



# Hub

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## **Who Dares, Wins**

There are few television programmes to inspire the kind of loyalty that *Doctor Who* enjoys. It's pretty safe to say that there are also few programmes that split the fanbase so frequently. Take the series' penultimate episode – *The Stolen Earth* – for example. Reading through the various fan forums, I know that I'm very much in the minority when I say that I thought that this episode was poor. I've enjoyed RTD's most recent stories immensely, and I believe he has proven his ability to write episodes to the quality of Mssrs Moffatt and Cornell, but I thought the latest episode was poorly written, overacted, and contained animation so bad that it could make South Park look good. When I texted a friend my thoughts after the show he told me that it was perhaps the most stupid thing I had ever said! (and I've been known to say some *very* stupid things, indeed!) Indeed, other than the final scene of the programme (and the scenes with Ianto, who is now played brilliantly by Gareth David-Lloyd), I could find little to recommend it. As I say, I'm very much in the minority in this, as this week's reviews will highlight. (I did think that the final episode was the best finale we've yet had with New Who).

However, it does illustrate that Russell The Davies has crafted a series that is not only avidly watched and dissected, but it's also talked about for days/weeks/months after it has aired. It's a sterling testament to the man's commitment to the show, and his talents in his various capacities behind the scenes, that it is one of the few "must-see" programmes on British television, and its viewers don't just enjoy the programme – they care. And that's the legacy that RTD has given us.

## **About Hub**

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## Exodus

by David Tallerman



Hunched over the laminate table, Adele read her letter for perhaps the hundredth time. The edges had already dissolved into ragged curves; the bottom right corner was stained with the muddy halo residue of a coffee mug. Still, the print was large and clear, and the meaning could survive the abuse.

Outside was the twilight of day. Through the shifting haze, Adele could just make out shapes that had once been her garden, skeleton outlines wilted into abstracts. Only the ancient pear tree retained some semblance of form, and that was sinister, uncomfortable. No fruit could grow on those barren branches, no leaf bud in that filthy, mould-scented air.

Looking outside, she couldn't help remembering the night a month ago when one of the window seals had punctured. She'd woken with acid-hot tears streaming from her eyes, gagging on the clot of phlegm in her throat, the scent of mildew thick in her nostrils. Adele had always had allergic tendencies, even back when others hadn't. It had been a fifty-fifty chance, the repairman had told her later. Just as likely she wouldn't have woken at all.

Since then she'd worn her mask at all times, even in bed. It was supposed to be saved for brief, vital trips outside. She wasn't even sure if it worked anymore but—whether for real or psychosomatic reasons—it kept away the wheezing, the rattle like some small animal caged in the back of her throat. But she couldn't read with the goggles on, and her eyes smarted now.

It was worth it.

She scanned the letter again, more slowly this time and more abstractly, picking out particular phrases and letting others fade into the yellow-stained background.

She read: Selection based on criteria of useful skills and specific requirements by zone.

She read: Necessity.

She read: Special opportunity; first wave; psychological profile; preparation.

From memory rather than because she'd turned to the last of the three pages, Adele knew that the collection time was 11.00 hours. This number was written indelibly on her mind, along with the date, which was today's.

Still fifteen minutes.

She was hungry, but her electricity ration had run out the night before, and she didn't think she could face cold food. Surely there would be food at the Terminus, and if not there then at Cloud 9? Her letter referred to processing times, which she took to mean form-completing, health checks, perhaps even DNA sampling, but imagined as being like the check-in process when they'd still allowed aeroplanes to fly, before the very idea had become outrageous, when the world had seemed boundlessly large and not the concrete cell it was now.

How long would processing take? Would it be finished before or after lunch? Almost certainly after; she would have to eat something.

Rummaging through the depths of the cupboard produced some breakfast cereal. She filled a bowl with starchy, angular flakes, poured soy milk over it, and gritted her teeth. At least they could still mass-produce real sugar. Perhaps, somewhere along the line, it had been deemed a basic human necessity, like alcohol and coffee and marijuana. If nothing else the tasteless mulch was sweet.

She was halfway to the bottom of the bowl when she heard the drone of a horn, long and melancholy like some wounded beast. She dropped the spoon, and watched as it clattered across the rim of the bowl, bounced to the table edge, tumbled towards the floor.

For a moment, she couldn't believe it was all real. Even the possibility of hope seemed ludicrous.

Then Adele was on her feet, snatching up her suitcase, a billow of dust rising as evidence of its long wait. She ran to the door, hauled on her coat, fumbled with the seals, made it out finally into the yeast-scented air, and was glad of it for the first time ever because she knew that she'd never have to breathe it again.

The air in Cloud 9 would be clean, for it was brand new air.

She ran towards the silhouetted bus, the suitcase clattering noisily behind her. There were five other passengers, the driver, and an official of some sort, any evidence of his function disguised beneath the cassock of his hazmat suit. She chose to sit beside the official rather than the other passengers, because they all looked so melancholy and pathetic and he (or perhaps she) was pristine in their gauzy white uniform and death's-head rebreather.

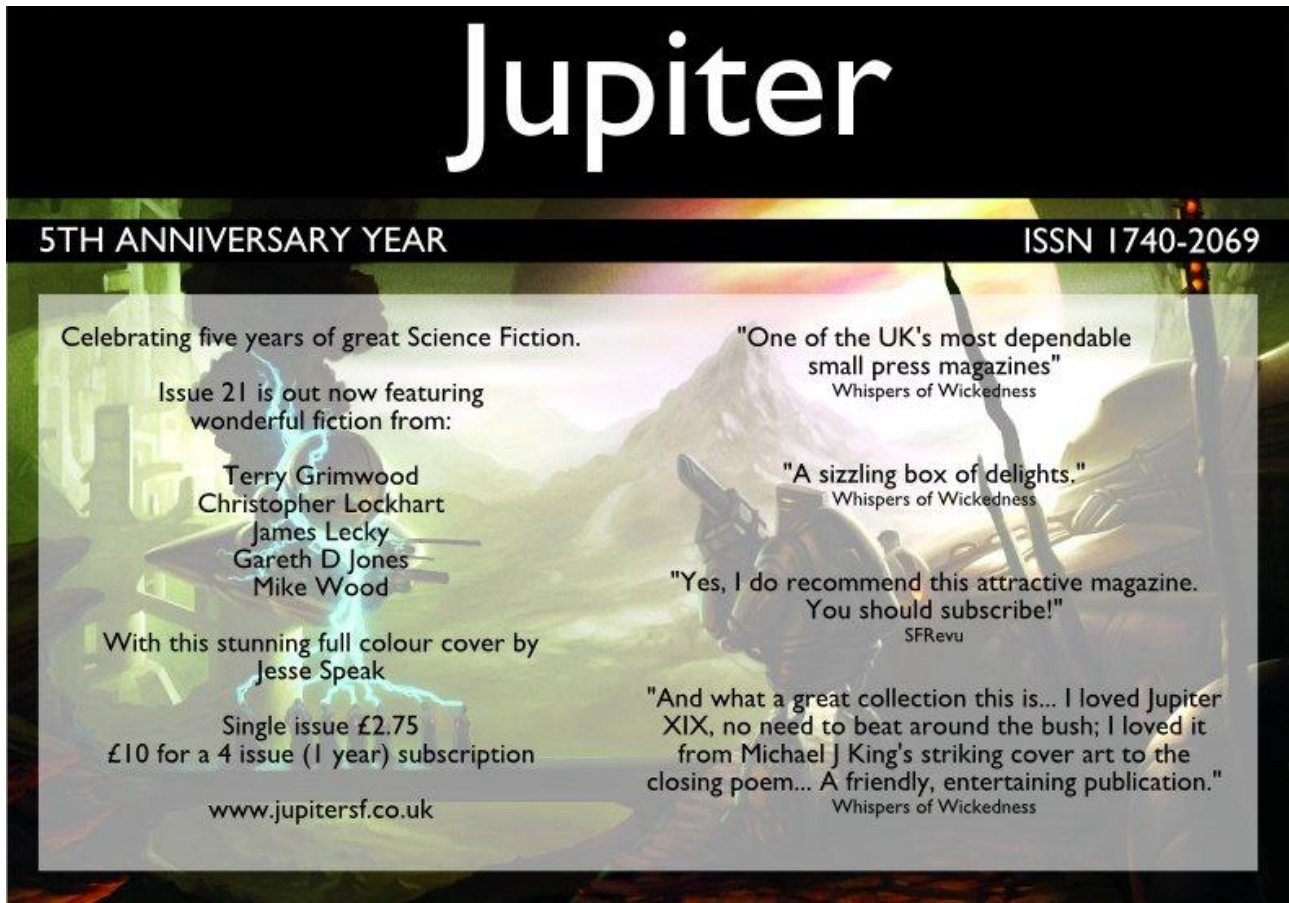
She could feel nervous excitement bubbling, and knew it was something she should suppress, knew equally that she wouldn't. What did it matter now? They couldn't turn her away. Her invitation was in black and white, unalterable. Even if they could, would they do it just because—for the first time in ten years perhaps, certainly for the first time since Derek died—she was happy?

Of course they wouldn't. It wasn't just her, in any case. It was a fresh start for the whole world. They would go to Cloud 9; first her wave and then others, more and more. Later some might even go to Mars. That would be possible they said, within five years maybe. Not Adele, though, she was in the first wave and bound for Cloud 9, and she would be able to see the world through her window, she felt sure, watch its day-by-day recovery. With only a handful of caretakers to watch over it, it would heal soon enough. Then they could return and start again, better this time: not her generation of course, but those that came after, or their children perhaps. It was a new beginning for everyone, and why shouldn't she be excited, for herself and for them as well if need be?

"It's a miracle," she said to the official, before she could do anything to stop the words. He (or she) glanced down at her. She tried to imagine eyes behind the frosted silver plates, and failing, continued almost in a panic, "It's a miracle, isn't it? All these years they've been working and nobody thought they'd ever manage it, but they did. I remember when everyone said it was impossible—a door here and a door there and, oh, something in between I suppose, but nothing you can see. Isn't it a miracle?"

For an instant she thought the official would ignore her, and turn away to resume whatever it was they were there to do. Or perhaps she'd be reprimanded, expelled from the bus.

Finally he (it was a he) said, "Yes, it's a miracle." The voice was flat and dull, in stark contrast to her own half-maniac enthusiasm.



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Still, it was an affirmation at least, an excuse to continue. She said, "I'm very lucky, to be in the first wave, to see it all happen. Who would have thought I could be useful? I'm not a scientist or a doctor or anything like that. Yet here I am."

"Yes," replied the official, "You're very lucky."

At that Adele began to doubt the whole conversation. It wasn't a conversation at all if he was only going to agree with what she said. She wondered again what was behind the mask, and shuddered.

No, it was better to keep quiet after all. She smiled weakly and turned away, staring instead into the haze outside. She tried to prise the shapes of buildings from amidst the gloom, to say definitely which skewed oblongs were houses and which weren't. That made her eyes smart again; she'd left her goggles on the kitchen table. So instead she closed them and settled into her thoughts for the remainder of the journey.

Adele opened her eyes again when they stopped. However it was only to pick up another passenger, a young man in tattered jeans and T-shirt, his mask decorated with jagged swirls of graffiti. He glared around with bloodshot eyes before dropping into a seat near the front of the bus.

After that there were more stops. Each time more people joined the crowd on the bus, which swelled until there wasn't a single seat left and then continued to grow, so that the aisle filled altogether, and the official began to fidget with the strap on his riot-baton. She couldn't blame him. Large crowds were such a rarity these days, and there was so much anger and fear.

It suddenly occurred to her that there were those who didn't see things the way she did, who perhaps resented the government for taking them from their homes, from their planet even. Was that why the official was there? Oh, how sad it all was. Why couldn't they view this as an opportunity, as a new start, finally a new start for everyone?

When there was no room left to so much as turn around in the aisle, the bus moved off again, faster this time and with a sense of purpose, and she knew they were really going this time. They moved onto the motorway. It was so strange to see it empty, hovering amidst translucent clouds. Just like being in an

aeroplane, she thought, and smiled, remembering a holiday to Morocco twenty years ago, gripping Derek's hand so tightly until she'd discovered to her amazement that she wasn't afraid of flying after all.

Half an hour later they jolted down onto a slip road. After that there was an interminable period where she couldn't see anything on either side. Presumably it was just that there was nothing there, perhaps it was land that had been left to rot rather than being converted to hydroponics tunnels or some other useful purpose.

Then she saw it. It was at once enchanting and disappointing, huge enough to be a fairy castle in a dream, but shapeless, and made entirely of prefabricated sheets of some drab metal. Except for its size, it might have been anything.

On the near side, a low tunnel jutted out to stop almost at the roadside. They drew up beside it, and the official began to push his way through the jostle. People tried to move aside and found they had nowhere to go, and for a moment the threat of violence was palpable. Then the official reached the front, the doors whispered open, and the mounting tension was abruptly released. The double doors at the end of the tunnel folded inward as well. Immediately, emerald fog swirled in to fill the newly-revealed spaces.

"Exit two at a time," said the official, "Form an orderly line."

The queue was clumsy at first, moulded only by the pressure of so many bodies; but once the centre aisle had cleared, and with occasional instructions from the official, it rapidly gained a semblance of structure. By the time it reached Adele, it was clear where she should stand. She slipped into her allotted place and marched up the aisle, stepped out, (thanking the official and the driver as she passed), crossed the patch of desiccated soil that joined exit to entrance and stepped into the neon brightness of the tunnel.

Moments later she thought she heard the doors behind her close but caught by the line she didn't dare look back. Another minute or so passed, with no sound except the occasional shuffle of feet or cleared throat. Then a claxon blared right above her, momentarily deafening, so that by the time she heard the other noise behind it, it was too late to respond. It sounded like a balloon deflating, coming from the level of their feet.

She felt a sharp discomfort between her eyes, then her ears popped; *just like flying*, she thought, for the second time that day. The thought seemed strangely prescient because she knew suddenly, even before the burning in her lungs, that there was no air to breathe; she remembered in all its intensity her fear, her absolute conviction of disaster. She remembered the laminate cards of emergency instructions tucked behind seats, but there was no mask dropping from the ceiling now, and the effort of useless gasps for breath was making her dizzy.

Then with a hiss, the air returned, and her own sharp tug of breath was echoed throughout the small chamber, as everyone inhaled too hard and fast. People began to cough, a man nearby struggled to remove his mask and made dreadful gagging noises.

Even amidst the confusion, Adele could tell immediately that the new air, the replacement air, was clean. There was no greenish tinge to it, no chemical aftertaste in the back of her throat. With that realisation, her fear evaporated. Of course this miraculous place must be clean, and isolated from the poisons outside. They would rust iron and rot wood within a month, what would they do to the incredible technology housed here? It was a terrible relief, because more powerful even than her fear had been the sense of betrayal.

They hadn't betrayed her. She was going to Cloud 9, just as they'd said. Everything was okay.

The doors at the far end slid open. She couldn't see beyond the exit, but the queue was quickly regaining its integrity, and soon they were moving. She waited for her moment then began to march in step. Only when she passed the end of the tunnel did she see that their efforts were actually being co-ordinated: there were two officials, one to either side, dressed in white coveralls and tinted goggles. They were silent, directing by the expedient of pointing with outstretched arms. There was a voice, however, speaking from somewhere invisible in amplified, fragmented commands:

"Stay within the demarcated areas," it said. "Keep moving. Go into the light."

Then Adele saw it. The light—it was as good a description as any. The gate, what she assumed to be the gate, was towards the far side of the colossal dome, stretching from floor to ceiling between two narrow columns that couldn't possibly support its weight. If it even had such a property as weight, because as the voice had suggested, it appeared to be made entirely of light. It was the most purely white thing she had



ever seen, like staring at the sun on the most perfect of cloudless days. It was astonishingly beautiful, and it hurt her eyes, whether with its brightness or its beauty she couldn't say.

She looked down at the ground, trying to blink away the rainbow splotches of after-image. She wanted to look again, to see it properly; it had seemed so narrow, no more than a dozen feet across, and she'd thought it was concave, but couldn't tell for sure. She wanted to look properly and knew she couldn't, because some instinct told her that if she'd stared for a second more she would be blind now.

Why hadn't they warned them?

Or issued goggles, sunglasses, some kind of protection?

*Because*, Adele chided herself, *it's perfectly obvious that you shouldn't stare at it*. These people weren't her parents, there to teach her the basics of existence. If there was a fire burning nearby, would she expect an announcement alerting her not to thrust her hand into the flames?

Yet even as she thought this, the disembodied voice repeated: "Stay within the demarcated areas. Keep moving. Go into the light." She saw that a gap had opened in front of her, that she was causing an obstruction. She paced quickly to catch up.

After that, for a long time, the world was as simple as the person ahead of her, the hazard-tape cordons to either side, the broadcast (it was pre-recorded, she'd soon realised) echoing at regular intervals. There was nothing else to see or hear. The room was certainly colossal, but apart from their queue and the occasional official to one side, it was empty.

Except for the gate, of course; she hadn't looked again, but it was impossible not to see that each step was taking them nearer. It was as if someone were steadily turning up the brightness on an old television set. Everything seemed bleached, sun-faded, as though the colours of the world were dissolving like ink in water. She tried to keep her eyes down, and half-closed.

How long had she been walking for? It was hard to judge. Their progress was painfully slowly, baby steps one upon another, and she wasn't tall enough to see further along the line. She felt sure she was close to the front now. There was a low crackle in the air, and a vile metallic smell, which conjured the ridiculous thought that the air itself was burning.

Even staring at the ground, even with her eyelids pressed almost shut, the light was scalding.

The person in front of her, revealed as a young girl with a sad, down-turned mouth and too-close-together eyes, turned back towards Adele and said, "I'm scared." Then it became apparent that she wasn't speaking to Adele at all, or to anyone in particular. Nevertheless, shielding her face with her hands, Adele replied, "Don't be scared. We're going to a better place."

The girl turned away again; perhaps she was reassured, perhaps she hadn't been listening. Adele continued to watch her back--the straggle of her blonde hair, the bob of her head with each step, the regular shaking of her shoulders beneath the patterned blouse--and wondered why the girl was so afraid.

Then she was gone.

Adele clamped her eyes shut, and when that didn't help threw her arm across them. Even then she could still see colour, a fierce red. The girl had vanished, or dissolved; for the barest fraction of a second she had seemed to glow, from inside and out, and then...

Adele couldn't bring her feet to move.

She was convinced of a terrible sense of impatience bearing down on her from those behind, and when the pre-recorded message intoned again, "Go into the light," she knew with certainty that it was speaking to her and only to her.

But her feet wouldn't move.

Someone coughed behind her, and the cough seemed to her to say, *you're ruining everything, for everyone, you're holding up the hope and the progress of a whole world*. She wanted to protest, suddenly and for the first time wanted to argue, to say, "You haven't seen what I just saw, you don't understand."

She managed to raise one foot, to edge it forward.

"Cloud 9," Adele said, beneath her breath, "Cloud 9."

"Goodbye," she said, out loud.

If you enjoyed this week's tale, and the non-fiction that follows, please make a donation at [www.hub-mag.co.uk](http://www.hub-mag.co.uk).

Your donations help us to pay our writers and to continue to bring you your weekly dash of *Hub*.

And she stepped into the light.

## REVIEWS

*Five Across The Eyes* reviewed by Marie O'Regan

*Doctor Who s4, Eps12 & 13: The Stolen Earth and Journey's End* reviewed by Scott Harrison

**Five Across The Eyes (Region 2) Directed by Greg Swinson, Ryan Thiessen**

**Starring: Jennifer Barnett, Angela Brunda, Veronica Garcia, Dave Jarnigan, Danielle Lilley, Sandra Paduch, Keith Smith, Jane Swinson, Abby Vessell, Mia Yi**

**Lionsgate Home Entertainment (UK). £15.99**

**Five Across The Eyes** is another horror 'road' movie, with a similar premise to many like it – **2001 Maniacs**, **Wrong Turn**, to name just two. Five girls are on their way home from a football match, driving through an area known locally as 'The Eyes'. Running late and lost, they stop at a shop in the middle of nowhere (lends a whole new meaning to the term convenience store) to ask directions – but on pulling out, they ram a parked car and ruin one of its headlights. Several minutes later, a vehicle with one light (big surprise) appears in the rearview mirror, and the driver spends the rest of the film chasing them, or terrorising them on the many times they stop and leave the car, with minimal motivation. I mean, would you leave the car with some lunatic chasing you? The villain of the piece (Veronica Garcia) is a seemingly hysterical woman in a business suit (why?) who proceeds to torture the girls until they finally retaliate. This anonymous woman pulls teeth, rapes a girl with a screwdriver, electrocutes another, forces them to strip and urinate...all without seeming rhyme or reason to her actions.

The film is shot with a handheld camera, to give it a 'realistic' feel. Except it doesn't, because the premise is just *so* unbelievable. The cast are all unknowns, and shriek their way through what can only just be called a storyline. **Blair Witch** used the same camera technique, and I wasn't a huge fan of that movie either, but it was streets ahead of the mess Swinson and Thiessen have served up with this, their first effort.

Extras include deleted scenes, and a 'behind the scenes' featurette which tells you nothing – merely films those holding the camera, with no explanatory commentaries or interviews.

### **Doctor Who Series 4 – Episode 12: The Stolen Earth**

**Written by Russell T. Davies**

**Starring David Tennant, Catherine Tate, Billie Piper, Elisabeth Sladen, John Barrowman, Freema Agyeman, Eve Myles, Gareth David-Lloyd, Penelope Wilton**

**BBC 1. First shown 28<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

Since Dalekmania first gripped the nation way back in the middle of the swinging sixties, the makers of *Doctor Who* quickly realised that in order for the programme to survive it had to become a delicate balance of casual viewer friendly stories mixed with



epic, fan-centric, rabid fanboy/girl pleasing, continuity chomping sagas! For every standalone, knockabout adventure like *The Keys of Marinus*, *The Romans* or *The Enemy of the World*, there was a continuity-dripping, Nerd-fest such as *The Evil of the Daleks*, *The Deadly Assassin* or *Earthshock*. Thankfully this is something that New Who makers Russell T. Davies and Phil Collinson are only too aware of and, as a result, the 2-part season finale has become something of an Uber-Geek's delight!

Racing back to Earth in response to Rose's Bad Wolf message the planet is suddenly stolen from under the TARDIS. Reappearing several thousand light years away in the Medusa Cascade the Torchwood team, Sarah Jane Smith and Martha Jones and UNIT prepare for the worst when they discover their kidnappers and soon to be attackers are the Daleks. After a stop-off at the Shadow Proclamation the Doctor and Donna eventually track down the Earth and twenty-seven other stolen planets where they discover the Dalek's evil creator Davros has survived the Time War, along with his new Dalek Empire!

At first glance it would appear that this episode of *Doctor Who* has split the viewing audience into those that loved *The Stolen Earth*, and those that are wrong! This is arguably the most exciting piece of FX driven, daring scifi TV our Saturday nights have ever seen. When the series has rattled it's way through umpteen more Doctors and the novelty has inevitably worn off with the casual viewer and it is limping its way towards cancellation, this will be the era everyone will look back on with a nostalgic sigh as they wipe a single tear from their collective eye – *Doctor Who's* second Golden Age. For the dyed-in-the-wool *Doctor Who* fan this is New Who's *Daleks' Masterplan* or *The Five Doctors*, this is a Classic in the making. Almost the entire Whoniverse has come crashing together, kitchen sink and all!

A lot of people had begun to grow weary of Davros over the last few years of *Classic Who*, often bemoaning that it had become so that you couldn't have the Daleks without Davros cropping up as well. OK, so this was the case but often writers used Davros as a way to break up the somewhat monotonous dialogue between the Daleks and also to inject a bit of threat and danger into an alien race that had steadily begun to lose their menace after the Second Doctor story *The Evil of the Daleks* in 1967. Originally Russell T. Davies was in no rush to bring back the Daleks' creator, feeling that Davros more often than not would dominate what essentially should have been a Dalek story. But having had three years to establish the Daleks in their own right he felt it was time to reintroduce the evil inventor to a new audience.

If *Midnight* and *Turn Left* were RTD's wonderful little character pieces then *The Stolen Earth* is his canvas-stretching, budget-busting, epic. And Davies is certainly going out in style... using every trick in the book to surprise and shock his audience and bringing together just about every story thread, arc and character ever created or used since it's return in 2005. Davies' script sparkles with originality and power, proving why the show has become the phenomenal success it has under his assured guidance. Trouble is, with a script so tightly packed as this one is, and crammed with so many wonderful and important actors as this episode is, it's damned difficult to single out any one performance as standing out above the rest. It's wonderful to see (what's left of) the *Torchwood* team finally crossing over into *Who* and both Eve Myles and Gareth David-Lloyd are on fine form as is the mighty John Barrowman as Capt. Jack. The Doctor and Donna aside though, perhaps the biggest fanboy salute must go to the return of Sarah Jane Smith, arguably the greatest character in *Doctor Who* after the Doctor himself. Elisabeth Sladen is always value for money and is the hardest working actor on the screen (again save Tennant) and virtually sparkles every time she pops up on our tellyboxes. Why this woman isn't a Dame yet I'll never know!

OK. So. Lets all calm down and take deep breaths. Yes, that apparently really was the Doctor regenerating at the end. But do we really believe for a second that David Tennant is bowing out in the penultimate episode and a new Doctor appearing for the final story of the season a la Colin Baker in 'The Twin Dilemma'? Well, no. Of course we don't. We all know it's just a very cheeky and mischievous RTD playing his last, and most unexpected, card. Going out with all guns blazing, if you like. But speaking as a major fanboy who was watching it on Saturday with a major fangirl... we did panic for a minute or two. But then we pulled ourselves together, because of course, it's all just a huge bluff.

Isn't it?!





## **Doctor Who Series 4 – Episode 13: Journey’s End**

**Written by Russell T. Davies**

**Starring David Tennant, Catherine Tate, Billie Piper, Elisabeth Sladen, John Barrowman, Freema Agyeman, Eve Myles, Gareth David-Lloyd, Julian Bleach,  
BBC 1. First shown 5<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

Let’s face it, British television serials have never been known for their stunning series finales. Back in what has now officially become known as ‘The Golden Age of Television’™ the final episode of the series was pretty much like any other episode in that series and could have been swapped around and shown at any point in its run. In fact many regional ITV stations would more often than not muddle the episodes up and show them in whichever order they chose fit – Nigel Kneale’s 1976 supernatural anthology series *Beasts* episode order was mucked about with by so many regional stations that when it was released on DVD in 2006 the episode running order had to be determined by production dates as it had no agreed transmission order! But, the point is back then it really didn’t make much difference. Apart from on very rare occasions (*Doctor Who*’s ‘Key To Time’ season or its 14-part season length story ‘The Trial of a Time Lord’, for example) television serials in the 60s, 70s and 80s seldom built to some grand, all-singing, all-dancing finale or used what has now become commonly known as the ‘story arc’. Thanks largely to American genre series of the late 1980s, early 90s – most importantly shows like *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *The X-Files* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* – the British television serial has begun to evolve in new and exciting ways.

Watching the new series of *Doctor Who* it’s blindingly obviously that the entire show is being shaped and driven by writers, producers and directors who have spent much of their formative years watching and studying the aforementioned American serials. Series Four has displayed the show’s strongest, most complex and over-reaching story arc in the four years it’s been back on our TVs. ‘Journey’s End’, Russell T. Davies’s conclusion to the series’ customary final 2-parter, continues the monumental task of bringing together all the loose ends from his ‘era’ of the show in an attempt to tidy things up in time for the hand-over to Steven Moffat as showrunner in 2010. No other series of New Who has revelled in it’s own past and continuity as much as Series Four; with Sontarans, Daleks, Davros, Capt. Jack, Sarah Jane Smith, K9, Torchwood, Rose, Martha, Mickey and Jackie, UNIT... all being thrown gleefully into the mix. Yet not for a single moment does it feel like the show is becoming too bogged down with it’s own history, nor does it feel too self-indulgent or introspective. As RTD has always maintained, they will only bring it back if there is a good story to tell!

The Doctor, having used the energy from his regeneration to repair his body rather than ‘renew’ it, transfers the residual energy to his severed hand and decides to take the fight to Davros. Donna soon finds herself trapped alone inside the TARDIS as it is thrown into the core of the Dalek Crucible with its defences switched off. The severed hand ‘calls’ to Donna, which then uses her to grow into another Tenth Doctor, this one part Time Lord, part Human. Unfortunately Donna is altered in the process, becoming DoctorDonna, a Human/Time Lord hybrid that is slowly killing her. This 2nd Tenth Doctor, having grown from the earlier, ruthless, still battle-scared Doctor’s hand, wipes out the entire Dalek Empire, much to the disgust of the ‘current’ Doctor. With his friends and allies all safely back on Earth, and the alternate Doctor banished to the alternate universe with Rose, the Doctor has no choice but to return Donna to a state before she met him, removing all memories of her adventures with him, no longer the terminal DoctorDonna hybrid. Desperately unhappy and alone, the Doctor sets off once more in the TARDIS!

Along with last weeks ‘The Stolen Earth’, ‘Journey’s End’ is the most exciting, satisfying and monumentally epic series finale so far in New Who! Again (with the possible exception of Torchwood’s Eve Myles and Gareth David-Lloyd) all guest characters are given a good chunk of action and story with everyone feeling like they have a legitimate reason to be there rather than just there to impress. With two such brilliantly talented lead actors heading the show it’s gratifying to know that the writers fully understand this and as a result constantly fuel their performances with sparkling dialogue and fresh and original situations. As with Series Three’s ‘Human Nature/Family of Blood’ David Tennant is given the opportunity to show off his impressive acting range with the chance to play two subtly different Doctors. In fact, it’s not until you see Tennant’s portrayal of a pre-Christmas Invasion Tenth Doctor that you realise just how much the character has grown and expanded during the actor’s 3 years in the role! For one final time Catherine Tate shines as Donna Noble, this time becoming the brilliantly funny DoctorDonna, a performance that blends a perfect imitation of the Doctor with the wonderful comic timing of Donna. And her final scenes with the Doctor – all but ignoring him in favour of a good old

gossip with her mate on the phone – are in turns subtly poignant and bitterly tragic. But the final scene is given to Donna's granddad, Wilfred, played to perfection by the masterly Bernard Cribbens who, let's face it, is a bloody legend, giving those last, touching moments with the Doctor a warmth and pathos that have become the hallmark of this new, character driven version of the series!

And that's pretty much it, until 2010. Yes, OK, we've got two Christmas specials and two specials in 2009 to look forward to, but we have to face up to the fact that they're probably not really going to advance the series much! Is it just me or does anyone else get the rather uneasy feeling that they may turn out to be four 'Voyage of the Damned's... which is all well and good but do we really want to be watching which was, lets face it, nothing more than 70 minutes of big explosions and people walking moodily towards the camera in slow motion for the next 20 months!?! Still, we're getting ahead of ourselves and time and tide melt the snowman, to quote the Doctor! Next stop is a good, old-fashioned, Victorian Christmas and the Tenth Doctor's second meeting with the Cybermen! Brussell sprouts, anyone?



It's nearly time...

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