

THE  
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PROJECT

**The PLASTIC PEOPLE**



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## PART ONE

"Sister."

"Sister?"

"Sister!"

The Nestene Consciousness drifted through the coldness of space in a semi-hibernative state.

"Sister," called the voice again. At first, the Nestene hadn't even registered the telepathic communiqué, but as the voice grew more persistent, she started to regain consciousness.

"Brother?" she asked, sending the telepathic message in the direction of the other. "Why have you awakened me?"

"Are you hungry?" asked The Other.

"Of course," answered the Nestene. "But I have many years of travel ahead of me."

"Divert your course for me," requested The Other.

"Why?" asked the Nestene.

"There is a being known as the Doctor," began The Other.

"I do not know of it," said the Nestene.

"He is a humanoid. And he has killed many of our brothers and sisters."

"One humanoid?" asked the Nestene incredulously. "How can one being destroy even one Nestene?"

"Do not be fooled by his appearance when you meet him," warned The Other. "He is clever and powerful and knows many tricks to defeat us."

"You want me to meet him?" asked the Nestene.

"I want you to destroy him," answered The Other. "Go to Earth. I will show you the way. And I will tell you my plan."

"Why don't you do it yourself?" asked the Nestene.

"I am too far away, and I am too weak," answered The Other. "I have been searching for another Nestene mind for years since he nearly destroyed me."

"I will do it," said the Nestene. "Show me the way to Earth."

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Gurjit Singh stood quietly at the door of the Vancouver Electronics Warehouse. He looked into the dark night, seeing only blackness across the parking lot. It was too dark to see the entrance to the industrial park in which the warehouse stood. All he could see was the light from the DVD warehouse across the street.

He turned away from the door and walked back to his security desk and sat down behind it. He checked his watch: 2:27 am. *I might as well start my 2:30 rounds a bit early*, he thought to himself. He'd be back by 3:15 and pour himself a nice cup of hot tea from his thermos.

As Gurjit got up and turned towards the corridor leading to the warehouse, he failed to glimpse the movement revealed by the light from the DVD warehouse. It was not until he was deep into the warehouse, heading towards the first stop on his rounds that he heard the sound of the glass front door being smashed. He was not able to identify the sound, knowing only that something had happened somewhere, and that it sounded like someone was breaking in. Gurjit took his cell phone and placed a call to the security company headquarters.

"Hello," answered the bored voice on the other end.

"This is Gurjit Singh at the Vancouver Electronics Warehouse," he said. "Code 3."

"I'll call the police," said the voice.

"Okay," said Gurjit, ending the call.

He turned off his flashlight and stood silently, hoping to hear more sounds of intrusion. Very faintly, he heard the slap of what sounded like bare feet on the concrete floor, somewhere down at the other end of the warehouse. In the dim light that came from various bits of machinery – red, green and orange indicators, he was able to make his way towards the sound without turning on his flashlight. He did not want to encounter the thief or thieves. That was a job for the police. He just wanted to get a sense of exactly where in the warehouse they might be. As he approached the section of the warehouse in which industrial storage tanks were kept, he heard a scraping noise. He identified it as the sound of something heavy being slid off one of the shelves. As he approached the aisle from which the sound emanated, he saw a large metal tank with glass windows slowly working its way to the edge of the shelf. The thief did not appear to need a flashlight either. Gurjit peered carefully around the corner in order to catch a glimpse of the thief. In the dim light, all he could make out at first was the shadow of the man. He seemed to be impossibly strong, pulling at the tank which must have weighted several hundred pounds without straining or grunting at all. In fact, the man did not make a sound. Eventually, he got the tank off the shelf and balanced it on his head, carrying the eight foot by four foot by four foot tank back along the long aisle.

Gurjit followed him, hoping to catch a glimpse of him when he walked past a light source. The man never once slowed down or gave any indication that he thought he was being followed. As he got to the end of the aisle, he turned left, to head back to the corridor leading to the front of the building. Gurjit hoped that the police would arrive before the man got through the front door, although how he was planning to do that with a large tank balanced on his head Gurjit wasn't sure. As the thief started to turn, he passed through a beam of light cast by the EXIT sign over his head, and as he turned slowly to keep the tank balanced on his head, Gurjit got a good long look at him. Gurjit screamed in horror at the hideous monstrosity before him.

The monster turned its misshapen head towards Gurjit and before he could think about running, to his great surprise, he fainted.

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Tom came out of the TARDIS first, followed by Val, and then the Doctor, who locked the door and turned to look at his surroundings.

"Oh, this looks familiar," he said. "I've been here before."

"It's Earth," said Tom.

"Of course it's Earth," said the Doctor. "But what city?"

"Doesn't look like Europe," said Val. "Cars are driving on the right hand side. These cars are immense. We must be in America."

"Canadian Flag," said Tom, pointing at a ten-story flag draped around two sides of a building.

The other two looked.

"They're not usually that ostentatious," said the Doctor. "The Canadians, I mean."

"Olympics," said Val, pointing to a sign hanging from a light pole.

"That explains it," said the Doctor.

"It's Vancouver," shouted Val.

"I've always wanted to come here," said Tom. "What year is it? 2010, wasn't it?"

"Right," said the Doctor.

"Hey," said Val. "I'm 9 years old!"

"And I'm only seven," said Tom. "I should ring my parents."

The Doctor looked at him to make sure he was joking.

"Don't worry," said Tom. "I won't do anything to risk the time stream or whatever."

"Oh, look," said Val, pointing at the sky. "A Zeppelin."

The other two looked up to see a very low-flying airship hovering over the Vancouver Art gallery. Painted across its side was an advertisement for the Bodyworkz exhibit at the Art Gallery. A similar banner hung across the front of the Art Gallery itself, spanning the four Greek columns that spanned the South side of the building.

"Bodyworkz!" said Val excitedly.

"What's that?" asked Tom.

"You know," said Val. "That artist who injected plastic into dead bodies and turned them into works of art!"

"Oh, yeah," said Tom. "Disgusting."

"Oh, come on," said Val. "Don't tell me you're squeamish. They won't bite you, you know. They're not zombies."

"It's not the Bodiez themselves," said Tom. "It's just the whole thought of it – people being turned into grotesque rubber versions of themselves." He shivered. "I can't imagine anyone volunteering for that."

"What about you, Doctor?" asked Val.

"Well, I wouldn't mind taking a look," said the Doctor. "You don't have to come with us, Tom. There's plenty to do in Vancouver for a couple of hours."

Val was already running up the steps. The two men followed her.

"They've got a gift shop," said Val. "You can browse in there."

"Hmm," said Tom, unenthused.

The Doctor browsed through a brochure and, pointing at a diagram of the museum, said to Tom, "The Bodyworkz exhibit is just on the main floor. There are four other floors with Photography. Paintings. Landscapes of British Columbia. That could be interesting."

"Maybe," said Tom.

Oh, look," said the Doctor excitedly. "They've got Leonardo's *The Mechanics of Man!*"

"I don't feel up to it," said Tom. "I'll just wait here, or maybe I'll go for a little walk. I noticed a bookshop across the street. It's 3:30 now," said Tom, having seen the large pink neon hands of the clock tower a block or two down Robson Street. "The sign says the museum closes at 6:00, so that's two and a half hours. I'll meet you back here at six."

"All right," said the Doctor as he turned to the cashier. "Two, please."

Tom started towards the exit as the Doctor and Val entered the gallery. A very attractive girl with a backpack over one shoulder was running up the steps of the gallery. Tom noted her bare legs as her skirt bounced up with each stair she took. He opened the door and held it for her as she came in.

"Thanks," she said in a Canadian accent.

"You're welcome," said Tom, letting the door close again without going through it. He watched the girl put her backpack down on a bench. *She's a bit young*, thought Tom, but changed his mind when she took off her jacket. She rolled up the jacket and stuffed it into her backpack. The girl headed off towards a flight of stairs in the corner. Tom followed, trying to think of a good conversation-starter.

When he got to the stairs he realized that the area was off-limits to the public. He saw the girl disappear as she turned right at the bottom of the staircase. She might be a staff member, Tom thought. But then again, why would she be coming to work a couple of hours before closing time? He decided to follow her and pretend he was lost if he was challenged.

The girl was half-way down the corridor by the time Tom rounded the corner, and she was peering through a door. Tom came up behind her. She heard his footsteps and quickly closed the door and turned towards him.

"Hi again," said Tom.

The girl looked puzzled. "Have we met?"

"Just now, at the door," answered Tom, gesturing at the ceiling in the general direction of the front entrance.

The girl narrowed her eyes. "Sorry, I don't remember you."

"Oh," said Tom, extending a hand, "I'm Tom."

"Ranveer," said the girl.

"I like your accent," said Tom.

The girl laughed. "I like yours too. But you're not supposed to be here."

"How do you know?" asked Tom.

"Because you don't work here."

"Do you?" he asked. Maybe she did. Maybe he was going to get kicked out of the building.

"What do you want?" she asked, changing the subject.

"I was just wondering why you were looking into doors all suspiciously," said Tom.

"I'm looking for my brother," she explained. "He works here."

"Oh," said Tom. "That's not very nefarious."

"You sound disappointed," said Ranveer.

"I was hoping you were a master criminal, wanted on five continents."

"Why?" asked Ranveer. "Were you going to turn me in?"

"Eventually," said Tom. That made Ranveer smile.

The pair turned as a door further down the corridor opened. "There he is," said Ranveer. "Maninder!"

The man who had stepped into the corridor at first looked as if he hadn't heard, but then he turned his head slowly and strangely toward them.

Ranveer ran towards him and put her arms around her brother.

"What are you doing here?" asked Maninder.

"Mum and Dad were wondering where you've been the last two days."

"I've been working late," answered Maninder.

"All night?"

"I...I had to get things ready for the exhibition."

Tom came up next to them. Ranveer stepped away from her brother and indicated Tom. "This is Tom," said Ranveer, "and this is my brother Maninder."

"You're not supposed to be here," said Maninder to Tom, ignoring his outstretched hand.

"I was just making sure she was alright," said Tom.

"She's not supposed to be here either," said Maninder.

"It's never been a problem before," protested Ranveer.

"The artist is very touchy about his equipment," said Maninder. "I'm the only one who he's allowed near it."

"My brother's an artist," explained Ranveer. "He's been learning the plastination technique so he can create his own works of art."

"From bodies?" asked Tom, grimacing.

"Yeah," said Ranveer. "Pretty sick, eh?"

"It's not really my..."

"You have to go," said Maninder. "I have to prepare for the presentation at four thirty."

"What's happening at four thirty," asked Ranveer.

"We're going to do a live demonstration of the plastination process."

"Live?" asked Tom.

"We're going to plastinate a dog in full view of the visitors."

"Dead, right?" asked Tom.

"Of course," said Maninder. "Now if you'll excuse me." Maninder opened the door opposite to the one he had come out of. Tom peeked inside and saw a large metal tank with glass windows filled with liquid, beside which was a table with a dead dog lying on it covered by a glass dome. Then the door swung shut.

"Do you want to see?" asked Ranveer.

"Not really," said Tom. "I don't have a ticket anyway."

"We can sneak back here at 4:30," said Ranveer.

"Maybe," said Tom. The things he did in order to meet girls.

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Inside the exhibit, the Doctor was reading about the origin of the plastination process from a large display. "They're called Bodiez," he said to Val, pointing to the unique (copyrighted) spelling on the poster. He turned to Val and noticed that she had skipped the explanatory panel and had headed straight for the first of the Bodiez.

The Doctor joined Val where she stood in front of the plastinated Body of a man riding a bicycle. The bicycle was attached to a mechanism that caused it to roll continually forwards and backwards, just a metre or so, so that the skinless man's legs pumped up and down as the pedals rose and fell.

"Hey, Bicycle Bill," sang Val to the tune of the Beatles' "*Bungalow Bill*".

The Doctor shook his head at her irreverence, "I wonder if he liked bicycles when he was alive."

"Look here," said Val, indicating a placard next to the exhibit. "It talks about who he was and yes, he did love bicycles."

The Doctor examined the Body. Other than the fact that it had no skin, every part of the man was there, except that instead of bone, muscle, fat, veins, tendons and organs, there was plastic. Muscles were pink. Veins were blue. Arteries were red. Fat was yellow, bones were white, and organs were various colours: red, brown, green, etc.

"This is all very interesting," said the Doctor. He prodded the brown plastic liver with his finger as Bicycle Bill came to a stop for a second before starting forward again.

"Don't touch!" hissed Val. "You'll get us thrown out."

"Oh, right," said the Doctor. "Interesting texture."

A security guard came up to the Doctor.

"Please keep behind the line, sir," said the guard, indicating the black line that had been painted on the floor around the exhibit.

The Doctor took a step back, and the guard went back to his usual position near the entrance.

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Ranveer had convinced Tom to look at some of the exhibits on the other floors. She had bought his ticket since he didn't have any cash, and eventually they arrived at the Afghan exhibit on the fourth floor.

One corner had been dressed to look like a tent, filled with cushions and low tables. Visitors were invited to sit on the cushions and relax, while drinking a complementary cup of Chai.

Tom and Ranveer sat down, and a girl came over to them with a tray of cups full of tea. They each took one.

"This is good tea," said Ranveer.

"I like the patterns on these carpets decorating the walls," said Tom. "They look kind of grubby, like they used to be on the floor somewhere."

"Do you suppose that they hang carpeting on the walls in Afghanistan? I mean, if this were a tent in the desert, how would you attach a carpet to the wall of a tent? And wouldn't it be a lot of excessive weight?"

"I like how they've draped these large silk sheets around the perimeter of this room to give it a tent-like feel," said Tom. "Although this one's not hanging quite right," he said, pointing at the stretch of material above their heads. "It's kind of lumpy."

"What's this?" asked Ranveer, reaching under the low table to retrieve something that her foot had kicked. She pulled up a stainless steel cylinder. "It's a thermos," she said, putting it onto the table.

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Val and then Doctor moved along to the next exhibit -- a display called The Average Family: Mom, Dad and 2.4 children. The display contained five plastinated corpses: a mother, a father, a son, a daughter and a baby that had pieces missing: ¼ of its head, one arm, half a leg, a large section of its torso.

"Two point four," laughed Val.

"It looks like the artist has a sense of humour that's almost as dark as yours," said the Doctor.

"I wonder if they were an actual family," said Val.

"That would be disconcerting," said The Doctor. "A whole family who agreed to have their bodies turned into plastic all died together in a car crash or something?"

"Could be," said Val.

"Be a bit of a coincidence," said The Doctor. "They're probably from five different families."

"Who would sign their children up for something like this?" asked Val.

"Maybe they come and visit them."

"Oh, little Tamara," said Val. "She looks just like she did the day she died. Except her skin's been removed and she's been partially dissected."

"That is a bit unlikely," agreed The Doctor. "I wonder if people are told when their own relatives are in this exhibit."

"Who's missing," said Val.

"Pardon," asked the Doctor.

"That sign on the floor next to the boy. "

The placard read, "Who's missing?"

"I don't know," answered the Doctor.

"Uncle Steve?" guessed Val.

They moved on to an exhibit of a plastinated woman who had been sliced into twelve vertical slices, each slice mounted on a wire frame, and placed ten centimetres from the one next to it, giving the illusion of a woman who had split apart. The woman's blonde hair went almost

all the way down her back, and each of the twelve segments had its own hair hanging down the back.

"The Twelve Slices of Eve" read Val from the placard.

"I don't think I will sign up for this," said The Doctor. "It's one thing to be turned into plastic, but another to be sliced apart."

"As long as it's artistically necessary," said Val, "I'd go along with it."

"The next one's missing," said Val as they approached a sign that read, "*The Dislocated Man*".

"Probably out for cleaning," said The Doctor.

The final exhibit showed half of a man, his left side completely missing.

"Some days, you just feel like half a man," said Val.

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"So what part of England are you from?" asked Ranveer. Having raced through the rest of the gallery, the pair were now sitting on the art gallery steps along with dozens of other people. They sat near the top where they could people-watch.

"Newcastle," said Tom.

"Not sure where that is," said Ranveer.

"It's in the North East."

"I didn't get much past the middle. I've been to London, York, Stratford-upon-Avon and the bus I was riding drove past Milton Keynes where I took pictures of a bunch of fake cows."

"Cows are gone now," said Tom. "Big thing about it on the news when I was a kid."

"What?" said Ranveer. "How old are you?"

"Oh, no," said Tom. "When I was a kid in the twenties. I forgot to tell you -- I travelled back through time from twenty thirty-one."

Ranveer laughed. "How's the weather in the future?"

"Oh, you know," said Tom. "Global warming."

"That explains the tan," said Ranveer. "I never really see British people with tans."

"Canada's a glacier now, though," said Tom. "One year, it just never stopped snowing."

"How is that global warming?" asked Ranveer.

"It's the moisture in the air," said Tom. "Super hot summer causes massive amounts of water to evaporate. During the winter, it just doesn't stop snowing because there's so much water vapour in the air. Triggered an Ice Age."

"Bizarre," said Ranveer. "When does this happen?"

"Pretty soon," said Tom. "Don't buy any real estate North of California."

"Thanks for the tip. So how long are you in Canada for?" asked Ranveer.

"Just passing through, really," said Tom. "Maybe just today."

"Oh," said Ranveer, obviously disappointed. "Are you headed back home?"

"No," said Tom. "Just travelling."

"By yourself?"

"No, with a couple of mates. Val and The Doctor."

"The Doctor? What is he, a musician?"

"No, just this totally mad guy who seems to be able to find something amazing to do wherever we go. He's just brilliant. I'll introduce you later."

"So where are you going next?"

"Wherever the Doctor takes us."

"Is he rich? Are you some kind of boy toy in a weird threesome thing with The Doctor and Val?"

"Yeah," laughed Tom. "Want to make it a foursome?"

"If it gets me out of here, sure, why the hell not."

"You don't like Vancouver?"

"I like it fine," said Ranveer. "But other than that one trip to England in the tenth grade and a few trips to India, I've never really been anywhere. I haven't even been to the States and the border's an hour away."

"Just get in the car and go," suggested Tom.

"Between school and working evenings and weekends at my parents' restaurant, I never have any time," said Ranveer.

"Well, if you come with us, you'll have all the time in the world. I did mention it's a time machine, right? You can spend a few months travelling with us and we'll have you back here the minute after you left."

"So that's how you do it, eh? The Doctor's the one with the time machine and you and Val are just cosmic hitchhikers."

"Yup," said Tom.

"I'd better leave a note," said Ranveer. She rummaged in her backpack and pulled out some nail polish. She used the brush to write onto the stone wall of the building, adding her message to hundreds that had been scratched into the wall over the years. "Ranveer Singh was here. February 10, 2010. But you're too late. She's gone now."

Tom picked up a stone and etched his name and the year underneath Ranveer's note.

"Very boring," said Ranveer. "Just like most of these others."

Tom read the one next to his name. "Tamara Scott was here! 2003."

Then Ranveer read the one right next to it. "And so was the Doctor! 1903."

"Maybe it's my Doctor," said Tom.

"Sounds like a time traveller to..." Ranveer didn't finish her sentence. Tom followed Ranveer's gaze as she looked up.

"It's snowing," said Ranveer.

The air was filled with millions of white particles. What they did not realize was that the particles were being sprayed from the Zeppelin that floated over the Art Gallery. The particles shot out in all directions, rapidly covering several blocks of the city, and then, inevitably drifting down towards the ground and settling on the cars, people, sidewalks and steps.

"Let's get inside," said Tom.

"Have you ever seen a dog being turned into plastic?"

"No," answered Tom.

"Well, it's almost four thirty," said Ranveer. "So now's your chance."

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“Ladies and Gentlemen,” said the voice of local actor William B. Davis who had been hired to record the voice over. “What you are about to witness has never been seen by any audience, anywhere in the world. While the plastination technique used to make the Bodiez in the main exhibit have taken anywhere from one to two years to create, Maninder Singh’s amazing new technique will plastinate a dog in less than thirty minutes, before your very eyes.”

A curtain opened, and the audience saw a movie screen.

“I thought we were going to see it live,” said the Doctor, disappointedly.

“What you are about to witness is going on right now in a laboratory in the basement of this building. For safety reasons, only a trained professional can be present during the transformation. The room has been outfitted with cameras to make sure that you don’t miss a second of this amazing process.”

“Sometimes live is overrated,” said Val. “It probably smells like formaldehyde down there.”

“You’re probably right,” said the Doctor.

“And now,” said the narrator’s voice, “please welcome the artist who will be performing tonight’s miracle. Maninder Singh.”

Maninder appeared from behind a screen and walked into the middle of the room.

“Ladies and Gentlemen,” began Maninder. “Today you will witness the creation of art. Thanks to the generous donations made by people around the world, Wolfgang has been able to create the amazing works of art that surround you. Today, I will demonstrate my rapid plastination technique, which will answer the question that was posed to you earlier today, “Who’s missing?” The answer is: Fido.

Maninder pulled a sheet from the table next to the tank to reveal the body of a collie. Maninder pressed a button and the glass dome lowered onto the table, forming an airtight chamber.

Maninder turned a valve and Val saw that a liquid was rapidly filling the chamber. When it had covered the dog’s body, the liquid stopped.

“There are several stages to the standard plastination process,” began Maninder.

He continued, “Removal of the skin, replacement of the fluids and the slow infusion of the cells with plastic. With my process, the plastic infuses the body in a matter of minutes, while the liquid bath removes the skin, revealing the muscles and veins and organs beneath.”

The audience muttered as they started to see the fur of the dog disappear as it was eaten away by the liquid, and then the skin became translucent. Finally, the dog was completely stripped of skin and hair.

The process completed and the liquid was evacuated from the chamber. Maninder pressed a button and the lid of the chamber opened, rising once again towards the ceiling. Maninder walked to the newly plastinated dog and tipped it upright onto its four legs. “Come along, Fido,” he said and picked up the dog. The cameras went black and the curtain closed.

As the lights came up and everyone’s eyes adjusted to the light, the announcer’s voice said, “Gather around the Average Family, and see them standing together with their newest addition. The screens began to rise, pulled up to the ceiling on long cables. Everyone turned towards the Average Family display: Father, Mother and two point four children. Standing next

to the little boy was the newly plastinated Collie. Standing next to the collie was Maninder. "Welcome home, Fido," said Maninder.

The group began to applaud and Maninder took a bow.

The Doctor walked up to him. "Can I have a word with you?"

"I've got a lot of work to do," answered Maninder stiffly, turning towards the exit.

The Doctor walked alongside him, continuing, "I'm very concerned about the process you're using to plastinated these cadavers." Maninder said nothing. "This process should take many months. There's no way to get plastic to infuse a body in such a short period of time. No way on Earth."

Maninder stopped for a second and then began walking again, exiting the exhibition hall and going out past the ticket counter and turning towards the stairs.

"If you're using alien technology to get the plastic to do your bidding, then I am very worried about what you might be dealing with. Have you ever heard of the Nestene?"

Maninder arrived at the top of the staircase and descended them quickly, not responding to the Doctor.

"The Nestene are dangerous," said the Doctor, following Maninder down the stairs.

"They will try to take over this entire planet. If you've made some sort of deal with a Nestene Consciousness, I can help you."

Maninder opened the door to the laboratory and turned to face the Doctor. "If you don't leave I will call security."

"I just thought you oughta know," said the Doctor.

Maninder shut the door in the Doctor's face.

"Oughta know," said the Doctor.

"Auton-Know," he tried.

No response. "Auton? No?"

He turned away from the door to see Val, Tom and a young Indian girl standing in the corridor.

"This is Ranveer," said Tom.

"Nice to meet you," said the Doctor, extending his hand.

"That's my brother in there," said Ranveer.

"I see," said the Doctor. He looked into her eyes. "Do you find anything strange about your brother lately?"

"He hasn't come home for a few days," answered Ranveer. "And when I talked to him earlier today, he seemed kind of, well..."

"Like a different person?" asked the Doctor.

"I guess," answered Ranveer.

"He could be an Auton," said the Doctor. "If the Nestene are involved, they've probably replaced your brother with a plastic duplicate."

Ranveer blinked a couple of times. "What?" she asked, incredulously.

"The Nestene can control plastic. They like to make copies of people in important positions and replace them."

Ranveer looked at Tom. "Why is he saying that?" asked Ranveer.

"He's telling the truth," said Tom. "The Doctor knows a lot of stuff about aliens."

"Aliens?" asked Ranveer.

"Come on," said the Doctor, heading back up the corridor toward the stairs.

"Yeah, aliens," said Tom. "We're not just time travellers. We fight aliens too."

Ranveer followed the trio up the stairs.

"You were serious about the time travelling?" asked Ranveer.

"Of course," said Tom.

"I thought you were joking," said Ranveer excitedly.

"Oh," said Tom. "I guess travelling with the Doctor, I just started to take things like time travel and aliens for granted."

The Doctor had found a pay phone and was dialling a number from memory.

"Hello, UNIT? This is the Doctor. There is a Nestene in the Vancouver Art Gallery. Send soldiers and have them bring an Electroshock Generator. There should be one in every UNIT HQ. I'll be waiting."

He waited for a response and then hung up the receiver. "They'll be here in an hour or so," said the Doctor. "They've got to fly in from Victoria."

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"Who was that?" asked Corporal Lee, returning to the UNIT Victoria communications room with two cups of tea, one for himself and one for Corporal Ng.

"Wrong number," said Corporal Ng. He took the tea that was offered him and brought it to his lips. The steam from the cup made his upper lip take on a shiny, almost plastic appearance.

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"Now, while we're waiting for UNIT," said the Doctor, "we've got to find a place to hide. The museum's going to close in a few minutes."

"You're all nuts," said Ranveer to no one in particular.

"No," said Val. "Everything the Doctor says is true."

"I don't believe in aliens," said Ranveer.

"But you do believe something's wrong with your brother," said the Doctor. "Why don't you go home and I'll try to have your brother back to you by morning."

Ranveer didn't move.

"Go on. You're just going to be in the way."

"Can't she stay?" begged Tom. "I'm sure we can convince her. Show her the TARDIS."

"If we leave the building now," said the Doctor, "we won't be able to get back in. We've only got a few minutes before they lock the doors."

"I know a place we can hide," said Ranveer.

The Doctor grinned. "Now we're getting somewhere."

Ranveer led them back into the exhibition hall.

"I don't have a ticket," said Tom.

"Don't worry," said Ranveer. She went up to the ticket taker. "Hi Jerry!"

“Hi Ranveer. We’re just about to close.”

“My friend thinks he left his camera. We’ll just be a minute.”

“Okay,” said Jerry, letting the group go past.

Ranveer took them through the Bodiez Exhibit, Tom keeping his eyes on the floor so he wouldn’t have to see the gruesome figures. Ranveer led them to a large display unit in the corner, a ten foot high, twenty foot wide plastic sheet on which was printed the details of the plastination process. She looked around to make sure that no one could see them and then ducked through a gap between the display board and the wall. Val, Tom and the Doctor followed. Ranveer went to the centre of the space, which was slightly wider due to the curvature of the plastic. She sat down on the floor and leaned back against the wall, just able to stretch her legs out without touching the display. “Now just make sure to stay quiet. They’ll do a sweep before they lock up.”

The other three sat down on the floor next to her, and the four of them sat in silence for the next half hour, listening to the sounds as the last visitors made their way out, the staff did a sweep of the hall to make sure there were not more stragglers, the lights were extinguished and the front door was locked.

“All clear,” said Ranveer, getting up off the floor. She slipped out from behind the display, and the others followed. In the darkened room, Tom could make out the shapes of the plastinated Bodiez. He kept his eyes focused on the exit, trying not to see the hideous figures.

“Night, Mummy,” said Val as she passed the plastinated family with its new dog. “Night, Rover.”

Rover’s head turned towards her, the plastic making a squeaking sound.

Val jumped. The Doctor stopped dead and looked at the display.

In addition to the dog, all four point four members of the family had started to move, turning their heads towards the Doctor and his companions, and slowly starting to lumber forward.

Ranveer let out an unintended squeal.

“Run,” shouted the Doctor.

They all turned towards the door, only to discover that all of the Bodiez had come to life, and their way was blocked. They all looked around for another way past, and realized that they were surrounded on all sides by Bodiez, lumbering towards them, those that had eyes looking at them. Muscles, bones, veins and organs: an obscene reflection of life. Their limbs jerking unnaturally back and forth every one of the Bodiez moved steadily towards the terrified foursome.

## PART TWO

### Last Night

Quarbani Singh (no relation) stared out the window on the West side of the fifth floor of the Vancouver Art Gallery. He watched a trio of Japanese girls leaving the Café Artigiano on Howe Street and walk towards Robson Street. He watched the cute boy who worked the late shift at the Café lock the front door and turn over the sign that now read Sorry, We're Closed. As the boy retreated from view, back into the Café, Quarbani sighed and turned away from the window to continue his rounds.

He walked past through the gallery of off-putting photographs that often made up the fifth floor displays, and headed down the stairs to the fourth floor. This floor was made up of art works from Afghanistan. In one corner of the floor, a simulation of an Afghan tent had been set up, with carpets on the floor, silk sheets hung from the ceiling to give it a tent-like feel, and a row of pillows along one wall behind a low table.

Quarbani detached his thermos from his belt and grunted as he sat down onto one of the pillows against the wall. He stretched out his legs and began to unscrew the lid of his thermos. As he set it down onto the table to use as a cup, he thought that he caught a movement out of the corner of his eye.

He undid the cap of the thermos and poured himself a cup of tea. He recapped the thermos and sat back against the pillows and took a satisfying gulp of the still-hot liquid.

There it was again. The silk above his head was moving. *Was there a breeze above,* wondered Quarbani. He kept looking up at the ceiling as he drank his tea. The movement was not at all random. Perhaps a bird had somehow got behind the silk cloth.

Quarbani went across the room to pick up a decorative sword that hung on the wall. He went back and stood onto the low table, aiming his flashlight with his left hand, and using his right to poke at the silk with the sword. As he did so, something pink appeared at the edge of the silk against the wall. Quarbani poked at it with the sword and suddenly a dislocated plasticized hand fell out, five dislocated fingers held together by plastic veins and tendons. Losing his balance, Quarbani fell off the table, tossing the sword to one side to avoid cutting himself as he fell. He sat up and watched as the rest of the arm inched its way slowly out of the

silk, all of the bones disconnected from each other and held together by thin strings of plastic veins, tendons and muscles. The forearm, the elbow, the upper arm. And then suddenly, the rest of the body came loose and fell onto the pillows in a jumble of bones.

Quarbani realized that this was the missing exhibit called The Dislocated Man. Quarbani wondered if he should try to move the pile of bones himself. Then he remembered that Maninder sometimes worked late in the laboratory that had been set up in the basement of the Art Gallery. He would go down and see if the man was working late tonight. He reattached his flashlight to his belt, picked up the sword and put it back on the wall where it belonged.

When he turned back to get his thermos, he was stunned to find The Dislocated Man standing in front of him, a strangely elongated parody of a body, jiggling as the animated plastic tried to simulate the shape of a human skeleton. Quarbani was too stunned to cry out when the dislocated hands reached up and began to choke him.

He struggled against the hands and found that the plastic man was surprisingly strong. The body began to walk awkwardly backwards across the room, dragging Quarbani with him as he struggled to avoid being strangled. Quarbani tried to grab onto anything he could, but the body was too strong. As they passed the low table, he reached out for his thermos and succeeded only in knocking it onto the floor.

When they hit the back wall, Quarbani had a sense that the Body was doing something strange behind him, and as he twisted to try to free himself from the strangling hands, he saw that the plastic veins and tendons were snaking up the wall and back behind the silk cloth that covered the ceiling. Suddenly, he felt his body yanked up off the floor and dragged jerkily up the wall, the whole weight of his body now being supported by the plastic hands around his neck. He lost consciousness just as his head slipped past the edge of the silk covering.

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## **Tonight**

"Run!" shouted the Doctor.

"Which way?" asked Val. She saw a gap between the Average Family and the Half Man, but as she ran toward it, Bicycle Bill rolled into the gap to block her way. The bicycle handlebars had been welded into their current position so that the wheel was slightly turned. Bicycle Bill could not control the steering, and all he could do was keep riding around the group in a big circle, but that was enough to keep the humans contained.

"They're just plastic," said Tom. "We can just knock them right over!"

"I wouldn't try it if I were you," said the Doctor. "The Nestene have complete control over plastic. Don't think of them like people. If you knocked one over, it could walk on its hands and grab you with its legs, twisting them around you like a boa constrictor."

"Hey," said Ranveer. "They're not coming towards us!"

Sure enough, once the Bodiez had begun walking, they all turned towards the entrance to the exhibit hall. All, that is, except for Bicycle Bill, who had no choice but to keep pedaling in a large circle, one of the pedals rubbing against the frame making a loud squeaking noise.

The zombie-like Bodiez lumbered and lurched toward the door. "We should follow them," said the Doctor. "Perhaps the Nestene that's controlling them is in this building. If we're lucky, we'll be able to destroy it!"

"Watch out for Bicycle Bill, though," warned the Doctor as he ran toward the exit. The other three followed, as Bicycle Bill was on the far side of his circle, away from the door, his misaligned pedal squeaking a regular rhythm.

The Bodiez were walking down the steps to the basement: the Half Man hopping on one leg, while the Average Family walked normally. Eve was having more trouble, however, since all twelve of her slices were attached to a framework. Eve's left leg had been positioned in front of her right leg, as if she had been frozen and sliced in mid-stride. Each of the slices on the right had a part of the back leg attached to the frame, whilst the free hanging slices of the left leg were lashing out and down in a grotesque mimicry of walking. The legs could barely reach the floor, and so with each 'step' she only managed to drag the metal frame a few inches across the tile.

"If we hurry," said the Doctor, "we can get down the stairs ahead of her."

"But then she'll be behind us," said Tom.

"Then keep your eyes out for a stick or something we can use against her on our way back," said the Doctor.

Val shook her head, and Ranveer took a deep breath before deciding to go along with the Doctor's plan. The four of them dashed past Eve and down the steps. The last of the Bodiez was just disappearing into the lab.

"That's the lab where my brother works," said Ranveer.

"I think we'll find that your brother has been replaced by an Auton," said the Doctor. When he got to the door he pushed it open carefully. The other three angled themselves at different heights so that they could all peer through the crack.

"It's too early," Maninder said aloud. He was standing in front of the large tank that stood next to the plastinating machine.

"We cannot wait," said a voice emanating from a speaker clumsily attached to the side of the tank. "The Doctor is here, and I need to complete my transformation."

"There are still too many people on the streets," said Maninder.

"I have taken care of that," said the voice.

\*\*\*\*\*

"This is Corporal Ng from UNIT," said the Auton over the telephone. "We request that the Vancouver Police Department cordon off a perimeter surrounding the Vancouver Art Gallery. No one is to enter the blast zone, which is designated as any ground that is covered by the white residue from the Zeppelin."

"We've already got a cordon around the Art Gallery," said Captain Wong into the phone. "We'll just pull it back a couple of more blocks and we'll be outside the blast zone."

"Thank you," said Ng.

"I imagine that your vehicles will need access to the area at some point. Don't come down Granville Street, because it's blocked right now. Come down Burrard and we'll have officers waiting to let you past the barricades."

"Very good," said Ng. "Don't expect us anytime soon, though."

"Oh?"

"We're waiting for some specialized equipment. We might not get there till morning."

"Good to know," said Wong. "Anything else I can do for you, you can reach me at this number."

"I'll let you know," said the Auton Ng. He hung up the telephone and stared blankly at the wall while submitting its telepathic report to the Nestene."

\*\*\*\*\*

Suddenly, the Doctor burst into the room, taking Val, Tom and Ranveer by surprise. The three of them collapsed in a heap at the entrance to the lab.

The Doctor skipped past the Bodiez and around the back of the Nestene tank. "Stop him," hissed the voice of the Nestene over the speaker.

The Doctor tried to approach the Nestene, but was stopped by a sudden loud, hissing static in his mind. He stumbled and took a step back. The painful feeling diminished as he got further away from the tank.

Keeping a safe distance from the tank, the Doctor followed the thick power cable from the tank to the wall, and began to yank at the cable, trying to pull it free. The Bodiez began to come towards him, while Maninder approached around the other side of the tank.

"Clang. Clang. Clang." The sound was coming from the hallway.

The Doctor was bracing himself against the wall with his foot, trying to force the power cable loose. His foot went through the drywall but the cable did not budge.

"Clang. Clang. Clang."

He looked around and spotted the circuit breaker panel further down the wall, past Maninder. He let go of the power cable and rushed Maninder, taking the man by surprise.

"He's not an Auton," shouted the Doctor. "He's just being mentally controlled!"

He got to the breaker panel and yanked open the front cover. He started to power down all of the breakers, plunging the room into complete darkness.

"Clang. Clang. Clang."

"I have travelled through the darkness of space for millennia," said the voice, not from the powerless speaker this time, but in the Doctor's head.

"And I do not need power to control my Bodiez."

An emergency lamp had come on and illuminated the laboratory in a dim, eerie orange light. The Doctor could see the Average Family was nearly upon him, the orange light reflecting from their dead eyeballs. They reached out towards him as they approached, and he realized that he had better run. Her came around the other side of the Nestene's tank and ran towards the door, shouting, "Run!" as he did so.

"Clang. Clang. Clang."

Val, Tom and Ranveer were more than happy to do so, Tom having grabbed a mop from a bucket. The wet mop was heavy to carry and he left a trail of water. The Doctor came out of the door and as he rounded the corner to head toward the stairs he slipped on the trail of water and went sliding into the wall.

“Clang. Clang. Clang.” It was the sound of the Seven Slices of Eve making her way gingerly down the stairs – their only hope of escape.

The Half Man came out of the lab and started towards the Doctor, but as he hopped onto the wet floor, he too went down. The Doctor was running on the opposite side of the hallway to avoid the water, and when he got to the bottom of the stairs, Tom was holding off Eve as she tried to pull herself down the last couple of steps. Her Plastinated hands reached out to grab the mop. Tom kept shaking it back and forth so that she could not grab it. A couple of times, one of the strands of the mop would wrap itself around one of her fingers but Tom quickly pulled it back before she could grab onto it. This time, he wasn’t fast enough, and her fingers took on a life of their own, stretching and getting thinner as they turned into long, writhing appendages. They intertwined with the strands of the mop.

“Get behind me,” shouted Tom. The other three did so, and Tom yanked hard, causing Eve’s frame to topple forward. He dropped the mop as she fell face-down onto the floor, and the foursome raced up the stairs, the Average Family momentarily stopped by the toppled metal frame containing the Twelve Slices of Eve.

“Back to the TARDIS,” shouted the Doctor. He ran to the front door and pushed on the glass. It was locked. He fumbled for his sonic screwdriver and finally found it, unlocking the door and running out, holding the glass door for the other three. They ran across the plaza, down the steps and across Robson Street.

“Looks like it snowed for a while,” said Ranveer noting the white powder covering the ground.

When they got to the TARDIS it too was covered with white powder.

Ranveer ran her hand over it. “It’s hardened,” she said. “And it’s not snow.”

The Doctor stared dumbfounded at his TARDIS. It was encased in a thin but impenetrable layer of plastic.

“This was done on purpose,” he shouted. “The Nestene knew I would be coming and planned to keep me separated from my TARDIS. Without access to parts, I can’t assemble another Electroshock Generator. Unless there’s an electronics store nearby. Ranveer?”

“I don’t know,” said Ranveer. “There’s Future Shop. They sell computers and TVs.”

“No,” said the Doctor. “I need a proper electronics store.”

“I don’t think they’ve been around since the seventies,” said Ranveer.

The Doctor pursed his lips. “Where on Earth is UNIT?” he yelled.

“What’s UNIT?” asked Ranveer.

“A Top Secret International Organization that’s supposed to be prepared when things like Nestene’s fall to Earth.”

“Never heard of them,” said Ranveer.

“So they’re doing half their job, then,” quipped Tom. “The Top Secret part.”

“Oh, no,” said Val. She was pointing across the street.

"Keep still," said the Doctor. The quartet were obscured by the small stand of trees in which the TARDIS had landed. "They might not see us."

"How could they see us?" asked Tom. "Their eyes are made of plastic!"

"Oh, they can see us," said the Doctor. "The Nestene consciousness can see through their eyes as clearly as if it were a real eye. They're not just made of plastic," explained the Doctor. "They're made of plastic that's been primed and modified by the Nestene. It can manipulate the plastic with its thoughts, and it can see, hear and smell through them as well." The Doctor was whispering.

"How can they take over plastic?" asked Tom. "It's not like a piece of plastic can act like an antennae the way a piece of metal could."

"The Nestenes send out telepathic signals hoping to find plastic," said the Doctor. "Once they sense the unique reflected signature of a plastic, they can focus their energies on it and slowly cause it to change, much like a magnetic field can change the pattern of a scattering of iron filings. Over the course of several hours, the molecules of the plastic rearrange themselves a little at a time into a form that is perfectly attenuated to the Nestene's telepathic commands. At that point, the Nestene has complete control over the plastic, able to make it move and change shape in any way that it desires."

"There's got to be some other way to defeat that thing," said Tom. "Can we fire bomb it?"

"My brother's still down there," reminded Ranveer.

"Not sure there's time," said the Doctor. "The Nestene is metamorphosing into its physical form. If it completes the process, it will be able to escape the tank. Imagine a giant squid loose in the city."

"Not good," said Ranveer.

"No," said the Doctor. "Not good. There is another possibility. Something I've never tried before because I'm not sure I'm strong enough."

"What," asked Val.

"It's telepathic. I'm telepathic. I will try to defeat it with my mind."

"Wow!" said Ranveer.

"But," began the Doctor.

"But?" asked Val.

"But it means the two of you will have to fight off the Bodiez while I battle the Nestene."

"No problem," said Tom.

"I'm in," said Val.

"Me too," said Ranveer.

"No," said the Doctor to Ranveer. "You're too young."

"It's my city," said Ranveer. "If you lose, it'll just come out here and find me and eat me anyway."

"Good point," said the Doctor. "You can help me try to deprogram your brother."

"Okay," said Ranveer. "But we should bring weapons in with us this time."

"There's still some construction material here," said Tom, pointing to a pile of wood, metal and tools half-way down the block. He ran to the pile and bent to pick up a length of pipe. It wouldn't budge.

"It's covered in plastic," said Tom.

"This whole thing seems like it was a trap laid just for me," said the Doctor.

"We'll have to find something inside the museum," said Val. "What about some of the stuff on the other floors?"

"There were swords in the Afghan exhibit," said Ranveer.

"Two swords," said Tom. "Perfect." We'll slice up those Bodiez in no time."

"Maybe I can find something in the gift shop," said Ranveer. "Can you unlock that door too?"

"No problem," said the Doctor. "Let's go."

Tom snapped some branches off the trees and handed one to each of the others, keeping one for himself. They ran back to the Art Gallery AND Found that the Bodiez were all clustered around the front door.

"Ranveer," said Tom. "You run and get the swords while Val and I hold off the Bodiez so the Doctor can go downstairs."

"Okay," said Ranveer.

Tom and Val went through the doors first, swinging their tree branches wildly. Tom succeeded in knocking over the Half Man, and Val knocked over the Twelve Slices of Eve. The Average family tried to advance, but they were having trouble getting past Eve's metal frame. The Doctor grabbed Ranveer by the hand and led her around the left side of the metal frame. Once they were past, Ranveer made a dash straight into the main hall and headed for the stairs that led up to the fourth floor, while the Doctor ran left to the stairs leading down to the basement lab.

In the basement, the Doctor found Maninder, guarding the Nestene tank. Maninder came towards the Doctor and tried to attack him with his bare hands. The Doctor grabbed his wrist and flipped him over onto his back. He then ran towards the Nestene tank, only to be stopped dead once again by the Nestene's mind.

The Doctor took a deep breath and began to concentrate. "Om Mane Padme Om," intoned the Doctor, using the Tibetan chant he had learned centuries earlier to focus his mind.

\*\*\*\*\*

Ranveer arrived at the place where she and Tom had enjoyed their Chai earlier in the day. She took the two decorative swords off of the wall, and looked around for a third.

She heard a sound overhead and looked up just as the entire silk sheet that covered the ceiling came loose. Ranveer jumped out of the way as the silk crashed down onto the floor, under the weight of the dead body of Quarbani Singh and the plastinated bones of the Dislocated Man that were wrapped all around him like an octopus.

The Dislocated Man let go of the body and tried to stand, looking like a marionette as its disconnected bones jittered back and forth. Ranveer raised one of the swords, and, as the Dislocated man took a step towards her, she swung the sword and sliced at his neck. The man's head fell to the floor and bounced towards her. She let out a small scream as she jumped back, but the head did not move. The headless body, however, continued to advance towards her, and one of the spindly hands grabbed her left arm. She used the sword in her right hand to hack

away at the arm that held her, and when it finally came loose she began to run, leaving the exhibit and running down the stairs, careful not to cut herself with the two swords, or to lose her balance and risk tumbling down the stairs.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Doctor was slowly inching towards the Nestene tank.

“Om Mane Padme Om.”

“You will succumb to my mind,” said the Nestene, via the speaker unit.

“I am a Time Lord,” said the Doctor. “I have defeated dozens of Nestene in my life.”

“That is why I have come for you,” said the Nestene. “To destroy you for what you have done to my brothers and sisters. “

The Doctor had reached the side of the tank. His hands were out and he was feeling his way along it. He didn't have his eyes open, so he could focus solely on the Nestene's mind. His hands found the faucet that he wanted, and he started to turn it.

“Aargh,” shouted the Doctor as a stab of pain entered his mind. The Nestene had found the pain sensors in his mind and was tricking them into registering immense pain. The Doctor stopped breathing for a few seconds as he tried to block out the pain. Finally, he was able to once again start turning the faucet, and soon the liquid in the tank began to pour out.

“Nooo,” shouted the Nestene. “It is too soon!”

\*\*\*\*\*

Tom and Val were valiantly pushing at the Plastic People with their branches, but there were too many of them. With Fido and the .4 Child being so small, they were able to get past the flailing branches and the .4 Child had clamped itself onto Val's leg, while Fido had managed to take a big bite of the tree branch Tom was wielding and was playing tug of war with him. The 2 Children were advancing on Tom, and he kept spinning around trying to keep out of their way.

Meanwhile Mummy and Daddy were taking turns trying to get past Val's tree branch. Suddenly, Daddy lashed out and grabbed hold of the branch, pulling it from Val's grasp. Mummy took a step towards Val, but suddenly, a sword slashed down slicing into the top of her head, splitting her in two from the top of her head down to the middle of her torso. At this point the sword became stuck and Ranveer tugged at it to get it out.

She handed the sword to Val and picked up the other one where she had dropped it.

Mummy was having a bad day, with the upper half of her body split apart and hanging limply on either side of her torso like a banana peel. But still she advanced, this time on Ranveer.

Ranveer took the sword and swung it at Mummy's waist, slicing off the left part of her upper body. It fell lifeless to the ground. Ranveer swung again and the right half fell to the floor. The legs and torso, however, continued to move. Ranveer swung from above once again and split the legs in two. They fell to the ground and twitched for a moment before both of them stopped moving altogether.

Meanwhile, Val had swung the sword at Daddy and succeeded in getting him to drop the branch and had managed to hack various bits off him.

Ranveer saw that Val was doing alright and ran over to help Tom. She sliced one of the 2 Children into thirds quite swiftly: first slicing off the head. Then hacking at the waist until the upper body fell apart and just the legs continued to move. She split them as she had done the Mummy and they fell to the floor, unmoving.

She felt a cold plastic hand around her arm which caused her to drop the sword accidentally. It was the remaining Child. She tried to reach for the sword, but the Child began to drag her away from it.

Tom saw the sword and let go of his branch, causing Fido to go flying across the floor in the opposite direction. Tom snatched up the sword and spun around. As Fido leaped through the air at him, Tom swung the sword with all of his might, cutting off the dog's head.

The body fell to the ground and Tom hacked it into several bits until the last of them stopped moving.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Doctor was now rewiring the tank and sparks had started to come out of the top of the tank.

"Nooo," cried the Nestene. Then suddenly, it let out an agonized cry and was silent.

The pain in the Doctor's mind was gone. The strain was so great that the Doctor fell back and landed hard.

"Ow!" said the Doctor and, suddenly overwhelmed by the entire battle, fell back onto the floor, unconscious.

How long he lay there, he was not sure, but when he came to, Maninder was shaking him.

"Wake up," he said. "You did it! I'm free."

"The Nestene is dead," said the Doctor.

\*\*\*\*\*

Back in the main hall, the Half man and the Twelve Slices of Eve had suddenly stopped moving.

"The Doctor must have done it," said Val.

Tom nodded.

The three fighters, exhausted, sat down amongst the bits and pieces of plastic, breathing hard, and just sat there in silence.

Eventually, they noticed a noise coming from the staircase. They saw the Doctor, crawling on his hands and knees, slowly towards them. He looked so tired, and possibly a bit older.

Tom pulled himself up, his muscles aching, and he went to help the Doctor.

"Defeated the Nestene," said the Doctor breathlessly.

"Thought so," said Tom.

When they got back to where Ranveer and Val were sitting, Tom and the Doctor got down on the floor as well. The Doctor fell backwards and lay on the floor, looking up at the ceiling.

"How's my brother?" asked Ranveer.

"Better," said the Doctor. "No longer hypnotized. I put him into a healing trance. There was a couch in one of the offices down there, and he's sleeping the whole thing off. He should come out of it in the morning."

"How will we get back into the TARDIS," asked Val.

"Won't be a problem now," said the Doctor. "The plastic should break fairly easily now that it's not being told to hold itself together by the Nestene Consciousness.

"We should take one of these swords to smash away the plastic covering," said Ranveer.

"Good idea," said Val.

"No," said the Doctor. "A good solid kick will take care of it. Why don't you return those swords to the exhibit."

Val looked around at the mess. "Are we planning on cleaning the whole place up?" she asked.

The Doctor laughed.

"I'll go with you," said Tom. He took one of the swords and handed the other to Ranveer.

"What do you think, Doctor?" asked Val. "Maybe she'd like to come with us."

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"So I've been thinking," said Tom as the pair made their way back down the stairs after returning the swords to the collapsed tent on the fourth floor. "Maybe you'd like to come with us?"

\*\*\*\*\*

"Maybe we should get you back into the TARDIS now so you can rest," said Val when Tom and Ranveer got back.

"Yes," agreed the Doctor.

"Ranveer wants to come with us," said Tom.

The Doctor let his head fall to the side so he could see Ranveer.

"Do you know what you're getting yourself into?" asked the Doctor.

Ranveer looked around and picked up a piece of a Body. She threw a plastic finger at the Doctor and said, "Yeah!"

"I guess you do," said the Doctor. "Why not? Welcome aboard."

"Thanks," said Ranveer.

Val went to the Doctor to help him up.

She saw how old he looked. "This battle has really taken a lot out of you," she said.

"Yes," said the Doctor, getting to his feet and holding on to Val for support. Tom came

over and supported the Doctor's other side. "I just need some time in the TARDIS to get my bearings. Come on Ranveer."

Ranveer grinned. "Tom said you can have me back here before my parents miss me."

The Doctor smiled. "Of course. You can travel with me for a few weeks or months and when you're tired of it, I'll have you back here by tomorrow morning in time to watch your brother come out of his trance.

"I'm in," said Ranveer. "Now what amazing alien planet are you going to show me?"

"Oh, I've got a doozy in mind," said the Doctor as the quartet shuffled slowly towards the door.



## EPILOGUE

The newly enlarged crew of the TARDIS was still shuffling zombie-like towards the door of the Vancouver Art Gallery, when suddenly the Half Man rose up from the floor.

The four friends stopped dead in their tracks.

"That's impossible," said the Doctor. "The Nestene is dead."

The Twelve Slices of Eve all rose off the ground in tandem, having somehow freed themselves from the wire frame that was holding them. They began inching forward, using their thin strip of a foot to move like an inchworm, the heel sliding along the floor towards the toe, causing the middle of the foot-slice to bend sideways disturbingly, and then the toes slid forward causing the foot to flatten out once again.

The Doctor was walking backwards, leading his group slowly backwards as the Half Man and the Twelve Slices of Eve advanced on them. The slices on either side of Eve, that had pieces of arms, were raising them outstretched, in a classic zombie pose.

The Doctor was at a loss. "How can they be moving without an intelligence controlling them?"

"Maybe someone else is controlling them using the Nestene's frequency," suggested Tom.

"It's possible, if there were another Nestene," said the Doctor. "But I would sense it. In order to battle that Nestene's mind, I had to attune myself to the frequencies used by the Nestene race. There's nothing now. Nothing at all!"

"I'll run and get the swords," said Ranveer.

"All right," said the Doctor. "Have you got a mobile?"

"Yeah," answered Ranveer.

"May I borrow it?"

"Of course," answered Ranveer, handing him her phone. Then she set off, dashing past the gallery entrance towards the stairs and escalators. As she reached the top of the first flight of steps, she rounded the corner and ran headlong into the Dislocated Man.

He didn't give her time to think, as he wrapped his grisly dislocated limbs around her. "Doctor," she shouted, but then found herself unable to speak as the Body wrapped its gangly

arm so far around her that the dislocated hand reached around to her face. The Body pressed its dislocated finger bones against her mouth so that she could no longer scream. Then the Body lurched forward and began to carry her down the motionless escalator that ran parallel to the staircase.

Meanwhile, Tom, Val and the Doctor were being herded back into the exhibit area. The Doctor had dialled UNIT once again and found himself talking to the Auton known as Corporal Ng.

"I'm sorry, Sir," said the Corporal. "There's been a delay, but I understand they're on their way now."

"All right," said the Doctor. "Please hurry."

The Doctor hung up the mobile as the trio found themselves with the choice of entering the main exhibition hall or climbing the stairs to the upper levels.

"Which way?" asked Val.

"Let's go up," said Tom. "Ranveer's coming down with those swords, and we might find more things we can use as weapons in the other exhibits."

"I'm worried about getting trapped up there," said the Doctor.

"Look," said Tom. "There are two flights of stairs, right?"

"Yes," said the Doctor.

"Let's get these Bodiez to follow us up one flight. Then Val and I will continue on upwards and get them to follow us, while you sneak down the stairs on the other side. Then you'll have free access to the lab."

"Great idea," said the Doctor.

The trio walked up the stairs, little knowing that just feet away from them, Ranveer was being taken down the escalator by the Dislocated Man. Getting to the top of the steps well before the slow-moving Bodiez, Tom and Val waited on the lower step of the next flight, while the Doctor crawled across the floor of the second story landing to the staircase on the other side, making sure to keep out of 'sight' of the Bodiez.

"What's on the second floor?" asked Val.

"The Da Vinci drawing," answered Tom.

"Anything we can use as a weapon?"

"I suppose we could break apart a painting's frame and use the jagged wood," suggested Tom.

"Maybe we can find some more swords," said Val.

They ran up to the third floor and then the fourth.

"Ranveer?" shouted Tom. "Where did she go?"

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The Doctor had made his way back down to the main floor and was crossing the foyer to get to the stairs that led to the basement lab. As he walked through a pile of severed plastic limbs he gave them an angry kick, sending pieces of the Average Family skipping across the granite floor. When they came to rest, however, instead of lying lifeless as they had been, they started moving. The severed arms raised themselves up on five fingers and began walking on them

towards the Doctor. Severed legs started rolling across the floor, using the little strands of plastinated veins and tendons to push themselves along.

“Oh no,” said the Doctor, jogging sideways to avoid the oncoming army of severed limbs. He jumped as Mummy Average’s head rolled up to him from behind, and he kicked it quickly across the room and ran to the staircase and down the steps to the lab.

When he opened the door, he gasped in horror at the sight before him. The Dislocated Man was standing at the controls of the plastinating machine, and Ranveer’s unconscious body was lying in the plastinating chamber, its glass cover sealed and the skin-dissolving liquid flooding the tank, almost completely covering her.

The Doctor rushed forward and rammed into the Disjointed Man with incredible force, causing the loosely connected bones to lose their balance and go tumbling back against the wall. The Doctor slammed his hand down on the red button that stopped the flow of acid and then pulled down the lever that would drain the chamber. He knew he only had another second or two as the Dislocated Man began to pull himself to his feet. He scanned the dials and found one that indicated a rinse setting. He turned the dial and pulled the lever, causing a spray of water to fill the tank. The Doctor hoped that this would be enough to wash the acid off Ranveer’s skin.

He turned his attention to the Dislocated Man who was back on his feet and coming towards the Doctor. The Doctor knew that he must keep the Body away from the controls at all costs. He launched himself at the Dislocated Man and immediately felt himself being wrapped up in the arms and legs. He fell to the floor as the Body tried to hug him to death with its ever-tightening embrace. The Doctor tried to grab one of the arm bones and pull it away from him.

\*\*\*\*\*

Slapper and Dink had sneaked past the Police cordon. The pair were dressed all in black, wearing black balaclavas and black backpacks. They had approached the Vancouver Art Gallery from the rear on the Georgia Street side, crossing Georgia when they saw that the two police officers stationed a couple of blocks up and a couple of blocks down had both wandered out of their line of sight.

The couple raced across Georgia and then across the remaining open ground to the Vancouver Olympic Countdown Clock. This vaguely rectangular fifteen foot monument with a digital clock surrounded by various Olympic logos was counting down the days until the Opening Ceremonies. It was not the first time that the two had made this covert journey to the symbol of the Fascist Olympic Committee. On two other occasions since the monument to Corporate Greed had been erected, the pair had approached it in the middle of the night and vandalized the metal, wood and glass object with spray paint, adding hilarious slogans that they knew their fellow Vancouverites would be laughing about when they passed by the next morning.

Dink took off her backpack and pulled out a can of blue spray paint, cleverly using blue paint to spray onto the blue face of the sculpture.

Slapper put his backpack next to Dink’s and pulled out a can of black spray paint. He wasn’t as good with spelling as Dink, so his contribution to the Revolution would be to spray a

perversion of the Olympic rings, each ring containing a frown-like face to indicate the feeling of all Canadians as the invading force of the Olympic Scourge overran one of their cities.

\*\*\*\*\*

Val and Tom arrived at the collapsed Afghan Tent Exhibit, finding that the swords were still on the wall where Ranveer had placed them a few minutes earlier. Ranveer was nowhere to be seen. The pair each grabbed a sword and ran back to the stairs so they could be ready when the Bodiez reached the fourth floor.

“Let’s just slice them up the way we did with Mummy and Daddy,” said Val.

“I’ll try to lead the sliced up woman away from the top of the staircase, and then when that half man comes up, you can get a clear shot at him,” said Tom.

“Right,” said Val in agreement. She took a few steps up the curved staircase leading to the fifth floor, just far enough up it so that she was not visible to the Bodiez coming up the flight from the third floor.

“She’s called Eve, by the way.”

“Right,” said Tom. “What’s the half man called?”

“Half Man,” said Val.

“Clever,” said Tom.

Tom stood at the top of the staircase, as far back from the edge as he could without losing sight of the Twelve Slices of Eve who were now making their way up the steps, the slices on the sides using their slivers of hands to grip the banister, while the armless slices inched themselves up the middle of the staircase, using the whole lengths of their slices in the same inchworm-like fashion to work their way up the steps. The Half Man was just coming around the curve at the bottom of the flight of stairs, hopping on his one foot, and using his one hand on the banister.

Tom was ready for Eve. As the first wave her slices reached the top of the stairs, he noted that they were pairing up, two adjacent slices would lean against each other, so that they could use their two leg-slices in tandem, mimicking left and right legs. The first two pairs, comprised of the four leftmost slices of Eve, headed for Tom and he readied his sword, intending to cut the slices at the waist. The Slices of Eve approached with their arm-slices outstretched. Tom swung the sword with all of his might and cut the four slices in two at the waist. The four upper-body slices fell to the floor, the four leg slices collapsing under them. Four of Eve’s central slices had inched themselves across the floor and were getting very near Tom. He was not sure how he should slice them. He was worried that if he hit the floor with the sword it might break or become too dull to cut through the rest of the Bodiez.

The four slices that he had first cut through were starting to stir. They too were on the floor. Tom decided to back away, hoping they would raise themselves off the floor a bit. The four leg-slices once again paired up and started walking towards him, but to his surprise, the upper-body slices were also on the move, leaning against each other in pairs and using their hands to walk on.

“They’re all still animated,” shouted Tom.

By this point, the Half Man had lumbered up to the top and had turned towards Tom, allowing Val to sneak up behind him. She raised the sword and cut off the Body's head. The head fell, but was caught by the single hand. Without turning around, the Body held up its half-head, facing the single eye towards Val. It was looking at her. The eye was moving slightly in its socket, as if the plastinated organ were trying to focus on her.

"I don't know what to do," said Val. "If the pieces still move after we cut them, we're just doubling their number."

Tom didn't respond. Val looked over at him, and saw to her horror that he had been overcome. The sixteen half-slices of Eve were clustered around his feet and he was trying to keep them away by kicking at them or batting them away with the flat edge of his sword. Meanwhile, the four slices of Eve's right side had managed to get behind him and before Val could say a word, they had jumped onto him, two on each side, pinning his arms to his sides, and pressing him into a horrific sandwich: layers of Eve on the outside with Tom in the middle.

Tom dropped his sword and tried to pull them off with his hands, but found that they were moulding themselves to his shape, the slices of Eve's arms had moulded themselves to his arms. He was quickly unable to move on his own – he was a puppet being controlled by the outer layer of plastic.

Val swiped at the Half Man with the flat end of her sword, causing him to lose his balance and tumble down the flight of stairs. She turned to see that all of the various slices and half slices of Eve had wrapped themselves around Tom and were force-marching him up the stairs.

"Can you breathe?" she asked Tom.

"Just barely," he answered.

Val picked up Tom's sword and followed her friend up the stairs.

"Doctor," she shouted. "We need help!"

\*\*\*\*\*

"Aaargh," screamed Ranveer as she regained consciousness, water spraying onto her face. She found herself lying in a freezing bath of water, most of her clothes melted off and her skin screaming with agony. She sat up, and the pain nearly made her pass out.

"You've been in an acid bath," shouted the Doctor. "I've got to rinse you." He was rolling around on the floor, trying to regain his footing, to find some weapon to use on the Dislocated Man. He rolled towards the chamber in which Ranveer was being rinsed. Below it was a chamber which held the fluids that were evacuated from the chamber. Just as he thought, there appeared to be different chambers labelled Waste Acid, Waste Water, and Waste Plastifier. He reached out towards the faucet under the Waste Acid chamber and unscrewed it, straining to keep the Dislocated Man from rolling him away. As he turned the handle, acid began to pour out of the bottom and onto the floor. By the time he had opened the faucet entirely, there was already a large pool of acid on the floor. He hoped it would have some effect on the plastinated man.

He rolled himself so that the Dislocated Man was under him. The acid reached the shoulder of the Body and the Doctor pushed down on it to make sure that it rested in the acid.

There was an immediate reaction, as the plastinated veins, tendons and muscles began to dissolve as soon as the acid touched them. The pool of acid had completely surrounded the Body by now, and the Doctor could feel the different parts losing their leverage as bits of them got eaten away. Careful to keep from getting too much acid on his clothes and hands, he pushed various bits of the Dislocated Man into the acid pool as it got weaker and weaker. He jumped up and grabbed a binder from the counter, using it to prod at the remaining pieces and hold them in the acid.

Ranveer had stopped screaming, and the Doctor could hear her breathing hard. He flushed the water out of the chamber and picked her up.

"Watch out," he said. "The floor's covered with acid."

He carried her over to the corner and sat her down on a metal stool. She was naked and shivering.

"I've got to get this acid off my clothes," said the Doctor.

All chemical laboratories have emergency showers in case of toxic spills. That is where the Doctor had taken Ranveer. He stood under the shower head and pulled the cord, causing a heavy spray of icy cold water to coat him from head to foot. His clothing was completely soaked. He made sure that his elbows and knees were thoroughly rinsed since they had made contact with the pool of acid numerous times during his wrestling match with the dislocated man.

"My shoes might be a loss," said the Doctor, taking them off and holding them under the shower to rinse them. "But I'll need them to get across this floor."

Ranveer pointed to a pair of rubber boots next to her.

"Good idea," said the Doctor. He turned off the shower and pulled the rubber boots on, giving his shoes to Ranveer to carry.

"Hold this too," he said, handing her a fire extinguisher. Then he picked her up and carried her out of the laboratory. Two doors down was the staff room, where he had locked the hypnotized Maninder. The Doctor put Ranveer down and unlocked the door. As he walked in ahead of him, he could see that her back was a vicious red colour.

"You've got severe burns on most of your body," said the Doctor. "You're probably in shock. I'm going to hypnotize you to help you deal with the pain, and when this is over, I've got something in the TARDIS that can speed up the healing. The Doctor took her head in his hands and looked into her eyes.

"Okay, now breathe deeply," he told her. "Slowly!"

Within minutes she was breathing slowly and regularly. She felt drugged, like the time they had given her Demerol at the hospital when she had had her appendix removed.

Ranveer stood shivering next to the couch on which her brother lay. The Doctor went into the staff bathroom hoping to find a towel with which to dry Ranveer, and found only paper towels. "These will have to do," he said, putting the stack down next to her. "Pat yourself dry with these, very gently," he told her.

While she did so, the Doctor opened a locker and rummaged through it. He picked through several white lab coats, smelling each of them.

"This one's clean," he said. "Put this on very carefully and just wait for me."

Ranveer nodded.

The Doctor took off the rubber boots and put his wet shoes back on. He grabbed the fire extinguisher and left the room. Ranveer heard the sound of the key being put into the lock and then the loud metallic “click” as the door locked. Sitting in a chair next to the couch, she pulled the blanket off of her brother and wrapped it around herself. She closed her eyes and soon fell asleep.

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Once on the fifth floor, the Twelve Slices of Eve had not stopped. The Bodiez somehow knew the layout of the building, and found the door to the roof. Val had followed the mummified Tom up to the rooftop, and watched in horror as he was taken to the edge of the roof. For a second, Val thought that they were going to force Tom to march over the edge, but they stopped just short. The Body appeared to be doing nothing. Val looked over the edge of the building and saw that a large wooden facade had been erected in front of the building. She had no way of seeing from that angle that the panels were covered with paintings of large flowers, giving the illusion of giant vinyl wallpaper.

Down on the lawn, she could see two figures dressed in black, apparently spray-painting a totem pole that had been erected on a cement foundation.

Suddenly, Tom started to move. The oddness of the movement made Val feel like she was almost living a dream. His body started to emerge from the cocoon of the Slices of Eve, almost as if he were floating. Then Val realized that he was not floating, but rather being held by dozens of thin strands of plastic. The plastinated veins and arteries of Eve were slowly unravelling themselves, extending out from the various slices of her Body, which had banded together to form a stable base, able to support the weight of Tom as he was propelled out over the edge of the roof, and beyond the wooden facade. The Slices of Eve pressed themselves against the cement railing at the edge of the roof for support, and held the wriggling body of Tom five stories above the cement walkway that surrounded the Art Gallery.

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As the Doctor came up the stairs to the main floor, he wondered what had happened to all of the pieces of the Average Family that had come to life before he had gone downstairs.

He was careful to check for them as he rounded the corner but he could not find them. In the distance, he heard the squeak, squeak, squeak of Bicycle Bill, endlessly circling the main Exhibit Hall.

The Doctor kept the fire extinguisher at the ready. He reasoned that the cold might help to slow down the movements of the animated plastic.

He saw something in the centre of the lobby, and as he approached, he realized it was all of the pieces of the Average Family lying on the floor. They had been re-assembled by someone or something as if they were a life-sized jigsaw puzzle. As he got closer, the Doctor saw that they had been knitted together where they had been sliced apart by swords. Veins and arteries from the various limbs had snaked out and intertwined with veins and arteries of the adjacent

body part, giving the affect of the limbs having been sown back together with thick red and blue threads.

He stopped to survey the four point four Bodiez, lying motionless. Suddenly, all four point four Bodiez sat up, causing the Doctor to jump back. He regained his composure and raised the fire extinguisher. The Bodiez had leaped to their feet, and now were advancing on the Doctor, their arms outstretched in the familiar, "I want to strangle you," gesture.

The Doctor triggered the fire extinguisher and sprayed it from left to right at the Bodiez' legs – Daddy, Mummy, Timmy, Tamara and then the Baby.

As he expected, the blast of cold caused the plastic to stiffen. The two larger Bodiez became unbalanced and fell backwards. The Baby fell forwards. Timmy and Tamara swung their arms and tried to move forward.

The Doctor blasted the group once again with the icy CO<sub>2</sub>, this time covering their torsos and heads. Timmy and Tamara fell as well, and the entire Average family lay unmoving on the floor.

"You're all going to have a bath very soon," said the Doctor. "Don't go away."

The Doctor ran up the stairs, shouting for Tom and Val as he arrived on each level.

He was surprised not to see them on the fourth floor, and wasted valuable time searching through the exhibits. When he got to the fifth, he felt the cool breeze and traced it to the open door leading to the narrow flight of steps up to the roof.

When he got up to the roof he saw Val looking over the edge, unaware that the Half Man was slowly approaching her from behind, and a tangle of Body parts on the other side of the roof. There was no sign of Tom.

The Doctor blasted the Half Man with the fire extinguisher, Val turned when she heard the sound. She gave a short scream before realizing that the Half Man was not moving.

"This will stiffen them up for a short time," explained the Doctor, handing Val another fire extinguisher that he'd picked up along the way. "Where's Tom?"

Val pointed down the side of the building, and saw that Tom was hanging about one story off the ground, held by thin blue and red ribbons of plastic.

"Better not freeze Eve," said Val. "She's liable to let go of Tom."

"This doesn't make any sense," said the Doctor. "There's nothing to be gained here. Whoever is doing this is just torturing us for the sheer fun of it."

"Did you find another Nestene?"

"No," said the Doctor. "Whoever is doing this has found a way to take over the severed communication channels."

"And they've got more control than the Nestene," said Val. "They've got control over every piece of plastic that the Nestene had primed. When we chopped them up into smaller pieces this time, every piece kept moving. Instead of cutting down our enemies, we ended up making more of them."

"Come on," said the Doctor, ushering Val down the staircase. He closed the roof access door behind him and looked around for some way to lock it. He found a little metal latch, which he clipped shut.

"That won't hold them," said Val.

“True,” replied the Doctor. “But at least we’ll be able to tell if they’ve come through the door.”

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The Half Man’s back had been sprayed with the Carbon Dioxide from the fire extinguisher, so his front was still quite warm. His intestines began to heave and finally came loose from its body, uncoiling themselves into a length of makeshift rope. Bracing itself by wrapping its leg around the concrete railing at the edge of the roof, the Half Man’s plastinated intestines stretched out and down across the wide space between the building and the Olympic clock, where two black-clad figures were merrily spray-painting the symbol of Olympic oppression.

As the Half Man’s perversely elongated intestines snaked around Dink’s legs, she thought that perhaps a cat was rubbing up against her calves. They coiled around Slapper’s legs as well, and in a flash, both Slapper and Dink were being strangled by the Half Man’s uncoiled intestines.

Struggling against their unseen foe, the pair were dragged across the courtyard and then up the side of the flowered façade.

Tom, witnessing the incident, began to swing himself back and forth so that he could grab hold of one of them and be pulled up to the roof along with them.

He managed to grab Dink’s hoodie and as the power of the Half Man’s animated intestines pulled him up the side of the building, Tom re-arranged his grip so that he had his arms wrapped around Dink’s torso. Up they went, and when Tom reached the roof, he grabbed hold of the concrete railing that ran along the edge and wrapped his arms and legs around it so he wouldn’t fall back.

He watched the Half Man pull against the door to the stairs until it pulled open with a snap, the small metal hook coming loose and clattering to the surface of the roof. The Half Man started to hop down the stairs dragging the hapless vandals behind him.

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The Doctor and Val raced through the lobby, pausing only to give the Average family another blast of Carbon Dioxide, and left the Gallery through the front door.

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Ranveer decided that she felt well enough to help out. She searched the staff room for anything that she might be able to use as a weapon against the Bodiez, and found a few things that might come in handy.

She unlocked the door of the staff room and peeked out into the hall. A puddle of acid was slowly seeping out from under the door to the lab. She put on the rubber boots and slipped past it, and then on up the stairs to the main lobby. Lying there on the floor were the Average Family, covered in a white frost of carbon dioxide.

Ranveer headed straight for the gift shop and pulled open the door that the Doctor had unlocked earlier with his sonic screwdriver. She went up to the counter and looked at the little knick-knacks for sale: candy, gum, aha. There it was. Hand sanitizer -- 60% alcohol.

She had brought with her a couple of dusters from the staff room. She thought they might be made of wool. She squeezed some hand sanitizer on each of them and rubbed it into the wool.

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Just outside the glass doors, the Half Man was dragging his prey across the lobby and down to the lab, but Ranveer was too busy making her preparations to notice.

After being dragged to the lab and being put into the plastination machine, Dink and Slapper started to regain consciousness as the cold acid began to seep into the chamber in which they lay side by side.

Slapper remembered how he had first met Dink. He was in Seattle during the World Trade Federation protests. He had just thrown a Molotov cocktail into a Starbucks, and she had just thrown a brick through its window. Their eyes met, and from that day on the two of them were inseparable, whether they were marching for the homeless, rollerblading around Stanley Park, protesting for the legalization of cannabis, Kayaking in English Bay or throwing pies into politicians' faces.

He remembered telling her that his nickname was Slapper because whenever he was handing out leaflets at one protest or another, he was invariably slapped by a woman who didn't like his message.

He realized now that Dink had never told him how she got her nickname.

The two of them both started screaming at the same time as the acid began to burn away their skin.

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Ranveer took a book of matches out of the lab coat's pocket and tore out a match, holding both the torches and the matchbook in her left hand.

Ranveer left the gift shop and approached the frosty Family. They were starting to stir.

Ranveer lit the match and set fire to one of the alcohol-covered dusters. With a whoosh it became a burning torch. She reached into her pocket and pulled out the little vial of hand sanitizer and squirted it onto the face of Daddy Average. She touched the torch against his forehead and the alcohol started to burn. She repeated the process with the other three point four Bodiez. As the heated warmed them, the Bodies started to move, Daddy being the first to stand up. His head had melted off and now his shoulders were sagging. His arms fell off, both burning at the shoulder. The Bodiez somehow knew where she was standing and turned towards her.

She danced around the lobby, leading them on as they rapidly melted into a burning pile of slag. The lobby was filling with thick black smoke, and suddenly, the fire alarm sounded and the sprinklers went off.

Ranveer threw the burning torch onto the pile of burning plastic and shoved the other torch under her coat to keep it dry. She kept her hand closed tightly around the matches.

She started coughing from the amount of smoke and decided to open the front door to let the smoke out. She propped it open and sat down on the steps, coughing.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Doctor and Val had arrived at the rear of the Art Gallery only to find that Tom was no longer hanging one story off the ground. He was now five stories off the ground, hanging off the side of the building. They ran back to the front entrance, finding Ranveer coughing.

"I told you to stay in the lounge," said the Doctor.

"Found a way to deal with the Average Family," said Ranveer. She held up the remaining duster with the hand sanitizer on it. "Melted them."

"Nice," said Val. "Let's melt the rest of them."

"Might not be able to," said Ranveer. "I set off the sprinklers."

"What about the one on the roof?" suggested Val. "The one that's got Tom."

"We'll try it," said the Doctor. He offered Ranveer a hand which she took, and he pulled her up onto her feet.

As they turned towards the doors, two figures lurched out. It was the plastinated Bodiez of Slapper and Dink, both missing their feet, which had been melted away when they slogged through the pool of acid in the lab.

"They're both wet," said Val.

Ranveer pulled out a fresh vial of hand sanitizer and squirted it at their chests and bellies. She handed the Doctor the duster and fumbled for the matchbook. Finally she found it and lit a match and then the torch in the Doctor's hand. The Doctor lunged forward and jabbed the torch at Dink's chest and then Slapper's. The alcohol-infused gel caught fire, even though the Bodiez were wet. Soon, they were both completely aflame, stumbling around briefly before tripping and falling down the long steps that led eventually to the street.

"We're all out of dusters," said Ranveer.

"Maybe we can re-use this one," said the Doctor.

He batted it against the ground to put out the flames.

"Keep it under your coat," she told the Doctor. He shoved it under his jacket and motioned for her to give him the matches. She handed them to him along with a fistful of hand-sanitizers.

The trio went back into the lobby, all instantly becoming soaked.

"You wait here," said the Doctor to Ranveer. "You're exhausted."

Val handed her a fire extinguisher.

"Use this if you need to."

"Who's left unaccounted for?" asked Ranveer. "The Doctor melted the Dislocated man in the pool of acid. The Average Family are burned up, as well as those two wherever they came from."

"The Half Man is still around," said the Doctor.

"I can take care of him," said Ranveer.

"Just stay put. If he comes, spray him and run outside, all right?"

"Yes, Doctor."

The Doctor and Val started the long trudge back up to the roof, while Ranveer sat on the floor under the ticket-taker's desk to keep the water off her.

When the Doctor and Val's footsteps faded, the hall became deadly quiet except for the steady splash of water from the sprinklers and the distant squeaking of Bicycle Bill. Ranveer was exhausted. She started to drift off to sleep.

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Tom was struggling against the tangled mess of plastic that had started out as the Twelve Slices of Eve. The glob of tangled veins, arteries, had worked its way along the cement railing towards Tom. Tom had managed to swing one leg over the railing so that he was not hanging quite as precariously over the edge of the roof as he had before. The plastic tendrils that enveloped him were trying to pull him away from the railing, but his grip was too tight. He cried out whenever they tugged at him because they were so thin that they ended up cutting into his flesh. Slowly he inched his way over onto the roof, keeping a tight grip on the railing.

"Tom," cried Val, as she and the Doctor burst through the door to the roof. "Hold on."

The Doctor was now able to do what he couldn't the last time they were on the roof. He sprayed the CO<sub>2</sub> at the tendrils holding Tom, and immediately Tom could feel the life go out of them. He let himself drop to the roof, and flexed his muscles, causing the plastic to bend. He quickly disentangled himself from the mass while the Doctor continued to freeze along the rail all the way to the big blob of Eve.

He then covered the mass with hand sanitizer.

"Get all the bits of plastic here," said the Doctor as he dried his hands on Tom's shirt before pulling out the matchbook. Tom and Val snapped off bits of plastic that clung to the railing like a vine on a trellis. They gathered up all of the bits and put them on top of the main blob that used to be Eve.

The Doctor added some more hand sanitizer and then dropped a match onto the pile. Minutes later, Eve was destroyed.

They waited to make sure that the fire did not spread to the roof, and when it was just a smouldering heap of sludge, they made their way back downstairs.

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Ranveer awoke to the feel of her face being tickled. She giggled and then awoke with a start. Her face was being licked. By Fido, the Average Family's dog. She let out a scream and Fido growled and then grabbed her by the throat. His teeth were not plastic. She tried to aim the fire extinguisher and let loose with a blast of icy CO<sub>2</sub>. The dog's back legs were immobilized, and it let go of her neck to try to keep its balance. Ranveer kicked it away and jumped up, running across the floor to the staircase. She'd be safe if she could make it to the staff lounge.

She took a quick look back and realized the Fido was coming towards her at a fairly rapid pace, using only his front legs -- his frozen hind legs dragging along the stone floor.

She ran carefully so as not to slip on the wet steps. She ran past the door to the lab, splashing through the puddle of acid that filled the hallway. When she got to the other side she stopped running and turned around. Fido was coming straight for her. He ran straight into the puddle of acid, and when he was right in the middle of it, Ranveer let him have it with the CO<sub>2</sub>.

It stopped him cold.

She almost felt as if the dog were looking pitifully at her as its legs slowly melted in the acid. Then its body hit the floor and it too began to melt. Ranveer used her foot to roll it around in the puddle, making sure it got acid all over its body.

She opened the door to the lab and kicked the remains of the body inside, into the large bath of acid that covered the floor. As Fido melted away, Ranveer saw what was left of the Half Man. His legs and body had completely dissolved by the time he had finished plastinating Dink and Slapper. All that was left of him was his forearm, sticking out of the pool of acid, holding his head, which was looking right at her.

And then Bicycle Bill came through the door behind her and grabbed both of her arms.

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“Ranveer,” called Tom as they entered the lobby.

“This water is bloody cold,” said Val. “Can’t we turn it off somehow?”

“I think we probably need a fireman’s key,” said Tom.

“If you can find the panel,” said the Doctor, holding up the sonic screwdriver, “I’ve got the key.”

It took them several minutes to find the fire panel, in behind the coat check desk. The Doctor unlocked it, and Tom looked at the panel briefly before flicking a switch next to one of two flashing red lights. The water stopped.

“Nice job,” said Val. “What’s that other red light?”

“It should be an alarm,” said Tom. “I wondered why we didn’t hear one.”

“Probably jammed full of plastic, I wouldn’t be surprised,” said the Doctor. “I told you I had a feeling that this was set up on purpose just to torture me. The alarm would have brought someone. And speaking of bringing help. UNIT still haven’t arrived. I think I’d better call Geneva directly. Tell them they might have an Auton working in their Victoria branch.”

Slap. Slap. Slap. Slap.

The trio turned at the sound of footfalls approaching on the wet floor. It was the sound of rubber boots sloshing in the puddles that covered the stone floor.

“Ranveer,” said the Doctor.

Slap. Slap. Slap. Slap.

“Oh God, no,” said Tom.

“She’s plastic,” said Val.

What was once Ranveer stood before them, all of her flesh, blood, organs and bone replaced by plastic, the process having been completed so quickly that sections of her skin still remained, resulting in a gruesome patchwork effect.

Tom took a step forward. The Doctor grabbed his arm.

“There’s nothing of her left in there,” said the Doctor.

"I know," said Tom.

Ranveer raised her arms and continued to walk towards them.

The Doctor half-heartedly raised the fire extinguisher.

"We've got to destroy her," said the Doctor, his voice filled with sadness.

"I know," said Tom, sobbing.

"There's some acid in the lab," said the Doctor.

The Doctor and Val both sprayed Ranveer with their fire extinguishers to stiffen her up, and then the three of them carried her body carefully down the stairs.

"Help me get these boots off of her," said the Doctor when they reached the edge of the puddle of acid. He put on the rubber boots and picked Ranveer up in his arms.

"Wait here," he said to Tom and Val.

Tom was crying uncontrollably now, and Val put her hand on his shoulder. He turned to her and put his head on her shoulder.

The Doctor walked into the lab, kicking the dissolving remains of Bicycle Bill out of his way, and placed the plastinated body of Ranveer into the glass chamber, closed the lid, and activated the Acid Bath.

"I'm sorry," he said aloud. "I should never have let this happen."

"What's going on?" asked a voice from the hallway.

"Don't step in the acid," said Val's voice.

The Doctor went to the door.

"Where's my sister?" asked Maninder.

"I'm sorry," said the Doctor, closing the door behind him. "She was killed."

"By the same creature that was controlling me?" asked Maninder.

"I'm not sure," said the Doctor. "Something similar."

"Can I see her," asked Maninder.

"No," said the Doctor. "There's nothing left."

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The Doctor sat on the ground next to the TARDIS as Tom kicked at the plastic covering it. Eventually, it cracked, and he slipped his hand behind it and pulled at it. It snapped off easily. He and Val pulled enough away so that they could open the door.

"I'm so tired," said the Doctor. Tom thought he had been crying.

"It's okay," said Tom, reaching out his hand to help the Doctor up.

They entered the TARDIS, and seconds later it dematerialized, leaving behind the broken plastic shell.

Across the street, some teenagers were milling around the Art Gallery steps. They had been fenced off, and workers were installing a giant television screen in preparation for the Olympics. The juxtaposition of a modern flat screen TV in front of the Greek columns did not result in an appealing effect.

One of the workers trying to wrangle the giant screen into position, paused, took off his tool belt and rested it against the wall of the gallery. Just above the spot where his hammer

leaned against the wall, someone had carved the words: "Ranveer Singh was here. February 10, 2010. But you're too late. She's gone now."



An ancient, lonely Nestene is diverted towards Earth,  
where she sets in motion a complex plan to trap  
the Doctor and his companions.

When the Doctor and company arrive in Vancouver on the eve of the  
2010 Olympics, they decide to take in an exhibit  
at the Vancouver Art Gallery: Bodyworkz - an exhibit of human Bodies in  
various states of dissection that have been turned into plastic statues.

In the deserted building, as the once-living art works come to life,  
the TARDIS crew are forced to battle the re-animated remains of human  
beings. Trying to keep himself, Tom, Val and their new companion alive,  
the Doctor must use all of his physical and mental abilities to try to  
overcome the Nestene consciousness that  
controls the gruesome army of the dead.

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