

DOCTOR · WHO

A Walk-on Part in the War

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Rose and Shareen were supposedly on holiday, yet somewhat inevitably they

found themselves eating chips, and killing time.

Rose's hapless feller, Mickey, had lost most of their spending money for the week on some stupid bet – he'd put £90 on France to beat Senegal in the World Cup. The odds were **9-1 on**.

'It's a dead cert babe,' he'd assured her before the match. He was still repeating that exact same line in the seconds leading up to the final whistle, albeit with a lot less gusto and a hell of a lot more bewilderment.

Mickey sulked in the bus shelter, famished, as Rose and Shareen made a show of finishing their chips on their wall. Kicking at a can, Mickey sought to kill the excruciating few minutes before the bus would arrive to take them all back to the campsite. He was killing time, in an abstract sort of way.

Meanwhile, a ribbon of black tore through the Orion arm of Mutter's Spiral, the refined apocalypse element reducing everything that stood in its path to subatomic particles.

The Nekastani home world was completely decimated within seconds; its time-sensitive inhabitants disintegrating before they even had a chance to see the dark, flaming nexus bearing down upon their planet. Every second of their lives; every molecule of their existence was divided, both physically and temporally. The apocalypse element was killing time in the most literal sense.

The Nestene protein planets, Procyon III and Eridani Foremost, were the next for crumbling, followed in short order by the Monan Host stockade at Ophiucus and then the Broken Heart of the Gelth Confederacy.

Any species with hoofmarks more than a reality deep in the multiverse.

Every single world with the merest whisker in the higher plain.

Exterminated.

Rose felt the urge to jump down from the wall, suddenly troubled. She found herself trying to focus on a shimmering object in the night sky; a burning band of black that was just becoming visible through the Scotch mist. Her heart beat heavy in her chest. It was headed for them. Heading for *her*. And fast.

Rose felt a wave of nausea flood over her and, just for a fraction of a second, everything went black.

The apocalypse element ravaged the planet Earth, leaving just 6,703,017,014 survivors.

Little did she know it, but Rose Tyler was eating chips in the middle of a theatre of war. All around her, imperceptible to her human senses, were the dead bodies of Gallifreyan time warriors.

ARCADIA: 170,140 AD

Millennia ago, the people of Arcadia fought a long and bloody war to free themselves from the shackles of the Corporations. Battles were waged in the air, on the sea and on land. And whilst over the centuries the Arcadian weapons of war evolved, one constant remained.

Death.

Stories were passed down from generation to generation. Wounded and dying men reported having seen mystifying, magical creatures; hoary sirens that tried with all their might to tear the Arcadians out of one life and pull them into the next.

But before long, stories that were once treated as reliable first-hand accounts passed into superstition, and anyone who gave the old myths any credence was at best disbelieved; at worst publicly tied up and beaten with a large stick. Though at heart they were a relatively primitive and deeply spiritual people, the Arcadians were still rational enough to close their doors to anything even remotely numinous.

But when the Time Lords of Gallifrey brought their War to Arcadia, the old legends suddenly didn't seem so apocryphal. The Gallifreyans were quick to identify the hoary sirens, labelling them as 'Watchers', their existence once again fact. And rather than fear these Watchers as grim harbingers of death, the Arcadians learned to look upon them as companions on the journey; aspects of spirit that would ease their passing from one life into the next. But when the Time Lords were asked where these Watchers came from, not one of their number could answer. The most technologically advanced race in the whole of creation, and yet they still put their faith in what their science could not quantify.

But to one Time Lord, the Watchers would become a symbol of one of the worst days of his lives. A defiant pacifist at hearts, this Time Lord was nonetheless his people's most resourceful combatant. And when the call came from his old friend, the Imperatrix, for once he did as he was told. No sooner had the Imperatrix given him the command, and he was in his TARDIS, headed straight for the front lines. He didn't even pause to take his young human friend home; he just locked her in her bedroom, sleeping soundly whilst the universe wept.

His first day in the field and he had to witness an entire detachment immolated. His TARDIS materialised right in the middle of black light cascade, the latest in a long line of Dalek ambushes that defied the very laws of time.

He had to lay there, paralysed, while his comrades cried out in anguish as they regenerated again and again and again. He saw countless Watchers that day, blinking in and out of reality as they strove to drag their mortal counterparts over the threshold.

Countless Watchers, but not his own.

At first the Doctor couldn't fathom how he'd managed to survive the cascade. As soon as did, he wished that he hadn't survived at all.

GALLIFREY: CIRCA 10,000,000,000,000 YEARS AFTER EVENT ONE

On the continent of Wild Endeavour, in the Mountains of Solace and Solitude, the deceptively large Citadel of the Time Lords basked in the gentle bronze light of Pazithi Gallifreya.

From her high chambers in the Capitol, Romanavoratnalundar, Imperatrix of the newly-formed Time Lord Empire, looked down on the courtyard below where the Chancery Guard were carrying out their daily manoeuvres under the melodramatically pitiless instruction of Ordinal-General Mozchek.

‘If anyone can flay them into shape, I am sure Mozchek can’ came a derisive voice from behind Romana. The Imperatrix turned to find the diminutive form of Coordinator Babel, the current head of Gallifrey’s Celestial Intervention Agency, blocking up her hallway.

‘I apologise for the intrusion, my lady, however-’

‘Indeed Coordinator,’ hissed Romana, turning. ‘It is customary to knock before entering *my* Imperial Chambers.’

Babel glanced downward as he rubbed his right hand around the back of his neck, clearly aggravated. Without looking up, he addressed Romana again, this time his disdain all the more evident. ‘With the greatest of respect, my lady, we are well beyond worrying about etiquette. Just look at that shambles in the courtyard! **Look at it.** Have you seen what Mozchek has to work with? Though the Laws of Time may keep our own future a mystery to us, it doesn’t take a Guardian to realise that we will have lost this war within mere weeks!’

Romana turned on Babel, drawing herself up to her full height and bearing down on his comparatively minute figure. He still couldn’t match her gaze. ‘And what would you have me do, Babel? I’ve just received word that our forces on Arcadia have been annihilated by yet another Dalek trap; **seventy thousand** men and women, all ravaged by temporal implosions. The Daleks must have crossed their own timeline again

– there is no other way that they could have pulled it off so effortlessly. We simply cannot compete with such recklessness!’

Romana fell silent for a moment, looking down to the marble floor beneath her. ‘And we cannot endure such losses. We are not Daleks. Even with the forging of the Empire, and the strength offered to us by our new allies, we are weaker than we have been in aeons.

‘So much death cannot be borne easily by a predominantly barren race. We cannot just weave new troops and send them into the field without training.’

Romana turned and walked back towards the tall, elongated window that overlooked the courtyard. With a sigh of defeat, she quietly muttered ‘not that we haven’t tried.’ Whether the comment was intend for Babel or not even she didn’t know.

‘Indeed,’ said the Coordinator, perhaps a little too brusquely. ‘Even with every loom in every house producing two soldiers for every one that has been lost, we simply do not have the resources to initiate them. Without the necessary brain-buffing, they are just meat puppets. But...’

‘But *what*, Babel?’ Romana turned to him, eyebrows raised.

‘But... If we could find a way to breed *and* educate troops as fast as the Daleks can...’

Romana turned slowly to face Babel, the cogs in her mind beginning to turn in time to the churning of her stomach. The light from Pazithi shone into her chamber through the high window, over-exposing half of her face in exquisite bronze whilst condemning the other half to shadow. ‘I take it you have a proposal, Babel. Make it.’

VANDROS IV ALPHA: 2,369 AD

The planetoid orbiting Vandros IV was a reasonable planetoid. So reasonable was it, in fact, that it couldn't bear to listen as the Doctor's TARDIS ripped its way through the fringes of the space-time Vortex, emerging into real space. And as the battered silhouette of an ancient terran police telephone box finally materialised on the mountainside by Lake Hurque, reason threw in the towel.

The right-hand door of the conspicuous contraption opened and out stepped a man dressed in clothes that were centuries out of date. He offset some second hand shoes and surprisingly plain trousers with a white shirt, dark blue cravat and dark green frock coat. Wild, roving eyes surveyed the mountainside and the lake, desperately looking for something. He practically fell out through the TARDIS door, careless as he was with his footing.

A moment later a young woman stumbled out of the same door, pulling it shut behind her. Whilst her clothes were almost as antiquated as her companion's, they did have the virtue of being manifestly milder, and thus far less conspicuous. The woman was tying her mid-length, peroxide-blond hair up in a taut ponytail as her companion's hungry eyes searched high and low, desperately looking for something.

'Doctor?' the young woman cried, unsure as to what exactly she wanted to say to him. **'Where are we?'** would perhaps have been a practical start, although as three suns appeared to be setting over her head, even the most comprehensive response from the Doctor would doubtless mean nothing to her.

On the other side of the lake, the Doctor could scarcely make out the outline of a figure. But he didn't need to see it to know who it was. He'd been looking for him for months, ever since Arcadia.

That very moment, the Doctor's hearts stopped as a wave of iridescent, orange light surrounded and penetrated his body. The Doctor threw his head back and his arms wide as he felt every cell in his body prepare for death, and life.

But the Doctor clenched his fists and, gathering every last ounce of strength that he could muster, forced his heavy head forward.

The Doctor's companion ran over to him, clasping him firmly by the shoulders and staring into a face that she didn't quite recognise. She stared at him for just an instant before he shook her off and pulled away, collapsing to his knees, but it was enough for her to see his facial features contorting unpleasantly.

'Doctor, what's happenin' to yer?' she asked, pleadingly.

The Doctor's knees gave way and he lay on his back, looking up at his young friend, his features having once again settled. 'Look at my face. **Look at my face!**'

'What's up? Come on, Doctor. Tell me what's happenin'!' his companion cried.

'Remember... Remember what happened to Romana... At Elysium...'

'Who? Oh... **her**. Romana-**bramo-bitch**? Oh God... D'you mean when... Like when she shape-shifted or whatever?'

'Yep...'

the Doctor nodded, his voice beginning to change ever so slightly, taking on the inflections of his companion. 'See, Time Lords we... when our bodies are worn out and we would otherwise die, we... y'know... well, we change.'

‘And that’s what’s happenin’ to yer?’

‘Oh I’m long past that point, I’m afraid’ the Doctor smiled sadly, biting his lip and concentrating hard, his big grey eyes staring straight up at her.

‘I’ve lived in this body for far too long; longer than I’d ever have thought possible. In this incarnation I’ve lived, and lived and lived. I’ve lived so much that I’ve got life coming out of the sides. But I’ve lived **too much**.’ The Doctor looked away ever more as he spoke, gazing back towards the lake, eyes narrowed.

‘I’ve been holding him back for so long now,’ the Doctor cried, his voice vacillating. He wasn’t really addressing his friend anymore. ‘He’s everywhere I go... And after what we’ve seen these last few months... After what those stinkin’ Daleks have done...’

‘It wont your fault, Doctor. I should’ve been with yer out there -’

The Doctor silenced her with a meekly-waved hand. ‘Look at my face. It’s **important**. Is this the face I had when we first met?’

‘What yer talking about, Doctor? I wish you’d meck sense. ‘course it... No wait. Hang on a minute. **That’s impossible!**’ His companion jumped to her feet, unable to control the instinctive urge to point at the Doctor and back away from him rapidly. ‘Yer cheekbones... Yer hairline. Jesus! Your ears! It’s you... but **not you**. Who the hell are yer?’

The Doctor laid on his back, pulling at his long hair and stamping his feet on the ground in rage. Massive clumps of hair came away in his hands.

'It is me! You thick or what? I'm regenerating! Dying a slow death. *Have you got that?* 'I'm regenerating. And I've been regenerating for the last six months of this bleeding war!'

THE CRUCIFORM: 5.730 / APPLE / MARABOU-STORK AD

Babel straightened his uniform and breathed in deep. Somehow, he had done it. He had found a way for his people to survive in this realm after all.

The Imperatrix could try to sell ascension to the masses all that she wanted; given the choice, he knew that the Senate would vote to remain on this plain and win the War rather than chase the Eternals back to their hallowed halls.

Besides, since the Daleks had begun their campaign of crossing the time tracks, the Chronovores had all but torn the Vortex apart, struggling to feed as time convulsed and haemorrhaged. The Time Lords' escape routes were being closed off one by one. This war would have to end the old fashioned way.

The door to the antechamber slid open with a satisfying wheeze and, just for an instant, Babel was lost for words. He stroked his wispy goatee thoughtfully, a voice in his head inexplicably telling him to run.

One of the technicians turned and looked at him expectantly. Babel acknowledged the gesture with a quick nod; a nod of assent. With that, the technician pulled an almost comically-oversized and archaic lever and the metal bed on which the potential saviour of the Gallifreyan people laid began to tip forward.

'...if we could find a way to breed and educate troops as fast as the Daleks can...'

It had worked.

Gradually the bed levelled out so that it was completely vertical, the feet of its intimidating occupant hovering just above the ground.

'...there is always, the Matrix, my lady...'

By Rassilon, it had worked!

'...the consciousness of every Time Lord that has ever lived...'

He had found a way to bring back their dead, and, by Rassilon, it had worked!

'...ready to be transferred into a newly loomed body...'

Their greatest scientists, their greatest tacticians, their greatest leaders.

'...very well. Do it, Babel. And may Rassilon forgive us...'

Their greatest legends could all be conditioned to serve, and respond.

'...Co-ordinator. Please proceed with caution. Needless to say, there are – were – those amongst us who, ah, would not necessarily help with the war effort...'

The souls of the triumvirate may have eluded the Matrix thus far, but Babel had found the next best thing.

The perfect warrior for a Time War.

The single greatest military leader in Gallifreyan history raged against the primitive steel chains that bound him, and through sheer force of will tore himself free.

Morbius lived again.

* * *

BOW-SHIP VENTURE, ON ROUTE TO THE CRUCIFORM: 5.734 / APPLE / MARABOU-STORK AD

The Doctor steadied himself on the navigation console as the deck beneath him shook wildly. As he struggled to right himself, the Doctor caught a glimpse of his visage in the smooth, reflective surface of the console. His hair had all but gone now, and his eyes... they were the same colour, but not at all the same. The veins had shifted... He could **see** it. The slightest of changes, every day, each more subtle than the last. The sight made his blood run cold.

He was dying from the inside-out, and the chances were that he would end up gruesomely deformed... If he survived at all, that is. The only thing that frightened him more than the prospect of a Dalek Emperor in control of the Time Lords' secret offworld loom was the idea of a botched regeneration.

The deck shook violently again and the Doctor was thrown across the room, colliding with one of Babel's new 'dematriculated' or 'demat' troops. In front of the ship an unfeasibly large bolt of steel had just destroyed a Dalek saucer through sheer brute force. No force shields, no matter how sophisticated, could repel a stake of validium-coated steel fourteen miles long. The Doctor found it ironic that his people's most durable weapon was conceptually the most primitive. Dalek or Vampire, the Bow-ship didn't discriminate.

'Sorry sir,' muttered the soldier distantly, scurrying to his station as the Doctor dusted down his new leather jacket.

'No worries, mate-' the Doctor was saying when his jaw dropped, frozen.

Nigh on a thousand Dalek saucers had just appeared on the view screen in an attack formation around the Cruciform. From this angle, and at this distance, it looked like a crucifix was being swarmed by locusts.

Babel's dying words graced the intercom a few moments later, but nobody on the bridge of the Venture was listening. The smoking ruin of the Cruciform hung on the view screen. The swarm had done its work.

BOW-SHIP VENTURE, IN THE VORTEX: 3 MONTHS RELATIVE AFTER THE FALL OF THE CRUCIFORM

'Oh fantastic! *Fantastic!*' The Doctor pounded his fist down against the Venture's engine core. In return, it showered him with sparks.

The Doctor's TARDIS stood in the corner of the Venture's engine room, countless wires trailing from its central column, out through the Police Box double-doors, all the way up to the Venture's engine core. No matter what the Doctor did, the ship didn't have a chance of getting back to Gallifrey ahead of the Dalek task force that had crippled it.

The Doctor heard footfalls but didn't bother to turn around. He knew it was Morbius – after all, as the only two survivors of the attack, who else would it be? When the ship was full, he had been avoidable. But now...

The Doctor hadn't been looking forward to this one bit and, in truth, nor had Morbius.

'How much longer are you going to waste tinkering, Prydonian?' came the thundering voice of the former dictator.

This was *it*.

The Doctor threw down his sonic screwdriver down and swaggered right up to Morbius, staring the neutered tyrant down. Neither man blinked and neither man breathed. This was the first time that they had met since they fought their way over the edge of a cliff on Karn, but then, that hadn't really happened, had it? And it wasn't even the same Morbius... not really. The Doctor wondered if Morbius could remember those events; if the Matrix's tendrils stretched out that quite far.

'Look see, I know they're supposed to have curbed your malicious impulses with retro-geneweaving or what have you, but I just want you to know that I don't believe a word of it. OK?' the Doctor lectured, wagging his sonic screwdriver at Morbius as he spoke. 'And that, if I have to, I'll take you down with the Daleks. **Have you got that?**'

Morbius sneered. He couldn't recall ever being chastised with a sonic screwdriver before. 'You might have to. It is not **us or them** anymore, Doctor. It's **us and them**, or the whole of creation. If I can see it, why can the **great saviour** of the universe not? The Commander knew that my **solution** might prove be the only option, and I happen to know exactly what his standing orders were, should he perish.'

The Doctor shook his head and turned away, heading back towards the engine core at the far end of the room. 'No way. No. We're not doing this your way. You're just in it for the killin'. I'm not gonna give up on our people, even if it does rid the universe of every last stinkin' Dalek. I won't do it.'

‘But I have made it so easy for you, Doctor. Look,’ Morbius held up a small black box in his left hand, waving it ever so slightly. In the centre of the box was a big, ominous red button. The stellar manipulator’s deadman switch.

The Doctor shook his head contemptuously. ‘No chance, mate.’

Morbius dropped the box on the floor and ran over to the Doctor, who had abruptly bent over double in pain.

‘You are not getting any younger, Doctor, despite what you would have us believe. I can see the life ebbing out of you...’

Morbius paused. ‘No, it is more than that, is it not?’

The Doctor’s skin began to crawl with light, but instead of exuberant orange the light was a murky brown.

‘Of course!’ Morbius ejaculated, his eyes wide with perverse fascination. ‘You are *phasing!* What is the matter? Been staving him off too long? You never cease to amaze me, Doctor. No wonder they call you *Life’s Champion!*’

‘I’m... Oh no! This is it, innit... *Isn’t it?*’ the Doctor muttered, his northern accent slipping back into soft, silky tones. ‘This is why I could never see... *Eighth Man Bound*... I held on too long...’

‘Oh no, Doctor. Your next life has been foretold.’

‘What? But that’s impossible. I could never see it!’

‘Doctor, Doctor... You forget - I was born of the Matrix. I have seen into corners of time and space that you could not even conceive of. And more important than that, I have seen into the deepest recesses of your mind. Better than anyone, I

know just how far back you go, and just how far you have to go. And I know that this was meant to be. Everything is fixed, Prydonian, and you cannot change it.'

'I won't do it, Morbius. I won't sacrifice our people, even if it means ridding the universe of all the hellish horrors of this War.'

'Oh because they are so worth fighting for, are they not? Worth the universe? Because, let us be clear, that is what is at stake. They exiled you and put you on trial... Romana cast you aside so that she could lead her spiritual elite into the six-fold realm, and as for those left behind. The diseased...'

'They only did what I wanted them to...'

At that remark, Morbius laughed. In the corner of his eye, he could see the Doctor's Watcher, his right arm outstretched. His hearts began to beat that little bit faster. This was *it*.

'End it Doctor. **Kill** the Daleks. **Kill** your own kind. End this war!'

The crisis moment had arrived.

Life or death.

Or, perhaps, even both.

'I... won't... do... it... ' The Doctor's every last word was a struggle, his every breath a fight.

'You have the moment, Doctor. Use it.'

Morbius glanced urgently over his shoulder as the Doctor's vision started to blur. The Doctor could barely make out the line '...allow an old man his final revenge...' before the cacophony of light and sound became too much for his ailing senses.

On the engine room's tiny view screen, the Doctor's flagging vision showed him a quorum of Dalek saucers entering the Gallifreyan system, each of them travelling sublight behind a burning ribbon of black. What a sight to behold with his new eyes.

The Time Lords might have been blind to the details of their future, but they could see its reflections; the ripples in the water. They had always known that this day would eventually come.

'Take them... with us...' Morbius hissed, but the Doctor couldn't hear.

And, in the darkest corner of his hearts, the Doctor *wanted* Morbius to press the button and wipe out every last Dalek, and every last Time Lord with them. He wanted Morbius to give him what he could never ask for; what he could never allow himself to even think. The Doctor *wanted* to die with his people. He'd earned it.

But he knew that Morbius couldn't press that button. He had the same twisted mind and the same bloodthirsty desire for revenge that he had had ever since the Doctor first met him on Karn all those lifetimes ago, but now, thanks to Babel's tampering, he was completely impotent; a beast in a cage, playing his walk-on part in the War.

Morbius took the device and placed it in the Doctor's sweaty palm. The Doctor struggled to wiggle his fingers. He just had to know, in himself, whether he had the means to press that button. Not that he'd do it. Not that he could do it.

But then again, if his people were doomed in any event, then he'd be doing the right thing in pressing the button and wiping out both races to preserve the universe. If it was coming from anyone other than Morbius, he might even admit as much - "*the needs of the many...*", and all that jazz.

Perhaps conscience and morality were luxuries that the Doctor could no longer afford. But then again, sentiments like that led down a slippery slope...

'Coward or killer?' came a twisted voice from within, and then the Doctor heard no more.

BOW-SHIP VENTURE, DRIFTING IN THE KASTERBORAN DESOLATION: TIME FRAME UNKNOWN

The Doctor sat bolt upright.

He'd survived.

Just as he survived the fall of Arcadia, and the sealing of the rift at the Medusa Cascade.

Saved once more by the shielding regenerative energies of a botched regeneration. It was almost too convenient. Almost too *cruel*.

How long had he been unconscious, drifting in space? The Doctor had no idea.

The memory suddenly struck him, like a hungover drunk half-remembering a painful indiscretion.

'Life's Champion,' the Doctor scoffed fervidly, admiring the backs of his hairy hands and desperately trying to bury the memory of something that he never really knew.

* * *

EARTH: 2,005 AD

'My planet's gone,' explained the Doctor, eyes forward and unblinking. 'It's dead. It burnt like the Earth, it's just rocks and dust. Before its time.'

'What happened?' asked Rose gently.

'There was a war and we lost.'

'A war with who...?' Rose's voice trailed off; somehow she was aware that an answer would not be forthcoming. 'What about your people?' she ventured.

'I'm a Time Lord,' said the Doctor, taking a deep breath. 'I'm the Last of the Time Lords. They're all gone. I'm the only survivor, I'm left travelling on my own, 'cos there's no one else.'

Rose smiled softly. 'There's me.'

VANDROS IV ALPHA: 6.02 / BANANA / CARBURETTOR AD

For miles the Doctor and Rose walked in silence. They had descended down to and then waded through Lake Hurque, Rose somehow managing to finish off her bag of chips despite being waist-deep in alien waters.

The Doctor had been deathly quiet ever since the TARDIS had materialised, the look on his face identical to the one that he wore when he first told Rose of his planet's fate.

As she marched dutifully towards a looming mountain, Rose thought about Mickey, and how he'd be waiting in that alleyway right now; waiting for her to come home. But the more she thought about it, he wouldn't be waiting at all; he'd simply be

frozen in the moment that she'd left him, waiting for the world to start up again. Either that, or dead -the ultimate Schrödinger's cat! The thought made her chuckle, earning her a remonstrative glance from the Doctor.

As the bottom of the mountain came into focus, Rose noticed the Doctor's eyes squinting and his feet picking up the pace. A brisk walk soon became a light jog which eventually became a full on sprint.

It took Rose quite some time to catch up with the Doctor. As fit as she was, she was certainly no sprinter. Not straight after chips, anyway.

The Doctor was stood perfectly still, just staring at the mountain. At first Rose wondered what exactly he was staring at, but then she realised. The base of the mountain was completely covered with small wooden crosses, each just a few inches high. They didn't look religious - more like the sort of thing you might find in somebody's back garden helping a plant to grow. Only these didn't support any plants.

They were just damp, mouldy bits of wood.

And there seemed to be hundreds of them, perhaps even thousands.

And then Rose looked up the mountain. They went all the way up, right up onto the highest buttresses that she could see. Right up into the mist. **Millions**, maybe?

'Doctor, what are they?' she asked, fully prepared for the most grim of responses. She remembered her Year Six trip to the Battlefields of Belgium and France all too well, and this place had the same sort of funerary feel. The only difference was that this place seemed more remote somehow; more desolate.

No matter how geared up Rose was, she was not prepared for the Doctor's response.

His normally self-assured, northern voice reduced to the barest of whispers, the Doctor turned to face his companion so that he might answer her question. 'They're monuments to *worlds*, Rose. Every single one of 'em, see. Welcome to the planet of the dead.'

Rose clasped the Doctor's hand tightly, doing her best to smile reassuringly. She couldn't even begin to comprehend the enormity of what the Doctor was showing to her - what he was *sharing with her* - and so she just stared forward, holding his hand.

THE CRUCIFORM, 5.733 / APPLE / MARABOU-STORK AD

'I am sorry Sir, but Morbius is just too volatile. We are going to have to recall him from *the Venture*. He may want rid of the Daleks – but he wants rid of us more! He has done nothing since his return but seek to undermine our control over him.'

Babel sighed. 'Damn it. Morbius was our last hope.'

'No, Sir. There are others.'