

As a Time Lord, the Cavalier had a kind of sixth sense when it came to disruptions in Time. But even without such an innate ability, it wouldn't have taken a genius to work out that a computerised radar did not belong in Ancient Rome. The Cavalier turned to face the Roman General Titus, desperate for answers.

"How can you possibly have this sort of tech?"

"The Roman Empire is widely recognised as the most powerful and technologically advanced civilization in the world," General Titus replied simply. He indicated the machine in the corner of the tent. "This is pretty basic, though. The satellites in the sky provide us with a detailed map of all life forms in the surrounding area."

"Sorry, satellites?" repeated the Cavalier in disbelief. "This is impossible!"

"It might seem like magic to you, sir. I imagine they do not have this where you come from." He looked the Cavalier up and down. "Come to think of it, where *are* you from?"

"Gallifrey."

"Is that in Ireland? Yes, I think so. I have a friend in Ireland. We talk all the time on Skype."

The Cavalier shuddered. Nothing was as it was supposed to be. This was not the Ancient Rome that he had been expecting. He had planned to come to this day, in 218 BC, to see the Roman Empire taken by surprise by the forces of Hannibal, who had braved a dangerous fifteen-day trek across the Alps to attack unexpectedly from the north. Events had spiralled out of control for the Cavalier, of course, when he was attacked...

And then he remembered.

Post-regenerative trauma had apparently caused a very important matter to slip his mind, as the Cavalier only then remembered that someone had been following him, desperate to kill him. He needed to get out of here, to get home.

But, as his malfunctioning mind told him, his TARDIS had been destroyed.

He was stuck in Ancient Rome.

And to make matters worse, it was the *wrong* Rome.

The Fear of All Sums

by Samuel Marks



Episode Two

Romana couldn't believe her dreadful luck. The day had started out so promisingly, with she and the Doctor spending a relaxing morning in the park. Sure, K-9 had randomly transformed into a *real* dog--and then back again a few hours later--but that wasn't particularly unusual considering what life in the TARDIS was usually like. It was only when they had visited the art gallery that things had taken a turn for the worse.

When a painting mysteriously disappeared in the blink of an eye, the Doctor had taken it upon himself to head off in pursuit. K-9 had tracked it to this place--to the very room that Romana was now trapped in. An incinerator. Why did the Doctor always have to get involved in these things?

"Well," said the Doctor, holding the recovered painting close to his chest, "look on the bright side."

Romana glared at him. They were about to be burned alive--there *was* no bright side.

"At least we found the painting," the Doctor finished feebly.

Romana shook her head, despairing. The room was getting hotter by the second. Flames were bursting forth from beneath the grates that they were standing on. In a few moments, their lives would end. The painting of one of the Doctor's old friends from Gallifrey--the *Laughing Cavalier*--wasn't going to be much comfort to her.

Romana braced herself. This was the end. "Goodbye, Doctor. Thank you for showing me what I never knew existed. Goodbye, K-9. You really were a good dog."

"As were you, Mistress."

Though she was offended, Romana was more interested in the Doctor's demeanour: he was strangely calm given the life-threatening situation.

"What's wrong?" she asked him, her curiosity prevailing even in the face of death. "Or rather, what *isn't* wrong? You do know we're going to die, don't you?"

"Always so pessimistic, Romana!" said the Doctor. "Now, punch me in the face."

Without hesitation, she punched the Doctor as hard as she could, landing a harsh blow right on the nose, causing him to stagger backwards, recoiling with the pain. A small amount of blood trickled down his top lip.

He wiped it away, staring at his blood-stained hand in disbelief. "You... You *actually* punched me!"

"You told me to!"

"I didn't think you'd agree to it quite so easily! You didn't even ask *why*! I had a whole speech prepared and everything!"

"Oh, but regardless, it made me feel so much better," replied Romana playfully. "I think, perhaps, I can die happy now."

"Maybe you can," said the Doctor, smiling through the pain, "but it won't be today."

The temperature began to rapidly decrease in the incineration chamber, as the three time-travellers breathed a sigh of relief--both literal and metaphorical depending on whether they were robotic dogs or not.

"We're not dying!" Romana cried, embracing her Time Lord friend. "How did you get us out of that problem?"

"By giving us another one," the Doctor replied gravely.

The exit door unlocked and swung open, and the sentient security camera hopped over the inch-high threshold to join them in the incineration chamber.

"Incineration has been prevented," it said. "A crime was detected in this vicinity, namely one count of assault. Death is not a valid excuse. Justice will be swift."

The Doctor, seemingly ignoring the security camera's remarks, knelt down to get a better look at the robot.

"K-9," he said, "have you got any information on these things? What

exactly are they? Who created them, and why? I'd like to know who's to blame. And most importantly, do they have an off-switch?"

"Accessing files," said K-9, who appeared to be more helpful after his recent reboot. "These are the Kuricams, Master."

"Kuricams? What does that mean?"

"They are the future of policing. Not only do they see crimes being committed and record them for future reference, they are sentient and therefore able to carry out the arrests themselves. They are armed with lasers capable of stunning their target, and contain teleport technology to transport prisoners to their holding facilities."

"What a silly idea!" said the Doctor. "It's hardly fair. I mean, how are you supposed to convince these things that you won't misbehave again, in exchange for being let off with a warning? At least with flesh and blood police you can turn on the charm. You can't *flirt* your way out of a crime when you're charged by these things."

"Well," said Romana, "*you* can't..."

She glanced discreetly over at an oblivious K-9, and the Doctor followed her gaze. The robot dog's ear twitched. He didn't seem to understand.

"It's up to you, K-9," smirked the Doctor. "Get us out of this."

Romana could hear K-9's mechanical brain whirring. "Master?"

"You must have a flirt setting," the Doctor wondered. "Or are you permanently set on smart-arse?"

Seemingly understanding, K-9 trundled forwards, ready to deploy his canine wiles on the unsuspecting Kuricam.

"Might I say," said K-9, "that your circuitry looks particularly dazzling?"

"How dare you!" replied the Kuricam, offended. "I'll have you know that I'm a happily married camera, thank you very much. Away with you, pest!"

K-9 backed away, hanging his head.

"Don't worry, boy," said the Doctor. "You can do much better."

The Kuricam jumped up and down on the spot, demanding attention; its thin mechanical legs looked like they were going to snap under its own weight at any minute. Electricity began to spark around its lens.

"No, don't do that again!" Romana said. "We'll co-operate. What is it you want from us?"

"You must be punished. A fine must be paid, or you will be arrested."

"How much do I owe you?" asked the Doctor casually.

The Kuricam thought about this for a moment. "Sum of total infractions of the law results in a cost to the criminal of 4,650,312 Galactic Credits, and one pence."

"The penny's important, is it?"

"Vitally so, yes."

The Doctor patted himself down, knowing full well that he didn't have any money, but stalling for time while he thought of something--*anything*--that would get them out of this situation. "I'm afraid I don't have any cash on me at all. I suppose I could start a savings account with a penny and then jump forward a million years to collect on the interest, yes?"

"Unacceptable. Fine must be paid *now*."

"Oh, you jumped-up little...! Well, I can't pay, and I'm certainly not going to prison, so it seems we've reached a bit of an impasse."

"One additional option is available," said the Kuricam.

"Yes?"

"You could make a down payment of some kind, to state your intention to pay the fine in full as soon as possible. You should surrender any item of value."

"What about my companion?"

"The robot dog is almost worthless."

"I wasn't talking about K-9."

Romana punched the Doctor in the arm.

"Getting a taste for violence now, are we, Romana?"

She winked at him. He was just so *hittable*.

"Look," he said, "just take K-9. Keep him impounded until I find the money--which I will do soon--and consider it a promise that I take my standing with the law very, *very* seriously. Deal?"

"Master?" began K-9 tentatively. "Should we not discuss this strategy first? I am not sure--"

"Proposition accepted," declared the Kuricam with a nod, which involved tilting its whole body forward to such a degree that it almost lost its balance.

Romana knelt down beside K-9, and patted him affectionately. "Don't worry," she said soothingly. "We'll be along to rescue you in no time at all."

"Thank you, Mistress," K-9 replied.

"Before you go," the Doctor said to the Kuricam, "what's so special about this painting? What's going on? Do you know who stole it?"

"Regrettably, we stole it. The man depicted in the artwork is wanted for serious crimes, including unpaid bills and indecent exposure. Kuricam officers detected his likeness and made an arrest, but it seems that we were *too* swift..."

"Yes, you were," said Romana. She suddenly remembered the security camera she had seen in the park earlier. "That was one of your lot, was it?" she asked, having explained the strange sighting.

"Correct."

"You detected the presence of a TARDIS--*our* TARDIS--on Earth," realised the Doctor aloud. "And then you found whatever looked like the Cavalier nearby, in the art gallery. Recognising the image of him, you went in for the arrest. You put two and two together and ended up with about a million!"

The Kuricam didn't answer. Romana had previously found them intimidating, but now that she had observed their tendency to arrest *paintings*,

she found them laughable more than anything else.

"And then you were just going to incinerate the painting because you got it wrong?" the Doctor went on. "This is art! It needs to be treasured and admired and loved, not burned to smithereens!" said the Doctor in what Romana observed was a curiously impassioned plea in favour of art. She never knew that he was so cultured. He was full of surprises.

The Kuricam said nothing else. It scurried over to K-9 and jumped up onto its back. The two machines disappeared in a teleport glow.

"Well," said the Doctor, "that was good. We managed to get rid of *two* irritating machines in one go!"

The Cavalier hadn't known what to do with himself since discovering the radar. He wanted to do *something*, to help put the timelines back on track. But without his TARDIS, trapped in this unfamiliar world, he felt helpless. He couldn't stop a tear from breaking out, and hoped that he had managed to wipe it away before General Titus had seen it. The last thing he wanted was to appear weak.

Titus approached the corner of the tent where the Cavalier was sat, and put his arm around him. "Be strong, stranger. To die and then come back to life can't have been easy, I understand. Merely as an observer, my *own* nerves are shaken."

The Cavalier nodded. "Cheers, pal."

"I will be here if you want to talk." General Titus wandered over to the radar and, after a few moments of studying the computer, he swore loudly.

"What is it?" asked the Cavalier, snapping himself out of his contemplation. He could feel sorry for himself later. Now, he had a problem to solve.

"We've caught sight of them." The General indicated the radar. "Hannibal of Carthage and his forces are close. They are within range."

"In range of what?"

General Titus smiled. "You will not be ignorant of the true power of the Roman Empire for much longer. Come with me."

The Cavalier followed Titus out of the tent and into the Roman encampment on the mountainside. The soldiers, too, were leaving their shelters and gathering in the centre of the camp. The Cavalier felt his hearts beating faster in his chest. Everything seemed so wrong, so terribly wrong.

A young soldier passed something to the General.

"Oh, of course!" said the Cavalier, resigned to the strangeness of this corner of the universe. "You've got a radio!"

General Titus spoke into the device. "Attention! This is your general speaking. The hordes of Hannibal have continued their advance, and have dared to defy our glorious and righteous Empire. They must be stopped! Roll out the fighters!"

"What does that mean?" asked the Cavalier. "Are you sending in gladiators to fight for you?"

"Not that sort of fighter, I'm afraid. Look to the skies!"

Right on cue, a deafening noise sliced through the thin air of the mountain, as something distant grew steadily closer. The Cavalier stared upwards, along with the Romans.

He couldn't quite believe what he saw: three sleek jet fighters zoomed across the sky, high in the clouds, leaving a trail of glorious red smoke behind them as they went. General Titus and his troops all cheered, but while the Cavalier's mouth hung open as he stared skywards, no sound came out.

There were no words.

A deep rumbling could be heard from far-off, across the Alps. It was unmistakably the noise of the jet planes of the Roman Empire dropping their bombs on the unsuspecting forces of Hannibal. But when the ground continued to shake long after the distant explosions ceased, General Titus and his forces

quickly stopped cheering.

"The mountain's coming down around us!" said the Cavalier, panicked.

Though they were silent, the Romans were seemingly unconcerned.

"Do not worry yourself, stranger," said Titus simply. "There's plenty of room in the transmat pod."

One minute that Cavalier had been stood on a mountainside, with the screech of fighter planes growing terrifyingly closer by the second, and the next he was in a large stone courtyard in the middle of a city. He had finally reached Ancient Rome, but it wasn't at all like he had been expecting.

The Roman courtyard looked like it had been converted into some sort of transmat hub--ancient and modern at the same time. The stony walls were lined with electrical cables, all powering up the huge glowing circle in the middle of the floor on which the Cavalier, Titus and the rest of the Romans had appeared. The Cavalier had dozens of questions, but it seemed that he was not the only one.

A young woman hurried over to General Titus. She was holding a microphone, and was flanked by a man holding a television camera.

"A film crew," mumbled the Cavalier miserably. "Oh dear." He wondered whether the radio and the fighter jets might have been the worst of it, but it seemed that the situation was far worse than he could ever have imagined. Ancient Rome was so utterly wrong.

"General Titus!" shouted the reporter excitedly. "Do you have any comments for everyone watching at home? How was the battle? I should add, we are live, so please don't swear."

Titus flashed a winning smile, and ruffled his hair. "Do I look okay? Right. Comments? Oh, well, everything went fine. Hannibal was well and truly trounced. No problems at all. Rome is safe, as usual, etcetera."

The reporter nodded. "That's fantastic. Thank you. I'll let you and the others head off to the bath house and get cleaned up."

Not even that thought managed to put the Cavalier in a good mood. The whole situation was overwhelming. He felt so uneasy, and knew he had to act. As a Time Lord, it was his responsibility to fix it. Somehow...

But the Cavalier spotted something out the corner of his eye. Standing beneath an archway in the courtyard, cloaked in shadow, was what appeared to be some sort of black knight. Glowing red eyes looked out from behind a heavy helmet, as if piercing the Cavalier's soul.

He felt a shiver run down his spine. Somehow, in his hearts, he knew that this was the enemy who had destroyed his TARDIS. Now they were coming to finish the job--to finish *him*.

The Cavalier didn't know what to do. Should he run? Or maybe confront the strange knight? He couldn't decide. So they stood for a while, as if oblivious to the joyful chaos of the Romans all around, just staring at each other across the courtyard.

Suddenly General Titus stepped in front of the Cavalier, obscuring his view. "So, friend, what will you do know? Are you planning on staying here? I think you'll love it. We have all the mod-cons and over a thousand television channels..."

The Cavalier stopped listening and peered over General Titus' shoulder to look over at the archway, at the sinister figure beneath it. But he saw that there were now at least a dozen of the black knights, all staring right at him with those red eyes. There was no doubt about it. They were coming for him.

"S-stay here?" The Cavalier couldn't take his eyes off the figures. "Nah, General. I'm afraid I can't. Actually, I-I-I think I'd better get going. Well done on the battle and stuff." The Cavalier planted a congratulatory kiss on the General's lips, then turned on his heels and ran as fast as he could.

He hoped that wouldn't be his last kiss. Not that it wasn't a good one, but he had that privilege reserved for someone else. For an old friend from Gallifrey...

Romana waited with the TARDIS outside the art gallery, while the Doctor returned the *Laughing Cavalier* to its rightful place. He emerged after a short while, deep in conversation with the woman who appeared to be the curator. She looked tired, and was no doubt in need of a good lie down after the dramatic theft of one of her paintings. Unfortunately for her, the Doctor was still talking.

When the Doctor had finally let the curator go, Romana asked where they were heading next. "Back to the park?" she suggested.

"Not just yet," said the Doctor. "First, we've got to see an old friend."

"Oh, yes. Poor old K-9, locked away because you can't pay your fine."

"What?" replied the Doctor, confused. "I was talking about the Cavalier! Thought we could pay him a little visit. It's been far too long since we last had a chat, and I need to warn him that some self-righteous little security cameras with a bad attitude are looking for him."

"But what about K-9?"

"Oh, he'll be okay for a while. What's the worst that could happen to him, he gets a little rusty? And I'm sure I've got a spare in the TARDIS somewhere, if it came to it."

The Doctor grinned at Romana; he was only joking. At least, that was what she told herself.

Above the entrance to the art gallery, a security camera swivelled to watch as the police box faded away. Its tiny mind clicked into action, realising that the box-shaped TARDIS might be its best hope of catching the criminal known as

the Cavalier.

"Justice will be swift," it said, before it teleported away.

The Cavalier was stopped running. He must have been miles away from the courtyard by now, and he had seen no more signs of the mysterious black knights. Perhaps he was wrong. Maybe they were statues, or... something. He couldn't think straight. His head was aching terribly.

Panting for breath, he stood leaning against a wall and tried to compose himself. He glanced around, checking that he was alone. But at the far-end of the street behind him stood one of the black knights.

"No way," sighed the Cavalier. He had to press on. "What in the name of Rassilon is wrong with this place?"

Summoning what little of his strength was left, he started running again. He turned a corner--and ran directly into someone. The Cavalier was knocked to the ground. His body collided with the tarmac painfully, and it took him a moment to regain his senses. But without looking, he knew that it was a black knight that stood looming over him.

The figure spoke in a deep, rasping voice that suited its terrifying exterior perfectly. "Nothing is wrong," he said. It was a *he*, for it was a man's voice, albeit one heavily manipulated by machinery.

"What are you talking about?" asked the Cavalier. "Of course it's wrong! There's technology here that doesn't belong in this time! It's completely impossible!"

"Incorrect," replied the black knight simply and chillingly. "It is not impossible. It is simply *improbable*. The chances are slim, yet it could still happen; indeed it *has* happened, as you can see."

The Cavalier started to push himself up onto his feet, but the armoured man placed his heavy boot onto the Time Lord's chest, holding him down.

Unable to move, the Cavalier's voice trembled. "Who the hell are you? And what do you want with me?"

Two more identical black knights stepped out of the shadows behind the Cavalier, preventing any chances of an escape. He was trapped, and at their mercy.

"We are the Zeronauts. And we want *you*."

The time rotor began its steady rise and fall as the TARDIS forged its way through infinity. The Doctor was busy at the controls, and once again, much to her annoyance, Romana had been reduced to simply being a passenger. She was forced to remain silent, keeping her intelligent criticisms to herself, even though she knew a faster, safer, and all-round better way to do what the Doctor was attempting.

"Done!" cried the Doctor triumphantly. "I've locked us onto the Cavalier's time signature. Wherever he is, anywhere and anywhen in the entire history of the universe, relative to our location, we can find him."

An explosion rocked the control room and it tipped on its side. The violent lurch knocked both the Doctor and Romana off their feet.

"Oh, for heaven's sake, K-9!" the Doctor said angrily, picking himself up off the floor and doing nothing to help Romana. "What have you done this time?"

"He's not here, is he? Remember? So there's only one person whose fault it is..."

"I suppose so." The Doctor thought for a moment. "Goodness, Romana, I thought you knew what you were doing!"

It took every ounce of strength in Romana's body to stop herself from answering back. Biting her tongue, she dusted herself off and checked the readings on the console. Despite the unintentional crash-landing, they had in fact seemed to arrive at the intended destination.

Outside the doors, the Cavalier awaited them.

General Titus searched long into the night to find the Cavalier, but there was no sign of him. The man was gone.

The flagship of the Zeronought Accumulation blasted through space, slowly but surely ploughing through the inky void, past stars and planets and moons of a thousand colours. On the command deck of the starship was the leader of the Zeronoughts, known as Nil the Calculator.

He was dressed identically to the others of his faction--his whole body protected inside seemingly impenetrable black armour--and yet it was still possible to tell that he was in charge. There was something about him, the way he walked and talked and held himself, as if he simply exuded power and confidence with everything he did, subconsciously letting everyone around him know that he was dangerous.

Also, he regularly killed people, which had a similar--if not even more potent--effect.

"What is the prisoner's condition?" he asked in the low, heavy, rasping voice that he shared with all the others of his kind.

"Life signs are stable," replied a lesser Zeronought, who was working away at a computer console nearby. "But the beat of his hearts has decreased, returning to regularity, and the lower levels of adrenaline support the conclusion that he is overcoming his fear."

"Well," said Nil, "we'll have to do something about that." He threw a lever on a nearby control console.

For a while, nothing happened. But the Zeronoughts waited patiently. A distant scream could then be heard, echoing up through the countless levels of the starship, having carried all the way from the holding cells. It was a cry of

pain, as thousands of volts coursed through a body that was already weak, and had already suffered so much at the hands of the Zeronauts.

The Cavalier would not be able to take much more.