

THE
DOCTOR WHO
PROJECT

ACE IN WONDERLAND



Michael Rees

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First Published, 2006 Jigsaw Publications

A TDWP/Jigsaw Publications E-Book

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Typeset in Century Schoolbook

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Bonus Feature Ace In Wonderland

A Word From Bob Furnell

To be honest with you, I don't remember a thing about this story. I can't even tell you anything about the author, or how I came to have the story in my possession. Reading "Wonderland" over, it's clear it doesn't fit the regular TDWP format, and I don't think it was ever intended to be part of the "Lost Stories" format either. The only thing I can think of was that it might have been intended for the first issue of "Dreamstones", a fiction compilation fanzine that TASC (Telefantasy Appreciation Society of Canada) briefly published around 2000.

About The Authors

Michael Rees

Unfortunately I have no details on this author.

Ace In Wonderland

Written by Michael Rees

A slight breeze brought Ace back to consciousness. She felt heat on her face that reminded her of when she would sunbathe in the park. In fact she did feel what felt like grass under her. It was soft and when she moved it tickled the back of her neck, damping it with morning dew. She heard the rustle of leaves and leapt to her feet, ready for combat.

She found that indeed she was standing on grass. It was lush and green. More alive than they yellowing grass in the park where she played as a child. She seemed to be in a glade of some sort. Nearby there was a cluster of trees. It was the trees that had caused the rustling and not some attacker.

Ace sighed and squinted at the bright sun hanging in the blue sky. It certainly looked as if she was on Earth. She started to reach for her shades inside that she kept inside a pocket in her battle armour when she realized she was wearing her battle armour.

She gasped as she realised she was wearing a long billowy blue dress covered by a pinafore. On her feet were buckled black shoes and knee length white socks. Her long hair was not tied back in its usual ponytail but lay across her shoulders loosely. It was as if someone had taken everything she hated and dressed her in it.

She grimaced and yelled a curse aimed at the Doctor for getting her into this. If he hadn't been so interested in the signal the TARDIS had been picking up, he would never of tried to follow it to its source.

She remembered how the TARDIS had thrown a major wobbly and started throwing them about like paper dolls. The Doctor had started to panic and tried to make the TARDIS materialize so that he could find out what was wrong. The last thing she could remember was the TARDIS doors being flung open and The Doctor, Bernice and herself being sucked out.

Now someone had stripped her of her combat gear and dressed her in ridiculous Victorian clothes. She swore again and started to march. The sooner she found some else the sooner she could take her aggression out on them.

* * * * *

Tralon banged the computer display and the light flicked back on. A groan echoed throughout the room as the power systems strained to hold itself together. The computer display showed a blinking yellow dot that was quickly crossing the map display.

He pressed a switch that activated the communication link "Team Alpha Omega, I have located the messenger. Go to full speed and hunt him down. I want him stopped before he gets to the castle. Is that understood?"

"Yes" Came a rough voice "He won't be tell nothing to nobody."

"Make sure of that" Tralon said and switched off the communication link.

Returning his display to the computer display he saw three red dots entering the map. A smile grew on Trillion's face as they got closer to the yellow dot.

"IS THE PLAN GOING ACCORDING PLAN?" Came a booming electronic voice.

Tralon snapped to attention and straightened his uniform "Yes sir!"

"GOOD. CONTINUE YOUR DUTIES." The electronic contained no element of emotion.

"Yes sir." Tralon saluted to the disembodied voice.

Tralon waited for any further orders and then returned to the computer screen. He frowned at the display. For a moment there seemed to be another blip on the screen. The computer deleted it immediately as it did not have a designation attached to it.

It was probably nothing. Tralon tapped his nail against the metal wall with nervous tension. He hoped he was right. This mission had to go without any problems.

* * * * *

An hour later Ace was still cursing. The area was annoyingly peaceful. She kept catching herself becoming sleepy. The only life she saw were the occasional sparrow and butterfly. This enforced her suspicion that she was on Earth.

"I 'm late, I'm late!" Came a shrill call from behind her.

She turned to see a large white rabbit bounding across the grass. It was about the same size as her and was wearing a waistcoat and in its paw it was holding on tightly to a golden watch. It was approaching her quickly.

"I'm late" it said its nose twitching.

It came to a stop next to Ace. It tilted its head and twitched its nose at her. Slowly it approached with the watch out stretched. Ace studied the strange form. It didn't seem to have any weapons on it but its large feet could do a lot of damage. Cautiously she took the watch from it.

The watch was unusually heavy and was made of a cold gold metal. The face of the watch showed a normal clock face with the exception that the hands flashed with green light. She frowned at it and then at the rabbit.

"I'm late" It said sadly.

"For what?" Ace could see a tear running from the rabbit's eye making its soft white fur damp.

"You don't understand Alice" Its large ears flopped so that it fell over its eyes "I am a late rabbit."

Ace was just about to ask the meaning of the strange comment when a loud gunshot shattered the peace of the countryside. She gasped as the rabbit's head exploded dousing its fur in red blood. Its body crumbled in a heap in front of her.

Disgust and anger swept over Ace. She scanned the horizon for the gunman. She spotted three rectangular boxes hurtling through the air. They were a dirty grey colour. Riding inside them were three men. They were thick set and covered in horrible scars that made them look like ugly jigsaw puzzles. All of them held long savage looking shotguns. The closest man had a smoking gun.

Angry as she was Ace knew she would be unable to fight three armed flying assailants. Clutching the gold watch tightly she dashed towards a clump of trees. She scowled at the dress that was slowing her down.

She heard the men laughing and another gunshot. The earth next to her exploded with such force it through grassy turf into the air knocking her to the ground. She used the confusion to roll behind a tree. As the cloud of dirt settled she could see the men searching for her.

She studied the tree and once satisfied that it was sturdy enough she dashed up it. Her military training in stealth had paid off because the men had not noticed her. She studied them carefully.

The men were very muscular. The burns and scars that covered them indicated they had spent a lot of time in dangerous places. The advanced technology they used indicated they were from some time after 2573, as she had not encountered it during her service as a Dalek killer. This sort of contradicted the clothes she was wearing but she was sure there was an explanation.

She noticed one of the men talking to someone even though the others were out of earshot. Squinting she realized the other men were responding. They obviously had some kind of communication link up. That would mean she couldn't hope to eliminate one without alerting the others. She would have to wait.

She stayed perfectly still. An hour passed and the men gave up their search and flew away. Ace sighed. She would have liked to pay them back for what they did to the rabbit. She climbed down from the tree and grimaced at the dress again.

She grabbed hold of the hem and tore it off. It now resembled a miniskirt and allowed her a lot more freedom of movement. She took the strip and wrapped it round her head in a bandanna. It would keep her hair out of her face.

She slipped the watch into the pocket in the pinafore. She could study it later. For now she wanted to get as far away as she could from the men. She continued to cross the grassy hills

* * * * *

Tralon adjusted his uniform and flicked dust from his beige tunic. He studied his form in the mirror making sure that his blond hair was perfectly combed and at the regulation length, that his medals shone just right in the light and so on. It was his job to set an example for his fellow officers.

Pressing a button the side of the mirror he watched it become a dull grey colour blending in with the wall. He returned to his seat behind the long square table. Glancing at his watch he saw that the officers had been waiting for a full hour. Good, make them sweat.

"Come" He said loudly over the sound of the ship's engines.

The door slid open revealing three men covered in grime. Scars criss-crossed their faces. Their hair was just a black stub, burnt away from the heat of being in a scout ship. It was a hardship that all loyal pilots had to endure. They were standing to attention but were clearly uncomfortable in front of a senior officer.

"Report" he said smoothly. His steely grey eyes watched their reaction.

"We eliminated the messenger before he reached the castle sir." Said the officer called Brosk.

The others nodded in agreement. Tralon let the silence hang in the air. He kept a strong rein on his anger. He would give them a chance to confess. The minutes ticked by and no one spoke. The men were sweating profusely.

Tralon relaxed in his chair and intertwined his hands "Do you know why I kept you waiting so long?"

The three men looked at each other searching for the answer. They were being tested and they dare not fail it.

"Err.. No sir." Brosk finally admitted.

"Well there were two reasons." Tralon spoke in such a relaxed manner he might as well of been talking about the weather "Firstly I wanted to go over your report and compare it to other reports. And do know what I found?"

The men were silent so Tralon continued, "I found that you didn't bring anything back. You didn't get the watch."

"No sir." Brosk's voice was full of fear "It must have been destroyed with the messenger sir."

Tralon shook his head sadly "Oh Brosk, I expected more from you. Your ship's records clearly show shots fired after you claim you killed the messenger. The only explanation is that there was someone else there who removed the watch. And through your ineptitude you let that person escape."

"But." Brosk began.

"Silence!" Tralon yelled. He coughed and took a moment to regain his composure.

"Which brings me to the second reason for the delay." Tralon pressed a button on the under side of the table.

In the centre of the room a holographic image materialised and stabilised. It displayed three large caskets. A network of glowing blue pipes interconnected the iron forms. Sharp jagged objects floated in front of the caskets buzzing with anticipation.

"Torture chambers," The three whispered. The fear was almost tangible.

"With an additional twist." Tralon said as a large black sphere with a protruding needle floated down in front of each casket.

"No! Not the mind probe!" The three said in union. Brosk fell to the floor crying.

"Yes, the mind probe. We will learn what really happened to the watch before you die." Tralon laughed.

Another press of a button and the doors slid open to reveal his personal guards. They roughly seized the pilots and dragged them screaming from the room. Tralon watched them with a smile as they left the room and the doors slid shut.

When they were gone Tralon let himself go. He became pale and felt his legs shaking. He collapsed on the table feeling the room reeling round him. He gasped for air while trying to hold back the tears. He was far more afraid that the pilots. He would suffer more than they would because of their failure.

He punched the table and heard it shudder under him. Sighing he flopped back in his chair. He had to be strong. He had to lead his men into triumph. He began to draw up the plans to regain the watch. This time there would be no failure.

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Ace had been making good speed but there didn't seem to be any change in the terrain. If it weren't for her trained direction sense she could have sworn she was working in circles. Deciding to get some rest and sat under a large tree to escape from the heat of the Sun.

Closing her eyes she hoped the Doctor or Bernice would turn up. She opened her eyes and sighed. There was no sign of them. No little man with a dishevelled white suit and garish umbrella with a red question mark handle, no dark haired woman with a cheeky grin and an ever-ready sense of humour, not even a blue police box.

She kicked at the grass knocking a lump of turf up. The Doctor had once talked about his time of exile on Earth. How trapped and alone he felt. It was a moment of surprising openness with the usually elusive Time Lord.

Alone on a strange land Ace knew how he'd felt. If she didn't find the TARDIS she would be just like he was. Stuck on one world in one time zone. She'd probably die of boredom. Ace swore at herself for moping. If she wanted off this world she'd have to do something about it.

She took out the watch and studied it. It continued to show the green lights flashing along the hands. Shaking it there was not the expected noise of cogs knocking against each other. Placing her palm against the back she felt a steady pulsing of electrical power. The watch wasn't what it seemed. And if those men thought it was worth killing for that was reason enough not to give them it.

Ace turned her thoughts to the rabbit. It had called her Alice just before it had been killed. At first she thought it had heard her name and accidentally corrupted it. A thought struck her and she glanced at her now grass stained clothes. Of course, she was dressed as Alice as in the book Alice in Wonderland.

She shook her head. The only reason she hadn't worked this out earlier was that she was so angry at being dumped into this strange world by the Doctor. Now she knew where she was things were going to be a lot easier.

So she was Alice and she had just met the white rabbit. Next she would probably meet the Cheshire cat.

"I am glad you were expecting me," purred a voice above her.

Ace pushed away from the tree and stumbled to her feet. Lying in the branch above her was a large fat ginger cat. Its tail hung down from the branch and swished back and fore. Its mouth was abnormally large and stretched back at the edges far further than should have been possible. The teeth were also not feline but human except they were larger than normal.

It smiled at her with a big grin and scanned her with its green eyes.

"My dear Alice. What have you done to your dress? What would Lewis say?" It chortled to itself.

"I don't give a fig for what Lewis would say?" She snapped back "I've had enough of this charade. You're going to tell me what is going on now!"

"Now, now" Whisper the cat "Calm down Alice."

The cat extended its paw and sharp claws extended themselves. It tapped the branch digging its claw into the bark.

Ace saw that she had to try another approach "Okay, I'll play along. Just take me to my friends."

The cat smiled and vanished. It reappeared at her feet its tail wrapping round her legs. It purred softly.

"I thought you would never ask." The cat started to fade.

Ace looked down and saw her legs started to become transparent. The effect seemed to sweep up her body. Her body began to tingle and she immediately recognised the sensation. It was a matter transporter. A very advanced version but a matter transporter all the same.

As her vision began to blur she noticed flickering lights under the fur of the cat. Then she could see nothing at all as her eyes disappeared.

* * * * *

"More tea?" Enquired the Doctor picking up the teapot.

"NO!" Bernice yelled, "I am sick of tea."

Bernice knocked her cup of the table and it crashed to the ground shattering. A wailing, crying and oinking erupted from the pram next to her. She scowled at the half baby half piglet. She had made some attempt to look after the thing but it had not been too co-operative.

She wrinkled her nose as she remembered the large unsavoury stains that ran down the front of her Midwives dress.

"And you can shut up as well." She looked back and saw the Doctor scowling at her.

He got up from his seat and bent over the pram. The pig baby looked at him and pricked back its ears. He smiled at it and lifted his large top hat. A dove was revealed to be sitting on his head. The pig baby giggled as the bird took flight into the blue sky.

The Doctor smiled and returned to the table. He replaced the top hat on his head. He frowned and tried shifting it. He shook his head as he failed to get the hat to fit comfortably.

"Would you pass me the cream?" He reached out his arm.

Bernice shrugged and handed him the blue jug with the cream in it. The Doctor smiled as he took it and calmly poured it on to his hat. To her surprise the cream started to dissolve the top hat. No, not dissolve it. Reshape it.

As the cream covered the hat it changed the fabrics colour to match its own. Soon it became a Fedora. The Doctor's fedora to be exact. Bernice blinked, as the cream seemed to jump from the hat to the oversized jacket the Doctor has found himself in and changed that too to the Doctor's familiar cream coloured suit.

"Thank you," He said in his slightly Scottish accent placing the now empty jug on the table.

"Mind explaining how you did that?" Bernice said with annoyance.

The Doctor rose and started to pour tea into the cup next to his "Maybe later. Right now we have a guest."

The chair next to the Doctor started to creak and groan. Bernice could see it began to move and at first she thought it had come alive. Then she saw a faint misty image of a young lady appearing. The image got clearer so that colours were visible. The woman wore a short torn blue dress and white socks. The woman's hair became brown and the eyes were clearly green

"Ace!" She cried out as her companion appeared in full.

Ace was stunned for a moment as she took in her surroundings. She saw the large table, the pram and the Doctor. Then she saw Bernice and was shaken out of her shock. She burst into laughter and pointed at the older woman.

Bernice's smile was replaced with a scowl. She picked up a scone and threw it at Ace. The younger woman caught it in midair and took a bite.

"Cheers" She said through a mouthful of cake.

The Doctor handed Ace the cup of tea "Drink up Ace. I think it's time for a story."

Ace nodded and started to relate the events of the last hour or so.

Millions of miles above Lewis Carroll groaned. His big bulky body moved slowly over the blue and green planet watching every inch of it. He groaned again as the silver parasite on its body bit deeper into him. He tried to ignore it as much as he could.

Time was short and there was a story to write and this required his full attention. Despite being the author of this particular tale he had no control over its ending.

* * * * *

"And then I appeared here." Ace finished "So are we in the Land of Fiction again?"

"That's what I thought at first." Said the Doctor rubbing his neck "but this place is to real. The Land of Fiction always had a dream like quality to it. It was also a patchwork of different ideas. This world however seems to be derived from one definite source."

"Like a template" Suggested Bernice "everything drawn from or based on Alice in Wonderland."

"The question is." The Doctor tapped the end of his umbrella against the table "How and why?"

Bernice decided to fore go asking the Doctor where the umbrella had come from and said "The rabbit called Ace Alice. That indicates she's playing the heroine of this story."

"So I am supposed to do something?" Ace said smiling "I get to kick some butt."

The Doctor put a finger to his lips and looked into the sky. He reached into his pocket and dug out a brass telescope. He extended it and looked into the sky. He smiled and stood up.

"I think its time we went to see the Queen." He strode of towards a clump of trees.

The two women shrugged and followed him. They hadn't gone far when the Doctor suddenly vanished. They came to a stop and looked at each other in amazement. The Doctors disembodied head suddenly popped into view.

"Come on. It's only an illusion."

The woman shrugged and continued walking. As they got closer to the trees they seemed to go out of focus. Soon they became a hazy the blur that was painful to look at. The colours changed and snapped into a new shape.

The women now found themselves standing in a beautiful garden in front of a white castle. The Doctor was chatting was a large woman dressed in a red dress and crown. Standing around the garden was a mixture of strange people. There were giant rabbits, two dimensional card people, a giant caterpillar, flamingos, smiling cats and a whole host of personalities drawn directly from a storybook.

Bernice started to study the stone that paved the path while Ace started to kick the small oysters that were scuttling up to her. Bernice smiled and strode over to the Doctor.

"Doctor, this comes from Earth. I spent enough time digging them up to recognise them with out my equipment." She smiled but her face dropped when she saw the Doctor just nod."

"Of course its from Earth. That's where the terra-forming ship came from."

He smiled and returned to his conversation with the woman in red.

* * * * *

Tralon watched the computer screen blur as text whizzed across the screen. Along the border of the screen monitors linked up to the ship's security camera's. All the while a stern computerised face stared at him. It was the representation of the ship's main computer and his senior officer.

"I AM NOT PLEASED WITH YOUR PROGRESS." Came the voice at last.

"Sorry sir." Tralon said casting his eyes down ward. The computer always intimidated him.

"YOUR REGRET IS EXPECTED AND IRRELEVANT. THE ENEMY HAVE EVADED YOUR FORCES FOR TO LONG..." The voice suddenly stopped.

Tralon stood silent for a while. Not knowing if he should or wanted to prompt his leader.

"Are you okay sir?" He asked at last.

"I AM OPERATING AT MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY. I HALTED VERBAL COMMUNICATION TO DIRECT MY FULL PROCESSING POWER TO SENSOR READINGS. I HAVE LOCATED THE CASTLE." The computer said impassively.

Tralon eye's widened "That's excellent sir."

"AFFIRMATIVE. PREPARE THE ASSAULT TEAM. ELIMINATE ANY RESISTANCE."

Tralon clicked his heels together as he snapped to attention "Yes sir."

"DISMISSED." The computer screen became blank.

Tralon turned and marched out of the room with a renewed vigour. This was an exciting development indeed. He theorised that this also meant Lewis Carol was nearly dead, unable to maintain the cloaking device that had hidden their foe for so long. This would certainly improve the ship's morale.

Hopefully this was the last time he would send his men into battle. Hopefully today would be the last day people under his command would die.

* * * * *

Soon the castle was a hive of activity. Card people were lining up outside ready for battle. Rabbits rushed around delivering messages. Cheshire cats regularly appeared and disappeared reporting on what was happening outside.

Bernice was watching this all on the castle wall. She had been left on her own since the Doctor and Ace had rushed off on some important business. She heard heavy footsteps behind her and turned to see the Queen of Hearts approaching waving her sceptre.

"Ready for battle my dear?" She said in a booming voice.

"Oh great. More blood and guts." Bernice sighed and stood up "So who we fighting and why?"

"I can answer that." Said the Doctor coming up from the stairway.

He sat down on the wall next to Bernice and let his feet dangle over the edge "You see this planet was created by a terra forming ship. Quite advanced by human standards and well after your time. It had a jump drive engine and was supposed to seed its stock of genetic material on to a planet ready to be settled."

"So what happened" Bernice said seeing a group of card men practising manoeuvres."

"Well it crashed into a Prisoner ship during a revolt. Millions of prisoners and wardens found their ship stuck in the side of the Terra forming ship. Their engines reacted with each other and they were thrown momentarily into the time vortex." The Doctor watched as a flamingo passed by.

"The signal we found" Said Bernice watching the Doctor taking a prawn cocktail out of his pocket and handing it to the pink bird "It was emitted by one of the ships?"

"Exactly. Both ships were badly damaged. The terra form ship tried to complete its mission but it was slightly confused." The Doctor smiled casting his eyes heaven wards

"You're not kidding!" Bernice exclaimed "I take it its files were corrupted. Used a book as its template and the crew of the prison ship as its materials."

"Not all of them. Just one side of the revolt." His face became solemn "and now the other side has recovered and are about to conquer this world."

"Let me guess" Bernice stood next to the Doctor and followed his gaze "they're the prisoners."

"Not likely." Boomed the Queen of Hearts "They're the wardens. We were political prisoners."

"Ahh" Bernice said non-chalantly. She wasn't sure whether she believed the Queen entirely.

A Cheshire cat strolled past, leapt on to the wall and then launched itself into the air only to vanish and reappear on the ground. It walked over to a tall white rabbit and handed it a scroll. The white rabbit nodded in appreciation and dashed across the courtyard.

"What about the animals? And the other things?" Bernice asked pointing at the castle and animals.

"Ah well, you see" The Doctor lifted his head in the way he usually did when was working out how best to explain something very complicated.

"The colonisation ship was very advanced. It could rearrange objects at their component levels. Able to take apart the molecular structure brick by brick and rebuild it in what every way it wants."

Out of nowhere the Doctor had produced tiny building blocks covered with colourful letters and assembled them on the castle wall. First so they read "Doctor" then "Bernice" and finally "Ace".

"It had live stock on board to create the cats and rabbits and the more mundane creatures." The Doctor was putting all of attention into the blocks that now read "TARDIS."

"I wouldn't call teleporting cat's mundane." Bernice said wondering at the fact the block's letters seemed to rearrange themselves at the Doctor's will.

The Doctor cast eye's sky ward "Well when it was being fanciful it had to include more technical advantages. For example the cat's had a teleportation system woven into their body."

Bernice nodded "So if it took apart and then put things back together at a basic level it could still be unstable. That's how you changed the cream into a suit."

The Doctor's face fell "Bernice, you take all the magic out of life."

Bernice laughed. Looking up into the blue sky she could make out two tiny black dots. She guessed that they were the two space ships orbiting the planet. That was what the Doctor had seen with the telescope. Probably the colony ship's cloaking beam landing on the castle.

She gasped as more dots started appear in the sky. At first she thought they were more space ships but then she realised that they were getting larger. They were heading towards the castle.

There was an explosion as the black dots opened fire with red lasers. The Doctor quickly made a grab for the cubes. He paused for a moment as he saw they had fallen and arranged themselves into the word "Cwej." Bernice grabbed him and pulled him to the floor as laser blew huge chunks out of the white stone castle destroying the cubes in the process.

The card soldiers leaped into the air and the wind enabled them to glide up to meet the black objects. The objects where clearly attack shuttles now. They fitted the description that Ace had given of the black flying coffins. These however had laser barrels along the under side of the body.

The soldiers beat at the cockpit with their swords but they where having no luck. Many were thrown off and tumbled to the ground. The rabbits bounded around scooping up the wounded and rushing them to safety.

"Is their anything we can do?" Bernice yelled over the explosions.

The Doctor clung to his hat as they were showered in shrapnel "Our only hope is that watch the rabbit gave Ace."

"Why?"

"Because it activates the Jabberwocky. Something so powerful it was never supposed to be used. That's why the key wasn't kept in the castle. As soon as they found out the wardens were planning an attack they sent the rabbit to get it." The Doctor opened his umbrella that deflected a large chunk of rock.

"What's a Jabberwocky?" Bernice said frowning.

"Me!" Came a woman's voice.

The Queen, Bernice and the Doctor turned to see a large armour plated form fly up to the wall. Large steel wings flapped on its back. The arms ended in vicious claws. The head resembled a dragon's head. Its eyes resembled a clear visor through which Ace's face could be seen.

"Wicked" She whispered as she flexed the suits claws.

"No time for that Ace." Yelled the Doctor getting to his feet "Distract them for a while."

"Off with their heads!" Yelled the Queen with glee.

"My thoughts exactly" Ace stretched out her wings and took to the air.

* * * * *

The attack shuttles opened fire on her. The armour absorbed the lasers fire easily. Ace smiled and redirected the power through the helmet releasing a wave of fire. The attack shuttles were reduced to molten slag and they tumbled to the ground.

Far below she saw the Doctor turning his umbrella up side down. He took out a small silver box and attached it to the umbrella.

She returned her attention to attack shuttles. They were coming towards her in front of her and from behind her. They opened fire on her and her armour shook. The suit couldn't absorb such a large amount of power.

She gritted her teeth and folded the suits' wings. Immediately she plummeted towards the ground. Above her the attack shuttles struggled to change their path but many of them crashed into each other.

At the last moment she opened the wings and swooped up from the ground twirling to avoid the falling fragments of the attack shuttles. She flew up into a shuttle slashing at it with her claws.

She burrowed through the cockpit frightening the life out of the pilot. She smiled at him as she tore the guts out his ship.

* * * * *

Tralon watched the myriad monitors that displayed pictures from each craft. The prisoners were resisting but only a couple of ships were falling under their attacks. The real problem was the woman in the armoured suit.

In the centre of the room was a holographic display showing a virtual map of battle. The winged form zigzagged through the attack crafts. The computer was trying to collate a logical pattern to the woman's attacks but could find none. Her actions were motivated by pure ferocity coupled with experience in many battles.

"THE FLYING ATTACKER IS THE PRIMARY THREAT. DIRECT ALL FORCE TO...." As before the computer's voice cut off.

Tralon waited once again. Maybe the computer had detected something important. He waited some more but still nothing happened. There was a crackling noise and he saw that all the monitors had clicked off. He got to his feet just as the holographic battle flicked and was then replaced by a spinning red omega mark.

"How do you do?" Came a voice with a slightly Scottish accent. It seemed to originate from the computer's monitor "I have something to discuss with you."

* * * * *

Bernice watched the carnage above her. Behind the Doctor was tapping on the silver box. A shuttle came crashing down near her and she scuttled out of the way of thrown up earth. The Queen of Hearts pushed passed her and started to beat the pilot who had stumbled out with her sceptre."

"Almost done Doctor?" She asked.

"Almost." He said in a distracted manner.

The silver box beeped and turned a bright yellow. High above the attack shuttles started to change direction. They were starting to fly back upwards. Ace followed slashing at the last couple.

Soon the sky was empty and Ace returned to the castle. She bowed theatrically to everyone.

"Well done Ace" Bernice smiled.

"That almost made up for having to wear that dress" Ace glanced down inside the suit "Almost. What did you do Doctor?"

The Doctor was putting the box back inside his pocket "Oh just told them to return to their posts. They're still wardens and they'll still obey orders from their superior officer."

Bernice laughed, "Don't tell me you're their superior officer."

The Doctor smirked and shook his head "No. The computer in prisoner ships contains an artificial intelligence, which in effect acts as their commanding officer. I just took control of their computer."

"So what now?" Ace climbed out of the Jabberwocky suit.

"Now the wardens will arrive back at their ship to receive new orders. They have to watch each other to make sure that they don't escape." The Doctor twirled his umbrella.

"So the guards guard the guards?" Ace laughed "good one professor."

The Doctor smiled and was about to say something but was drowned by a loud thundering. Everyone looked up to see the sky growing dark. The two dots were getting bigger. Around the two forms there was a red glow that was increasing in intensity.

"What is it?" Bernice asked noting that the Doctor had gone very pale.

"I...I seem to of made an error." The Doctor said rubbing his hands.

"You?" Asked Bernice with genuine surprise.

"Knock it off Bernice." Ace said in a stern voice "Can we stop it?"

Ace began to get back inside the armoured suit but the Doctor placed a restraining hand on the young woman and shook his head.

"The two ship's collided into each other. It seems I did not manage to take over all of the computer systems. The guidance system must have made it fall out of orbit. Lewis Carol probably saw that and crashed into it to slow it down. Give it us time." The Doctor was going through his pockets studying the objects and then throwing them away.

"To do what?" Bernice picked up the items the Doctor was discarding.

"Lewis Carol must have had an idea." The Doctor gave a cry of triumph as he brought out the TARDIS key.

He rushed over to the cats whose grins had disappeared "I need you to bring my ship, the TARDIS."

They nodded and vanished. The castle inhabitants crowded together shivering. A cold wind blew through the building as the dark shadow grew in size. It expanded over the surrounding landscape covering everything in sight.

Above them the two ships continued to bear down on them. The silver prison ship puncturing the hull of the large oval shape of the terra-forming ship. They were shaking as the two ship's hulls struggled not only with the stress of the gravitational pull of the planet but the hull breaches that both ships had suffered.

"Will they find it in time?" Ace asked.

"I hope so." The Doctor ran his fingers over the silver triangular key.

In front of them the furry form of the cat's appeared next to them. They covered the tall blue form of the TARDIS, each of them clutching an edge with their paws."

"Found it." They purred in union.

"Thank you." The Doctor rushed over to the TARDIS forcing the key in and opening the door.

Ace and Bernice were about to follow him in but he turned and stopped them.

"No" He looked down sadly "This I do alone."

Without another word the little man shuffled into the TARDIS and closed the door.

There was a familiar noise of the TARDIS dematerializing that rose above the sound of the wind. The two women were stunned as their travelling companion disappeared in front of them. A moment later the sound came again but this time it was above them.

They could make out the small form of the blue box appear in front of the ships. They were huge in contrast, their hulls burning red with heat. At first it appeared the TARDIS would be pushed along by the great space transports if not destroyed. But to everyone's amazement the ships were coming no closer.

At first it appeared they had stopped moving as they hung at the same point in the air. However it was soon clear that the hull was rippling. The contrast in the surface texture was visibly changing. And then came the realisation that the ship was still travelling on wards. Yet impossibly not getting any closer.

Ace squinted against the dust that was being blown up by the savage wind and saw the TARDIS' doors were open. As impossible as it seemed the TARDIS was allowing the two ships to enter it. The Doctor had always said the inside of the TARDIS was vast but she never imagined it could be that big.

After an eternity the two ships finally disappeared into the TARDIS. The wind died down and the sunlight poured down on the ruins of the castle. It took a moment for realisation to strike everyone and silence reigned across the air. And then the Queen cheered with triumph. The others soon followed her lead and the noise of their celebration was almost deafening.

It was at that moment the TARDIS exploded. The ground shock with the thunderclap of noise. Black smoke issued forth from the open portal of the time capsule and swirled in the air. The smell of burning and melted metal made the air pungent and vile to smell.

The TARDIS started to fall from the air turning over and over leaving a spiralling trail of pitch-black smoke in its path. The blue light flashed weakly and a terribly grating groaning noise was emitted like the pathetic dying cry of a wounded animal.

The smoke swirled and surrounded the TARDIS hiding it from view. The smoke drifted down to above ten meters above the ground before completely disappearing. Bernice and Ace ran to the

area and looked around. The TARDIS was nowhere to be seen. Frantically they searched the area for the blue box or the Doctor. They found neither.

* * * * *

Hurting. Pain. Confusion. The words described the sensations but did not seem to aptly describe the sear immensity of them. The two were one and the one were two and both did not know what to do.

A laugh filtered through the air. Humour at the rhyme, which they had unconsciously made. It was soon replaced with a groan. The sensation known as pain seemed to make up everything in reality. There was no light, no dark, no heat, and no coldness. Just unending pain. Pain that seemed to of lasted a lifetime. The question was whose lifetime?

A man with flowing white hair placed his hand on a young woman's shoulder. He stared up sadly at the white ceiling of a humming room. He was speaking of how they were exiles from their own people and time. But who were they?

A short man with black hair played with a recorder in tune to the rising and falling of a semi-transparent column. The noise was beautiful all the more so because it was produced by the two of them. But who were they?

Again there was a man with white hair but he was much taller than the first one. He patted the wide console with affection. Pleased his knowledge of the other had returned to him. Knowledge that was now gone.

White hair was replaced with curly brown hair. His hands were dug into his long coat, a long scarf wound round his neck. He was talking to a woman in a flowing white dress behind him. Of being a wander in eternity, of being old beyond measure and still young.

Young again with an innocent face. Holding on to a blue door. Giving up power and responsibility to stay with his longest companion. He would never leave her. They had begun together and they would end together.

The man's multicoloured clothes and behaviour seemed fractured but she knew he was devoted. Devoted to her. He spent many hours fixing her, taking care of her. Repaying her service to him yet she had never asked anything of him.

Short again but his character had not diminished. He was whole again.

More complete than he had ever been before. It seemed that with the TARDIS returned to her former glory he was more complete as well for he was the Doctor.

"I am the Doctor." He said with sudden realisation.

The TARDIS hummed quietly to itself with satisfaction. Repairs were complete.

* * * * *

The last week had been hard work but it kept Ace and Bernice busy. Kept them from thinking about what had happened to the Doctor. Better to help those people they were able to aid rather than worry about the one they couldn't.

Everyone had worked together to rebuild the castle. It was had going at first, as the prisoners had not done any hard work for so long. Lewis Carroll had done everything for them. However the Queen proved to be a good leader and rallied the people raising their morale.

Each night they would huddle round a large fire warming them. In these dark hours they would tell each other tales. Bernice and Ace would tell the prisoners about their journeys in the TARDIS and the in return they were regaled with tales of how the prisoners had got there.

Apparently they were indeed political prisoners. They had all spoken out against the strict laws of the ruling government and for that they had been bundled up and exiled from their home. Not that they had any desire to return. On this planet they could do as they wished without fear of retribution.

Ace was up early on the eighth day. She watched the sun rising into the air the light chasing away the shadows. She rubbed her arms trying to keep warm. She was glad to be back in her

armoured suit. The cats had found them the day before along with Bernice's travel bag and Ace's backpack and weapons.

It had made both of them feel better but only served to remind them of just how much they had lost. Behind her the castle was beginning to look like its old self. Most of the walls had been patched up and only two of the four turrets needed to be rebuilt.

"How are you doing?" Bernice asked.

Ace turned and watched the older woman rubbing the sleep from her eyes. Her dark hair was all mussed up and stuck up at awkward angles.

Ace smiled to her self but knew she looked just as bad in the morning.

"Fine." She sighed and looked down "No, not fine. If I am honest I feel terrible."

"Missing the Doctor? Me to." Bernice opened up diary and laughed. "I was just looking through this. The number of times the Doctor irritated me so much I wished he'd just disappear."

"And now he has." Ace said sadly.

Bernice nodded and closed the book "I used to think that he needed us more than we needed him. Whenever he talked about the past he always mentioned a travelling companion. It's as if he's terrified of being alone. And now I find it's us who need him."

Ace opened her mouth to say something but was interrupted by a wonderful noise. A whooping noise that rose and fell in a gentle rhythm. A blue light flashed over them highlighting their now smiling faces.

About a metre away from them the TARDIS was becoming visible casting a long shadow along the ground. They stood holding their breath. Eventually the sound faded away and was replaced by the low hum coming from the blue police box.

There was a slight clicking and a thud as the door was pull open and the Doctor stumbled out. Ace caught him and noticed the cobwebs and dust disperse in the light wind of the planet.

"Nice to see you again." He said weakly "I hope I didn't keep you waiting."

The two women laughed and gave him a big hug almost crushing the air out of him.

* * * * *

"The Grand Commander has announced that the last Dalek shock troops have been eliminated from the Negross system." The blond newsreader put on her best smile "Which means that all traces of the Dalek forces have been removed from the Galactic Empire."

A moment of confusion passed over her face for a moment but she quickly regained her composure. She put on her stern look and looked seriously at the holo-camera.

"This just in. The prison ship Armardon has been recovered in the Delao system. The ship, which has been missing since 2992, has been found by the Galactic space patrol." the blond woman's image was replaced by a film of a huge black ship being towed in a glimmering white space base. Its surface was burnt and torn in several areas exposing the deck inside.

"Despite heavy damage seventy percent of the warden crew had survived and where retrieved unharmed" The woman continued.

The film changed showing the grime covered crew stumbling out into the landing bay to applause. They all look confused, even Tralon. They waved back weakly not knowing quite what to do.

"The fate of the ship and the rest of its crew will remain unknown for now." The crew were shown to be examined by doctors "It appears all of the crew are suffering from selective amnesia covering the length of time from their disappearance to their reappearance. Doctors are mystified by the condition."

The Doctor stood up and flicked off the holo-projector "Not all of them."

He ejected the holo-vid cartridge and slipped it into his bulging pockets.

"Did you have anything to do with their memories?" Ace asked.

The Doctor placed his hand on his chest in mock surprise "Me?"

"Stupid question." Ace sighed.

"So they'll never come looking for us?" Asked the Queen from her throne.

The Doctor shook his head as he lifted the holo-projector of the immense table around which everyone was sitting.

"Why that's excellent Doctor. I know how to celebrate." The Queen got to her feet and thrust her sceptre into the air. "A tea party."

The castle denizens cheered while Bernice groaned and shook her head.

"Never mind" Ace nudged Bernice bringing out a silver canteen "I know how to make it more interesting."

Ace groaned. She knew she shouldn't have put that whisky in the tea. Nor should she of had twenty cups of it. Beneath her she felt cold stone. Squeaky voices were talking nearby. Gingerly she opened her eyes.

She lay on a yellow brick round. Standing around her were munchkins who studied her in curiosity. In the distance stood an emerald city that sparkled in the sunlight. Nearby the TARDIS was resting on the top of a witch's body. Her legs sticking out from under the time capsule. Worst of all was that she was now wearing a long blue dress and ruby shoes.

"Not again!" yelled Dorothy.

Ace In Wonderland

Written by Michael Rees

A slight breeze brought Ace back to consciousness. She felt heat on her face that reminded her of when she would sunbathe in the park. In fact she did feel what felt like grass under her. It was soft and when she moved it tickled the back of her neck, damping it with morning dew. She heard the rustle of leaves and leapt to her feet, ready for combat.

She found that indeed she was standing on grass. It was lush and green. More alive than they yellowing grass in the park where she played as a child. She seemed to be in a glade of some sort. Nearby there was a cluster of trees. It was the trees that had caused the rustling and not some attacker.

Ace sighed and squinted at the bright sun hanging in the blue sky. It certainly looked as if she was on Earth. She started to reach for her shades inside that she kept inside a pocket in her battle armour when she realized she was wearing her battle armour.

She gasped as she realised she was wearing a long billowy blue dress covered by a pinafore. On her feet were buckled black shoes and knee length white socks. Her long hair was not tied back in its usual ponytail but lay across her shoulders loosely. It was as if someone had taken everything she hated and dressed her in it.

She grimaced and yelled a curse aimed at the Doctor for getting her into this. If he hadn't been so interested in the signal the TARDIS had been picking up, he would never of tried to follow it to its source.

She remembered how the TARDIS had thrown a major wobbly and started throwing them about like paper dolls. The Doctor had started to panic and tried to make the TARDIS materialize so that he could find out what was wrong. The last thing she could remember was the TARDIS doors being flung open and The Doctor, Bernice and herself being sucked out.

Now someone had stripped her of her combat gear and dressed her in ridiculous Victorian clothes. She swore again and started to march. The sooner she found some else the sooner she could take her aggression out on them.

* * * * *

Tralon banged the computer display and the light flicked back on. A groan echoed throughout the room as the power systems strained to hold itself together. The computer display showed a blinking yellow dot that was quickly crossing the map display.

He pressed a switch that activated the communication link "Team Alpha Omega, I have located the messenger. Go to full speed and hunt him down. I want him stopped before he gets to the castle. Is that understood?"

"Yes" Came a rough voice "He won't be tell nothing to nobody."

"Make sure of that" Tralon said and switched off the communication link.

Returning his display to the computer display he saw three red dots entering the map. A smile grew on Trillion's face as they got closer to the yellow dot.

"IS THE PLAN GOING ACCORDING PLAN?" Came a booming electronic voice.

Tralon snapped to attention and straightened his uniform "Yes sir!"

"GOOD. CONTINUE YOUR DUTIES." The electronic contained no element of emotion.

"Yes sir." Tralon saluted to the disembodied voice.

Tralon waited for any further orders and then returned to the computer screen. He frowned at the display. For a moment there seemed to be another blip on the screen. The computer deleted it immediately as it did not have a designation attached to it.

It was probably nothing. Tralon tapped his nail against the metal wall with nervous tension. He hoped he was right. This mission had to go without any problems.

* * * * *

An hour later Ace was still cursing. The area was annoyingly peaceful. She kept catching herself becoming sleepy. The only life she saw were the occasional sparrow and butterfly. This enforced her suspicion that she was on Earth.

"I 'm late, I'm late!" Came a shrill call from behind her.

She turned to see a large white rabbit bounding across the grass. It was about the same size as her and was wearing a waistcoat and in its paw it was holding on tightly to a golden watch. It was approaching her quickly.

"I'm late" it said its nose twitching.

It came to a stop next to Ace. It tilted its head and twitched its nose at her. Slowly it approached with the watch out stretched. Ace studied the strange form. It didn't seem to have any weapons on it but its large feet could do a lot of damage. Cautiously she took the watch from it.

The watch was unusually heavy and was made of a cold gold metal. The face of the watch showed a normal clock face with the exception that the hands flashed with green light. She frowned at it and then at the rabbit.

"I'm late" It said sadly.

"For what?" Ace could see a tear running from the rabbit's eye making its soft white fur damp.

"You don't understand Alice" Its large ears flopped so that it fell over its eyes "I am a late rabbit."

Ace was just about to ask the meaning of the strange comment when a loud gunshot shattered the peace of the countryside. She gasped as the rabbit's head exploded dousing its fur in red blood. Its body crumbled in a heap in front of her.

Disgust and anger swept over Ace. She scanned the horizon for the gunman. She spotted three rectangular boxes hurtling through the air. They were a dirty grey colour. Riding inside them were three men. They were thick set and covered in horrible scars that made them look like ugly jigsaw puzzles. All of them held long savage looking shotguns. The closest man had a smoking gun.

Angry as she was Ace knew she would be unable to fight three armed flying assailants. Clutching the gold watch tightly she dashed towards a clump of trees. She scowled at the dress that was slowing her down.

She heard the men laughing and another gunshot. The earth next to her exploded with such force it through grassy turf into the air knocking her to the ground. She used the confusion to roll behind a tree. As the cloud of dirt settled she could see the men searching for her.

She studied the tree and once satisfied that it was sturdy enough she dashed up it. Her military training in stealth had paid off because the men had not noticed her. She studied them carefully.

The men were very muscular. The burns and scars that covered them indicated they had spent a lot of time in dangerous places. The advanced technology they used indicated

they were from some time after 2573, as she had not encountered it during her service as a Dalek killer. This sort of contradicted the clothes she was wearing but she was sure there was an explanation.

She noticed one of the men talking to someone even though the others were out of earshot. Squinting she realized the other men were responding. They obviously had some kind of communication link up. That would mean she couldn't hope to eliminate one without alerting the others. She would have to wait.

She stayed perfectly still. An hour passed and the men gave up their search and flew away. Ace sighed. She would have liked to pay them back for what they did to the rabbit. She climbed down from the tree and grimaced at the dress again.

She grabbed hold of the hem and tore it off. It now resembled a miniskirt and allowed her a lot more freedom of movement. She took the strip and wrapped it round her head in a bandanna. It would keep her hair out of her face.

She slipped the watch into the pocket in the pinafore. She could study it later. For now she wanted to get as far away as she could from the men. She continued to cross the grassy hills

* * * * *

Tralon adjusted his uniform and flicked dust from his beige tunic. He studied his form in the mirror making sure that his blond hair was perfectly combed and at the regulation length, that his medals shone just right in the light and so on. It was his job to set an example for his fellow officers.

Pressing a button the side of the mirror he watched it become a dull grey colour blending in with the wall. He returned to his seat behind the long square table. Glancing at his watch he saw that the officers had been waiting for a full hour. Good, make them sweat.

"Come" He said loudly over the sound of the ship's engines.

The door slid open revealing three men covered in grime. Scars criss-crossed their faces. Their hair was just a black stub, burnt away from the heat of being in a scout ship. It was a hardship that all loyal pilots had to endure. They were standing to attention but were clearly uncomfortable in front of a senior officer.

"Report" he said smoothly. His steely grey eyes watched their reaction.

"We eliminated the messenger before he reached the castle sir." Said the officer called Brosk.

The others nodded in agreement. Tralon let the silence hang in the air. He kept a strong rein on his anger. He would give them a chance to confess. The minutes ticked by and no one spoke. The men were sweating profusely.

Tralon relaxed in his chair and intertwined his hands "Do you know why I kept you waiting so long?"

The three men looked at each other searching for the answer. They were being tested and they dare not fail it.

"Err.. No sir." Brosk finally admitted.

"Well there were two reasons." Tralon spoke in such a relaxed manner he might as well of been talking about the weather "Firstly I wanted to go over your report and compare it to other reports. And do know what I found?"

The men were silent so Tralon continued, "I found that you didn't bring anything back. You didn't get the watch."

"No sir." Brosk's voice was full of fear "It must have been destroyed with the messenger sir."

Tralon shook his head sadly "Oh Brosk, I expected more from you. Your ship's records clearly show shots fired after you claim you killed the messenger. The only explanation is that there was someone else there who removed the watch. And through your ineptitude you let that person escape."

"But." Brosk began.

"Silence!" Tralon yelled. He coughed and took a moment to regain his composure.

"Which brings me to the second reason for the delay." Tralon pressed a button on the under side of the table.

In the centre of the room a holographic image materialised and stabilised. It displayed three large caskets. A network of glowing blue pipes interconnected the iron forms. Sharp jagged objects floated in front of the caskets buzzing with anticipation.

"Torture chambers," The three whispered. The fear was almost tangible.

"With an additional twist." Tralon said as a large black sphere with a protruding needle floated down in front of each casket.

"No! Not the mind probe!" The three said in union. Brosk fell to the floor crying.

"Yes, the mind probe. We will learn what really happened to the watch before you die." Tralon laughed.

Another press of a button and the doors slid open to reveal his personal guards. They roughly seized the pilots and dragged them screaming from the room. Tralon watched them with a smile as they left the room and the doors slid shut.

When they were gone Tralon let himself go. He became pale and felt his legs shaking. He collapsed on the table feeling the room reeling round him. He gasped for air while trying to hold back the tears. He was far more afraid that the pilots. He would suffer more than they would because of their failure.

He punched the table and heard it shudder under him. Sighing he flopped back in his chair. He had to be strong. He had to lead his men into triumph. He began to draw up the plans to regain the watch. This time there would be no failure.

* * * * *

Ace had been making good speed but there didn't seem to be any change in the terrain. If it weren't for her trained direction sense she could would have sworn she was working in circles. Deciding to get some rest and sat under a large tree to escape from the heat of the Sun.

Closing her eyes she hoped the Doctor or Bernice would turn up. She opened her eyes and sighed. There was no sign of them. No little man with a dishevelled white suit and garish umbrella with a red question mark handle, no dark haired woman with a cheeky grin and an ever-ready sense of humour, not even a blue police box.

She kicked at the grass knocking a lump of turf up. The Doctor had once talked about his time of exile on Earth. How trapped and alone he felt. It was a moment of surprising openness with the usually elusive Time Lord.

Alone on a strange land Ace knew how he'd felt. If she didn't find the TARDIS she would be just like he was. Stuck on one world in one time zone. She'd probably die of boredom. Ace swore at herself for moping. If she wanted off this world she'd have to do something about it.

She took out the watch and studied it. It continued to show the green lights flashing along the hands. Shaking it there was not the expected noise of cogs knocking against each other. Placing her palm against the back she felt a steady pulsing of electrical power. The

watch wasn't what it seemed. And if those men thought it was worth killing for that was reason enough not to give them it.

Ace turned her thoughts to the rabbit. It had called her Alice just before it had been killed. At first she thought it had heard her name and accidentally corrupted it. A thought struck her and she glanced at her now grass stained clothes. Of course, she was dressed as Alice as in the book Alice in Wonderland.

She shook her head. The only reason she hadn't worked this out earlier was that she was so angry at being dumped into this strange world by the Doctor. Now she knew where she was things were going to be a lot easier.

So she was Alice and she had just met the white rabbit. Next she would probably meet the Cheshire cat.

"I am glad you were expecting me," purred a voice above her.

Ace pushed away from the tree and stumbled to her feet. Lying in the branch above her was a large fat ginger cat. Its tail hung down from the branch and swished back and fore. Its mouth was abnormally large and stretched back at the edges far further than should have been possible. The teeth were also not feline but human except they were larger than normal.

It smiled at her with a big grin and scanned her with its green eyes.

"My dear Alice. What have you done to your dress? What would Lewis say?" It chortled to itself.

"I don't give a fig for what Lewis would say?" She snapped back "I've had enough of this charade. You're going to tell me what is going on now!"

"Now, now" Whisper the cat "Calm down Alice."

The cat extended its paw and sharp claws extended themselves. It tapped the branch digging its claw into the bark.

Ace saw that she had to try another approach "Okay, I'll play along. Just take me to my friends."

The cat smiled and vanished. It reappeared at her feet its tail wrapping round her legs. It purred softly.

"I thought you would never ask." The cat started to fade.

Ace looked down and saw her legs started to become transparent. The effect seemed to sweep up her body. Her body began to tingle and she immediately recognised the sensation. It was a matter transporter. A very advanced version but a matter transporter all the same.

As her vision began to blur she noticed flickering lights under the fur of the cat. Then she could see nothing at all as her eyes disappeared.

* * * * *

"More tea?" Enquired the Doctor picking up the teapot.

"NO!" Bernice yelled, "I am sick of tea."

Bernice knocked her cup of the table and it crashed to the ground shattering. A wailing, crying and oinking erupted from the pram next to her. She scowled at the half baby half piglet. She had made some attempt to look after the thing but it had not been too co-operative.

She wrinkled her nose as she remembered the large unsavoury stains that ran down the front of her Midwives dress.

"And you can shut up as well." She looked back and saw the Doctor scowling at her.

He got up from his seat and bent over the pram. The pig baby looked at him and pricked back its ears. He smiled at it and lifted his large top hat. A dove was revealed to be sitting on his head. The pig baby giggled as the bird took flight into the blue sky.

The Doctor smiled and returned to the table. He replaced the top hat on his head. He frowned and tried shifting it. He shook his head as he failed to get the hat to fit comfortably.

"Would you pass me the cream?" He reached out his arm.

Bernice shrugged and handed him the blue jug with the cream in it. The Doctor smiled as he took it and calmly poured it on to his hat. To her surprise the cream started to dissolve the top hat. No, not dissolve it. Reshape it.

As the cream covered the hat it changed the fabrics colour to match its own. Soon it became a Fedora. The Doctor's fedora to be exact. Bernice blinked, as the cream seemed to jump from the hat to the oversized jacket the Doctor has found himself in and changed that too to the Doctor's familiar cream coloured suit.

"Thank you," He said in his slightly Scottish accent placing the now empty jug on the table.

"Mind explaining how you did that?" Bernice said with annoyance.

The Doctor rose and started to pour tea into the cup next to his "Maybe later. Right now we have a guest."

The chair next to the Doctor started to creak and groan. Bernice could see it began to move and at first she thought it had come alive. Then she saw a faint misty image of a young lady appearing. The image got clearer so that colours were visible. The woman wore a short torn blue dress and white socks. The woman's hair became brown and the eyes were clearly green

"Ace!" She cried out as her companion appeared in full.

Ace was stunned for a moment as she took in her surroundings. She saw the large table, the pram and the Doctor. Then she saw Bernice and was shaken out of her shock. She burst into laughter and pointed at the older woman.

Bernice's smile was replaced with a scowl. She picked up a scone and threw it at Ace. The younger woman caught it in midair and took a bite.

"Cheers" She said through a mouthful of cake.

The Doctor handed Ace the cup of tea "Drink up Ace. I think it's time for a story."

Ace nodded and started to relate the events of the last hour or so.

Millions of miles above Lewis Carroll groaned. His big bulky body moved slowly over the blue and green planet watching every inch of it. He groaned again as the silver parasite on its body bit deeper into him. He tried to ignore it as much as he could.

Time was short and there was a story to write and this required his full attention. Despite being the author of this particular tale he had no control over its ending.

* * * * *

"And then I appeared here." Ace finished "So are we in the Land of Fiction again?"

"That's what I thought at first." Said the Doctor rubbing his neck "but this place is to real. The Land of Fiction always had a dream like quality to it. It was also a patchwork of different ideas. This world however seems to be derived from one definite source."

"Like a template" Suggested Bernice "everything drawn from or based on Alice in Wonderland."

"The question is." The Doctor tapped the end of his umbrella against the table "How and why?"

Bernice decided to fore go asking the Doctor where the umbrella had come from and said "The rabbit called Ace Alice. That indicates she's playing the heroine of this story."

"So I am supposed to do something?" Ace said smiling "I get to kick some butt."

The Doctor put a finger to his lips and looked into the sky. He reached into his pocket and dug out a brass telescope. He extended it and looked into the sky. He smiled and stood up.

"I think its time we went to see the Queen." He strode of towards a clump of trees.

The two women shrugged and followed him. They hadn't gone far when the Doctor suddenly vanished. They came to a stop and looked at each other in amazement. The Doctors disembodied head suddenly popped into view.

"Come on. It's only an illusion."

The woman shrugged and continued walking. As they got closer to the trees they seemed to go out of focus. Soon they became a hazy the blur that was painful to look at. The colours changed and snapped into a new shape.

The women now found themselves standing in a beautiful garden in front of a white castle. The Doctor was chatting was a large woman dressed in a red dress and crown. Standing around the garden was a mixture of strange people. There were giant rabbits, two dimensional card people, a giant caterpillar, flamingos, smiling cats and a whole host of personalities drawn directly from a storybook.

Bernice started to study the stone that paved the path while Ace started to kick the small oysters that were scuttling up to her. Bernice smiled and strode over to the Doctor.

"Doctor, this comes from Earth. I spent enough time digging them up to recognise them with out my equipment." She smiled but her face dropped when she saw the Doctor just nod."

"Of course its from Earth. That's where the terra-forming ship came from."

He smiled and returned to his conversation with the woman in red.

* * * * *

Tralon watched the computer screen blur as text whizzed across the screen. Along the border of the screen monitors linked up to the ship's security camera's. All the while a stern computerised face stared at him. It was the representation of the ship's main computer and his senior officer.

"I AM NOT PLEASED WITH YOUR PROGRESS." Came the voice at last.

"Sorry sir." Tralon said casting his eyes down ward. The computer always intimidated him.

"YOUR REGRET IS EXPECTED AND IRRELEVANT. THE ENEMY HAVE EVADED YOUR FORCES FOR TO LONG..." The voice suddenly stopped.

Tralon stood silent for a while. Not knowing if he should or wanted to prompt his leader.

"Are you okay sir?" He asked at last.

"I AM OPERATING AT MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY. I HALTED VERBAL COMMUNICATION TO DIRECT MY FULL PROCESSING POWER TO SENSOR READINGS. I HAVE LOCATED THE CASTLE." The computer said impassively.

Tralon eye's widened "That's excellent sir."

"AFFIRMATIVE. PREPARE THE ASSAULT TEAM. ELIMINATE ANY RESISTANCE."

Tralon clicked his heels together as he snapped to attention "Yes sir."

"DISMISSED." The computer screen became blank.

Tralon turned and marched out of the room with a renewed vigour. This was an exciting development indeed. He theorised that this also meant Lewis Carol was nearly dead, unable to maintain the cloaking device that had hidden their foe for so long. This would certainly improve the ship's morale.

Hopefully this was the last time he would send his men into battle. Hopefully today would be the last day people under his command would die.

* * * * *

Soon the castle was a hive of activity. Card people were lining up outside ready for battle. Rabbits rushed around delivering messages. Cheshire cats regularly appeared and disappeared reporting on what was happening outside.

Bernice was watching this all on the castle wall. She had been left on her own since the Doctor and Ace had rushed off on some important business. She heard heavy footsteps behind her and turned to see the Queen of Hearts approaching waving her sceptre.

"Ready for battle my dear?" She said in a booming voice.

"Oh great. More blood and guts." Bernice sighed and stood up "So who we fighting and why?"

"I can answer that." Said the Doctor coming up from the stairway.

He sat down on the wall next to Bernice and let his feet dangle over the edge "You see this planet was created by a terra forming ship. Quite advanced by human standards and well after your time. It had a jump drive engine and was supposed to seed its stock of genetic material on to a planet ready to be settled."

"So what happened" Bernice said seeing a group of card men practising manoeuvres."

"Well it crashed into a Prisoner ship during a revolt. Millions of prisoners and wardens found their ship stuck in the side of the Terra forming ship. Their engines reacted with each other and they were thrown momentarily into the time vortex." The Doctor watched as a flamingo passed by.

"The signal we found" Said Bernice watching the Doctor taking a prawn cocktail out of his pocket and handing it to the pink bird "It was emitted by one of the ships?"

"Exactly. Both ships were badly damaged. The terra form ship tried to complete its mission but it was slightly confused." The Doctor smiled casting his eyes heaven wards

"You're not kidding!" Bernice exclaimed "I take it its files were corrupted. Used a book as its template and the crew of the prison ship as its materials."

"Not all of them. Just one side of the revolt." His face became solemn "and now the other side has recovered and are about to conquer this world."

"Let me guess" Bernice stood next to the Doctor and followed his gaze "they're the prisoners."

"Not likely." Boomed the Queen of Hearts "They're the wardens. We were political prisoners."

"Ahh" Bernice said non-chalantly. She wasn't sure whether she believed the Queen entirely.

A Cheshire cat strolled past, leapt on to the wall and then launched itself into the air only to vanish and reappear on the ground. It walked over to a tall white rabbit and handed it a scroll. The white rabbit nodded in appreciation and dashed across the courtyard.

"What about the animals? And the other things?" Bernice asked pointing at the castle and animals.

"Ah well, you see" The Doctor lifted his head in the way he usually did when was working out how best to explain something very complicated.

"The colonisation ship was very advanced. It could rearrange objects at their component levels. Able to take apart the molecular structure brick by brick and rebuild it in what every way it wants."

Out of nowhere the Doctor had produced tiny building blocks covered with colourful letters and assembled them on the castle wall. First so they read "Doctor" then "Bernice" and finally "Ace".

"It had live stock on board to create the cats and rabbits and the more mundane creatures." The Doctor was putting all of attention into the blocks that now read "TARDIS."

"I wouldn't call teleporting cat's mundane." Bernice said wondering at the fact the block's letters seemed to rearrange themselves at the Doctor's will.

The Doctor cast eye's sky ward "Well when it was being fanciful it had to include more technical advantages. For example the cat's had a teleportation system woven into their body."

Bernice nodded "So if it took apart and then put things back together at a basic level it could still be unstable. That's how you changed the cream into a suit."

The Doctor's face fell "Bernice, you take all the magic out of life."

Bernice laughed. Looking up into the blue sky she could make out two tiny black dots. She guessed that they were the two space ships orbiting the planet. That was what the Doctor had seen with the telescope. Probably the colony ship's cloaking beam landing on the castle.

She gasped as more dots started appear in the sky. At first she thought they were more space ships but then she realised that they were getting larger. They were heading towards the castle.

There was an explosion as the black dots opened fire with red lasers. The Doctor quickly made a grab for the cubes. He paused for a moment as he saw they had fallen and arranged themselves into the word "Cwej." Bernice grabbed him and pulled him to the floor as laser blew huge chunks out of the white stone castle destroying the cubes in the process.

The card soldiers leaped into the air and the wind enabled them to glide up to meet the black objects. The objects where clearly attack shuttles now. They fitted the description that Ace had given of the black flying coffins. These however had laser barrels along the under side of the body.

The soldiers beat at the cockpit with their swords but they where having no luck. Many were thrown off and tumbled to the ground. The rabbits bounded around scooping up the wounded and rushing them to safety.

"Is their anything we can do?" Bernice yelled over the explosions.

The Doctor clung to his hat as they were showered in shrapnel "Our only hope is that watch the rabbit gave Ace."

"Why?"

"Because it activates the Jabberwocky. Something so powerful it was never supposed to be used. That's why the key wasn't kept in the castle. As soon as they found out the wardens were planning an attack they sent the rabbit to get it." The Doctor opened his umbrella that deflected a large chunk of rock.

"What's a Jabberwocky?" Bernice said frowning.

"Me!" Came a woman's voice.

The Queen, Bernice and the Doctor turned to see a large armour plated form fly up to the wall. Large steel wings flapped on its back. The arms ended in vicious claws. The head resembled a dragon's head. Its eyes resembled a clear visor through which Ace's face could be seen.

"Wicked" She whispered as she flexed the suits claws.

"No time for that Ace." Yelled the Doctor getting to his feet "Distract them for a while."

"Off with their heads!" Yelled the Queen with glee.

"My thoughts exactly" Ace stretched out her wings and took to the air.

* * * * *

The attack shuttles opened fire on her. The armour absorbed the lasers fire easily. Ace smiled and redirected the power through the helmet releasing a wave of fire. The attack shuttles were reduced to molten slag and they tumbled to the ground.

Far below she saw the Doctor turning his umbrella up side down. He took out a small silver box and attached it to the umbrella.

She returned her attention to attack shuttles. They were coming towards her in front of her and from behind her. They opened fire on her and her armour shook. The suit couldn't absorb such a large amount of power.

She gritted her teeth and folded the suits' wings. Immediately she plummeted towards the ground. Above her the attack shuttles struggled to change their path but many of them crashed into each other.

At the last moment she opened the wings and swooped up from the ground twirling to avoid the falling fragments of the attack shuttles. She flew up into a shuttle slashing at it with her claws. She burrowed through the cockpit frightening the life out of the pilot. She smiled at him as she tore the guts out his ship.

* * * * *

Tralon watched the myriad monitors that displayed pictures from each craft. The prisoners were resisting but only a couple of ships were falling under their attacks. The real problem was the woman in the armoured suit.

In the centre of the room was a holographic display showing a virtual map of battle. The winged form zigzagged through the attack crafts. The computer was trying to collate a logical pattern to the woman's attacks but could find none. Her actions were motivated by pure ferocity coupled with experience in many battles.

"THE FLYING ATTACKER IS THE PRIMARY THREAT. DIRECT ALL FORCE TO..." As before the computer's voice cut off.

Tralon waited once again. Maybe the computer had detected something important. He waited some more but still nothing happened. There was a crackling noise and he saw that all the monitors had clicked off. He got to his feet just as the holographic battle flicked and was then replaced by a spinning red omega mark.

"How do you do?" Came a voice with a slightly Scottish accent. It seemed to originate from the computer's monitor "I have something to discuss with you."

* * * * *

Bernice watched the carnage above her. Behind the Doctor was tapping on the silver box. A shuttle came crashing down near her and she scuttled out of the way of thrown up earth. The Queen of Hearts pushed passed her and started to beat the pilot who had stumbled out with her sceptre."

"Almost done Doctor?" She asked.

"Almost." He said in a distracted manner.

The silver box beeped and turned a bright yellow. High above the attack shuttles started to change direction. They were starting to fly back upwards. Ace followed slashing at the last couple.

Soon the sky was empty and Ace returned to the castle. She bowed theatrically to everyone.

"Well done Ace" Bernice smiled.

"That almost made up for having to wear that dress" Ace glanced down inside the suit "Almost. What did you do Doctor?"

The Doctor was putting the box back inside his pocket "Oh just told them to return to their posts. They're still wardens and they'll still obey orders from their superior officer."

Bernice laughed, "Don't tell me you're their superior officer."

The Doctor smirked and shook his head "No. The computer in prisoner ships contains an artificial intelligence, which in effect acts as their commanding officer. I just took control of their computer."

"So what now?" Ace climbed out of the Jabberwocky suit.

"Now the wardens will arrive back at their ship to receive new orders. They have to watch each other to make sure that they don't escape." The Doctor twirled his umbrella.

"So the guards guard the guards?" Ace laughed "good one professor."

The Doctor smiled and was about to say something but was drowned by a loud thundering. Everyone looked up to see the sky growing dark. The two dots were getting bigger. Around the two forms there was a red glow that was increasing in intensity.

"What is it?" Bernice asked noting that the Doctor had gone very pale.

"I...I seem to of made an error." The Doctor said rubbing his hands.

"You?" Asked Bernice with genuine surprise.

"Knock it off Bernice." Ace said in a stern voice "Can we stop it?"

Ace began to get back inside the armoured suit but the Doctor placed a restraining hand on the young woman and shook his head.

"The two ship's collided into each other. It seems I did not manage to take over all of the computer systems. The guidance system must have made it fall out of orbit. Lewis Carol probably saw that and crashed into it to slow it down. Give it us time." The Doctor was going through his pockets studying the objects and then throwing them away.

"To do what?" Bernice picked up the items the Doctor was discarding.

"Lewis Carol must have had an idea." The Doctor gave a cry of triumph as he brought out the TARDIS key.

He rushed over to the cats whose grins had disappeared "I need you to bring my ship, the TARDIS."

They nodded and vanished. The castle inhabitants crowded together shivering. A cold wind blew through the building as the dark shadow grew in size. It expanded over the surrounding landscape covering everything in sight.

Above them the two ships continued to bear down on them. The silver prison ship puncturing the hull of the large oval shape of the terra-forming ship. They were shaking as the two ship's hulls struggled not only with the stress of the gravitational pull of the planet but the hull breaches that both ships had suffered.

"Will they find it in time?" Ace asked.

"I hope so." The Doctor ran his fingers over the silver triangular key.

In front of them the furry form of the cat's appeared next to them. They covered the tall blue form of the TARDIS, each of them clutching an edge with their paws."

"Found it." They purred in unison.

"Thank you." The Doctor rushed over to the TARDIS forcing the key in and opening the door.

Ace and Bernice were about to follow him in but he turned and stopped them.

"No" He looked down sadly "This I do alone."

Without another word the little man shuffled into the TARDIS and closed the door.

There was a familiar noise of the TARDIS dematerializing that rose above the sound of the wind. The two women were stunned as their travelling companion disappeared in front of them. A moment later the sound came again but this time it was above them.

They could make out the small form of the blue box appear in front of the ships. They were huge in contrast, their hulls burning red with heat. At first it appeared the TARDIS would be pushed along by the great space transports if not destroyed. But to everyone's amazement the ships were coming no closer.

At first it appeared they had stopped moving as they hung at the same point in the air. However it was soon clear that the hull was rippling. The contrast in the surface texture was visibly changing. And then came the realisation that the ship was still travelling on wards. Yet impossibly not getting any closer.

Ace squinted against the dust that was being blown up by the savage wind and saw the TARDIS' doors were open. As impossible as it seemed the TARDIS was allowing the two ships to enter it. The Doctor had always said the inside of the TARDIS was vast but she never imagined it could be that big.

After an eternity the two ships finally disappeared into the TARDIS. The wind died down and the sunlight poured down on the ruins of the castle. It took a moment for realisation to strike everyone and silence reigned across the air. And then the Queen cheered with triumph. The others soon followed her lead and the noise of their celebration was almost deafening.

It was at that moment the TARDIS exploded. The ground shock with the thunderclap of noise. Black smoke issued forth from the open portal of the time capsule and swirled in the air. The smell of burning and melted metal made the air pungent and vile to smell.

The TARDIS started to fall from the air turning over and over leaving a spiralling trail of pitch-black smoke in its path. The blue light flashed weakly and a terribly grating groaning noise was emitted like the pathetic dying cry of a wounded animal.

The smoke swirled and surrounded the TARDIS hiding it from view. The smoke drifted down to above ten meters above the ground before completely disappearing. Bernice and Ace ran to the area and looked around. The TARDIS was nowhere to be seen. Frantically they searched the area for the blue box or the Doctor. They found neither.

* * * * *

Hurting. Pain. Confusion. The words described the sensations but did not seem to aptly describe the sear immensity of them. The two were one and the one were two and both did not know what to do.

A laugh filtered through the air. Humour at the rhyme, which they had unconsciously made. It was soon replaced with a groan. The sensation known as pain

seemed to make up everything in reality. There was no light, no dark, no heat, and no coldness. Just unending pain. Pain that seemed to of lasted a lifetime. The question was whose lifetime?

A man with flowing white hair placed his hand on a young woman's shoulder. He stared up sadly at the white ceiling of a humming room. He was speaking of how they were exiles from their own people and time. But who were they?

A short man with black hair played with a recorder in tune to the rising and falling of a semi-transparent column. The noise was beautiful all the more so because it was produced by the two of them. But who were they?

Again there was a man with white hair but he was much taller than the first one. He patted the wide console with affection. Pleased his knowledge of the other had returned to him. Knowledge that was now gone.

White hair was replaced with curly brown hair. His hands were dug into his long coat, a long scarf wound round his neck. He was talking to a woman in a flowing white dress behind him. Of being a wander in eternity, of being old beyond measure and still young.

Young again with an innocent face. Holding on to a blue door. Giving up power and responsibility to stay with his longest companion. He would never leave her. They had begun together and they would end together.

The man's multicoloured clothes and behaviour seemed fractured but she knew he was devoted. Devoted to her. He spent many hours fixing her, taking care of her. Repaying her service to him yet she had never asked anything of him.

Short again but his character had not diminished. He was whole again.

More complete than he had ever been before. It seemed that with the TARDIS returned to her former glory he was more complete as well for he was the Doctor.

"I am the Doctor." He said with sudden realisation.

The TARDIS hummed quietly to itself with satisfaction. Repairs were complete.

* * * * *

The last week had been hard work but it kept Ace and Bernice busy. Kept them from thinking about what had happened to the Doctor. Better to help those people they were able to aid rather than worry about the one they couldn't.

Everyone had worked together to rebuild the castle. It was had going at first, as the prisoners had not done any hard work for so long. Lewis Carroll had done everything for them. However the Queen proved to be a good leader and rallied the people raising their morale.

Each night they would huddle round a large fire warming them. In these dark hours they would tell each other tales. Bernice and Ace would tell the prisoners about their journeys in the TARDIS and the in return they were regaled with tales of how the prisoners had got there.

Apparently they were indeed political prisoners. They had all spoken out against the strict laws of the ruling government and for that they had been bundled up and exiled from their home. Not that they had any desire to return. On this planet they could do as they wished without fear of retribution.

Ace was up early on the eighth day. She watched the sun rising into the air the light chasing away the shadows. She rubbed her arms trying to keep warm. She was glad to be back in her armoured suit. The cats had found them the day before along with Bernice's travel bag and Ace's backpack and weapons.

It had made both of them feel better but only served to remind them of just how much they had lost. Behind her the castle was beginning to look like its old self. Most of the walls had been patched up and only two of the four turrets needed to be rebuilt.

"How are you doing?" Bernice asked.

Ace turned and watched the older woman rubbing the sleep from her eyes. Her dark hair was all mussed up and stuck up at awkward angles.

Ace smiled to her self but knew she looked just as bad in the morning.

"Fine." She sighed and looked down "No, not fine. If I am honest I feel terrible."

"Missing the Doctor? Me to." Bernice opened up diary and laughed. "I was just looking through this. The number of times the Doctor irritated me so much I wished he'd just disappear."

"And now he has." Ace said sadly.

Bernice nodded and closed the book "I used to think that he needed us more than we needed him. Whenever he talked about the past he always mentioned a travelling companion. It's as if he's terrified of being alone. And now I find it's us who need him."

Ace opened her mouth to say something but was interrupted by a wonderful noise. A whooping noise that rose and fell in a gentle rhythm. A blue light flashed over them highlighting their now smiling faces.

About a metre away from them the TARDIS was becoming visible casting a long shadow along the ground. They stood holding their breath. Eventually the sound faded away and was replaced by the low hum coming from the blue police box.

There was a slight clicking and a thud as the door was pull open and the Doctor stumbled out. Ace caught him and noticed the cobwebs and dust disperse in the light wind of the planet.

"Nice to see you again." He said weakly "I hope I didn't keep you waiting."

The two women laughed and gave him a big hug almost crushing the air out of him.

* * * * *

"The Grand Commander has announced that the last Dalek shock troops have been eliminated from the Negross system." The blond newsreader put on her best smile "Which means that all traces of the Dalek forces have been removed from the Galactic Empire."

A moment of confusion passed over her face for a moment but she quickly regained her composure. She put on her stern look and looked seriously at the holo-camera.

"This just in. The prison ship Armardon has been recovered in the Delao system. The ship, which has been missing since 2992, has been found by the Galactic space patrol." the blond woman's image was replaced by a film of a huge black ship being towed in a glimmering white space base. Its surface was burnt and torn in several areas exposing the deck inside.

"Despite heavy damage seventy percent of the warden crew had survived and where retrieved unharmed" The woman continued.

The film changed showing the grime covered crew stumbling out into the landing bay to applause. They all look confused, even Tralon. They waved back weakly not knowing quite what to do.

"The fate of the ship and the rest of its crew will remain unknown for now." The crew were shown to be examined by doctors "It appears all of the crew are suffering from selective amnesia covering the length of time from their disappearance to their reappearance. Doctors are mystified by the condition."

The Doctor stood up and flicked off the holo-projector "Not all of them."

He ejected the holo-vid cartridge and slipped it into his bulging pockets.

"Did you have anything to do with their memories?" Ace asked.

The Doctor placed his hand on his chest in mock surprise "Me?"

"Stupid question." Ace sighed.

"So they'll never come looking for us?" Asked the Queen from her throne.

The Doctor shook his head as he lifted the holo-projector of the immense table around which everyone was sitting.

"Why that's excellent Doctor. I know how to celebrate." The Queen got to her feet and thrust her sceptre into the air. "A tea party."

The castle denizens cheered while Bernice groaned and shook her head.

"Never mind" Ace nudged Bernice bringing out a silver canteen "I know how to make it more interesting."

Ace groaned. She knew she shouldn't have put that whisky in the tea. Nor should she of had twenty cups of it. Beneath her she felt cold stone. Squeaky voices where talking nearby. Gingerly she opened her eyes.

She lay on a yellow brick round. Standing around her were munchkins who studied her in curiosity. In the distance stood an emerald city that sparkled in the sunlight. Nearby the TARDIS was resting on the top of a witch's body. Her legs sticking out from under the time capsule. Worst of all was that she was now wearing a long blue dress and ruby shoes.

"Not again!" yelled Dorothy.