

As you know, for such a long time I wasn't much of a fan of Christmas. Always popped off on holiday. The best one was Tenerife. You remember the stories? The night that Veena cleared out the Karaoke bar with her painful rendition of 'I will survive', missing words and all? Well the bar didn't survive, but we can't let Veena know she put a bar out of business. Especially when they did such brilliant cocktails!

Well, Grandad. This one was a weird old Christmas. Strange, it's probably June or July where you are, trips to Margate with Minnie and everything, but for us it was Christmas a couple of days ago. Christmas 6015. And a little story of how The Doctor became John McLane. Well, not literally, but he did a mighty good impression of it. No sight of him in a dirty vest though. Kind of a shame...

A Ding-Dong Merrily Up High

by Steve Fiori

We were in the TARDIS, and I was bored. Seriously bored, and you know how I get when I'm bored. All the Doctor could do was be a bloke and fiddle with the console whilst humming various songs. I went for a walk around the TARDIS – spent about two hours trying to figure out my way back! Eventually made it...

“Christmas!” the Doctor yelled.

“Christmas?” I replied. Well, just repeating...

“Yes. I'm feeling Christmassy. Very Christmassy! I love Christmas... snow, turkey, token alien invasion to keep me on my toes... yes, Christmas!” He was too excited, practically dancing around the console like a right muppet.

“Yeah, but do you remember what the first Christmas we spent together was like?!” I asked, reminding him of the day we met. That bloody weird and mental day.

“Attacked by a giant spider and my fiancé getting eaten?”

He looked embarrassed, and then shrugged. “Not every Christmas is like that!”

“I do know, I have lived through 30-odd of them! Besides, you just said ‘alien invasion to keep me on my toes’ you big idiot!” There, I felt proud. Finally I’d outwitted him!

“Okay, we won’t do an actual Christmas.” And then he grinned, all cocksure. “But I bet there’s a certain thing to do with Christmas you’d love, knowing you!”

Oh this was good...

“What exactly would I love about Christmas?” I asked, confident spaceboy was going to be wrong.

“Christmas party, very Donna Noble,” he said. “Work paying for a free bar for the employees, dancing, music, handsome men to flirt with, you love it!”

My smugness dropped. He was bloody right ‘n’ all. I love a good booze-up. And all the other stuff. Especially the dancing, oh and there are nice blokes there too. Even more after a few wines have kicked in.

“Alright then, I love the Christmas drinks, that much I can admit!”

“Ha!” he yelled, and started setting course.

“You’ll love this one. Year 6000 and something on Earth. Skyscrapers that actually nearly poke into space!”

“Like that one in Dubai?”

“Even taller!”

“Oh, well, that is tall!”

“And we’re going there! The Smythe tower. At the North Pole.”

“A trip to see Santa then?”

“If he still lives there.”

So he’s telling me Santa is real. I’m not that stupid!

I watched him literally leaping round the console, then a thought hit me...

“What about invites?” I asked. “These things are invite only!”

“Psychic paper!”

Of course.

“Though you should put a dress on, Donna. Don’t think jeans and a jumper are gonna be acceptable!”

The cheek! Though he did have a point. Can’t turn up at a party where there’s all these supermodel types in lovely dresses and I roll up in casual weekend stuff.

Half an hour later I was waiting for him, all glammed up, when he turned up in a tux.

“Very James Bond” I joked, but he seemed to take it seriously, pulling a smug face.

“Well... yeah, I am pretty smooth!”

I couldn’t help but laugh.

Silly spaceman.

PART ONE: “Mistletoe and Wine...”

The Party was dazzling. The tower overlooked practically the northern hemisphere (okay, an exaggeration, but still...) with all these hover cars whizzing about, like something out of Star Wars. Everyone there was glamorous, which made it even more embarrassing when the Doctor took to the dance floor and did this mental dance where he waved his arms above his head. Nuts.

The wine flowed, then the gin, then the mulled wine. Oh, that mulled wine. It was all glitz and glamour too. Not only was there a load of socialite types there, there was royalty too. Princes, princesses, dukes and duchesses, literally the most expensive party ever. The host was the property supremo, Petro Smythe, who had work completed on the tower earlier that year.

He was only young himself, and yeah, basically a working class lad done good. The sort of story a media loves.

Only, Grandad... This was the story so far. They say behind every good man is a woman. But not Smythe, behind him was something else.

The band on stage were playing 'Fairytale of New New York' (the one with lyrics of Galway Spaceport instead of Galway Bay, thanks to future development), when I heard a familiar sentence...

"I'm getting weird readings."

I was talking to King Ronaldo of Scotland at the time, but that particular sentence came from someone behind me. I turned to see the Doctor, fiddling with the sonic.

"What do you mean, weird readings?" I knew roughly what he meant. No such thing as a quiet day with him about, which is why a REALLY high skyscraper probably wasn't the best place to be.

"Energy! Lots of it, coming from below..." He frowned: clearly the cogs were turning in his head. "Like something has been charging up for ages."

"Like what?" I asked.

"Like... how would you like to find out?"

"Kinda having fun up here, thanks. You can leave me with the booze and twiglets!"

"Fine, suit yourself... see you in a bit!" And so he sauntered off, past the bloke in the Santa costume, and the drunken elves.

PART TWO: "Lonely this Christmas..."

Some time had passed, the band on stage now had a weird female version of Justin Bieber on vocals (is he known in 2008? He seemed to rule the internet when we made a pit stop in 2011...) I'd got chatting to this Reindeer farmer from The New

Republic Of The Isle Of Man (much nicer than that actual farmer back home from the plain old Isle of Man that Sandra sent me on a blind date with. Bloody 'eck, he was frightening) who told me an intriguing story of how they had to eject a madman earlier that night.

Some fella called Iannis had got a bit close to one of the trees, and had probably had a bit too much to drink. He had apparently heard a sort of humming sound, and saw a blue light in there. Weird. One of Smythe's men grabbed him and escorted him out.

The band with the strange woman boy finished, and Mister Smythe came back on stage to make a big announcement!

"Ladies and Gentlemen... let me thank you, for tonight wouldn't be possible without you. Your generosity and kindness helped me build this place, and for that I am thankful! But..."

Dramatic pause...

"...I am sad to announce that this world isn't yours any more, and you're all about to die!"

Just another day in the office.

Everyone in the room just gasped. And then burst into laughter. I didn't. I've been in these situations enough to know when some nutter is threatening to kill you, it's probably an actual threat.

Slowly I moved backwards towards the door as he began to speak again.

"I'm deadly serious. It has been fun, but you are all the most powerful people on the planet, and you all must die."

The security guards (who had even been chatty and friendly throughout the night), raised their guns, locking and loading and whatever the actual words are (you should know, you were in the war).

Then Smythe opened his mouth again...

"Mister Iannis of the Great Prosperous Treasury of Greece helpfully pointed out your visitors earlier, but you all laughed at him... well, here he is, back at the party to greet your new rulers!" Iannis was brought back in by the guards,

handcuffed and dragged on stage. "He must be made an example!"

Smythe pulled a remote control from his pocket and stroked it.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the Skaro council!" he said as he pressed the button.

Steam and smoke shot out of the trees in streams as they opened. Always with the dangerous Christmas trees.

Trundling out of the trees came these weird multi-coloured things shaped like a salt cellar or a pepper pot. They had these two little lights on their head, a long camera thing which I assumed was their eye and plungers and whisks for weapons! (What the hell are they meant to do? Meringue you to death?!)

One hovered up onto the stage and headed over to Iannis.

"And what do we do with examples?" asked Smythe. He turned to the monster and it stood silent.

Then it let out a shrill cry... "EXTERMINATE!"

It raised its whisk and then... boom, crash fizzle! The lights on the ceiling and Christmas trees flickered, sparks flying from every Electric item in the room, and then the pepper pot monsters themselves! Everyone scattered and ran out of the hall as I just stood there, trying to figure out how I'm supposed to help

Through the strobos and madness and noise, I saw Iannis yanked off of the stage suddenly, as Smythe yelled something inaudible through the din.

I didn't have time to attempt to hear what he was saying, as I was pulled away myself, out of the hall, and out into the light of the moon.

We were on the balcony. I was disorientated and flung myself to see who had pulled me out of the room... of course, it was the Doctor! All dirty and oily for some reason, but it was him!

From above, a massive blast of engine noise... these big helicopter-like things hovered down to the balcony.

"Evacuation! Everyone get inside them!" The Doctor yelled as he sonic'ed Iannis's handcuffs and pushed him towards the crowd. "You too!"

"What's going on?!" I yelled at the Doctor, simply confused from the

madness of the last couple of minutes.

“Daleks! I found their tech downstairs!”

Daleks! He had told me about them. Vaguely. Nasty things. Unbeatable. This was going to be a tricky Christmas. Even trickier than the great Christmas Eve scandal of Chiswick, back in 1999. Oh Debbie. Oh silly Debbie. Mulled wine can be an evil thing.

“So you called these guys? They won’t be shot down will they?” I asked the Doctor.

“That cordelaine signal should last the few minutes they need to fly off. Besides, this is the army, they’ll have force-fields on their ships...”

“Oh, one of those signal things. Very Sontaran. So is that what stopped the Dalek from killing?”

“Yup! Normally wouldn’t work, but they were thick enough to leave their stuff unguarded! I managed to programme it to affect Dalekanium which is why they can’t shoot. But it’s not going to last long!”

As a soldier jumped out and herded people on, the Doctor helped, and warned them to get away as fast as they can. Then a few words came down the radio. “Target located. Preparing to fire!”

PART THREE: “Stop the cavalry!”

The Doctor grabbed the radio, and straight away he started yelling down it. “Stop the strike! Your men will be slaughtered!”

“Will they? Like, there’s nothing they can do?” I asked. He shook his head. Well ain’t that pleasing to know...

The radio crackled and a voice the other end replied, “We’ll see about that!”

We looked out to see that most of the hover cars had scattered, the last

flying away as the Dalek saucer rose up from below...

“There’s more of them, Doctor?!”

“Only a few! I sonic’ed the tech. These are the last few survivors of a battle. Wonder if I was anything to do with it? Anyway! This is a small bunch of Daleks, few in the building, few in the ship.”

Just as he was saying that, a Dalek floated up beneath it.

“You were saying?”

“Okay, except that one, but there’s definitely only a few about!”

By now, the evacuation ships had filled up and left. We ran back into the tower, and the Doctor decided we were taking the stairs.

“Right, we’re not going back in via the windows are we? I nearly got killed last time!” I called, losing my breath as he had pretty much made it to the top. Where does he get that energy?!

“We just need to fiddle with the antenna dish thing up top!” He called as I struggled. “Well, I say fiddle... I mean blow up! Boom!”

“Why?!”

“To stop other Daleks getting the signal! They’re gonna invade!”

Brilliant.

As we went through the door onto the roof, the Dalek sped upwards and caught up with us, screaming all “EXTERMINATE! EXTERMINATE!” as he started shooting at us. He missed, but had hit the door, which was all buckled in and impossible to open. Great. Looked like we would be going back in via the outside of the building.

Then the army struck. And the Doctor didn’t expect what came next... Their missiles actually worked on the Dalek ship and ripped a dirty great hole in it. Then it started swooping down all in flames.

PART FOUR: "(A) Ding Dong Merrily Up High..."

One thing the Doctor told me whilst we went up was that these things were his worst enemy. Like, his planet and their planet were at war. Two great time travelling races battling it out, one big deadly war. Only two survived, the Doctor said, he and his former friend the Master. That one abandoned the war apparently, ran away. The coward. I was taken aback by all this. Him fighting an intergalactic timelocked time war of death, and the worst battles I had were with Nerys.

Speaking of Christmas (and Nerys...) while we were escaping to the roof, it reminded me of this massive ding dong me and her had Christmas Eve a last year (you remember, I thought I was still drunk when that Titanic replica fell from the sky...) It was her party, and she was all queen bee, even cosyng up to me and Veena after she had a few. So, as the night went on and the wine flowed, more and more people turned up. It was getting near midnight when she decided she was going to make a thank you speech (oh, how conceited), when her mad ex, Simon, jumped straight out of the tree. Needless to say, an ambulance was called and Nerys only escaped court on account of being inebriated. And that Simon was mental.

Anyway, I've gotten away from meself. The moral is, you don't know what's hiding inside a Christmas tree. Most people have their pet cat knowing at a bauble or a bit of tinsel but I seem to see the unpleasant stuff. Nutters, explosive balls, and Daleks. So, back to that night...

We ran up to the other side of the roof, to watch the blazing saucer slowly hover to its doom. It began swooping directly towards us though. And fast.

"Er... Doctor... how the flip are we supposed to get off the roof?" I asked in a panic, knowing he might not know. "We're locked up here!"

"The door!"

"Which the flipping Dalek melted and buckled up!"

"Ah!"

"Yes, ah! We're going to die!"

He laughed. "Nope! Found a little something earlier, very handy now!"

He pulled out some tinsel from his pocket. Then some more, then some more. He ran to the railing and tied it into a tight knot.

It suddenly dawned on me what he was going to try... he couldn't. That's absolutely mental!

"How the bloody 'eck do you expect that to hold both of us?" I yelled above the din of the now very close Dalek ship.

"This tinsel is made from Belaxian steelthread wire. Holds anything... It's probably keeping parts of this building together right now!" he yelled back.

"I'm not doing it!"

Too late. He tied it round our waists and grabbed my arm. He pulled us running, and as we got to the edge, it was now or never, we jumped over the railing like it was a big ol' hurdle. Sally Gunnell, eat your heart out.

And then we were off. He even yelled "Yippee ki-yay!" as we went!

As soon as we were over, we carried on falling forward until gravity and the length of the super super tinsel pulled us back and around through the window to the main hall.

We crash landed, the Doctor ripping the tinsel off us, as it whipped back out of the window. Suddenly there was the almighty crash as the Dalek ship hit the roof.

And then as we went to look outside, the top of the spire, the antenna thing, the ship and then the Dalek, now in a few pieces went crashing to the ground...

"Well, that's the contact cut off then!" yelled the Doctor.

"So they're not coming?"

He pulled the sonic out and let it whirr a bit.

"Nope, they didn't get through!" he said as he turned to the door and walked through, a man on a mission. "And now for those few in there!"

PART FIVE: "Emergency temporal shifting home for Christmas..."

We reached the hall where the pandemonium had happened earlier. Sitting alone in the middle of the hall on an extravagant throne thing was Smythe. He looked really narked. But he was alone and defenceless.

The Doctor went straight to Smythe and stood over him.

"Where did they go, Smythe?" he asked. I think that deep down, he knew they were gone though.

"They went. Poof, right into thin air!" Smythe replied. "Literally after everyone ran off".

"What?"

"Something about an emergency shift. They zapped out of sight! Gone! No more!"

The Doctor then kicked a bauble into the wall. Blimey, angry Doctor. Angry Doctor not good. He ruffled his hair and put his face in his hands.

"Gone again, Donna!"

He walked away from Smythe, and I went with him out of the hall to the main foyer where the TARDIS stood.

"Oh, they did say something before they went Doctor... to each other" Smythe yelled from inside the hall.

The Doctor turned round to him as Smythe continued to speak: "Something about a crucible..."

The Doctor stared for a moment, then carried on to the TARDIS.

"What's a crucible then?" I asked as I followed him back.

He opened the TARDIS door and look concerned. "I don't know. But it doesn't sound good..."

PART SIX: "Mele Kalikimaka..."

The Doctor leant on the console and I flumped down on the seat. Absolutely cream crackered. Just as Christmases always end. Even more so with the Doctor. I'll make a mental note to not let us land this time of year. Ever again.

"I lied" he said.

"About what?" I asked.

"Christmases. When I said they aren't always like that. They kinda really are!"

I couldn't help but laugh. "Every day with you is like that!" I replied.

He chuckled a bit, but as he walked off to the other side of the console, I noticed his smile drop.

"They're bad I know..." I started. "But we beat them, right?"

He didn't answer straight away, but nodded. I wasn't convinced but he seemed to be fine moving on.

"Where to?" he asked.

"Hmmm... I've had enough of snow. What about... Hawaii?"

"Ooo, look good in a hula skirt, do we?" he laughed.

"Oi, spaceman! Don't be getting any ideas!"

"Well then, next stop Hawaii!"

Lovely. I walked off down into the depths of the TARDIS, but before I got to my room, I turned to him.

"FYI, I look GREAT in one of those skirts!"

So, that's it, Grandad. That was my Christmas. Now, I've swung from the tinsel quite a few Christmases, but most of them it was just a euphemism for too many cocktails. Nice to do it for real for once.

Guess I'd better be going. But I hope you're well. And love to mum – only, don't tell her, of course, or she'll use it against us. But yeah, I miss you both.

And incidentally, a happy Christmas to all of you at home!



**DOCTOR
WHO**

CLASSIC DOCTORS - BRAND NEW ADVENTURES

A
DING-DONG
MERRILY
UP HIGH



by Steve Fiori



THE COMPANION CHRONICLES PROSE SERIES

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