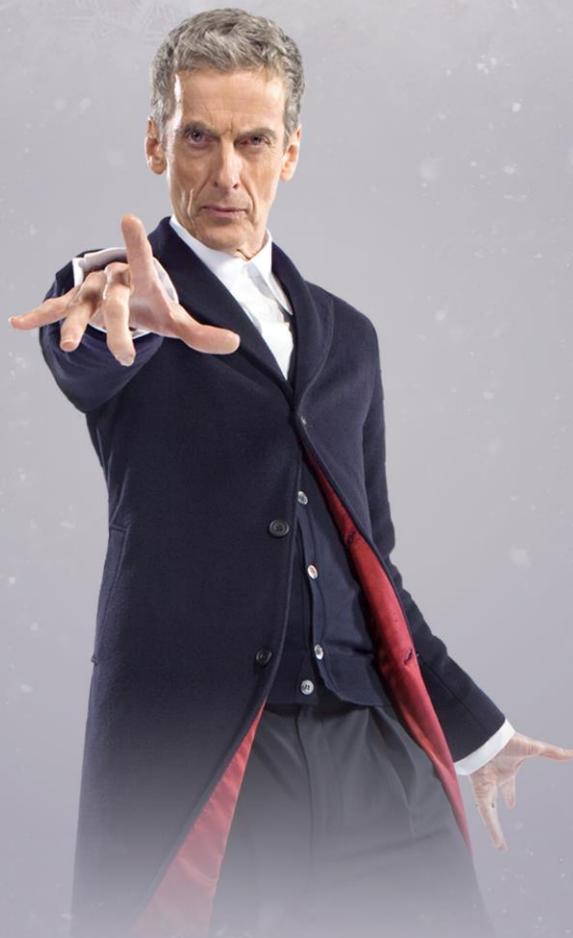


DOCTOR WHO



Behind You
Part Three

By Mark Williams

Part Three

“Proscenia!” said the Doctor. He pointed at a large planet on the monitor, as the TARDIS travelled back to 2014. “An entire civilization built from light. Home to two races, linked by a deep mental bond – the Addos and the Logos. The Addos are invisible beings of pure creative energy. They use light to make the most beautiful ships in the universe. The Logos are humanoid like you, Ceri – and they’re the Addos’ biggest fans. The Addos can only build something if the Logos are there to appreciate it.”

“Like a play can’t happen without an audience?”

“Exactly! The psychic appreciation of the Logos fuels everything the Addos create.”

“But why create animals out of actors?”

“When they crashed in 1902, before the damaged ship put them into emergency hibernation, the Addos got a glimpse of that Mummies play. Fast forward. 2014. A theatre opens on the same site. Big crowds, every day. All that appreciation wakes the Addos up. They try to repair the ship straight away – by recreating the last thing they saw an audience enjoy.”

“But this audience are terrified!” said Ceri.

“And all that fear is confusing the Addos. At first, I thought it was just the actors at risk. But in that Mummies play, the actors were part of the audience! Unless their ship is repaired, the Addos will keep transforming people, across the entire planet!”

“But you have a plan, right?”

“Of course! I’m going to do what I always do. Make it up as I go along.”

“Doesn’t sound like much of a plan.”

“Do chime in if you have a better idea,” said the Doctor.

Ceri thought for a moment. “How do you feel about getting into character?” she said.

The theatre auditorium was still in semi-darkness. On stage, the cast of Cinderella stood immobile beneath the Addos spotlights, transformed into human-animal hybrids. In the audience, a new spotlight shone down on an old woman, her head changing into a bear while the petrified crowd looked on in a waking trance. As a result, nobody noticed a horse-headed newcomer step onto stage.

“The revel begins,” said the old woman bear.

“So won’t you join in?” said the newcomer. The Doctor removed the pantomime horse head Ceri had taken from the Props Room. An Addos spotlight moved towards him, but the Doctor dived nimbly behind the back of badger-headed George. “Now!” the Doctor shouted.

Over in the wings, Ceri switched on the house lights. The sudden glare broke the Addos’ psychic hold on the audience, who shook their heads groggily.

“Don’t panic, it’s all part of the show!” said the Doctor. “We need your help with some audience participation!” The fox-headed figure of Jade lunged at the Doctor, who only just missed getting caught. “Look lively!” he yelled at the crowd, running to the front of the stage. “I haven’t got all day!”

Ceri rushed to the Doctor’s side. The cast of animal humans surrounded them in a semi-circle. Slowly but surely, they stepped ever closer.

“It’d help if you didn’t glare at the audience,” Ceri said.

“I’m not glaring!”

“No, you’re right. That’s more of a grimace.”

“This is my happy face!” said the Doctor.

A boy in the front row suddenly piped up. “Oh no it isn’t!” he shouted. A few people started to laugh. The animal-headed actors stopped in their tracks at the sound. Ceri elbowed the Doctor in the ribs. He sighed heavily.

“Oh... yes it is,” he said.

The audience roared. The fox’s features transformed back into those of Jade Martin. “Doctor, it’s working!” Ceri whispered.

“The audience’s mental energy is changing,” said the Doctor, “but the Addos need more than laughter to repair their ship.” Several people in the front row got shakily to their feet.

“Wait! The show’s not over!” shouted Ceri, “we’ve got a story for you!” She looked at the Doctor. “The story of an alien. A strange and crazy alien. He’s called the Doctor. And he can show you the most *amazing* things in the universe.”

The front row sat down again. And Ceri and the Doctor told them a story. The story of a mad man in a blue box, travelling through time and space. A reluctant hero turning up in unlikely places, often scary and sometimes dark, but always bringing light and hope where it’s most needed.

As they spoke, the Addos spotlights increased in number, sweeping across the stage in a kaleidoscope of colour. The audience cheered in delight and the lights moved faster, dancing above their heads in shades of red, green and gold as the Addos repaired their damaged craft. Finally the entire ship burst into view, enveloping the theatre in a cathedral of light. It flew up through the roof and out into the night sky, off into the glittering darkness of the Milky Way.

“Right, I’ve got a show to do,” Ceri said. She and the Doctor had made a swift exit to the Props Room, leaving the confused stage crew to figure out what had just happened. “Jade’s too shaken up to go on tonight. And this afternoon warmed me up nicely.”

“Go easy on the spotlights,” said the Doctor, smiling for the first time since Ceri had met him.

“Where did the Addos go?” said Ceri.

“Where everyone wants to go on Christmas Eve,” he said. “Home.”

“How about you, Doctor? Any Christmas plans?”

“I’ve got a time machine, Ceri! Every day is Christmas if I want it to be.”

The Doctor smiled again. But this time, Ceri noticed that the smile didn’t quite reach his eyes.

THE END

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