

DOOMSDAY

Re-Incarnated

THE HEAVY SCENT OF VIOLENCE

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The Heavy Scent of Violence

An original Doctor Who story

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The Heavy Scent of Violence

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The old, cobbled London street was silent. Everything was quiet. The air was thick, as if the street was tensing itself for something. Then, after a long moment of stillness, the silence was broken by strong footsteps as Catherine Eddowes walked down the road.

She was a short woman, roughly forty years of age. She wore sturdy boots up to the knees and a long, tattered dress. On her head was a black straw bonnet, and she played with a stray piece of fabric hanging off it as she walked.

She stopped suddenly. The sound of footsteps was coming from behind her, and for some reason the sound made her feel uneasy. She turned round slowly, and was greeted with the sight of a man wearing a black cape and a large top hat. His walking cane knocked across the ground, tapping out a gentle rhythm on the cobbles. Catherine sighed, and smiled at the man.

'Hello there, good sir... Where are you off to?'

The man didn't speak. He just continued to walk. *Tap, tap, tap*, went his cane.

'Sir?'

The man kept walking, unhurried, his face hidden in shadows. Catherine shivered, though it wasn't too cold of a night. The man seemed to radiate darkness, and with every step he took Catherine felt more and more fearful. She found herself subconsciously taking a step backwards.

'Sir, are you alri-' The man lashed out violently, a gloved hand grabbing Catherine by the neck, cutting off her sentence with a gasp of shock. He slammed her against a wall, holding her firmly in his tight grip.

'It's you...' Catherine choked. 'Isn't it? Ripper...'

'Please. Call me Jack.'

The man punched her in the stomach, a harsh blow that would have doubled her over in pain, if she hadn't been held aloft off the ground. He dropped her, and she crumpled into a pile on the cobbles – but before she could recover, he swung his cane into her side, sending her rolling, her body twisting like a ragdoll.

'Help me...' she managed to whisper, trying to get to her feet. The Ripper laughed manically, and unsheathed from within the folds of his cloak a long, wicked dagger, that glimmered in the dim light of the street lamps. He advanced on the half-standing figure before him, and Catherine Eddowes' screamed as the knife flicked down.

For a while, there was nothing but the thump of his own heart and the rhythm of his blade as it spun and nicked, gentle like the tapping of his cane. Then, a low, rasping noise, growing louder with each passing second, made him look up from his work.

A blue box stood on the street corner, a lantern flickering on its head.

The Doctor walked towards the TARDIS doors. He stopped, hesitated, and ran a hand through his black hair.

'I'm sure I had a hat. I *definitely* had a hat.'

He ran back past the console and over to a rickety spiral staircase that twirled away upwards and downwards, steep metal steps ascending and descending to various other levels inside the massive ship. He tapped down the steps to the tea room, then up them to the library, but his trilby hat was nowhere to be found. Perplexed, he headed back down to the console room. His eyes caught a flicker of black fabric and there it was, perched on the console typewriter.

'There you are... Don't you run off on your own like that, okay?' he said, patting the hat fondly before flipping it back onto his head. His search complete, he turned back to the TARDIS doors and

strode across the room.

The first thing he noticed upon opening the door was the dead body across the street.

He ran over the cobbled road, and flinched at the sight of the wounds on the corpse. The body had fallen backwards, the head tilted at a slightly unnatural angle. The arms were limp at the sides. The fingers were curled in the hands. The right leg looked broken, and there was blood slowly pooling around it. As he watched, the blood slowly began to trickle down the street, as the road sloped gently.

Hesitant, dismayed, the Doctor reached for the face, which was covered by a black bonnet. He pulled it back, and winced away as he saw the disfigured face. It was a woman - that much, he could still tell. He pushed the bonnet back down again, covering the horrific wounds.

He felt for a pulse in her wrist, though he knew it was futile, and sighed. The body was still warm, and her fingers had yet to stiffen, so the murderer could only be a couple of minutes away, at most. He stood, and spun round, surveying the dim streets. Then he ran to the nearest house and began to knock frantically on the door. A flickering light appeared in the uppermost window as the occupant lit a candle.

'Hello? I need some help out here!'

The flickering light moved away from the window and the Doctor heard the thumping of stairs from inside. Then the door opened, and a bleary-eyed young man peered out.

'Erm... Evening, sir.' He rubbed his eyes, as if hoping the Doctor was a bad dream that would fade away and leave him to sleep in peace. When he opened his eyes and the Doctor was still there, he added 'Is there anything I can help you with?'

'Yes, I need you to call the police. Do you have a videolink?'

The young man stared blankly at him.

'Er, communicon? Telephone? Trained fleet of messenger pigeons? Sorry, what year are we in?'

The young man looked baffled. 'It's 1888, last I checked, sir. Are you sure you're quite alright?'

'Not really, no. There's a dead woman in the road... Ah.' The Doctor's eyes widened. 'When in 1888 are we? Specifically.'

'It was September 29th when I went to bed. Don't know now though, looks to be past midnight...' the man peered out of his doorway and looked down the street, shielding his candle from the cold breeze with his evening gown.

'Oh dear. Oh dear oh dear oh dear. A dead woman on September 30th 1888. This is bad.'

'Did you say, dead woman, sir?'

'I need to find a police officer. Quickly, police officers, where, now.'

The young man seemed stunned. 'I-I'm sure there will be an officer on patrol nearby, but-'

'Thanks!' the Doctor cried, already halfway up the street, his red scarf billowing behind him in the breeze. The man looked left, looked right, then spotted the prone figure of the dead woman lying a couple of yards away from his doorstep, and gave a small squeak of surprise. An ill-timed gust of wind blew out his candle, and the man scampered back inside with a yelp and slammed his door closed as the Doctor pelted away.

The streets were dark and badly lit, and the cobbles uneven and hard. The Doctor tripped, more than once, but he didn't fall. He had to hurry. He rounded one dark corner, then another, committing each twist and turn to memory. Eventually, he spun past yet another street lamp and came face to face with a tall man in a long black coat, buttoned up down the middle, the attire of a Victorian police officer. The man had pale skin stretched over a thin face, and a gruff beard of brown hair that clung to his protruding chin.

'I need help,' the Doctor panted, a little out of breath. The man noticed the concern in his eyes immediately.

'Help? What's happened?'

'There's been a murder, there's a woman lying dead just over that way. Follow me.'

The officer's eyes widened in shock, but he nodded firmly and took off after the Doctor as he quickly retraced his steps through the streets. Within minutes, they were back at the road where he had landed; the TARDIS stood, conspicuous as always, across the road, parked in the mouth of an alleyway. The dead body was unchanged.

The officer leant down and felt for a pulse in the woman's wrist. 'She's dead,' he confirmed.

'Good work, Sherlock.'

The officer stared blankly at him. The Doctor cocked his head.

'Sherlock Holmes, first published in... 1887... Not really a household name yet, I suppose. Sorry, ignore me,' he waved to the confused officer, who went back to examining the body. 'Now, what's your name?'

'My name's Watkins. PC Edward Watkins, at your service, sir. Now, when exactly did you find this body?'

'Maybe fifteen, twenty minutes ago? My TARDIS landed me here, sort of by accident, just thought I'd pop out and see where I was and, well, you know, there was a dead body...'

'TARDIS? Ship?' Watkins muttered. 'I see. Well, sir, I'm terribly sorry about this, but I'm afraid I'm going to have to arrest you.'

'What? Why?'

Watkins stepped forward, looming high over the Doctor. 'Your maddened ramblings, your unusual attire, your proximity to the scene of the crime... This looks to me, sir, like a Ripper killing. And if that's correct, you might just be the man we've been looking for. Sir, I am arresting you in order to subject you to the accusation of being Jack the Ripper, serial murderer.'

The Doctor gaped. Then he fumbled through his pockets for a moment, and Watkins leaped forward, assuming the Doctor was about to brandish a weapon.

'Arf,' was the noise that the Doctor made, as Watkins careered into him. 'Please, Mr. Watkins, Officer Watkins – do you mind if I call you Eddie? Actually, best not, I have too many friends called Eddie – I am merely trying to prove to you that I am not the killer.'

Watkins released him, but kept him at arm's length, wariness in his eyes. The Doctor produced a wallet from his pocket and flashed a small rectangle of card inside it to the officer.

'I cannot be the Ripper because I am Inspector John Smith, formally titled the Doctor, in London investigating the Ripper murders.'

Watkins examined the paper, not knowing it was slightly psychic; the paper would change from person to person and situation to situation, showing them a combination of what they expected to see, and what the Doctor wanted them to see. On this occasion, it showed the Doctor's official identification papers, proving him a detective and an agent of the highest authority.

'Oh... I apologise, inspector.'

'Call me Doctor.'

'I apologise, Doctor.'

'Not a problem, understandable mistake to make. Now, I want you to go and bring in reinforcements, inform the higher ups of the murder. Go back to your nearest station or base of operations and sound the alarm, then try to set up a perimeter around the general area. If we're lucky, the Ripper might still be in the area. Where can we use as a meeting point nearby?'

'The Red Herring pub, two streets down, would be ideal.'

'Excellent. Meet me there in an hour, after you've got your officers together. If my hunch is right, and this woman really is Catherine Eddowes... Well, there's going to be another murder soon.'

'Understood, sir. And what are you going to do in the hour?'

The Doctor checked his watch.

'I think I'll go and have a drink. See you in an hour, officer Watkins!'

With that he strode away, leaving Watkins to stumble awkwardly into action and sprint away in the opposite direction. The body and the TARDIS faded from view as the Doctor walked briskly through the night.

The Doctor checked his watch again, though the time it told was foreign and irrelevant to his surroundings. Then he glanced back over his shoulder and caught one last glimpse of the body, before it vanished behind a high wall.

'Catherine Eddowes...' He murmured thoughtfully to himself. The Ripper had one more murder to commit, history foretold. A fifth woman, his final victim, would join Eddowes and three others, before the year was out.

But not if the Doctor could stop him first.

The Red Herring bar was noisy. People of all different sizes and shapes were bustling about, laughing with their friends or moping alone over a pint. The atmosphere was strong and sharp, a smell of alcohol, sweat and a dark edge to the smell that made the Doctor crinkle his nose. He walked over to the bar and slipped onto a stool between two tall, well-built men. He tapped his fingers against the wood and the young bartender, a pale woman with blond hair, looked around.

'Hello,' he said to her. 'I'd like to drink... Er... I don't want to be too picky, so just give me... How about, a Vesper Martini with a squeeze of lime, and extra ice. But no Martini, and easy on the Vesper. And, erm, could you put one of those little umbrellas in it? I like those.'

The bartender gave him a very odd look, then placed a small, murky glass of beer in front of him. He sighed.

'That'll do.'

She continued to look at him. He stared blankly back for a moment, until it clicked.

'Ah, my payment! Yes... Hang on a minute...'

He pulled a rough fist from his pocket and spilled the contents onto the bar. Most of it was small change, from every corner of the universe. Currencies that had long since died, and others that had yet to be invented. The bartender was not impressed.

'Tell you what, just put it on my tab,' the Doctor smiled, patting the woman on the shoulder. 'Have tabs been invented? I'm sure they have, you look reasonably intelligent. Thanks for the drink!'

He hopped off his stool and walked away, leaving the two well-built men to grumble amongst themselves about how easy it was to escape from asylum these days.

The Doctor pulled up a seat at a small, round table near the entrance. The pub felt dark, almost oppressive, as if everybody was secretly glancing over their shoulders to look at him and conspire against him. He shook the paranoid thought away, but it lingered, like the bad taste of the beer in his throat.

The door swung open and a young woman walked in. She had dark hair that curled over her shoulders, and she wore a long dress that must have been freezing on such a cold night. She had a friendly face, so much kinder than the harsh glares that surrounded the bar. Her eyes looked tired, but she smiled brightly all the same at the bartender.

'I'll have a beer, please,' said the woman, but the bartender didn't look up.

'Jim says I'm not to serve you until you pay up what you owe,' the bartender said, stiffly. The young woman's smile drooped.

'Oh, it's just one beer. I'll pay next time, I just haven't had any work recently.'

'You always say that.'

The Doctor piqued up, lifting his hat in greeting as he did so. 'She'll have her drink on that tab of mine,' he smiled at the bartender.

The bartender frowned. 'I'm really not allowed to serve her, sir,' she said coldly. The Doctor's face darkened. Who was this pale, rat-faced woman to stop him from buying a drink? He slammed a fist on the bar and raised his voice slightly.

'I'd like to buy her a drink,' he repeated. The bartender hesitated, then nodded carefully, and poured a second glass for the dark-haired young woman. The woman flashed the Doctor a smile, and he returned it, and she followed him as he walked back to his small table in the corner. The bartender was still watching them; she looked scared.

'You really do know how to get your own way, don't you?' the woman laughed. The Doctor smiled, but after a moment he stopped, and paused.

'That's funny. I don't know what came over me. I'm not usually so impolite. I should go over and apologize to the poor girl behind the bar,' he said. He went to stand back out of his chair, and the bartender hurried away to the other side of the pub, as if scalded. The Doctor sat back down, confused.

'What's up with her?' he asked.

'Well, if you don't mind me saying mister, you had a pretty scary look in your eye when you were demanding that drink.'

The Doctor shook his head slowly, as if trying to clear it.

'Odd...' He whispered, almost to himself. Then he shook his head again, more abruptly, and the sharp, tangy smell of the bar rose in his throat. Everything looked darker than it had done a few moments ago, or was that just him?

'So anyway,' said the woman, dragging him out of his musing, 'What's your name?'

'I'm the Doctor. What's yours?'

'Just call me Fair Emma. All my friends do.'

The Doctor laughed. Fair Emma was warm and friendly, the opposite of all the angry, spiteful people around them. She had something fresh about her, something unsullied, whole.

('Angry?' thought the Doctor's subconscious. 'Spiteful? I haven't even spoken to these people. What am I thinking?')

'So, what are you doing in this old place, Doctor?' Fair Emma asked. He leaned in conspiratorially.

'Well, between you and me, I'm preparing to catch a serial killer.'

Fair Emma arched an eyebrow. 'Oh, really?'

The Doctor frowned. Fair Emma seemed to dampen, become dimmer, and suddenly her smile seemed slightly less sincere. Why would she question him?

'Yes, really,' he said. 'Jack the Ripper. You might have heard of him?'

'Oh, I've heard the stories alright,' she nodded.

'He's murdered again tonight, and I'm going to find him before he can hurt anyone else.'

Fair Emma laughed. 'And how are you going to do that? He's given everyone else the slip.'

The Doctor frowned again. Fair Emma was slipping slowly, her cheery exterior peeling to reveal a cruel, vile person beneath.

(Again, the Doctor's subconscious rallied. 'She really is just a nice person – why are you being so cold?' It asked him, but he ignored it.)

'I can catch him,' the Doctor said, stressing the *I*, 'Because I have technology that nobody else on this planet can hold a candle to. Once I've gathered the police force together, they can lock down the area so nobody comes in or out; and I know for a fact that the Ripper's still in the area, because I know for a fact that he's going to try another killing soon. Then, once his escape is cut off, I'll take some DNA samples from the corpse of Catherine Eddowes and feed them into the TARDIS's biotracing systems.'

The look on Fair Emma's face cut him off.

'What? What are you looking at?'

'No offense mister, but you sound like a complete loony to me. All this DNA and biosomethings... Are you sure you haven't had a bit too much to drink?'

The Doctor was on his feet, though he had no memory of standing. 'That's it,' he snarled, 'I'll prove to you that I'm telling the truth.'

He grabbed Fair Emma by the arm, spilling her drink, and dragged her up after him as he walked away from the table. The chatter in the pub stopped as the Doctor stormed through the door, pulling the young woman behind him. The door swung shut, and everybody looked at everybody else; then, in a moment of simultaneous indifference, they laughed and went back to their conversations.

In the corner of the pub, one man watched the angered Doctor leave with Fair Emma in tow with interest. He was tall, had a long black cape slung over his shoulders, and was idly adjusting the brim of his top hat. He sipped his drink slowly. Then, he stood, and followed them out of the pub, tossing some spare change onto the bar as he did so. He stepped out into the cold London night, and slipped from a sheath a long, silver blade. His work tonight was not yet complete. The insatiable urge to kill still seeped his mind like omnipresent fog.

He turned away from the bar and began to walk briskly into the darkness, his cane *tap, tap*, tapping as he went.

The TARDIS stood in front them, its lantern a beacon in the early hours, and as the Doctor let go of Fair Emma's hand she stumbled into it.

'Now look here, mister-' she started aggressively, but the Doctor stumbled and fell the one knee, cutting her off.

'Are you alright?' she asked nervously. The Doctor shook his head.

'It's like there's this... This fog, inside my head...'

She stared oddly at him, but was distracted by something over his shoulder. A corpse, the body of Catherine Eddowes, lay just a few meters away. Several police officers were stood around it, examining the body or the surrounding area, and one of them caught Fair Emma's eye. He was a tall man, with a short brown beard.

'Everything alright, miss?' he asked, walking over. The Doctor stood, rubbing his temples, and as the officer came closer he recognised the Doctor.

'Inspector! I mean, Doctor – I thought you were in the Red Herring? Anyway, I've got a few patrols from nearby streets camping out on the street corner-'

'Good, good,' the Doctor muttered distractedly, scratching his head. 'Sorry officer, I'm a bit busy at the moment... I need to take Fair Emma here into the TARDIS, I think...'

He took Fair Emma's hand again and pulled her into the phone box, her eyes dragged away from the fallen body on the cobbles. He slammed the door behind him.

Watkins stood, perplexed, in front of the box. When neither the Doctor nor the young girl showed any sign of coming out again, he harrumphed indignantly and walked back to his officers.

'What in the lord's name...?'

Fair Emma looked around in disbelief as the Doctor tripped up to the console. He staggered, dizzy and disorientated.

'Look, whoever you are, what exactly is happening here?!'

The Doctor looked at her, confused.

'I wanted to show you the TARDIS... I don't remember why. Isn't that odd? My memory's all hazy. Why is that? What happened to us before we were here? How did we meet?'

Fair Emma frowned, but the distress in the Doctor's eyes softened her.

'We were just chatting in the bar, and you were talking about how you were going to track down Jack the Ripper, and then you got all aggressive and dragged me out to show me *this* place.'

The Doctor rubbed his chin as he slowly pulled himself up. 'That doesn't sound like me... Why did I do that? Why was I being so... Angry?'

Fair Emma gave him a reassuring smile, and gently took the black hat off of his head. His skin was slightly pale, as if he was about to break into a sweat. His eyes were confused, but a calculating sheen of intelligence shone within them. He was thinking, considering, deciphering, figuring things out. She tossed the hat onto the console, then looked around at the massive room they stood in slowly, still in awe.

'How does this place work, anyway? Why is it so... Big?'

Before the Doctor could reply, however, the whole ship began to shake, and suddenly their world was turned upside down.

'Woooooaaaaah!' the Doctor yelled, as the console shuddered violently, and a loud groaning sound permeated the air around them. 'But I didn't touch the controls!'

His eyes dropped to a thin lever that was pointing resolutely downwards on the console. His trilby hat was perched on the end of it, thrown there by Fair Emma a few moments ago.

'Oh, dear...' the knocked lever was jolting to and fro along with the rest of the console, as the Doctor stumbled up to it. Fair Emma had grabbed onto a handrail on the console to keep herself upright. A glowing screen embedded into the control panel illuminated the Doctor's face.

UNKNOWN BIOLOGICAL SHIFT OCCURRING

TRACING SOURCE

The Doctor mouthed the words as he read them, then glowered at the display.

'Unknown biological shift...? Wonder what that's all about-'

Then another violent tremor shook the whole room, and the Doctor and Fair Emma were flung sideways. The whole ship paused, and sighed, and then the shaking stopped and everything was still. The Doctor stood, hesitantly, and after a moment decided they had landed.

'Well, that was unfortunate...' he murmured, plucking his hat from the lever and replacing it on his head. 'You really should be more careful with this hat, Fair Emma... Emma?'

Fair Emma tripped away from him, half-running towards the door.

'What in the name of god is this thing, anyway?' she yelled at him. Her legs looked weak, as if the sudden and violent movement had turned them to jelly. 'What sort of trick, or, or illusion of some sort, is it?'

The Doctor reached out a hand towards her. It was clear she was shaken by the ship's movement.

'Don't worry, I can explain...'

But before he could continue, she bolted out of the door, slamming it closed behind her.

The Doctor sighed. 'Oh dear...' he mumbled, but his attention was suddenly diverted by a blinking light. He glanced back to the console, and saw that the display on the screen had changed.

TRACE COMPLETED

SOURCE OF BIOLOGICAL SHIFT DETECTED

He frowned.

'So whatever the shift was, we've landed right next to the cause of it...' He looked up suddenly.

'Emma!'

Then he ran for the door.

Jack stared out across the dark London streets and growled to himself. Something wasn't right. He was stood on a high roof atop a behemoth of brick and stone, a huge tower that stood high over the surrounding buildings. From here, he could see out over all the alleys and roads in every direction. But something was missing from those alleys and roads; his fifth victim

Jack knew, without a shadow of a doubt, that a girl with curled black hair should have been walking down that lane there, the one with the pub on the corner. Mary Jane Kelly, a noisy youth living in the Whitechapel district. His next target. He would repeat the pattern he had perfected on his previous four victims; a repeated dance of predator and prey, stalking his target until the thirst for blood became too much for him to handle.

But his target wasn't where she was supposed to be. She should have been walking back past the pub, having left it earlier with the angry man in the dark clothes. But she was nowhere to be seen, and it puzzled Jack. Somebody was interfering with events.

Just as that thought entered his head, a flickering light joined him on the rooftop. He turned around to see the light grow in intensity, and then a shape began to imprint itself on its surroundings, a tall box that grated eerily against the quiet of the night. Then with a final flash of bright light white, everything was still again. The box stood, quite real, a few paces away from Jack. And Jack smiled.

The scene the Doctor found when he rushed out of the TARDIS doors was a faintly ridiculous one. If it hadn't all been so real, he might have laughed. They were stood on a high roof of some sort, looking out over London – they had travelled through space, but not through time, clearly. The streets below were still dim and cobbled, and the buildings were still built of old, faded bricks. What really caught the Doctor's attention, though, was the tall man in black who held a knife to Fair Emma's throat.

'Jack. Jack the Ripper,' he said, taking a step forward. Jack tightened his grip on Fair Emma, who squirmed.

'Don't take another step,' Jack warned. The Doctor flashed his psychic paper.

'I'm inspector John Smith,' he began, 'And I'm here to arrest you-'

'No you aren't,' Jack interrupted. 'You've been interfering with time. You're a time traveller. And that means you already know who I am.'

Fair Emma's eyes were wide and uncomprehending. The Doctor slipped the psychic paper back into his pocket.

'Okay, that was worth a try. Yes, I know exactly who you really are, Jack – or can I call you Jax?'

Jack smiled manically in response. 'You know my story, then.'

'Of course. Everyone knows the story of Jax the RIPper. I once went to a colony planet where they told your story around holographic campfires to scare children.' The Doctor shrugged. 'One of the best Reality Interface Pod Programmers they had on staff. Working for the biggest of the big, the best of the best, designing nanochips and neural interfaces day after day. Living the high life in the year four billion.'

Jack grinned. 'Happy times.'

'Then it all went wrong when they brought in the new circuits. Programs that could amplify emotions – make athletes more determined, or soldiers more aggressive. A solution to hundreds of problems. But they gave you a faulty prototype, didn't they, Jax?'

Jack's face twisted into something a little more sinister. 'They should have made sure it was safe before they gave it to me. Me! Their best programmer. I'll bet they regretted handing it over to me after the accident.'

His grip on Fair Emma tightened and she let out a gasp.

'Ah-'

'Don't you hurt her!' the Doctor barked angrily. Jack paused, took a deep breath, and loosened his grip – though he kept the blade to her throat.

'It wasn't my fault,' Jack continued, his breath a little ragged. 'There was a loose uplink. I hit the wrong key...'

'And bang. The amplifier overloaded, ripping a hole in the fabric of time and blasting you through it. You ended up here.'

'Alone. Cold. Cut off from all of my friends. I was angry,' Jack seethed.

'And the amplifier's energy made that anger a thousand times more tangible,' the Doctor remarked.

'You were trapped in the past, and filled with more anger than any individual has ever felt.'

'So I went on a killing spree,' Jack said, adjusting his top hat. 'It seemed the proper thing to do.'

'You've only killed four girls. Hardly a spree,' the Doctor commented. Jack laughed.

'I am doing only as I am told. When I was sent back, the subtle strands of time ensnared me. I can see the future. I follow those whose deaths I foresee.'

'You got caught up in the web of time,' the Doctor murmured. 'Following a life preset to you by reality itself.'

'I lived by time's rules,' Jack agreed. 'But then *you* came along, time traveller, and you disrupted the natural order. You cut through time's snares and formed a new path.'

The Doctor frowned. 'Impossible. I've barely changed anything since my arrival. What damage could I have done to the fabric of time?'

Jack laughed, and ran the tip of the blade slowly across the edge of Fair Emma's throat. She whimpered.

'Ask your friend here,' he smiled coldly.

'What, Emma? What does she know?'

'Emma?' Jack laughed again. His eyes were dark. 'You mean you don't know her real name?'

'She told me her friends called her Fair Emma...'

'And I'm sure they do. But what's her *real* name, eh? Why don't you ask her?'

The Doctor looked at Fair Emma. There was confusion in her eyes, and fear, an overwhelming fear of the madman at her throat.

'What does m-my name have to do with anything?' she breathed, almost whispered. Jack said nothing. After a moment, she stammered,

'My name is Mary Jane Kelly.'

Time seemed to slow for the Doctor. An old memory surfaced. He was stood in a dank, brick cellar-
He is standing in a dank brick cellar. His face is older, but his mind is much younger. His clothes are different, and his voice. A Victorian police officer hands him a file.

'That's the one you requested, sir,' the officer says. The year is 1890; the case has long since closed. He opens the file given to him and skims over the details.

'The injuries are abominable,' he says. 'They look almost too horrific to be real.'

The officer chuckles, perhaps in bad taste. 'I can assure you, these documents are authentic. They were brought in from one of the most high-ranking inspectors in the department at the time.'

He nods. He is hunting down a rogue killer in the 35th century, an avid fan of the Ripper mythos recreating the murders of Jack himself. He pockets the files, assured that they will help him locate the impersonator before he strikes again.

'Thank you, officer,' he says, and turns to walk back to the blue box at the end of the lane. As he walks, he glances at the name on the victim file;

Mary Jane Kelly.

Then he shrugs his coat tighter around himself and walks to-

-Shrugged his coat tighter around himself and walked to the TARDIS.

The Doctor blinked once, twice, then gasped as the realisation hit him. Mary Jane Kelly, time told, was the Ripper's next victim.

Jack nodded. 'You see now, time traveller. By moving Miss Kelly from her proper place in time, you have disrupted the web, and now time hangs, teetering on the precipice of calamity. Are you so certain you want to save her? Or would it not be best to just leave now, and let time heal over the wound you have created?'

The Doctor thought about that for a moment.

'Oh, shut up,' he said. Then he lunged.

Jack was clearly not expecting an attack, and leapt backwards, the knife flying past Mary's face and cutting a tiny nick in her cheek. She cried out and stumbled, but the Doctor caught her, arresting his leap mid-bound, and then he dragged her to the TARDIS.

'Hurry, hurry, angry serial killer from the future on the loose here,' he blabbered, pushing her back through the TARDIS doors. He jumped in afterwards and tried to pull the doors closed, but Jack pushed his cane through them and jammed them open. He swung forward into the ship, brandishing his cane like a broadsword over his head, but the Doctor pulled something down from beside the entrance and used it as a shield; an old hat stand that stood just inside the TARDIS doors. The cane clashed with the hat stand, and the two men were locked in a duel for a moment.

'I don't mean to interrupt you,' shouted Mary from the console, 'but if you could stop fighting to the death for a moment and explain to me exactly what's going on, I would bloody appreciate it!'

'Not now Emma, I'm fighting Jack the Ripper,' the Doctor mumbled, and then he and Jack fell backwards, back out onto the rooftop.

'You have a marvellous machine, time traveller,' said Jack. 'I would very much like to use it for myself. I could return home at last!'

'Not with all that anger in you, you can't. You'd murder the whole planet with the technology at your disposal there.' The Doctor swung the hat stand, and Jack blocked with his cane. The Doctor swept the hat stand under Jack's feet, and the killer was sent rolling across the roof. When he rose up, he had picked up his dropped knife and was gripping it tightly.

'You're tearing time apart by doing this. That girl must die. She's my next victim. I've seen it happen; time told me it will come to pass,' Jack said. The Doctor sighed.

'For a mad person, you're not as fun to talk to as I was expecting,' the Doctor said. Jack snarled and flew at him, a tornado of rage and whirling limbs, the knife like a silver bullet that buried itself in the handle of the hat stand, inches from the Doctor's face. The Doctor grunted with the effort of throwing Jack off, then spun around and whacked the stand against his side. Jack growled but remained standing, and he advanced while the Doctor was unbalanced from the swing. The knife danced down again, but once more the Doctor survived by an inch, ducking aside and dropping the hat stand as he did so. There was darkness in both of their eyes, and a dank fog had descended on the roof. The combat continued, as the Doctor grabbed up Jack's fallen cane and used it to strike the Ripper in the stomach, knocking him off of his balance.

Something bright and silver fell at the Doctor's feet, and it took his eyes a few moments to realise what it was. Jack's knife. Long and wicked, and sharp as any blade the Doctor had ever seen. He thought for a moment, then tossed the cane aside and picked up the knife. Jack was still pulling himself to his feet, and the Doctor walked over and kicked him, roughly, in the stomach, knocking the killer down again. The Doctor's eyes were cold and crazed. He pointed the knife at Jack's throat and-

'Oi!'

-turned around, to see Mary Jane Kelly standing, afraid, at the TARDIS door.

'...You're meant to be arresting him, aren't you? Not killing him.'

The fog lifted from the Doctor's mind, and he gaped as air flooded his lungs. He coughed, and almost dropped the knife; but he managed to hold it steady.

'It's you,' he whispered. 'You're doing it.'

'Ah, you figured it out. Just in time for me, I suppose,' Jack smiled, picking himself up and dusting off his dark coat. His top hat had come off in the scuffle, and his hair was messy.

'You've got the anger of a billion madmen coursing through you. One human body can't store all of that emotion, so you radiate it. All of that hate and fear and paranoia, pouring into the air around you.' The Doctor took a deep breath and felt the tang of the night air sting his throat. 'There have

been over thirty brutal murders in this area within the last sixth months. Different culprits, different motives, but ultimately only one cause. You, and the darkness you exude. I felt it at the bar, too. You were there, weren't you? Hiding in the shadows after you killed Catherine Eddowes.'

Jack shrugged, a sly smile on his face. Mary grimaced at him.

'That why I felt so angry there, and why Mary seemed so bright when she first walked in. You had permeated the Red Herring with your dark atmosphere, but she was untouched by it. So I gravitated to her.'

'You seemed more sensitive to the darkness than others,' Jack noted. The Doctor nodded.

'Having a Time Lord's mind does that to you. Then the longer she was there with me, the colder I felt towards her, until eventually she was just like the rest of them. I hated them, all of them, and then I stepped outside and suddenly my mind began to clear.'

Jack knelt and retrieved his cane from the floor. Mary was hovering in the TARDIS doorway, afraid to step any closer to them.

'That was the biological shift the TARDIS picked up,' the Doctor rambled, his mind forming links and making connections faster than he could speak. 'And then when Emma – Mary, I mean – threw my hat at that lever, the scanner went about locking on to the source of the shift and took me to it. That's you.'

Jack took a bow. 'And you felt it again here, didn't you? Trying to kill me with my own blade – not a very honourable fighter, are you?'

'Says the man who murders unarmed women,' the Doctor retorted. The dark cloud no longer affected him now he was aware of it, but he still felt hatred for Jack. In a way, he was the victim himself; victim of a freak industrial accident that no one could have predicted. But he was still a remorseless killer, and the Doctor couldn't forgive that.

'I'm afraid we've come to a bit of an impasse,' Jack said. He leant casually on his cane; he seemed at ease, even though he was being held at knife point. 'You cannot change this moment in time. I must kill my next victim, and she is standing just a few steps away.' He gestured to Mary, who shrank back.

'I can,' said the Doctor, 'because I have an idea.'

'And what is your idea, Doctor?'

The Doctor shrugged. 'Goodbye, Jack. And good luck.'

Then he walked back to the TARDIS, and pulled the door to behind him. Jack stood, stunned. The Doctor had wrong-footed him.

'So you're just going to leave me here? To carry on my killings in accordance with time? That's it?!' And the TARDIS slowly faded into the night, leaving the Ripper alone with a battered hat stand, a crumpled top hat, and the heavy scent of violence that filled the air around him. The Doctor had left him be, and vanished away with his victim in hand. He had been given the freedom to carry on, unabated.

Despite that, for the first time, he was scared.

'Professor Thompson, allow me to introduce your new assistant.'

The Doctor had spouted a lot of long words and named a lot of strange names, but Mary had still felt utterly out of place as she had stepped through the doors of that impossible phone box to find herself in an enormous study, piled high with books and strange equipment. The Doctor had made her shake hands with a rather rotund man with spectacles, named Professor Thompson, and then the Doctor had began to spout even longer words and name even stranger names to the Professor. 'She's an expert on the branch of quantum lunar physics you just happen to be writing a paper on, and she's extremely keen,' the Doctor finished, and then he stepped back and pulled Mary to him. 'Mary, this is going to be a bit sudden, but you have to die.'

She gasped.

'What?'

'Don't worry, you don't really. But it has to appear that way. You have to disappear from 1888, permanently. History tells us that you were murdered, by the Ripper, and I can't risk changing that. You wouldn't believe the problems I've cause by altering time too much before.'

'Mister, I've only just met you. I can't run away from home-'

'It's the only way. Besides, you aren't running away. You're moving here to live with the nice Professor here.'

She thought about it for a moment. 'Can't I come with you?'

He looked at her quizzically.

'Look, I know I'm not as smart as you or that Ripper, but I understand this much; that machine can take you wherever you want to go, right?' She nodded at the TARDIS. 'So take me with you. Explain to me how it works, teach me to work it. I want to travel with you. Please?'

He shook his head.

'You belong here, I'm telling you. If that TARDIS leaves here with you inside it, you'll regret it.'

'I...'

'Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but soon, and for the rest of your life, you will regret travelling with me, Mary Jane Kelly.' He paused. 'I think I just quoted Casablanca.'

'Casa... What?'

'Sorry, 1888. Doesn't matter. Now,' he clapped his hands, to gather the attention of Professor Thompson. 'It's time for me to scoot. I've got to find myself a good forger – Space Vegas should be a good place to start – and then I've got to drop off the photographic evidence of your death with PC Edward Watkins, under the guise of Inspector John Smith. I think I know how the report goes – I borrowed it once, when I was younger. Well, older. Anyway, with a bit of computer manipulation, I reckon we can mock up a death for you, Mary.' He bowed to the two people before him.

'Have fun, Professor,' he added, as he turned back to the TARDIS. Perhaps Mary opened her mouth to say something, or perhaps call him back, or plead with him to not leave her, but he didn't look, and he wouldn't ever know.

As the magical blue box disappeared, Professor Thompson turned to his assistant.

'So, Miss Kelly, the Doctor tells me you're an expert in the field of quantum lunar physics.'

Mary Jane Kelly looked at him blankly. And then, even though she was lost, and unsure, and cold, she started to laugh.

Back on the cobbled streets of London, Jack was running. He hadn't eaten in days, his face was unshaved, his eyes more manic than ever before. Time had abandoned him; he no longer saw visions of his victims, nor of the deaths he would cause. What had happened? It was as if, he thought to himself, somewhere in a tiny corner of his mind which remained rational, Jack the Ripper had only ever committed five murders in 1888, and following that had vanished. But that couldn't be true, could it? He was still here, and he still was filled with an insatiable desire to kill. That left only one option; someone was going to stop him. Imprison him, or kill him. Kill Jack the Ripper; he laughed at the thought.

Somewhere ahead of him, in the dark alley, a tall, cloaked figure heard his laugh and turned her head. Kill Jack the Ripper. She laughed at the thought.

Somewhere completely different, in the midst of the time vortex, several thoughts ran through the Doctor's head at once. He still had the Ripper's long blade; he dropped it into a small pocket on the console, to keep as a souvenir. He had delivered the forgeries, as he had said he would, and everything would turn out as it was supposed to. Mary would live in the far future, studying an obscure science, and she would be happy, he was sure. Jack would continue to roam the streets of

London, but not for long. For just as time told that five people would die, it also told that Jack would vanish before he could murder a sixth. The Doctor had friends in all sorts of odd places, and he already knew that Jack would meet his end at the hands of one of them. A detective on the prowl in Victorian London, with a taste for human flesh.

His friends, he noted to himself, were very unusual people.

He was exhausted. It had been a long day. He slumped down at the console, and thought about how angry he had been when Jack had been nearby. All of that hatred, pouring out of him... It had felt strange. Wrong.

He shook his head, to brush away those thoughts, and went back to tinkering with the console. Though he was the only one who would ever know, he had changed a little piece of history for the better.

Coming next time to
Doctor Who: Re-Incarnated...

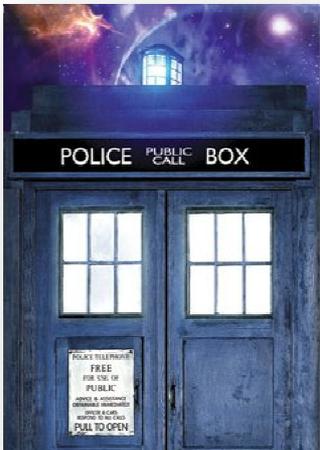
Ghosts of Christmas Past

By Shaun Collins

'And what Christmas surprise do you have in store for me next, eh?'

Legend tells there was a man named Kris Kringle, who handed out presents to children. The Doctor is on his way to see this bit of history for himself, when suddenly the TARDIS violently drops out of the Time Vortex and is stopped dead in space. When he comes to, he begins experiencing visions of companions long gone. Is the Doctor losing his mind? Or have the ghosts come to warn him of much greater danger?

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About The Author

Mark Lee lives in Merseyside, England. He aspires to become a lawyer, partly for the money but mostly so he can shout 'Objection!' and pretend to be Miles Edgeworth. In his spare time, he writes short stories and scripts, and he is even working on a full length novel. His obsession with Adolf Hitler is, he assures you, entirely academic.

You can follow Mark on twitter @Marcus_Joan.



'Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow,
but soon...'

A killer is stalking the streets of London, and four people are already dead. The Doctor and his friends might be able to stop the Ripper - but can they do so before he claims his final victim? Or will Jack's escape be set in motion by the complex machinations of time?

