARDIS. Swinging the door open, he stepped aside to allow Silver to enter and gestured for Abbot to follow.

Abbot stammered in consternation. "Surely, Sir, you would not bid me enter such a confine with a young lady?"

"Your carriage home," the Doctor told him dryly. "It's quite safe, I assure you."

Swallowing his apprehension, Abbot took a step forward, placing his foot over the threshold gingerly. Waving a final goodbye to Downs, the Doctor ushered Abbot inside and followed him, closing the door firmly.

Colonel Downs watched as the TARDIS dematerialized, taking JADE's recent guest with it. "Safe journey," he murmured.

* * * *

Despite his protestations to the contrary, the Doctor always enjoyed taking a new passenger aboard the TARDIS. His brusque retorts to wide-eyed companions who stated that the TARDIS was “bigger on the inside” had hidden this enjoyment for several centuries.

It took Thomas Abbot some moments to compose a coherent sentence, by which time the Doctor had set the craft in motion. Meanwhile, Silver had sunk into an armchair by the door and was picking up where she had left off with the witchcraft magazine she had found in the TARDIS library.

“What fresh hell is this?” Abbot cried, turning to the Doctor. “I confess I have seen enough illusions today to see me to the end of my days. What next, are we to be turned into rats?”

The Doctor smiled at his visitor. “I should hope not,” he declared, “otherwise the High Council will be very angry.”

“But it was a box, not big enough to fit the three of us in comfort,” Abbot argued.

“You’ll get used to it,” Silver remarked absently, not looking up from her reading.

Abbot had turned pale. “I am not sure I wish to become accustomed to such chicanery.”

The raucous sound of materialization had already begun. Silver glanced over at the Doctor.

“That was quick.”

The Doctor shrugged. “London 1900 and Essex 2050 are not that far apart, as the temporal crow flies.”

“I do declare that I am unable to comprehend any of this, least of all how we moved anywhere,” Abbot admitted with a sigh.

The time rotor at the centre of the console slowed and stopped. With a flick of a switch, the Doctor operated the TARDIS scanner.

“See anything you recognize?” he asked Abbot, indicating the screen.

The Victorian seemed taken aback by the sight of a dark, slightly foggy road lit by gas lamps. “That is just a few streets away from my abode,” he said quietly.

“Excellent. And how close is it to Mr. Bartholomew’s residence?”

Abbot considered for a moment. “No further than half a mile.”

“Fantastic!” the Doctor exclaimed, somewhat to Abbot’s alarm. “Now, I would like us to pay this Jonathan Bartholomew a visit, if you don’t mind, try and get to the bottom of how you ended up so far from home.”

“I am reluctant to return to that accursed place again, Doctor, but in any event we should require a hansom carriage for the journey.”

The Doctor raised an eyebrow. “Why?”

“Because Essex, where you said we were, is quite some way from Mr. Bartholomew’s home,” Abbot replied. “Despite the quite accurate simulacrum you have conjured on that wall.”

Silver grinned over the top of her magazine. “Oh boy, are you in for a shock!”

The Doctor said nothing, merely operating the control to open the TARDIS doors, ushering Abbot towards them. As he stepped close enough to see what was outside, he stopped short.

“This is impossible!” he said firmly, as a curl of London fog snaked around the open door.

“My dear Thomas,” the Doctor said, placing a hand on Abbot’s shoulder, “I do wish you would stop telling me what is possible and what isn’t. I’ve brought you home. I thought you might be grateful.”

Abbot stepped slowly out, taking in his surroundings incredulously. Turning, his eyes fell on the TARDIS exterior, and the open doors betraying its much larger interior.

“I am grateful,” Abbot almost whispered. “More grateful than I can ever tell you. I cannot conceive of how you have done this thing, what magic you have worked, but indeed I am forever in your debt.”

The Doctor grinned. “Think nothing of it. Now, you were going to show me the way to Mr. Bartholomew’s house.”

The Doctor heard a magazine rustle behind him as it was dropped back into the armchair.

“Wait for me,” Silver called, her footsteps resounding on the floor of the console room.

But the Doctor turned in the doorway, blocking her exit. “Not this time, Silver. I’m not sure what kind of danger this man Bartholomew poses, but I’m quite sure he is a threat to this time. It would be quicker and safer, for all of us, if Thomas and I conducted a quick reconnoitre on our own.”

“But Doctor...” Silver began plaintively.

The Doctor shook his head. “No. We won’t be long. Stay here and keep an eye on the TARDIS for me. Please.”

For a moment it looked like she was going to protest further. Then her shoulders slumped and her head dropped.

“If that’s what you want,” she said, sounding deflated.

“It is. Thank you, Silver.”

The Doctor smiled at her, then turned back toward Abbot.

“Where are we going, exactly?” the Time Lord asked him.

As Abbot replied, Silver pushed the lever that closed the doors of the TARDIS. But not before she learnt the address of Mr. Jonathan Bartholomew.

* * * *

The thin mist swirled around their ankles as the Doctor and Thomas Abbot made their way along the streets of Victorian London. They talked as they walked.

“I must say, that machine of yours is quite the marvel,” Abbot enthused.

The Doctor smiled. “Why, thank you Thomas, I’m sure the old girl would be delighted to hear such praise.”

Abbot looked confused for a moment, then decided not to pursue that line of conversation any further. “I am sure that the principles on which its locomotion is founded are entirely beyond a man of my learning.”

“Trust me, Thomas, sometimes the TARDIS is beyond even my understanding.”

Shortly thereafter they arrived at their destination. It was a large but unremarkable house, among others of similar style. There was nothing to set it apart as the home of a renowned spiritualist. The Doctor strode up the footpath with Abbot close behind. When they reached the front door, the Doctor pulled hard on the bell.

Somewhere just on the edge of hearing, a tinkling sound announced visitors to those within. After a short wait the door swung open and the two time travelers were greeted by a tall, balding man dressed in a smart butler’s uniform.

“May I help you, gentlemen?”

The Doctor took a step forward, his foot just inside the door. “We should like to speak with your master, Mr. Bartholomew.”

The butler regarded them coolly. “Mr. Bartholomew is not at home to visitors this evening.”

As the butler made to shut the door, the Doctor’s foot prevented him. “He’ll see us, I can guarantee it. We’ve traveled a long way, further than you can possibly imagine.”

A look of annoyance crossing his face, the butler remained firm. “I have not been instructed to expect visitors, from any quarter, Sir.”

The Doctor sighed deeply. “Then why not check with your master, while we wait in the hall. Mr. Bartholomew will be very unhappy if he discovers you turned us away.”

This caused a change of mind. Reluctantly, the butler opened the door far enough for them to enter. Indicating with a nod that they should remain just inside the front door, he withdrew at a stately pace.

It didn’t take long for him to return, looking rather crestfallen. The reason was soon apparent.

“You are to await the master’s pleasure in the library,” the butler intoned, his disapproval evident.

But the Doctor ignored his surly attitude, clapping the man on the shoulder. “Excellent! What did I tell you, eh? Probably saved your bacon, old chap.”

“Indeed, Sir,” the butler replied frostily, slipping his shoulder out from under the Doctor’s hand and escorting the two of them to the library, where he left them. The large grandfather clock read five minutes to nine. The two of them looked around the room. For Abbot, it was much as he remembered it. But the Doctor was seeing it all for the first time. He took in everything with interest, especially the bookshelves lining three of the four walls.

Running his fingers along the spine of a particular tome, the Doctor turned to Abbot. “I must say, Mr. Bartholomew has an extraordinary collection of books. I thought I was the only person in the universe to have a first edition copy of this.”

Abbot shrugged. “I should rather have answers than study books.”

“And answers you shall have,” declared a rich, deep voice from the doorway, speaking in time with the clock chiming nine.

The Doctor and Abbot turned to regard their host. As described, he was a man of large build, yet carried himself with an athletic grace. While his smile was wide and welcoming, his eyes were hard and predatory.

“My dear Mr. Abbot, welcome back,” Bartholomew said, striding over and shaking him firmly by the hand. “I do hope your little trip has not inconvenienced you too much.”

Abbot just stood there, his mouth open as the implications of the statement sank in. But Bartholomew had already turned his attention elsewhere.

“And you must be this Doctor about whom I have learned so much!”

* * * *

Silver stood in the TARDIS console room, thinking furiously. Having already printed out a map to Bartholomew’s house from the ship’s data bank, she was determined to follow the Doctor and Abbot, but didn’t want them to see her. She needed some sort of disguise.

Her face brightened as she thought of the wardrobe section, somewhere the Doctor had shown her shortly after she had arrived aboard the TARDIS. With a spring in her step she set out to see what she could find.

While the room was so large, she couldn’t see the back wall, there was a handy index by the doors. Selecting the aisle for Victorian England, she began her search.

A frustrating ten minutes later, she was pondering yet another flowery gown, when something darker caught her eye. Her mind quickly picked up a stray memory, of watching a Sherlock Holmes story on television when she was younger. Grinning, she picked the clothes she had discovered from their rail.

A couple of minutes later, her hair scraped up under a dark flat cap, Silver was transformed from 21st Century teenage girl to 19th Century male street urchin.

A couple of minutes later, she was out of the TARDIS doors, making her way swiftly through the foggy streets of London, following in the footsteps of the Doctor.

* * * *

The Doctor recovered quickly from his surprise. “Should I know you, Mr. Bartholomew?”

Bartholomew smiled, a wolfish expression. “This is the first time our paths have crossed, but your reputation precedes you. I have read many of your exploits throughout the centuries. You are a fascinating individual, Sir.”

“I’m flattered,” the Doctor replied casually, “but you must be mistaking me for someone else. Centuries? Nobody lives that long!”

“Nobody human, that is certainly true. But then you are not human, are you, Doctor?”

The Doctor laughed, but the sound was uneasy. “You have a lively imagination, Mr. Bartholomew, I’ll give you that. I assume you’re a fan of Jules Verne and Herbert Wells.”

“They are half-witted fancies, as you well know,” Bartholomew growled. He pointed a finger at the Doctor. “You are a Time Lord from the planet Gallifrey. You travel through time and space in a blue box, larger within than without, which you call TARDIS. And you have the ability to change

your physical form, presumably when your body becomes too injured to repair itself. Have I omitted anything?"

"You're remarkably well informed," the Doctor conceded, his eyes narrowing. "Who are you, really?"

Bartholomew grinned. "Unlike you, I am exactly what I appear to be: human; a collector and spiritualist. Nothing out of the ordinary, I assure you. I am neither alien nor from another time."

The Doctor considered this carefully. If Bartholomew was what he said he was – and why should he lie? – then he had managed to get hold of information that was well beyond the present time.

"So where exactly did you acquire all this *knowledge*?" the Doctor demanded.

Bartholomew wagged a finger at the Time Lord. "Patience, my dear fellow, all shall be explained."

He strolled over to the nearest bookshelf, running his index finger along the spine of one tome in particular. With a slight sigh of escaping air, a hidden door in the bookcase swung open.

"Oh, how clichéd," the Doctor groaned.

"Do you think so?" Bartholomew enquired, raising an eyebrow. "I thought it rather clever myself. Now, if you should like to step through, both of you, I will show you as much of the truth of the situation as I think you can comprehend."

The Doctor snorted at Bartholomew's condescension and was about to refuse, when he noticed two scowling, heavysset men who had entered the room behind them. The meaning was clear. Bartholomew's request was not to be turned down.

Touching Abbot lightly on the arm, the Doctor led him through the concealed doorway.

* * * *

Consulting her printed map, Silver peered through the darkness at the street nameplate fixed to the wall above her. The nearby gas lamp was little help, throwing out meagre illumination.

She had taken three wrong turns so far, finding herself in dark alleys each time. The city was trying to confuse her, she concluded. Squinting slightly, she made out a name on the wall. Examining her map, Silver found she was getting close to her objective. It should be three streets away now. Providing that there were no more alleys between her current location and Bartholomew's house.

With a renewed surge of optimism, she set off in search of the Doctor.

* * * *

At that moment, the Doctor was staring around the torch-lit chamber before him. There were more books here, though not nearly as many as in the main house. There were also a number of objects around the floor and walls. Sinister objects. Dominating the centre of the chamber was a large stone altar.

"I see that you're a Satanist on the side," the Doctor said pointedly as Bartholomew entered behind and stood before him and Abbot. The two heavies stood behind Bartholomew, ready if needed by their master.

"It is a means to an end," the Victorian admitted. "Not that I describe myself so. I prefer the term pagan warlock."

"Whatever you call it, you can't deny that you use the forces embodied in these artefacts for the purposes of evil."

Bartholomew smiled his wolfish smile again. "One man's evil is another man's good, as I am sure you would agree." He gestured, taking in the whole chamber. "This I find good."

"I know something about evil and can usually spot it without too much difficulty."

"And what do you see, Mr. Abbot?" asked Bartholomew, turning to his other guest.

Abbot had been too stunned to add much to the conversation since the two forces of Victorian and Gallifreyan had clashed. Addressed now, he took a few moments to compose his answer.

“What I see here, Sir, is wrong – utterly monstrous! Whatever diabolical scheme you are engaged in, I will do everything in my power to stop it.”

Bartholomew sighed. “Another puritan. I had hoped that when the Doctor returned you might be of further use to me.”

The Doctor looked sharply at Bartholomew. “You staged all this...for my benefit?”

“But of course, Doctor. When I first learned of you from the journals of those whose lives you touched, I quickly realized that you were a threat to my plans. So I decided to draw you here. As you can see, the plan worked perfectly.”

Still trying to wrap his mind around what Bartholomew was claiming, the Doctor gave voice to his thoughts.

“You’re saying that you somehow sent poor Mr. Abbot into the future, in the hope that I would learn of him and bring him home? That all of this has been a trap and I’ve walked right into it?”

“Exactly so! Professor Litefoot was right, you are an extraordinary fellow.”

The Doctor’s eyes narrowed. “You know the Professor?”

“I read an account of the Li H’sen Chang incident a few years ago, and tracked Litefoot down to interview him about you. He was full of praise, as was Mr. Jago.”

“What exactly are you up to, Bartholomew?” the Doctor demanded. “Go on, you might as well boast. Few megalomaniacs can resist the temptation.”

“Ah, but I am no common adversary Doctor.”

“Maybe. But why not tell me anyway? Please? I dare you.”

“After such a gracious request, I can scarcely refuse to enlighten you. I intend to be Emperor.”

“You wish to rule the British Empire?” the Doctor scoffed. “That is the prerogative of the Royal Family, I’m afraid.”

“Who said anything about the British Empire? I shall be Emperor of the entire world! The British Empire is just the beginning, an adequate stepping stone to supreme control!”

“You’re serious, aren’t you?”

“Never more so,” Bartholomew confirmed. “I already have the ear of the Prince of Wales.”

“So I hear – I hope you give it back!”

Abbot raised his eyebrows and the Doctor shrugged.

Bartholomew continued. “So when our beloved Monarch dies next year, and yes, Doctor, I know exactly when she will pass away, down to the hour, the Prince shall accede to the throne and appoint me as his chief advisor.”

“A shadow emperor,” the Doctor declared.

“As you say. Until such time as I am ready to step out of the shadows and seize the reins of power for myself.”

Frowning, the Doctor considered this information before enquiring, “So, what happens now?”

“Now, Doctor? Why, what else? I shall kill you.”

* * * *

Silver studied the large, dark house. This was the place, she was sure of it – even after her wrong turnings. But now she was here, what next?

The best thing to do would be to find the Doctor and help him, if she could. However, she realized that simply ringing the doorbell wasn’t an option.

Approaching cautiously, she scouted around the entire building, finally finding an open window around the back. Slipping the catch, she managed to squirm through and landed lightly on the hard tiled floor.

The room was in darkness but her eyes rapidly adjusted, showing that she had broken into the kitchen. Skirting the large central table, she found a heavy door that led out into the servant’s passageway. Just as she was starting to step out of the kitchen, Silver heard the sound of

approaching footsteps. She ducked back inside, hoping that whoever was coming her way hadn't seen her.

Standing in the shadows, her heart beat faster as she saw the handle of the door she had been about to use start to turn.

* * * *

The Doctor frowned at Bartholomew. "Well, I suppose I should have expected no less. You won't want me intervening in your nefarious schemes, though I must say that laying a trap for me beforehand is something new. I congratulate you on your foresight."

Bartholomew executed a small bow. "High praise indeed, my dear Doctor. It almost seems a shame to have to destroy such an intellect as yours."

"So, do I get a last request? A hearty meal? A final cigarette?"

"I would not have thought you a smoker, Doctor," Bartholomew commented wryly.

The Doctor shoved his hands deep into his trouser pockets. "I'm not, but the offer would be nice."

The pistol had appeared in Bartholomew's hand as if by magic, his face changing from joviality to menace in a heartbeat.

"Put your hands over your head Doctor, where I can see them," the occultist ordered.

The Doctor complied airily, removing his hands slowly then raising them above shoulder height. They appeared to be empty.

"I know your reputation for trickery, Doctor. Be assured that I am prepared for anything you may try."

"I'm sure you are," the Doctor told him with a slight smile. Using his free hand, Bartholomew beckoned forward the two heavies. They obeyed without question. As Bartholomew turned to issue them with instructions, one of the Doctor's hands twitched forward. Something small clattered to the floor and a cloud of smoke burst forth.

Stunned into immobility, Abbot felt a hand pull him backwards. Turning, he saw the hand belonged to the Doctor, who was trying to pull him back towards the secret doorway they had entered through. Taking the hint, he ran for it.

Behind them Bartholomew could be heard cursing loudly. A gunshot echoed, the muzzle flash not making much impression on the thick smoke now filling the chamber. Coughing, Abbot stumbled into the library just a little ahead of the Doctor, who didn't seem at all incapacitated by the smoke. The Time Lord pushed the bookcase closed behind them.

"That won't hold Bartholomew for long," he announced, reaching the door to the hallway in two long strides.

As he and Abbot dashed for the front door, they heard a stern voice behind them.

"I say! What are you think you're doing?"

Glancing back, the Doctor and Abbot saw the butler at the far end of the hall.

"I think we just outstayed our welcome!" the Doctor called back, opening the front door and bolting into the night, Abbot close on his heels.

* * * *

Silver stood, frozen in fear, as the shadowy figure of a man stepped through the door into the kitchen.

Before he got any further in, however, the sound of a commotion from somewhere in the house caused him to hesitate, then turn around and leave. As the door swung shut behind him, Silver heard him call out to someone, but couldn't make out the words.

Gingerly moving forward, she opened the door. The man was now nowhere in sight, so she slipped out into the passageway beyond. This was brighter than the kitchen, with a couple of lamps set into the walls. Silver made her way towards where she had heard the man shouting a few moments earlier. It seemed likely that the Doctor might have been the object of the man's attention.

The door at the end of the passageway was partly open. Through the gap she could make out a hallway, with a large front door and other doors to left and right. Cautiously she stepped into the hall.

But obviously not cautiously enough. Before she even knew he was there, the man had grabbed her from behind, one hand clamped firmly over her mouth.

"It looks as though the master has another unwelcome visitor to deal with," he hissed, dragging the struggling Silver towards one of the side doors.

* * * *

The Doctor didn't stop running until he was at least three streets away. Hearing no sounds of pursuit, he steadied down to a jog before stopping altogether.

Abbot drew up beside him, hands on knees, wheezing like a steam engine.

"That...was too close...a shave," the Victorian declared between gasps for air.

The Doctor, seemingly none the worse for their dash, looked back the way they had come.

"Our Mr. Bartholomew is certainly a unique individual. He has knowledge far beyond what he should have, and if he truly did send you into the future, which I have no reason to doubt, then he has powers that make him possibly the single most dangerous man in the history of this planet. We have to find a way to stop him, Thomas."

Abbot straightened, having regained his composure somewhat. "If there is one man I trust to do just that, then that man is you, Doctor."

The Doctor smiled modestly. "Your trust is appreciated. Now, we need to return to the TARDIS. I want to take another look around Bartholomew's lair, but this time I don't want him knowing about it."

* * * *

The butler thrust the wriggling bundle of ragged clothing at the feet of his Master, who was coughing into a handkerchief.

"What is this, Jenkins? Another visitor? My, we are blessed this evening."

"Do you need me to stay, Sir?" Jenkins asked.

"No, I am sure I can handle this...guest."

Jenkins nodded. "Very good, Sir," he murmured, beating an impeccable retreat.

"And who might you be?" Bartholomew enquired, squatting down to see this street urchin better. Silver looked up at him, eyes blazing with defiance. As she lifted her head, the grimy flat cap fell off, revealing her black and purple hair that was hidden beneath it.

Bartholomew reached out and pulled her to her feet. She resisted, but might as well have tried to stop the tide coming in.

"Well, this *is* a stroke of good fortune," the man declared. He noticed a glint of reflected light around her neck and grasped the object. It was a triangle, with a stylized Egyptian eye in the centre.

"Leave that alone!" Silver exclaimed, yanking the symbol from his hand.

But Bartholomew was smiling widely. "Your arrival was foretold by the runes. You are the Pagan Princess I have been expecting."

This brought Silver up short. "You know about Paganism?"

"My dear girl, I know more than you could ever guess. I have been using rituals for more than twice the number of years you have been alive."

"You're a warlock?"

"Of course. And I sense great power within you. You may even rival me in that respect one day." He put a fatherly hand on her shoulder. "I could teach you, help you develop those powers."

Silver considered his words. While she had the greatest of respect for the Doctor, and he had shown her such wonders in their short time together, here was a chance for her to develop, to grow, to be more than she had ever thought possible. The Doctor had taught her to trust again, so maybe it was time to apply that trust.

She looked up at Bartholomew. "Teach me," she said simply.

* * * *

"Silver, we're back!" the Doctor called as he and Abbot entered the TARDIS. The Time Lord looked around the empty console room and frowned slightly. "She must be sulking in her room," he decided.

The Doctor opened the inner door and marched down to Silver's bedroom, second on the left. He tapped lightly on her door, but got no reply.

"Look, Silver, I'm sorry we left you behind, but I think we were right to do so. Bartholomew is more dangerous than I could ever have expected." Still silence greeted him. "Silver?"

Concerned, he tried the door handle. Peering into the room, he found there was nobody home. The Doctor returned to the console room with a deep scowl lining his handsome, bearded face.

"Is anything amiss?" Abbot asked.

"I can't find Silver," the Doctor told him. He stood over the console, punching buttons with unnecessary force. "She accessed and downloaded a map of the area and she's used the Victorian area of the wardrobe section." Now he thumped the console with his fist. "Damn it! Why can't they just do what I tell them for once!"

"They?" Abbot enquired.

"My companions," the Doctor sighed, his frustration evident. "Silver is just the latest in a long line of headstrong young people who think they know better than someone who has been around a lot longer than they have."

"So where do you think she has gone?"

"That's what worries me," the Doctor admitted. "The only place she could possibly be is Bartholomew's house." His fingers flew over the console with the grace and fluency of a concert pianist. "We need to reach her before he does."

* * * *

Like Silver before them, the Doctor and Abbot found themselves in the kitchen of Bartholomew's home. Cautious lest the noise of their arrival should have alerted the household, they held back for a minute or two until the Doctor decided that the coast was indeed clear.

The house appeared dark throughout; the master and servants all seemed to be asleep. Following the passage into the hallway, they quietly made their way to the library.

The door opened easily and despite the gloom the Doctor retraced his two strides to the bookcase unerringly. Selecting the same volume Bartholomew had used earlier that evening, the Doctor ran his finger down the spine and the hidden door swung noiselessly open.

Stepping through into the chamber, the Doctor and Abbot found that it was illuminated by a couple of flaming torches set into the wall, presumably still lit from their encounter with Bartholomew. They were wrong.

The Doctor was seized by strong arms and held in position, while Abbot was felled by a blow to the back of the head. He slumped to the floor, unconscious.

Struggling in the grip of one of the Satanist's thugs, the Doctor beheld once more the grinning face of Jonathan Bartholomew.

"Doctor, what an entirely expected surprise. I knew you would not be able to resist returning to my humble abode. Especially when I now hold a trump card."

He stepped aside to reveal Silver, still dressed as a street urchin and unable to look the Doctor in the eyes.

Despite the large Victorian holding him firmly in place, the Doctor managed to look sympathetic. "It's all right, Silver, I'm not annoyed with you for leaving the TARDIS. I'm just sorry you got caught."

"Caught, Doctor?" Bartholomew echoed, a hint of amusement in his tone. "Does Miss Silver look to you like she is being restrained?"

Now he came to mention it, Silver wasn't either held or tied in any way. The Doctor found this mildly puzzling, as was the fact that Silver still couldn't meet his gaze.

"What have you done, Bartholomew?" the Doctor demanded. "Drugged her?"

"Nothing so crude, I assure you, Doctor. No, Silver has elected to join me in the furtherance of knowledge."

The Doctor looked like he had been physically struck. "Silver? Is this true?"

"Yes," Silver muttered.

"Louder my dear, I do not think he heard you," said Bartholomew gleefully.

"Yes!" Silver repeated, at last lifting her head and giving the Doctor a defiant stare. "Mr. Bartholomew says I have a great deal of power, of untapped potential. I'm sorry Doctor, but I won't be able to realize that traveling with you."

"But Silver, he's the enemy! He wants to destroy me because he believes I will be a hindrance to his plans!"

"Is he right? Will you hinder him?"

The Doctor looked shocked. "Of course I will, with every fibre of my being! What Bartholomew is trying to do is wrong!"

For a moment, Silver looked torn. Then she simply looked away.

"Then I'm truly sorry, Doctor. I can't help you."

Bartholomew patted her shoulder affectionately, turning his wolfish smile on the Doctor. "You see, practicality will always win out over loyalty."

"So it would seem," the Doctor replied, injecting plenty of venom into his words. Silver blushed.

"Time to finish this," Bartholomew declared, snapping his fingers. From out of the shadows stepped twelve robed and hooded figures. At a nod from their master, they began to chant.

"You didn't tell me you had ordered a male voice choir," the Doctor quipped, but even to his own ears it sounded half hearted.

Another click of Bartholomew's fingers saw the figures produce a length of rope. They bound the Time Lord's hands tightly in front of him, then moved the unconscious Abbot onto the altar. Meanwhile, Bartholomew was rummaging through a selection of ceremonial daggers. He found one, held it up to the light and smiled. Then he turned and handed it to Silver.

"When the time is right, you may attend to Mr. Abbot."

Realizing what he meant, Silver paled, then nodded forcefully, as though to persuade herself. Satisfied that everything was ready, Bartholomew reached under his cravat and brought out a thin slice of crystal on a gold chain. As it caught the light, the crystal changed color, shifting through from white to blue, green to red: it seemed to have a life of its own.

The Doctor gasped. "Is that what I think it is?"

Bartholomew raised an inquiring eyebrow. "And what do you think it is?"

"A vortex crystal," the Doctor breathed. "Or at least a sliver of one. One of the most powerful naturally occurring phenomena in the universe."

"And it is mine to control," Bartholomew rejoined exultantly. "It whispers to me sometimes, telling me things, here," he tapped the side of his head, "in my mind. Strange things, forbidden knowledge."

The Doctor frowned. "It's powerful yes, but it's also dangerous. Too dangerous for a mere human to influence."

"That is where you are wrong, Doctor. I *have* influenced this vortex crystal of yours. How do you think I sent Mr. Abbot here forward in time?"

"Then you were very lucky," the Doctor told him defiantly. "It should have shredded your mind like tissue paper."

"So what does the fact that it did no such thing tell you, Doctor?"

This gave the Doctor pause. "Well, if you're sure you've not been influenced by any alien force, then I have just one conclusion. You must have an incredibly powerful mind. Possibly the strongest and most organized human mind I've ever encountered."

Bartholomew gave a mocking bow. "Why, thank you Doctor, you flatter me."

“Not half as much as you flatter yourself,” the Doctor snapped back. “No matter how strong and organized the mind, that crystal *will* destroy you!”

“Poppycock! Your craven attempt to sow doubt in my mind will fail, Doctor. I am not some weak-willed petty villain that you can overcome with your Time Lord’s parlour tricks. You have met your match this time.”

The Doctor actually hung his head. “You may be right.” He looked up at Bartholomew. “Will my end be quick?”

Bartholomew shrugged. “I do not know. I have never tried casting a Gallifreyan through the Gateway before. Though the humans we experimented on died quickly. Very quickly.”

Stepping back, Bartholomew said something to Silver in a low voice. She nodded once in agreement and moved to the altar, the dagger gripped loosely in her hand.

“It isn’t too late to end this, Silver,” the Doctor pleaded, pitching his voice low. But not low enough.

“Oh, Doctor,” Bartholomew sighed. “I thought you had accepted your fate, made peace with Rassilon or whoever you call a God, and were ready for the next world.”

“I will never go quietly,” the Doctor grated, struggling with the rope binding his hands.

Silver moved to stand in front of him. She gazed up into his eyes. “Don’t fight it, Doctor. It will only make this more painful, and I don’t want you to suffer.”

“Then turn away from *him!*” the Time Lord exclaimed. “He’s leading you astray!”

Silver shook her head sadly. She turned away from her former mentor. “I’m sorry, Doctor,” she told him simply.

Bartholomew was smiling, but not unkindly. “You have been a worthy opponent, Doctor. Much as I expected. Your death will bring me no joy.”

“Then release me!” he snarled.

“That, regrettably, I cannot do, Doctor. I have a destiny to fulfill, and you stand between it and me. Like Silver, I am sorry.”

Silver had rejoined him before the altar. Bartholomew turned to the chanting group around the chamber. With a wave of his hand, the chanting changed slightly, increasing in depth and intensity. Bartholomew grasped the sliver of crystal and looked up at the ceiling.

“I call upon the forces embodied in this crystal to give me the strength to use the powers we are summoning to open the gateway between the past and the future!”

As the Doctor watched, the air around the head of the altar shimmered, becoming a swirl of colors that shifted in harmony with those of Bartholomew’s crystal, a swirl the Doctor recognized with a thrill of horror.

“The Time Vortex!” he breathed.

“Is that what you call it?” Bartholomew enquired. “I refer to it as the Gateway, but then I am just an ignorant savage.”

He patted Silver on the shoulder. Taking a deep breath, she reached forward and pressed the dagger against the throat of the still unconscious Thomas Abbot. Nicking the skin gently, a bead of blood trickled down his exposed neck.

The vortex increased in brightness and color, as the chanting got faster. Bartholomew’s eyes flashed with satisfaction.

Her face a blank mask, Silver lifted the knife high above Abbot’s chest...

...and buried it in Bartholomew’s left thigh.

At this, the Doctor wrenched his hands apart, snapping the remaining strands of rope. When she had stood before him earlier, Silver had surreptitiously sliced part way through them, out of sight of her Victorian mentor.

Many things happened at once.

As his guard attempted to restrain the Doctor, he elbowed the man sharply in the stomach, doubling him over. A swift blow to the back of the neck felled him into the dark pit of unconsciousness.

Bartholomew was roaring with pain, the dagger still stuck into his leg. Silver skipped backwards away from him, but now found herself firmly held by one of the hooded figures. Abbot,

awakened by the sound of Bartholomew bellowing, realized where he was and sat up, dazed and confused.

Silver struggled in the grip of the hooded man. Abbot realized her predicament and slid off the altar to come to her aid. As he did so, the Doctor vaulted past him and tackled Bartholomew before he could fully recover.

The Victorian and the Time Lord grappled, slowly but surely edging towards the still open tear in the vortex.

Meanwhile, Abbot recovered his presence of mind enough to deliver a punch that knocked Silver's attacker off his feet and deposited him on the cold stone floor. The rest of the robed and hooded figures were not as brave and fled into the shadows, hoping that they could escape justice.

The Doctor and Bartholomew still struggled for primacy. Even encumbered by the dagger in his leg, the Victorian was holding his own. In fact, he was starting to turn the tide in his favour.

Silver wanted to plunge into the fight to aid the Doctor, but Abbot prevented her. The two of them watched as Satanist and Gallifreyan battled on.

Suddenly the Doctor went limp. Caught off guard, Bartholomew overreached as the Time Lord ducked out from under his bulk. Momentum carried Bartholomew forward and for a brief moment, he teetered on the edge of the vortex opening. With his face a mask of horror, he tumbled across the threshold.

Almost instantly, the tear snapped shut. The Doctor staggered away, drained by his fight.

"Are you okay?" Silver dashed to his side as he leaned against the altar.

The Doctor looked down at her and for a moment Silver thought she saw mistrust in his eyes. But then he smiled weakly and the moment was gone.

"I've been better. And you?"

"Bumps and bruises, nothing more," she replied.

"And you, Mr. Abbot?" the Doctor asked, looking over at the other member of their party.

"I shall survive, I think," Abbot told him with a smile.

"Good. Then we just need to tidy things up here." So saying he reached down and with little effort lifted the thug that he had recently rendered unconscious. Nodding to Abbot, he indicated that the man should pick up his own victim.

As they left the chamber, the Doctor knocked one of the blazing torches off the wall, sending it spinning into a stack of Bartholomew's pagan texts.

As the fire took hold, the three of them, plus their two burdens, made their way through the house, shouting as they went to alert the staff to the fire. Finding the kitchen, they made for the safety of the TARDIS.

* * * *

The following morning dawned bright and clear, though there was a red glow over the spot where Bartholomew's house had stood. The entire building had been consumed by fire in the night, the only person unaccounted for being the owner.

Abbot and the Doctor had handed their captives over to the authorities. Between them they would name all the members of Bartholomew's Satanist sect.

The Doctor, Silver and Abbot stood outside the TARDIS, parked in a quiet alley near Bartholomew's home.

"Goodbye, Thomas," the Doctor said, extending his hand and smiling. "I hope this is as eventful as things get for you!"

"As do I," Abbot replied with feeling, shaking the Time Lord by the hand. "And thank you once again for bringing me home."

Disengaging his hand, he took Silver's in it and kissed the back of it. Then with a smile and a wave, he walked away.

The Doctor and Silver watched him leave. At the mouth of the alley he turned and waved again. They returned the gesture.

Then the two of them stepped into the TARDIS and left Victorian England behind them.

* * * *

“It was all an act you know. I wouldn’t really have joined him.”

Silver had said the same, or words to that effect, probably a dozen times since they escaped from Bartholomew’s house. The same number of times the Doctor had framed his reply.

“I know. You were very convincing.”

“I had to be,” she told him, desperately wondering whether or not he believed her. “I couldn’t risk you tipping him off.”

“Of course,” the Doctor said, looking up from his study of the console with a smile. But to Silver the smile looked forced. Again she wondered if he believed what she said.

She tried not to think about whether or not she believed it herself.

* * * *

After a few minutes, Silver left the Doctor alone in the console room, with his thoughts and his research.

Something about seeing Bartholomew and Silver together had disturbed him. It wasn’t that she had almost betrayed him – not really. He had known many misguided young people who occasionally strayed from the straight and narrow. He thought fleetingly of Adric and his trust of the Urbankan Monarch.

No, this was something else. Using the TARDIS’ data banks, he sought out all the data he could on Jonathan Bartholomew. Census records, birth and marriage certificates, newspaper clippings.

He discovered that Bartholomew had married, though his wife had died reasonably young, during the birth of their only child, a son. That son had married too, having three children.

Eventually the Doctor’s trail ended, just where he had thought it might: with Silver.

Bartholomew had been Silver’s great, great, great grandfather.

* * * *

Epilogue

The Time Vortex resounded with the rage of its newest occupant.

By rights he should have been dead by now, shredded by the time winds until his atoms were scattered across all of space and time. But then he had a little bit of special protection.

The sliver of crystal still glowed around his neck as he tumbled through the maelstrom, screaming his defiance of the Doctor and his intention of visiting vengeance upon him...

MARK SIMPSON

Season 33's *The Shadow Emperor* is Mark's third story in a row for TDWP, following on from *Split Infinities* (Season 31) and *No Rest For The Wicked* (Season 32). Things have changed a little for Mark in the last year. While he still lives in Yorkshire and works for the same company, he is now single once again and very much enjoying the new lease of life the Doctor is having on television.

