

DOCTOR WHO



Haunted Part Three

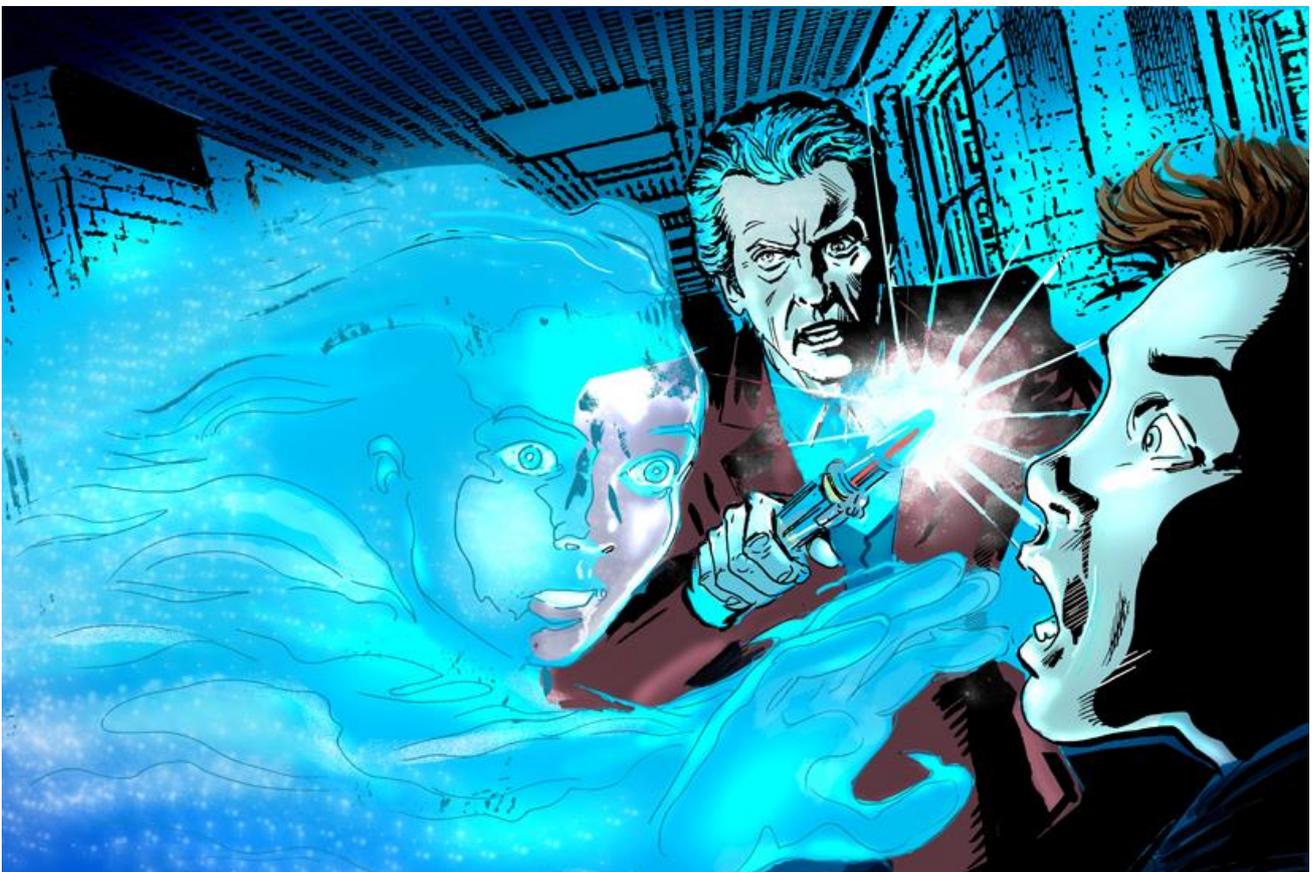
By Joseph Lidster

Part Three

Suddenly what feels like the entire world is lit up by this amazing bright blue light. I force myself to turn around and there's something in front of me. A boy with a blurry face staring at me. A ghost with arms outstretched, hands on my neck. And through him I can see the Doctor holding up a strange-looking metal device. Blue light is shining from it and he's grinning.

"It works!"

I look at him as he shouts. I look through the ghost at him. I look at him.



“New sonic screwdriver,” says the Doctor. “Don’t just stand there! Run!”

I see him running towards me and I look at the ghost staring at me and I pull free from his icy fingers and I run! And we’re both back running down the corridor. Paper snowflakes are still spinning in the air and we can hear the *tap, tap, tap* of the ghost following us. The Doctor is pointing his device – his sonic screwdriver – up at the lights and they’re pinging on but almost immediately going dark again. *Chink, chink, chink...* We keep running. Running towards the only lights that are still lit.

“We’re going back to the basement!” I cry out.

The Doctor nods. “It’s where it all started.”

“But it’s where it wants us to go!”

He looks at me again. “Clever boy,” he grins. Then he suddenly stops grinning. It’s as if he’s remembering something. Then he shouts. “Come on!”

We carry on running. I turn back a couple of times and see the ghost in the shadows. It’s just staring at me as it walks after us. And suddenly it looks so familiar. But it can’t be...

“Stop looking at it!” shouts the Doctor. “And tell me, what was a clever lad like you doing down in the basement?”

As we run, I tell him. I tell him about Dan and how he bullies me. I tell him about how the others laugh at me. For some reason, I tell him everything. “I just wanted to... impress them. I want them to like me!”

“Then you’re an idiot,” he replies. And that’s that.

We reach the basement and run down the stairs. It's dark except for the single light fitting hanging from the ceiling. The Doctor glances up at it. "Not bad considering that's over a hundred years old. Things were made to last in those days." I look up at the light bulb. I'm not particularly good at history but...

"They had light-bulbs like that in the 1900s?!"

The Doctor stops and stares at me. "What?"

"You... you said that's over a hundred years old."

I feel cold again. The Ghost...

"Ross," asks the Doctor, gently. "What year is it?"

"2015," I reply.

"Ross," says the Doctor. "It's 2115."

The boy. Locked in. Trapped over Christmas. Always looking for a way out. *Tap tap tap. Chink chink chink.* And he looked so familiar...

"I'm... I'm the ghost?" I whisper. "I'm dead?"

There's what feels like an eternity of silence and I remember how the catch was missing from the window. How I couldn't open it. I remember how the lights were on – almost as if they sensed my presence. And I realise... I'm in the future. It's 2115 and I'm dead and I'm the Ghost.

“Oh, don’t be ridiculous,” says the Doctor. “You’re not a ghost, now come on. Where were you when you woke up?”

I close my eyes and take some deep breaths. It was a trick another doctor had taught me for when I found myself getting fixated on things. I point to the far corner and he strides over towards it, taking out his sonic screwdriver. He points it into the darkness, and there, in the blue light is...

A spaceship. Well, one wall of a spaceship.

I start to laugh. There’s the wall of a spaceship in my school’s basement and I’m in 2115 and I’ve been chased by a ghost and nothing makes sense any more but it’s really really funny. And it’s definitely better than being back at home waiting for Terry to come home from the pub and us wondering what mood he’ll be in.

“You know,” says the Doctor, grinning at me as I laugh. “I’ve lost count of the number of spaceships I’ve found in cellars. What is it with you lot and building things on top of crashed spaceships?”

I’m trying to think of an answer but then I’m realising it’s a rhetorical question. The Doctor is analysing the spaceship wall and muttering to himself. Then suddenly he’s standing to his full height and he’s looking down at me.

“Helestican!”

I look at him blankly.

“That there’s a Helestican ship. And do you know what they have?”

I look at him blankly.

“They, Ross, have time travel technology. And what’s happened to you?”

“I’ve...” I pause. But I must have. It’s the only logical explanation. “I’ve travelled in time?”

“That’s it! You see, there’s a hole in the outer casing... just there... and something’s escaped, probably just a bit of chronal vapour, and it’s sent you a hundred years into the future.”

“And the Ghost?”

The Doctor points up at the doorway. The Ghost is standing there watching us. “It’s not a Ghost. It’s an echo. As it accidentally sent you forwards in time an echo of you went back in time, sideways in time, everywhere. For all we know you might be every ghost there’s ever been.”

I don’t know if he’s being serious or not but it’s nice to think he might be telling the truth.

“But what about all the... stuff? The lights and everything.”

“Chronal vapour and human beings don’t mix. It’s like pouring water onto burning oil. Lots of noise and nastiness.”

“So what do we do?” I asked, trying not to sound scared although I was suddenly more scared than I had been before. Was I going to be trapped in the future?

“Oh, I’ve fixed the spaceship so we can send it on its way and then I’ll take you home.”

And it's that simple apparently. The Ghost fades away as we walk through it and we're heading back to the Doctor's blue box. It's called a TARDIS apparently and it can travel anywhere in Time and Space. Before I'd have wanted a scientific explanation but after the last hour I was ready to believe anything.

Oh, and it's bigger on the inside. It's the size of my wardrobe on the outside and it's the size of a city on the inside.

The Doctor closes the doors and there's this noise and shaking and I realise we're moving! I'm grinning and I don't know why. And the Doctor is looking at me and trying to pretend he's not smiling. He presses a button and the doors open again. We go back towards them but then I stop.

WE ARE IN THE SKY!

We're looking down at my school and we are in the sky. The Doctor points his sonic screwdriver down at the school and suddenly there's this huge explosion! The Doctor has just blown up my school! And soaring through the flames... a spaceship! An actual spaceship!

"The Helesticans will be waking up soon..." says the Doctor, waving at the spaceship. I'm too busy looking down at what remains of the school.

The Doctor laughs. "A kids' dream come true, eh?"

"I quite like school," I say.

"Yes, well, beggars can't be choosers!" he says, grumpy again. He closes the door and we head back to the control unit thing. He starts to press buttons and switches.

“2015, yes?” he asks.

I nod. “Christmas.”

As the TARDIS starts shaking again, he comes over to me and he’s suddenly very quiet.

“Your little mate, Dan,” he says. “One day he’ll realise he made a mistake but you... you, Ross, promise me something. Stay true to yourself. Recently I’ve... Well, I’ve tried to be someone else but...” He shrugs. “Someone made me realise I don’t need to be someone else. I’m an old man, messing about in Time and Space. And that’s good. And look at you. You’re clever! You’re brilliant! You might be every ghost that ever was! So no more breaking into basements to try and impress idiots.”

I’m not crying. Of course I’m not. And he doesn’t say anything else but just looks away from me. When he turns back I’m smiling.

“Doctor,” I say. “You could come to my Mum’s for Christmas?”

“Ross,” he says, rubbing the back of his neck. “I don’t really do Christmas. But you go and have fun.”

I look at him and he’s pointing at the doors. They’re open and we’re on the pavement outside my house.

“But... how did you know where I lived?”

The Doctor grins. “Trade secret. Oh, and you might find that Terry might have got himself a job. Who knows, maybe he’ll be a bit nicer to be around... Maybe.”

I stare at him. He's magic. I rush over to him and I hug him because nobody can see us.
And he hugs me because nobody can see us.

And then I leave the TARDIS and I watch as it just vanishes away into thin air.

And I'm home.

The End

bbc.co.uk/doctorwho
not to be reproduced or sold

©BBC, 2015