

Chapter 26

'Please take us back to 2006, please...' Hardy was almost crying.

'Well, how are you feeling, did the tablets do any good?'

'Erm...well...I may be a bit better....but....'

'There's only one thing for it', said the Doctor decisively, turning dials and pressing buttons, 'let's go!'. He pushed the big handle forward.

*****The box lurched again.

Rose, who had been silent and sultry during the trip back to 1850, glanced at the dials that The Doctor had been turning.

'You're going to love this one', she said, '2050, a brilliant year for medicine'.

'Why is it brilliant, will it be able to cure me?,' moaned Hardy. His ailments had clearly returned to haunt him.

'2050 is the year that they finally discovered the ultimate secret of human life, the key to *immortality*,' said Rose grandly. As she said the word 'immortality', she ran her hand over the perfect skin of her face and smiled broadly.

'I just want to be rid of these terrible *pains*', said Hardy. As he said the word 'pains', he ran his hands pathetically over his whole body.

Jolt. The Tardis jolted to a stop. The Doctor spoke.

'Now, we have to be a bit careful here, my friends. By about 2060 things had settled down a bit, but in 2050 they were still suffering from the effects of the 2049 Great Reboot, when all civilised society had been re-programmed, but a bug in the computer code had meant that all human minds were scheduled to work at double speed, like a film on fast forward. You have to be ready for them being a bit unpredictable. Especially in medical matters, there was a lot of pressure on them to get operations completed in the shortest time possible. For a while medical staff were grabbing people in corridors and just operating on them, there and then. There was often no time to lie down, they just grabbed you, held you down, and started work.

'Er, I think I'm feeling a bit better'. The voice was Hardy's. Pathetic.

The Doctor either did not hear, or ignored him, because he was busy opening the front door. But he was being rather cautious, which in turn made everyone nervous in turn. He looked carefully around the side of the door before exiting.

The corridor was empty. It was unbelievably bright, and they each had to blink several times before they could focus on the scene in front of them.

The corridor was bright white, with high fluorescent bulbs producing the uncomfortable level of light. The floor was white. The walls were white. The ceiling was plain white, broken only by

several small grilles out of which was playing quiet music. They listened for a while before proceeding.

'You're beautiful,

You're beautiful,

You're beautiful, it's true,

sang a familiar voice.

'Still number one then,' said the Doctor turning to Rose and smiling.

A man appeared at the end of the corridor, and stood with his arms across his chest. He was wearing a long silver coat, and some kind of helmet which sat on the top of his head, but which had curly wires leading down his back, and a set of glasses, rather like diving goggles, which covered half his face. In his hand he carried a small metallic stick which glowed menacingly.

'Beep', he said, approaching Hardy with the stick.

'No, I'm fine, really,' stammered Hardy quickly.

'Beep', said the man again, slightly louder this time, coming much closer now. The stick started bleeping.

'Beep, beep, BEEP!', said the man, seemingly irritated. 'Bleep, bleep, bleep, BLEEP', went the little stick.

'Ah, Doctor Bleep, g-g-good to see you'. Even Doctor Who sounded nervous now. They all recoiled a little as he tried to step in between the good doctor and Hardy.

'BLEEP!', said Doctor Bleep again, turning to look behind him, really loud now, and really angry.

Two females dressed head to toe in silver, with large backpacks and complicated-looking hoses and pipes leading to various parts of their suits and helmets, appeared at the end of the corridor. Doctor Who drew out his sonic screwdriver and pointed it at Dr Beep, who froze quite still.

'Uh Oh, cybernurses, you don't want to mess with them, quick, get back inside'. He grabbed Hardy's collar and pulled him away from the temporarily disabled doctor. The cybernurses started advancing slowly down the corridor.

'I'm much better, really...' said Hardy pathetically.

'When they were rebooted, President Cameron gave the order for re-programming but the order got encrypted incorrectly, wires got crossed and the nurses have been out of control ever since. Get inside, now'.

They scrambled inside the Tardis, and Rose and the Doctor leant on the door to close it, just

as the errant nurses were making their advance. The Doctor almost climbed over Clara to get to the controls.

'2006, *please*', said Clara.

'Yes, yes, that's where we were going, my friends'.

Another jolt. Another whoosh. And another bump.

'This is where we part company,' said the Doctor cheerily, 'Ten past three, on March 15th 2006. How are you feeling, my dear boy?' he said, turning to Hardy.

'I'm fine, absolutely fine', Hardy replied, jumping up and down on the spot for emphasis.

'Well, I knew we could fix you one way or another!', said the Doctor as they all piled out. 'Come on Rose, we've work to do, I hear Mr Dickens has some problems with a ghost!'.

And with a deep booming sound from the Tardis, they were gone.

Freddy, Hardy, Wil and Clara looked at each other, and breathed a huge collective sigh of relief, of muted excitement, and of tiredness at what had happened to them over the past few days. Where they had been, and where they had ended up.

Where they had ended up.

Good question, where exactly had they ended up?

It didn't look very familiar. Some grass. Some large trees. A slightly strange smell. A wooden hut.

They looked at each other questioningly.

'Well, I suppose we can't just stand here all day, let's see if anyone is around,' said Freddy, reassuming his role of leader.

He marched up to the hut, followed by the others. He tried the door. He knocked once. No answer. He knocked again. He pushed at the door, and it opened. They peered round the corner of the door.

Inside was a most bizarre sight. Twenty-eight children, dressed in red, sitting quietly at their desks, writing, drawing, or constructing things. They stared at the children for a while. Occasionally the children would speak,

'Yes Mr Davis, no Mr davis, of course we will Mr Davis.'

Freddy looked round at the others. None of them had ever seen such well-behaved children before. Everything seemed so normal.

Suddenly, there was a shout. Up roar. Children everywhere, running to the window, bumping into each other, knocking over chairs and tables.

'Look, up there!', shouted one of the children, pointing to the sky.

Everyone looked up. *Not so normal after all.*

There, in the distance, clear as anything, a flock of cows flying south for the winter.

THE END