

VORTEX



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O BRAVE NEW WORLD

THAT HAS BAMBERA IN 'T!

WINIFRED BAMBERA RETURNS WITH A NEW UNIT TEAM...



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DOCTOR WHO

THE DEAD STAR

ACCLAIMED NOVELIST KATE ORMAN MAKES A WELCOME RETURN AS THE WRITER OF THE FOURTH DOCTOR WHO AUDIO NOVEL FROM BIG FINISH.

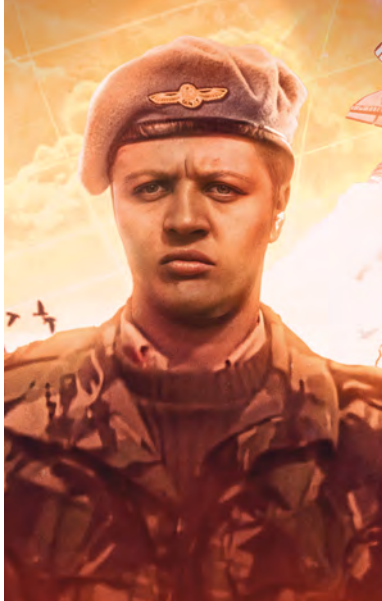
DUE FOR release in January 2023, *The Dead Star* is a six-hour epic set between the 1966 television stories, *The Power of the Daleks* and *The Highlanders*. Michael Troughton, who provides the voice of the Second Doctor, narrates this brand-new adventure which sees the second incarnation of the Time Lord and his trusty companions Polly and Ben face a solar system disaster!

Producer David Richardson said: "It's been some years since we've had the pleasure of Kate Orman's name on a **Doctor Who** audio script. In fact, the last was a **Short Trips** box set in 2009. This was something I wanted to address in **The Audio Novels** range and so here we have *The Dead Star*. Kate's initial pitch was superb and the finished script is equally delightful. It's great to have her back and Michael Troughton has brought the words to life impeccably." **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO: THE AUDIO NOVELS THE DEAD STAR

- RELEASED: JANUARY 2023
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EDITORIAL

WHEN I'M preparing *Vortex* previews, my interviewees often tell me that so and so was absolutely wonderful on a production! So when EVERYONE, to a person, enthused about how brilliant Angela Bruce was to work with on **UNIT: Brave New World**, I knew I wanted to chat with her!

Brigadier Winifred Bambera is a character far ahead of her time. In recent years, we've (quite rightly) seen people campaigning for equality for ethnic minorities and for women, while back in 1989 here was the Brigadier in charge of UNIT in the (probable) 1990s. **Doctor Who** was ahead of the curve, as ever.

And I can't begin to say just how wonderful Angela is. We had never spoken before our chat, which you can read in this month's issue, but within five minutes it felt like we were old friends, nattering about our lives, football, jobs, life in lockdown and, of course, **Doctor Who**. Angela seemed quite taken aback that my 15-year-old-self had a poster of the Brigadier on his wall back in 1989! But best of all, she even gave me her forgiveness for going to watch my beloved Aberdeen beat Celtic 1-0 in the Skol Cup semi-final when **Doctor Who Battlefield** episode three was first screened on television – thank goodness for the power of the VHS! **VORTEX**

Kenny

"HOW MANY GOODLY CREATURES ARE THERE HERE!"



**BRIGADIER BAMBERA RETURNS WITH A
NEW UNIT TEAM IN BRAVE NEW WORLD...**

WORLD PARTY

WHEN BATTLEFIELD aired as part of the final television season of **Doctor Who** in the 20th century, Brigadier Winifred Bambera made a great impact.

We previously encountered Bambera in the Big Finish audio *Animal* – one of **The Lost Stories**, and then in **UNIT: Nemesis**, and now actor Angela Bruce reprises her role with the Unified Intelligence Taskforce saving the world, nineties-style in her own range.

Producer Emily Cook tells *Vortex*: “Making this new series, **UNIT: Brave New World**, has been so exciting. It’s the first range I’ve worked on where I’ve had the opportunity to completely develop it from scratch and that was a challenge I relished. I love the practical side of producing

but I love the creative side even more, so working with script editor Robert Valentine to create this new 1990s **UNIT** world has been just brilliant. And what a gift of a character to be given! I know a Brigadier Bambera spin-off is something listeners have wanted for a long time (and rightly so, she’s fab!). I’m very conscious that we’re working on something highly anticipated.”

The whole team have been delighted to work with Angela. Emily confirms: “Angela is incredible. And lovely. She is an utter joy to work with. By default, I think whoever the lead is in your series sets the tone for the recording sessions which impacts the mood of everyone else in studio. Angela’s energy is phenomenal and that energy is

contagious! She is very funny and loves a lot of banter but at the same time is completely focused on the job in hand – which means not only do we get a great end product but we have a wonderful time getting there.”

Director Scott Handcock adds: “I got into **Doctor Who** when I was about 8-years-old during a series of repeats on BBC2. They culminated with *Battlefield* and Brigadier Bambera left an indelible mark on my brain. She was such a memorable character – so matter-of-fact and real – and that’s all to do with Angela’s performance. Recording with her, 32 years on (yes, really!), and she still has the same energy and attitude in studio. She’s a force of nature in the best possible way imaginable – an enormous personality but not an



Above (l-r): George Watkins, Angela Bruce, Will Scolding and Alex Jordan

BAMBERA, WE DISCOVER, DOES NOT ENJOY THE 'WOO-WOO' STUFF!

ROBERT VALENTINE

ounce of ego - and she hit it off with the rest of the cast in the very first scenes. It truly was effortless, like we'd all known each other for years."

OF COURSE, Bambera can't take on threats to the world on her own so she has a new team around her. Get ready to meet Savarin played by Alex Jordan, Bambera's new military adjutant, and Dr Rix brought to life by Yemisi Oyinloye, UNIT's new scientific adviser. Robert reveals: "We have Bambera's boss, Dame Lydia Kingsley, who helps to give the stories a more global feel which was definitely a feature of UNIT as presented in *Battlefield*: they're like United Nations peacekeepers.

"Secondly, Sergeant Jean-Paul Savarin is her sarcastic and mildly insubordinate second-in-command

but that's exactly what she likes about him. And we have Dr Louise Rix, her rebellious scientific adviser who dislikes the military but loves the odd and the unexplained.

Although Bambera, we discover, does not enjoy the 'woo-woo' stuff!"

Scott says: "Yemisi and Alex as Rix and Savarin are the perfect foils for Bambera. All three have very distinct characters and abilities - really different attitudes - but they complement one another brilliantly. There was such fondness and humour and camaraderie while recording, you can't help but feel that in their performances. And that trust allows you to push the dynamic further because every single one of them cares about the others. Not just their characters but the actors they're working with. It really is a fantastic team, with a great lead in Angela."

Working with this cast has been a highlight for the producer. Emily says: "I love Brigadier Bambera as a character and I love the two new UNIT leads we've created to join her. It was such a thrill to see the team meet on day one and then bond so quickly, both on and off mic. We all laughed so much in studio. I know this sounds like such a cliché, but genuinely these recording sessions were three of the happiest days of the year."

SERIES ONE, UNIT: Brave New World - *Seabird One*, opens with *Rogue State* by script editor Robert. Emily explains: "*Rogue State* reintroduces us to Brigadier Bambera and where she's at in her life now. It's quite a fast-paced, ambitious script - very late-1990s. It sets up a lot, not just in terms of the context for this series but also threads we have running throughout **UNIT: Brave New World**. Rob and I really enjoyed constructing these threads."

How exciting was it for Rob to be involved in the first set of a new range? Rob tells *Vortex*: "Getting to set up the premise and originate

a new set for Big Finish is hugely exciting, and when it's for the terrific yet still under-explored character of Winifred Bambera, it's a gift.

"The brief was super-simple: bring back Bambera! The first decision to make was when to set the series, and the most satisfying time from my point of view was to set it not long after the events of *Battlefield* and get to see more of that world. Making Bambera the new head of the British branch of UNIT was a chance to give her a UNIT 'family' of her own, and the fun there was to create characters who would complement her and also rub her up the wrong way because she's funny when she's grumpy!"

Rob explains the set up for the series: "The Cold War is over and the millennium is on the way and Bambera finds herself slightly unsure of her place in this brave new world. It's the 1990s but a slightly parallel one which is based partially on that 1989 idea of what the '90s would be like. My opening story, *Rogue State*, finds Bambera at a crossroads in her life but she's forced into action to stop an arms

kind of thinking of the TV episode *The Green Death* but set in the 1990s – a UNIT 'bug hunt' – as a premise for this adventure. I later found out that Alison's really afraid of insects but she took that brief and has come up with a super story."

Rix and Bambera spectacularly get off on the wrong foot."

As for her highlight, Alison tells Vortex: "Definitely meeting the cast at the studio and getting to chat to 'my' Brigadier. I was very young but I remember her arguing with the



Above (l-r): Yemisi Oyinloye, Angela Bruce and Alex Jordan

BATTLEFIELD WAS ACTUALLY MY FIRST BRIGADIER STORY AND I LOVED BAMBERA. I MEAN, HOW COULD YOU NOT?

ALFIE SHAW

dealer from smuggling a Soviet-era biological weapon into the UK.

"Beyond the experience of getting to bring back Winifred Bambera across two box sets, the main highlight has been working with Emily, who is a fantastic producer, and writers Alison Winter and Alfie Shaw. As assignments for Big Finish go, this has definitely been one of my favourites and I really hope we get to do more."

TIME FLIES is the second adventure in this set. Emily explains: "*Time Flies* is Alison's debut Big Finish script. I came across her on Twitter, read some of her writing and thought she'd be a great fit for Big Finish. We were

Alison confirms that after being invited to write for the series she was: "Excited beyond words, I can only wildly gesticulate! I adore Big Finish stories and I love how they're always giving beloved characters room to expand. It's wonderful for all involved that these stories continue to branch out.

"Emily had read some of my work and got in touch. We then had a video call to discuss various projects and she invited me to pitch two or three story ideas for this new Big Finish series.

"I was asked to introduce the character of Louise Rix who'd been created by Rob. She was great fun to write and I was instructed to ensure

Seventh Doctor in *Battlefield* and the Doctor saying, 'There's nothing so firmly clamped shut as the military mind.' I'm from a military family so I found this fabulously controversial!"

THIS SET concludes with *Dark Side of the Moon* by Alfie Shaw. Emily explains: "*Dark Side of the Moon* (I think we've got some great episode titles in this series!) is our brilliant finale. The episode is based around a countdown and there is a very clever, unpredictable threat unravelling throughout the course of events. I think it's a very suspenseful episode - one which ends on a cliff-hanger so I'm going to say no more for now!"

Alfie was delighted to be involved: "I grew up when **Doctor Who** was off air and watched it on VHS and DVD out of order. *Battlefield* was actually my first Brigadier story and I loved Bambera. I mean, how could you not? The fact we were deprived

was given. It was an interesting tightrope to walk, merging the big military feel of a traditional UNIT story with the paranoia of something like **The X-Files**."

And what about the future? Alfie grins: "Rob and I were on a call

exciting to be able to make those happen. There are characters from *Battlefield* that were left on the table while the dynamics of this new team were being established - which I think is a smart move that we could bring in next." **VORTEX**



Above (l-r): Angela Bruce, Lesley Ewen, Timothy Blore and Liz Sutherland-Lim

of more stories with her was just criminal! Having the opportunity to be part of the launch of this range, and being able to make these stories happen, was a total no-brainer.

"I was given character breakdowns of the new UNIT team including hints at what happened to Bambera between *Battlefield* and the start of *Rogue State*, as well as the overall arc of the two sets. Other than that it was a delightfully open conspiracy thriller piece. I pitched three different paragraph ideas and it ended up being a combination of elements from two of those."

How would Alfie sum up the story? "**X-Files**-esque? That was the main point of inspiration I

EXCITED BEYOND WORDS, I CAN ONLY WILDLY GESTICULATE!

ALISON WINTER

recently and about the same time as each other said, 'I know what happens in series 3 and 4!' We were eerily close in our thinking, and we told Emily and she loved it. You know, nothing's guaranteed at this point but it would be really

UNIT: BRAVE NEW WORLD
SEABIRD ONE



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BACK IN BUSINESS

ANGELA BRUCE IS ABSOLUTELY DELIGHTED TO BE RETURNING TO UNIT...

BRIGADIER WINIFRED

Bambera was one of the most striking creations from the final series of **Doctor Who** in the 20th century – a bold, brash character who broke the mould – a brigadier with UNIT who had risen to the top of the tree. Oh, and she's mixed race and female. Ben Aaronovitch's creation for *Battlefield* was literally decades ahead of her time.

Angela Bruce – at that point best known for her part on television in nursing drama **Angels** and as the female Lister in **Red Dwarf** – was cast in the part by Michael Kerrigan, and would later reprise the role in *Animal*, one of **The Lost Stories** produced by Big Finish.

Chatting to *Vortex*, Angela says: "I love working with Big Finish. It was really interesting this time because of COVID-19 but they set it up really well, and it's so nice to see the communities of actors coming back into the studios.

"I love the writing and I enjoyed the humour in this set – and I like the idea that it's based around Bambera and her adventures, a lovely treat. It took me until about the third day to realise that I was the lead – it really hadn't dawned on me until then!"

Angela has very fond memories of her time on **Doctor Who** in 1989, recalling: "Back when we did *Battlefield*, they allowed you

to rehearse so you had time for the chemistry of the characters to develop. There was Jean Marsh, Nicholas Courtney, James Ellis – and we got on so well. We had just met and had two weeks to block it, to work it all out and establish the relationships. Actually, where we rehearsed in North Acton is near where Big Finish record now! We had Sylvester McCoy and Sophie Aldred too, of course, and we had such a good time and got the initial giggles out of the way in rehearsal.

"I'm amazed how many people go back and watch the older **Doctor Whos** when they've found the show in the 21st century. What people connected with was the strength of character – particularly women. Something I believe is that **Doctor Who** is one of two shows on television where women have always been strongly represented – the other is **Coronation Street**. I think today, especially after COVID-19 when everyone has been

how we have conversed with people on this planet. In **Doctor Who**, you are talking about a universal unity, a coming together for peace, with generosity and all the good qualities we have as a human race."

IT WAS JUST AHEAD OF ITS TIME THEN, AND THAT'S WHAT I ALWAYS LIKED ABOUT IT.

ANGELA BRUCE



Above (l-r): Emily Cook and Angela Bruce

isolated, there's a coming together of community which I see when I go to conventions – fans old and new coming together for an occasion. You get drawn into it and you see people you haven't seen in years.

"You can make a connection – that's what we take away in life, how have we connected with others,

VORTEX ASKS Angela how she felt about Bambera being ahead of her time, a black woman in charge of a military organisation. She says: "After **Angels** I was invited to audition for **Coronation Street**. The character I was up for was a woman who ended up breaking up the marriage between

Deirdre and Ray Langton, and Neville Buswell was leaving so it wasn't going to be repaired – that was it. The guy who wrote for me was someone I'd worked with on **Angels**, Leslie Duxbury. He wrote the part specifically for me and didn't mention race at all, and he didn't make her a prostitute or a screaming person with a West Indian accent – hard for me, as a Geordie! He then recommended me to the producer who said, 'We can't have a black person to play that part.' And Leslie said, 'If you don't allow the person I would like to play it because of the colour of her skin, I'm going to withdraw my script.' That's amazingly brave. The producer, Bill Podmore, met me and said I might need security because I would still be shooting when the episodes went out. I told him not to be ridiculous as people do realise it's a drama!

"But I didn't have to go through any of that with Bambera – I didn't have to give a back story of where I came from. It's never happened since and nor should it. I had earned my stripes to be there, to be the leader of UNIT. There was no question of anything like... 'I started off in...'; 'I always wanted to be a Brigadier...' or 'My father...' No! It was just ahead of its time then, and that's what I always liked about it."

Despite only appearing in four episodes, the part of Bambera is one that's stuck with Angela. She explains: "One time, I was in the middle of nowhere in the mountains of Switzerland and there was hardly anyone about just all these beautiful snow-capped peaks around me, and then someone shouted, 'Bambera!' in the loudest voice and it ricocheted around the mountains – and I could hardly see who it was. It just proves you can't go anywhere in the world without meeting a **Doctor Who** fan!

"It's been an amazing experience, having this **Doctor Who** connection. I was working with David Tennant many, many years ago when he was a young actor in **Takin' Over the Asylum**, and he was a real fan – he came over and was so excited to meet Brigadier Bambera!" **VORTEX**



JONATHAN MORRIS IS TAKING A NOVEL APPROACH ONCE AGAIN...

FITTING THE BILL

THE TWELFTH Doctor and Bill are reunited for their first adventure since 2017 in a new audio novel from Big Finish, *Emancipation of the Daleks*.

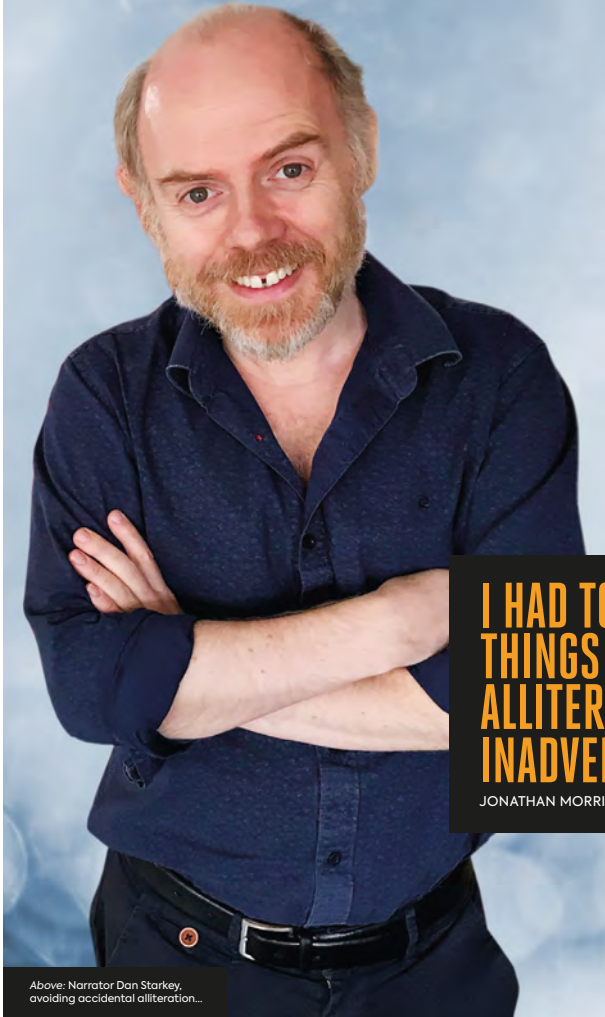
Having written on several occasions for BBC Books, Jonathan Morris was delighted to write an epic as an audio-only release.

He says: "It's always lovely to be offered a job though it was a little intimidating. Writing an audio novel is a lot more work than writing an audio drama. It's not only that you're describing everything that the characters experience and telling the story through their thoughts and emotions, it's because writing

a novel, it's all you. You're entirely on your own. You have control over the whole story, what the characters look like, what the food tastes like, what the weather is like, down to the biggest set-piece and the smallest detail. You have to think of everything and you are responsible for everything. There is nobody to blame if it goes wrong. So it's a big commitment. And, having written five novels already, I had some idea of what I was letting myself in for! So it was excitement tinged with trepidation and anticipatory exhaustion.

"The other challenge with a novel is that you need to come up with

an idea strong enough to sustain the equivalent of three television episodes. It's fairly easy to come up with ideas for one episode, and it's quite hard to come up with ideas for a 90-minute story, but for anything longer than that you really need to dig deep. Fortunately with this I hit upon an idea which I thought was absolutely brilliant, and which, crucially, hadn't been done before! An idea which prompted all sorts of interesting thoughts and suggested avenues to explore and dramatic situations. So that was exciting. Once I had that idea I sent it in to David Richardson and Nicholas Briggs, hoping that they would like it too,



Above: Narrator Dan Starkey, avoiding accidental alliteration...

because frankly it would have been annoying if I didn't get to do it!"

WHEN WRITING something like this, knowing it's an audiobook, does Jonny craft things a little differently with disciplines such as sound design in mind? Jonny reveals: "Writing this audio novel was different from writing a sight-read novel in two major ways. Firstly, I didn't really need to bother describing any sounds in the prose because they would be added as part of the sound design, so

if you have a line such as, 'There was a loud explosion' you have the dilemma of where to put the explosion – do you put it before the line, thus rendering it redundant, or have it after so it sounds like the reader is cueing-up the sound effect?"

"The other difference was in terms of pacing; knowing the book would be experienced as a reading meant that I had to work to keep it as tight as possible, led by action and dialogue, without flowery descriptions. Sight-reading a page takes maybe two minutes

but narrating it might take four minutes, so you need to tell the story at a pace where enough happens to keep it exciting. It needs to be twice as fast as a regular novel.

"The other thing that I had to bear in mind when writing it was that *everything* I wrote would be read aloud. So I had to be careful of things like accidental alliteration or inadvertent rhymes, and sticking to one or two clauses so each sentence could be delivered in one breath. It's stuff I tend to do anyway but I had to pay even more attention than usual."

Jonny was delighted to be given Peter Capaldi and Pearl Mackie's characters to work with. He explains: "It was lovely to be writing for the Twelfth Doctor and Bill again. I seem to have made their era my own! I wrote a BBC Book for the Twelfth Doctor, Bill and Nardole a few years

I HAD TO BE CAREFUL OF THINGS LIKE ACCIDENTAL ALLITERATION OR INADVERTENT RHYMES...

JONATHAN MORRIS

ago called *Plague City*, and an audio for BBC Audio for the Twelfth Doctor and Nardole. But the exciting thing about that era is that it hasn't had lots of books or spin-offs so there are still areas left to explore; stuff like Bill's family background, which was only ever sketched in on television.

"The other thing is that I think, in retrospect, fandom has mostly come around to the opinion (if they didn't hold that opinion already!) that this year of **Doctor Who** was one of the best and the Twelfth Doctor and Bill are a really strong pairing. Add that the year was mostly standalone stories with a fresh format of the Doctor as this Earthbound university lecturer, and you realise that it was probably the most 'all-new' series since Matt Smith's first year. It doesn't feel like year 10 of an old show, it feels like the first year of a new show.

"I think it's not the normal Doctor/companion relationship that we've seen in the new series. It goes back to the First Doctor and Vicki, or the Third Doctor and Jo where there's an age gap, and it's implied that the relationship is more paternal. With the Twelfth Doctor and Bill, it's explicit that their relationship is one of a professor and student; the Doctor is a cantankerous lecturer taking an uneducated but intelligent student under his wing. It's *Educating Rita* with aliens. It's also a clash of eras and backgrounds; the Doctor is old school while Bill is contemporary. And that's what they like about each other, what they find fascinating. They bring different things to the relationship in terms of experience and attitude."

JONNY PARTICULARLY

enjoyed writing for the Daleks, and admits: "For this story, there were moments when I wanted to make the Daleks threatening so went back to stories like *The Power of the Daleks* and *Dalek* where they don't say very much, where they are a kind of ominous, malign



Who will I become, was I really the person who I remember being, what would I have been like if things had turned out differently? And that's a big part of *Emancipation of the Daleks* – the middle third of the story, really – about exploring the idea of how much of someone's nature and personality is down to their environment and upbringing, and how much of it is 'them' and would be the same no matter what. That is, I think, a fascinating thing to explore, and that's what the story is basically about, rather than the rules of 'the web of time' and all that stuff!"

THE WRITER concludes: "The story is divided into six instalments which are the equivalent of three TV-length episodes. I think the middle episode is my favourite because

it's telling a different sort of story and involved a different type of writing; much more realistic and emotionally honest and deep than I would normally write. So I felt I was being stretched a bit, I was outside my comfort zone. As I was writing it, I felt myself being carried along by the story; I was gripped by it, which is what you want, you don't want to feel like you are wading through treacle. And then when I went back to revise it and polish it, I was going, 'Woah, this is actually really good, who wrote this? Oh, yes, it was me!'"

VORTEX

IT WAS LOVELY TO BE WRITING FOR THE TWELFTH DOCTOR AND BILL AGAIN. I SEEM TO HAVE MADE THEIR ERA MY OWN!

JONATHAN MORRIS

presence that you can sense is watching and listening, where you're waiting for them to speak. Of course, once they do start to speak, it's all exterminate, exterminate but even then, the challenge with the Daleks is to find something new for them to do; to place them in a situation or context where we get to see a different facet of their behaviour. The story also explores their psychological influence, the way they affect people. The idea that there's something so fundamentally evil about them that it infects anyone who comes into contact with a Dalek."

And there's a bit of a time travel element? Jonny agrees: "There is a little bit of a time travel element too. But it's not included for the sake of showing off how clever I am or how complicated I can make things before somebody pulls a lever that solves everything!"

"The reason is always to create a strong dramatic situation with a real emotional kick. Because time travel – whether it's into the future, or into your past, or into an alternative present – is not about whether or not there are zeppelins in the sky or who the Prime Minister is, it's about how it changes the person you are.

**DOCTOR WHO:
THE AUDIO NOVELS**
EMANCIPATION OF THE DALEKS



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DOCTOR WHO: THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES
INFAMY OF THE ZAROSS

WE TURN BACK THE CLOCK THIS MONTH TO JOIN THE TENTH DOCTOR, ROSE AND JACKIE TYLER...

WRITTEN BY John Dorney, *Infamy of the Zaross* was the first adventure of three in **The Tenth Doctor Adventures Volume Two** with the Doctor and Rose fighting off alien warthogs in Norfolk! Producer David Richardson says: "I suggested three writers to executive producer/creative director, Nicholas Briggs, with the proposal that the first story should be set in the present day along the lines of a Russell T Davies season opener. And with David Tennant and Billie Piper both onboard, it was essential that we

have Camille Coduri back as Jackie Tyler fighting an alien invasion – though this time John has taken the threat to Norwich!"

John says: "I received the email to say, 'We're going to be making an adventure with David Tennant and Billie Piper', which was massively

JACKIE IS MORE LIKE THE COMPANION THAT WE'D PROBABLY BE... A BIT OUT OF OUR DEPTH.

JOHN DORNEY

exciting. And I was told we had Camille Coduri as Jackie too – and everyone loves her – and everyone loves the Doctor and Rose. Jackie is an extra something to play with – she's a wonderful character and Camille does a glorious job with her. She has a real vibrant energy.

"Jackie is more like the companion that we'd probably be... a bit out of our depth. We all like to think we'd be Rose, but really we'd all be like Jackie!"

"The Zaross initially appear to be your standard **Doctor Who** monster, which they had to be – war-mongering warthogs, quite angry and quite hairy – but as the story goes on it becomes apparent there's a little more than that going on with them.

"The Doctor is a bit baffled that

he hasn't heard of them before so there's clearly something they're hiding but initially they seem to be straightforward."

NICK ALSO directed the adventure. He tells *Vortex*: "The studio sessions were pretty joyous. I had an inkling that Billie would be surprised how straightforward audio recording is for an actor as compared to how difficult and time-consuming filming can be. As she walked into her booth, I told her it would be easy. And after we'd done a couple of takes for the first scene and I told her and David that I was happy with what I'd got and would move on to the next scene, Billie said, with her voice full of incredulity, 'Is that it?' When I told her that was indeed 'it' for that scene, she said, 'Wow, this is much simpler than filming!' And she never really lost that feeling of ease about the whole thing. About three scenes in, I remembered to tell her that she was being brilliant. And I can tell you that Billie Piper is one of the best people in the world to compliment." **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO: THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES
INFAMY OF THE ZAROSS



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WAR ROOM

GALLIFREY STANDS FIRM AGAINST THE DALEKS IN THE NEXT SERIES FROM BIG FINISH...

GALLIFREY IS one of Big Finish's longest-running ranges. From its beginning in 2004, we've followed Romana and Leela's exploits seeing off Inquisitor Darkel, surviving the Dogma virus and defeating a Dalek incursion before the outbreak of the Time War.

But Romana has now gone, Leela's friend Narvin has left his homeworld and Rassilon is in command – dark times indeed. There's a new producer at the helm for *Gallifrey: War Room Allegiance* as Heather Challands follows in the footsteps of Gary Russell and Scott Handcock. Matt Fitton continues as script editor with Samuel Clemens as director.

Heather says: "Gallifrey is a series with a strong following – I've

felt that this time more than with other ranges I've taken over, a sense of a mantle being passed.

"We're picking up almost straight after *Time War Volume Four*, just a few hours after it ended. This new series is everything that people love about **Gallifrey**: it's centred around the characters and politics. If you look at the **Gallifrey Time War** series, it's Romana, Leela and Narvin fighting to preserve what they see as Gallifrey's morality. That's been lost with the resurrection of Rassilon. When we start *War Room*, that's all done. Rassilon won! Romana is gone, Gallifrey has fallen in the deep end and there's very little Gallifrey won't do to win this war. This is about how those characters fit into this new world order."

Gallifrey's strength throughout the range has been its characters and their agendas. Heather explains: "We've a really good ensemble cast. Some listeners will know all of our regulars, some may only know Leela, and others might just know of the

General from the television series – we've reintroduced these characters to make it accessible to all listeners.

"Everyone is in the War Room for different reasons – Leela, the General, Rasmus, Rassilon, Veklin, Ollistra – and they have very different personality types.

"We've the marvellous Carolyn Pickles back playing Ollistra. Jacqueline Pearce, who is sadly no longer with us, played the previous incarnation where Ollistra is bound to the Matrix to run Rassilon's War Room whilst the current Ollistra fights on the front line. What excites me about that is it means she will always have a sword of Damocles over her head. As soon as Rassilon is done with her... she's finished! She's an absolute patriot."

THE SERIES opens with *The Last Days of Freme* by Lou Morgan. Heather says: "Essentially Leela has to prove her loyalty and usefulness to Rassilon whether she wants to or not. It's really

good, as it gets to the heart of what Leela's new position is and how she can still make a difference despite the new constraints that are around her."

There are familiar faces with Leela, Veklin, the General and Ollistra's previous incarnation who appeared with the Eighth Doctor in *Doom Coalition*. A delighted Lou says: "I've written for the last two Gallifrey box sets – *Time War Volume Three* and *Volume Four* – and it's a world I've come to really love being a part of. It's so rich with loads of intrigue and drama, and being able to continue that into a new era with *War Room* is very exciting.

"The brief was very much in the line of introducing this new version of Gallifrey with Rassilon ever more in control, and establishing

"*The Last Days of Freme* picks up after the end of *Homecoming* with Leela now Rassilon's prisoner. The Lord President has plans – not just for the Time Lords but for Leela herself. To survive, she must prove her loyalty to Gallifrey as one of the War Room's operatives, ensuring the strategically crucial planet Freme does not fall under Dalek control... by any means necessary."

THE SECOND adventure, *The Passenger*, was written by David Llewellyn, and puts the emphasis on Ollistra, the General and the Doctor's friend Rasmus. Heather says: "*The*

Passenger is very exciting. We have a mysterious figure arriving by Dalek saucer, played by Nicholas Rowe, and this episode, for me, was all about the morals of war. I suppose there are no clear answers in it.

"We have the introduction of Rasmus as well and it goes to highlight the differences in our characters and what fighting a war means to them. Is this guy who shows up someone they should condemn or throw a parade for? They all approach that differently. We also get Ollistra and Rasmus butting heads – which was great to listen to in the studio as well."

The intriguingly titled *Collateral Victim* by Alfie Shaw is the third



Above: Daon Broni



Above: Seán Carlsen

WE'RE VERY MUCH BRINGING EVERYONE UP TO SPEED AND THROWING THE DOORS OF THE WAR ROOM WIDE OPEN. LOU MORGAN

the new rules. Everything has changed for Leela and she has to adapt and learn how to navigate her surroundings all over again, but it's also changed for us as listeners. So we're very much bringing everyone up to speed and throwing the doors of the War Room wide open.

adventure in the box set. Heather says: "This is a timey-wimey one. What would the Time War be without timey-wimey hijinks? Ollistra sends Rasmus, Veklin and Leela on a mission to get to the bottom of a space/time anomaly that's kicking about, and the ending will surprise people!"

Alfie says: "I don't think I got a standard brief as I went to Matt with the central conceit of the story before the briefs were all sent out. I was told which of the regulars that I'd get to play with, but that was it for this one."

"It's about the people caught up in the Time War who aren't Daleks or Time Lords, and how they try to resist these overwhelming forces. It was also a chance to play around with structure as the weird nature of the Time War lends itself so well to try out unusual narrative structures."

"Obviously, Leela is a legendary **Doctor Who** character and it's always a delight to get to write scripts for characters that I grew up with. With the others, I've listened to them as they pop up along the way in other ranges, so I had a passing familiarity with most of them."

"The real joy is getting these characters to spark off against each other. In particular, letting Rasmus and Ollistra's egos play off each other was great fun to do."

LOOKING AT the conclusion of the series, Heather says: "We open with *The Last Days of Freme*, and close with *The First Days of Phaidon* – the set is bookended by first days and last days! The General and Leela are our main players in this one, and they get sent to broker an alliance and to retrieve an artefact after the Daleks bring back Phaidon and the Warpwrights."

"It might sound repetitive of me but there are choices to be made and Leela has to make a decision at the end of this box set. A lot of the episode is about trust and following orders. Leela is absolutely still her



Above: Ken Bones

I LAUGHED, I
CRIED, I CHEERED,
I CRIED A BIT
MORE. SOPHIE ILES



Above: Eve Winters

own woman and just because she works for the War Room, it doesn't mean she's necessarily working for

Ollistra or Rassilon. It's very rare to see her and Rassilon in the same room, and she won't threaten to kill him!

"We also have our big return in this episode with Narvin coming back. You can't have Gallifrey without Narvin! Will Leela choose the War Room or will she choose Narvin? It was great to have Seán involved and he was so lovely to work with, and really enthused."

The writer, Sophie Iles, is a newcomer to **Gallifrey**. She says: "I've been a lover of **Gallifrey** since I got into Big Finish in 2017. I was listening to the original series whilst I dealt with one of the worst work experiences I ever had. Despite that, I had Leela, Narvin, Romana and Brax to help me through and it truly helped me manage. I laughed, I cried, I cheered, I cried a bit more. These characters feel like family to me so to be a part of that now feels like the biggest honour."

"My brief was very simple. I was told I was going to handle Narvin's return and the Daleks – the last story in the box set. My only other big note was Heather said she wanted to feel emotions. Otherwise,

new director, so it's a new era for us all. It's very exciting!

"As far as the listeners were concerned, and as far as I was concerned, I thought we'd had heard the last of Narvin in the previous

reaction was quite touching as people were saying, 'What about Narvin?' People had accepted that Narvin wasn't in it! Big Finish had convinced people that Gallifrey continues but without Romana and Narvin."

Heather concludes: "The title of the box set is *Allegiance* – where does Leela's allegiance now lie? With Gallifrey and the memory of Romana, or with Narvin and the resistance? It's not an easy decision.

"Leela and the General become unlikely allies as they are quite similar when you think about it. They are people-orientated, and when they form a bond or sense of duty, that becomes integral to them. The General, who is a patriot, is very different from Ollistra. He and



Above (l-r): Charlotte Harris, Carolyn Pickles, Corrinne Wicks and Nicholas Rowe

I GENUINELY FELT HIS STORY WAS TOLD. BUT I'M DELIGHTED TO HAVE BEEN PROVEN OTHERWISE!

SEÁN CARLSEN

the plot and storyline were completely up to me, and that was as exhilarating and terrifying as it sounds. My script is one of mystery. A mysterious artefact is ordered to be destroyed by Lord Rassilon himself, and it is buried inside an ancient Time Lord ship. Even the Daleks want it, and want it so badly that they'll return a dead planet – a dead race – they exterminated at the start of the war. But what is it? And why has it been lost for so long? Not only that but you have political intrigue, emotional damage and an old-fashioned adventure story at the heart of it all."

SEÁN CARLSEN is delighted to be back as former CIA Coordinator Narvin. He tells *Vortex*: "It feels like it's all change with **Gallifrey**. There's a new producer at the helm and a

series. I think I believed it more than the listeners – they thought he had to come back but I genuinely felt his story was told. But I'm delighted to have been proven otherwise! No one at Big Finish told me differently – I just thought it was a great run, to have done 18 years on Gallifrey and been very privileged to have been involved.

"Scott was leaving and **Gallifrey** seemed to have reached its conclusion. I hoped, at best, we might get a younger Narvin popping up with some of the other Doctors. I certainly didn't expect to get an email from Heather asking, 'Would you be interested in something called *War Room*?' I was delighted to be asked, and I think we're in very, very good hands.

"I loved the trailer for *War Room* on Gallifrey starring Louise Jameson, Ken Bones and all these wonderful actors – but there was no mention of me. The

Leela have a sense of honour and the way we leave it is... well... you'll just have to listen to find out!" **VORTEX**

**GALLIFREY: WAR ROOM
ALLEGIANCE**



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- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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THE SECOND DOCTOR'S BACK, AND HE'S FACING...

WAR GAMES

WITHOUT FRONTIERS

EARLIER THIS year, Big Finish listeners were introduced to a new Second Doctor in **The Third Doctor Adventures: The Annihilators**. When it came to casting, the decision was taken to literally keep it in the family with actor Michael Troughton, son of Patrick Troughton, stepping into his father's shoes.

We join Michael's Doctor again in **The Second Doctor Adventures: Beyond War Games**, moments after he's been sentenced by the Time Lords (as featured in the 1969 **Doctor Who** television story *The War Games*). The Doctor finds himself at the beginning of two

action-packed audio adventures in which he encounters his old enemies the Daleks and the Ice Warriors.

Michael will be joined by Jon Culshaw, reprising his acclaimed role as Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart, and Emma Noakes appears as an intriguing, new recurring character known as Raven. There are other familiar faces too, with Nicholas Briggs as the Daleks and Katy Manning guest starring as the Ice Warrior queen Lady Zelanda. Tim Treloar, who plays Big Finish's Third Doctor, also features in a new role.

Vortex asks Nicholas Briggs, the director of these tales, how he felt about the positive reaction to

Michael's debut in *The Annihilators*. Nick says: "It turned out really well. We had lots of fun with Michael recording it, and I think he succeeded in encapsulating the essential 'Troughton-ness' of the character. It's not an impersonation, rather it's a kind of embodiment of everything we know and love about the Second Doctor. It also set-up some long-term plans I have for the Second Doctor range that won't come to fruition until next year.

"I'm particularly excited about it because Patrick Troughton's Doctor is my most favourite Doctor. I love all the Doctors but for me he's the one who established the character

as I know it. In one way or another, every succeeding Doctor owes their approach to the eccentric, warm but strangely unknowable persona Patrick Troughton created.”

Producer Mark Wright adds: “I was delighted when I was asked to do this – I was offered the First and Second Doctors at the same time! Nick and I had lots of discussions about who to cast and, of course,

the most respectful way of doing it. There are general discussions online saying it is disrespectful to recast, but if it's done with love, and respect for the legacy, then what could be better than casting Patrick Troughton's son as his Doctor? Michael is very receptive to it all. He's got the Doctor in his DNA! Michael has a real interest in the character and his dad's legacy.”

ARE THESE new adventures Season 6B? You may ask! Mark explains: “There's a lot of talk of a fabled Season 6B, which has been touched on in fiction by Terrance Dicks. What we're doing here is our own take on that concept, the gap between the television episodes *The War Games* and *Spearhead from Space*, paying homage to one of **Doctor Who's** greats in the process.”



Above (l-r): Tim Treloar, Nicholas Briggs, Anna-Maria Nabirye and Emma Noakes

very quickly Michael's name came to the top of the list. He had written a lovely biography of his dad and had read the audiobook of it, and there was a sense that he had the spirit of his dad in it when he was doing direct quotes from Patrick Troughton. He'd also made an unabridged reading of one of the Target books, *The Dominators*, and so as soon as his name was mentioned, it was obvious casting.

“Nick approached Michael and he came back very positively, saying he'd love to have a go at it, and I think with these types of situations, when you cast a direct descendant – son or a daughter – it's

I WAS OFFERED THE FIRST AND SECOND DOCTORS AT THE SAME TIME! MARK WRIGHT

Nick continues: “It's all very mysterious. But I can tell you that it begins a split second after the Second Doctor is sentenced to a forced regeneration and exile to Earth. Remember, the Time Lords have a formidable mastery of time and, if they decided to do something unscrupulous, then almost anything would be possible.”

The first story in the box set is *The Final Beginning* which features the Daleks, and has been co-written by Mark and Nick. Nick says: “It was a really fruitful and genuinely inspiring process. Mark and I have known each other for years and years, but never actually worked

together. We both had strong ideas about how the range should begin. We talked them through and it became clear that Mark had a very good story in his head, but I also wanted to be sure I had some solid input into it. So we agreed to co-write along the following lines: Mark wrote the storyline, I reworked it. Then Mark wrote a script based on that storyline, and then I reworked it. Then Mark did a final polish and I did some little tweaks before the recording.”

HE MANAGES TO FIND HIS WAY THROUGH WITH HIS CUSTOMARY DETERMINATION AND LACK OF RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY.

NICHOLAS BRIGGS

was like getting a daily serial! He then did his pass on it and the script came together really quickly – it didn’t need a great deal of work.

“On a good day, I can write 500 words in an hour, so in 20 days that’s a 10,000-word script. I might try this writing method again in the future!”

Nick adds: “This is a new beginning for the Doctor that contains many, scary shadows of the past. He is wrong-footed right from the beginning, but despite not being in control of events he manages to find his way through with his customary determination and lack of respect for authority.”

THE SET’S second adventure is *Wrath of the Ice Warriors* by Andrew Smith where the Doctor is reunited with Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart in Scotland.

Together with local crofter Sheena Flynn, they investigate what turns out to be Ice Warriors.

Mark says: “This story is based on a line from *Spearhead from Space* when the Brigadier says: ‘Since UNIT was formed, there have been two attempts to invade the Earth.’ Of course the Brigadier is talking about *The Web of Fear*, but technically UNIT hadn’t been formed then, so we’re taking advantage of that!

“It also ties in with a line from TV episode *Castrovalva* when the Doctor says: ‘Not far now, Brigadier, unless the Ice Warriors get there first.’ Andrew couldn’t find a way to put that line in, sadly!”

Andrew explains: “Patrick Troughton is my Doctor and the Second Doctor is one I’ve always wanted to write for, so getting the chance to do this was great.

“One of my first thoughts with this story was to set the beginning in the far north west of Scotland at Cape Wrath – adding a double meaning to *Wrath of the Ice Warriors*. I knew it was the only location in the UK where large-scale live firing exercises are carried out by the military, which fitted what I wanted to do with UNIT in this story too.

“My first definite memories of **Doctor Who** are the Yeti in the Underground, the Quarks and Dominators, Cybermen and the Ice Warriors. It’s fabulous to write for this Doctor. I went back to all of the



Above: Michael Troughton

Mark confirms: “It was Nick’s suggestion that we write the opening story together when we were working out what we should do and who to commission. Nick came up with an idea which takes place a quantum of a second after the end of *The War Games*. The Doctor finds himself wandering around on

a snowy, icy planet where there’s weird stuff going on, and he meets a young woman, Raven, who’s also wandering about. We discover she has a secret of her own (spoilers!) which we learn half way through.

“I wrote the first draft, in 500-word chunks, and delivered it to Nick every day. He said he loved it because it



Above (l-r): Mark Elstob and Katy Manning

RECALLING THE recording sessions, Nick says: “We had a fabulous time. I particularly liked the moments when Michael spoke very fondly of his father. I remember we had a great discussion about the explosions the Doctor escaped from in *The Invasion* and how his dad was yelping so loudly because he didn’t quite know where the next pyrotechnic would go off! It’s always great to work with Michael because he’s such a nice man. He’s one of those people who is determined for everything to be light-hearted. He’s meticulous and serious about what he’s doing as a performer, but a giggle is never far away. I love people like that. It makes the whole experience joyous, and what is life without joy?”

WRITING FOR THE ICE WARRIORS WAS GREAT FUN, PARTICULARLY COMING UP WITH NAMES FOR THEM.

ANDREW SMITH

Mark adds: “Michael was nervous on the first morning – I asked him how he was before we started – and you would be worried if he wasn’t. He wants to honour his dad and do good work as well.” **VORTEX**

late Patrick Troughton episodes and went over the Ice Warrior stories and TV episode *The Invasion* quite a bit. The Brigadier is involved in this one and we even have a scene early on that replicates where the Doctor is being shot at by Cybermen! The script even notes, ‘as in *The Invasion* episode eight!’ “Although they didn’t use what we now recognise as UNIT call signs back in the Patrick Troughton era, we decided we would include them, so the Doctor is introduced to them, and suggests, ‘Why greyhound, why not springer spaniel?’ And he rather teases

the Brigadier with deliberately wrong codenames in that mischievous Second Doctor way!”


Andrew adds: “Writing UNIT on Mars was a highlight, and I loved the scenes with the Brigadier and the Doctor as they reacquaint themselves with each other.

“And writing for the Ice Warriors was great fun, particularly coming up with names for them. There’s also an Ice Warrior who forms a bit of a partnership with the Brigadier and I’m really pleased how that plays out with the two of them working together and recognising a common ‘warrior’ outlook.”

DOCTOR WHO: THE SECOND DOCTOR ADVENTURES BEYOND WAR GAMES



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UFO-RIA

Having seen the news article about the new box sets Big Finish are producing of **UFO** I cannot appropriately express how excited I am! It was only three years ago I learnt of the **UFO** TV series after having spent much of my childhood watching Gerry Anderson productions like **Thunderbirds**, **Joe 90**, **Captain Scarlet** and **Stingray**. Now a grown man, I still find myself pretending to be SID and have often gotten a strange kick out of the thought I could be the voice, "This is Space Intruder Detector... Red Alert!" How glorious it is then to learn that this character and many others will get a new lease of life.

ANDREW BARRETT

*Nick: Thanks Andrew, all sorts of exciting **UFO** revelations to come!*

A MISSING PERI-OD?

I know that in past *Vortex* magazines Nick has gone on record saying that the gap between *Planet of Fire* and *The Caves of Androzani* has been pretty much filled with the early

main range stories with the Fifth Doctor, Peri and Erimem, but I was thinking, what if you had a single story in a box set with Peter Davison and Nicola Bryant set immediately after *Planet of Fire* done in the style of the Third Doctor adventure *The Annihilators*? I just feel that it's been 15 years since we had a proper full-cast Fifth Doctor and



Peri story and it would be a nice temporary change from the Fifth Doctor/Nyssa/Tegan team – looking forward to the 2023 box sets!

ADAM ROSS

Nick: It's a lovely idea, Adam, and I would personally never rule that out.

WONDERFUL WAR

What a tremendous idea the latest **Unbound** story, *Doctor of War*, is. I had always wondered what would have happened if the Fourth Doctor had finally touched the wires during the pivotal scene in *Genesis of the Daleks* – now I know! **Doctor Who Unbound** is the jewel in the crown of Big Finish's releases – highly original, delivered with consummate style, and always surprising. The latest release sets a new high, and I can't wait to hear what happens next.

DR ANDREW DAVIS

*Nick: Thank you, doctor. It's always great to do a 'what if?' story, isn't it? I mean, 'what if' is central to all science fiction and fantasy, but when it's applied to the central concept of **Doctor Who**, it's a particular thrill.*

ARCS IN SPACE – AND TIME

I am writing as a follower of the Eighth Doctor stories since *Storm Warning*. Now the box set sagas are coming to an end, will you be abandoning ongoing plotlines altogether as this aspect of the series has always been a major draw? The Tenth Doctor Adventures really hit their stride for me during **Dalek Universe**. I am afraid the McGann box sets have spoiled me and this is why I hope some sort of arc continuity will be maintained in the sets to come later this year.

SAMUEL GRAY

*Nick: We're not ruling out story arcs forever, Samuel, but we want to explore all kinds of ways of telling stories. **VORTEX***



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Allegiance (BOX SET)

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(AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

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GALLIFREY WAR ROOM

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A NOVEL APPROACH FOR THE TWELFTH DOCTOR...

