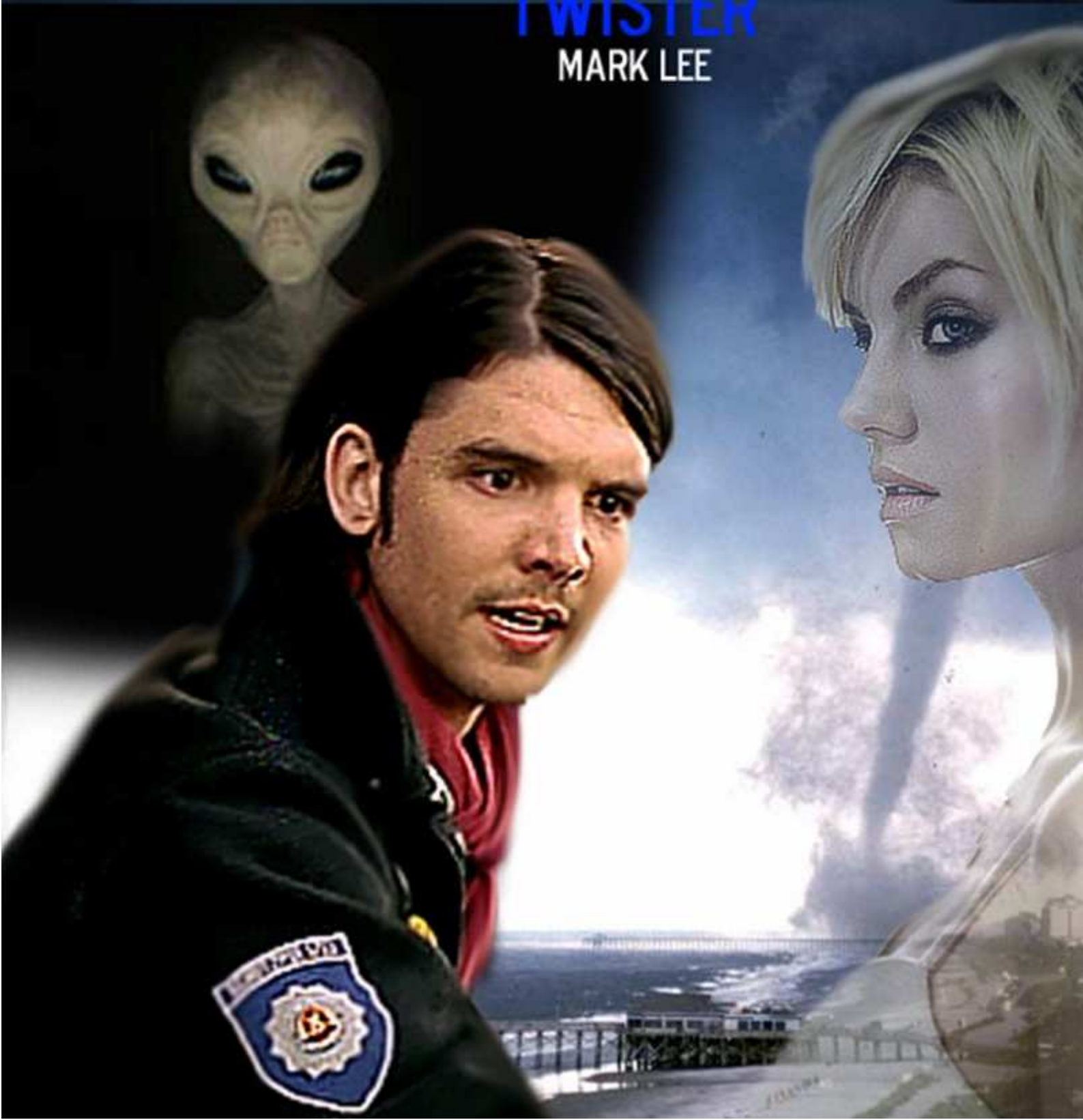


# DOCTOR WHO

Re-Incarnated

**TWISTER**  
MARK LEE



DOCTOR WHO: RE-INCARNATED PRESENTS

# Twister

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An original Doctor Who story

By Mark Lee

DOCTOR WHO: RE-INCARNATED

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Twister

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The Northendale farm housed the Pickett family, the only family for hundreds of acres in every direction. The nearest settlement was Rinetown place, a small village that stood a long walk away from the isolated pastures of the farm. A harsh wind hit the farm house, drawing Mary-Lou Pickett from her sleep and back into reality. She stood up, rubbing her eyes and sweeping the hay out of her hair. Momentarily dizzied, she lost her balance. Only by wrapping her hand around the saddle of a horse stood a few feet away from her, was she able to keep both feet on the ground.

'Ah, looks like I fell asleep again. Papa's going to be mad this barn isn't tidy.' The young girl was tall, blonde and beautiful, but every inch a farm girl. Her arms were lean, and her brown jacket was worn. The horses around her moved nervously, whinnied or pawed the ground, desperate to escape the ropes that bound them to the barn. Another gust of wind hit the building, which only agitated them further. Mary-Lou wrapped her arms around a wooden column as the wind shook the farm house. 'What in God's name...?'

She jumped up and threw open the barn doors, and gasped. Wind whipped all around her, as barely fifty meters away a gigantic twister raged, tearing apart fences and uprooting trees as it tore a path of destruction through the fields. Mary-Lou squinted slightly, to protect her eyes from the wind, but as her vision adjusted and sharpened, she spotted something – a man, dressed in dark clothes, standing dangerously close to the spiralling hurricane. She stared at him, confused for a moment, then shouted,

'Hey! You! Get here, it's a twister, you idiot!'

The man looked at Mary-Lou, and the farm house, then looked back at the twister that was gathering momentum behind him. Then he looked back to her, and he started to run. He sprinted the full distance, a red scarf around his neck trailing wildly behind him. When the man was only a metre away from Mary-Lou, another gust of wind threw him forward, and he hurtled into her, sending them both sprawling back into the barn. Quickly they disentangled themselves from one another. 'Hello! I'm the Doctor,' the man said cheerily. 'Just sort of passing through. My... Transport got caught up in that twister there.'

Mary-Lou smiled, and stood up, as the Doctor helped her to her feet. His eyes roamed the room, oblivious to the heavy winds that rocked the farm house. He began to pace around the barn; he walked up to a crack in one wall, and peered through it.

'So, are you one of those city folk?' she asked, brushing her hair out of her eyes. Up close, she could see he was wearing a dark suit, with a matching black hat, and he had a red scarf wrapped tight around his neck.

'Not exactly. I'm a traveller.'

'You were travelling through Rinetown place?'

'No, through time and space.'

'Pardon?'

'Oh, nothing...' the Doctor clapped his hands together, then began to pat down the pockets of his jacket. 'But the point is, I left my ship parked right inside that hurricane... Well, I usually use the word *parked* loosely.'

Suddenly, he pulled up one hand triumphantly from his pocket. In his fingers, he clutched a thin metal tube, shiny and silver, a little longer than a pencil.

'Now what's that little thing?' Mary-Lou asked. 'Is it some kind of torch?'

'It's my sonic screwdriver. It makes noise and does stuff.' He rolled the tube between his fingers and smiled fondly. 'I built it myself, back in my academy days.'

'Academy? You are one of those smart city folk!'

The Doctor laughed. 'Not really, no. It took me five tries to pass my final exam on temporal mathematics, and do you know where I got my degree from?'

'Where?'

'Birmingham.'

A harsh blast of wind, stronger than any of those before it, tore through the barn, whistling through the crack in the wood the Doctor had been examining, and wrenching one of the doors free from its frame. Through the newly-made hole in the wall, they could see the colossal shape of the tornado looming ever closer.

'Oh, good lord!' Mary-Lou shouted, trying to keep her feet placed firmly on the ground.

'Time to go,' the Doctor said, holding his sonic screwdriver aloft. Quickly, he turned to the nearest of the struggling horses. With a whirr of noise and a beam of light, the rope restraining the animal fell to the ground, frayed apart. The Doctor leapt up, jumping onto the horse's back.

'I'm going to call you Bernard,' he said, patting the animal's neck fondly. Mary-Lou stared at the device in his hand.

'What sort of screwdriver is that?'

'No time to explain. Get on.' The Doctor grabbed Mary-Lou's hand and pulled her upon the horse. 'We're heading straight into the eye of the storm.' the Doctor lashed the horse's reins and it momentarily lifted its front legs off the ground. Then, as all four hooves crashed down, the horse charged. The Doctor took off his hat, spun it around, and with a cry of 'Yee-ha!' they darted out of the barn and towards the twister.

He glanced to his left, and spotted something he had failed to notice earlier; a thin dirt path, leading to a small wooden shack a short distance away.

'Who else lives here with you?' he asked back to Mary-Lou, over the roar of the wind. 'They'll be swept up by the hurricane!'

'It's just me and my father,' she replied. 'And he's out buying some tools from Rinetown Place...'

'What?' the Doctor was utterly wrong-footed by her response. 'It's just the two of you? Running the farm all on your own?'

'That's right,' she said, smiling a little; but it was a sad smile. The horse began to veer slightly from its path, slanting out of the direct path of the storm. 'Everyone else has gone, now. Both of my brothers, and my sister. They all left a long time ago, to follow their dreams. To reach for the stars.' She glanced skyward. 'Why would they ever want to leave, Doctor? I have all the stars right here.' The Doctor laughed at that. 'Yes, only fools run for the stars. And trust me, it never ends very well. Look what it did to me!'

As he said that a loose plank of wood, torn up by the wind, flew directly at them. The Doctor yanked hard on the reins, and the horse pulled back, whinnying in alarm. The plank hurtled pasted them, the tip swiping the air inches from the Doctor's face. His expression determinedly set, the Doctor urged the horse on.

'Ok, look Doctor. You're a man of science, correct?'

'Sort of.'

'Well, tell me. What are the odds of surviving riding a horse into a twister?'

'Err... The odds of surviving are very minimal. But the odds of surviving are minimal on this planet anyway. Human beings are blessed with this little thing I like to call *death*.'

'Blessed? What do you mean?'

'Never mind, just thinking aloud-'

'-Watch out!' Mary-Lou shouted, as a large tree came crashing down, uprooted by the strong wind. The Doctor pulled the horse to the left and they narrowly dodged it.

'Thanks,' he muttered, gritting his teeth. The horse began to bank left, galloping around the side of the hurricane. The wind whipped through Mary-Lou's hair, and the Doctor's scarf flapped out behind him like a flag on a pole.

'Right, here we go. Ready?' he cried. She tried to shout back, but her voice was lost to the wind. The Doctor lashed at the reins, and with a snort of power the horse blasted its way across the field, its hooves crushing the grass beneath them as the storm swirled around them. They were rounding back, moving around the storm in a wide circle. The Doctor waved his screwdriver over his head, and orange light swept from it, along with a high pitched buzzing of noise.

'You can't stop a hurricane with a screwdriver! We're going to be killed!' she shouted.

'That isn't an ordinary hurricane, and this isn't an ordinary screwdriver. Now, watch *this!*'

He spurred the horse on with an exhilarated cry, the sonic screwdriver raised high like a sword as he charged for the tornado.

Suddenly, from one of the many creases and folds in the overwhelming wall of wind ahead of them, a blue box spun into view, hurtling wildly as the hurricane knocked it to and fro.

'There she is, the beauty!' the Doctor cried, his laughter almost manic as the twister's winds began to envelope them.

'There what is?!' Mary-Lou shouted back to him, her voice bellowing to be heard over the screeching tendrils of the air around them.

'My ship, my transport! My TARDIS!'

'...Your transport is a box?!'

The TARDIS spun wildly, the light atop its head flashing and fading as all hell broke loose around it.

'It's a box alright! I'm using the sonic screwdriver to lock onto its frequency, aaaaaand...'

Without warning, the box began to spiral towards them, buffeting on the gusts as it plummeted downwards.

'Good lord,' cried Mary-Lou, 'It's going to hit us!'

'Oh no it isn't!' the Doctor yelled – and then, he jumped.

For a moment, time seemed to freeze. Mary-Lou could sense everything around her; the blasting, unrelenting currents of air, flowing all around them, tossing and turning across the field. The horse beneath her was shivering as the winds bucked it back and forth, and the Doctor was hanging, suspended in mid-air above them, a second away from plummeting down and crushing himself beneath the hooves of the animal he had been riding. Far over their heads, the blue box spun down, crashing down on them, down-  
-Into the Doctor.

Time unfroze, and the blue box spun right at the Doctor, swerving off course so that it pulled up at the last moment. The Doctor slammed against the front, and disappeared inside as he fell through the doors. The horse carried on moving, galloping fearfully, as the forces around them became ever stronger, and Mary-Lou could feel herself being pulled from the saddle and spun into the air...

All of a sudden, everything was still.

Mary-Lou looked around. She was lying on the floor, on a bed of high grass. Sitting up, she saw that the horse had come to a stop some meters away, and was nibbling nervously at the grass stems. All around her, nothing moved. The wind was gone, the twister instantly dissipated. Not even a slight breeze rustled through her hair. She was alone, in an empty field. She looked over her shoulder. Not quite alone.

The Doctor's blue box stood resolute, only a few steps away. A shadow cast on the bright field. With a squeak of hinges, the door creaked open, and out stepped the Doctor, smiling gently, the sonic screwdriver still in one hand.

She stared at him. He grinned back.

'Like I said, it wasn't an ordinary twister. Really, it was just a heavy load of displaced temporal energy, so once I was inside the TARDIS, I just used the engines to dissipate – sorry, are you alright?' 'I'm fine, yes,' she said, stumbling a little. She pulled herself to her feet, tested her weight, and found she hadn't injured herself in her fall from the horse. 'I think I just rode into a hurricane and survived.' The Doctor's smile grew wider. 'That you did, that you did.' 'Right.'

They stood in silence for a little while, admiring the calmness of the air around them. Mary-Lou saw the barn, quite a way away now, had been damaged further by the storm, and great holes had been torn into the walls and roof. Her home along the dirt path had miraculously remained unharmed, or at least, it seemed to be unharmed from this distance. Eventually the Doctor broke the tranquillity. 'That storm was no accident. Temporal energy doesn't just spring up at random, you know. Some sort of time vehicle, possibly experimental, quite probably dangerous, will have landed nearby.' He held up his screwdriver. 'I can find it with this. It should be within walking distance. If you wanted....?' 'Yes,' said Mary-Lou. 'I'll come with you.' He smiled even wider at that.

It took them nearly an hour to trace it, track it down. The Doctor kept his sonic screwdriver scanning, constantly pointing it this way or that. Though they eventually found it within walking distance of the barn, they took 'Bernard' – the Doctor had become rather fond of the horse. It was a metal pod; rounded, blue, smooth, and partially buried in the ground. Steam rose steadily from it. 'You think this machine caused the storm, Doctor?' Mary-Lou asked him. He nodded in response, and tossed the screwdriver over to her. She caught it as he bent down to examine the pod closer. 'I know it caused the storm. Temporal displacement... Right, what do we have here...?'

Suddenly, a croaking voice, female, but broken with age, began to whisper from within the pod, startling both of them. 'Scared...'

The Doctor grasped at the rim of the metal sphere, and somehow found a handhold. He pulled, and the pod slowly opened itself up.

'What... What is it?' Mary-Lou asked. The being within the pod was grey and thin, emaciated, its damp skin stretched over a slender skeleton. Its eyes were huge and dark. It looked up at them mournfully.

'She's not an *it*.' the Doctor said sternly, running his hand across the metal. 'She's a she.'

'Doctor...'

The old being coughed, her mouth a thin slit. 'Who is she? A friend of yours?' Mary-Lou asked. The Doctor looked confused, and slowly took off his jacket. He wrapped it around the old figure, tried to comfort her, keep her warm.

'No... At least, I don't think so. She seems to know me.'

The being's eyes widened. 'Doctor... The time has come, as you told me it would. The day I would meet you for the final time.'

The Doctor put his finger to his lips, like a child. 'Shhh. Don't try to talk.'

'But you will meet me again, I can promise you that.'

'Who are you?' the Doctor asked, a hint of confusion in his voice.

'You know I can't tell you that, Doctor... The web of time?' the wizened figure laughed, a choked cough of sound. 'You know I can't change the course of history as you do...'

The old being raised her hand, and around it was a piece of string. A yellowing, frayed knot, tied to her index finger. The Doctor raised one eyebrow.

'What's with the string?'

The figure paused, and smiled. Her voice became croaky. The Doctor closed his eyes, only for a moment, and he knew her last words were fast approaching. He had seen enough death in his time to know when somebody's time was up.

'The string helps me remember things. Time is delicate. If there's one thing you can't do...' she coughed, and her eyes closed. 'It's forget.'

The mysterious being's head turned, and just for a moment, a white light shimmered around her. Then, a second later, the light vanished, and the Doctor was left kneeling beside a corpse, in a metal pod that had become her coffin. Mary-Lou stepped back, patted the flanks of the horse that stood nervously away from them, and shook her head sadly.

'What – I mean, who was she?'

The Doctor stood up, and ran a hand thoughtfully over his chin.

'I really don't know. What she was, or who she was... I've encountered so many races in my time, but this is something new to me. As for who she was...' He sighed. 'It's complicated. Things don't always happen to me in the right order, you see. I haven't met her yet.'

He paced a few steps away and hung his head.

'I don't know, I don't know, I don't know,' he sighed. 'Isn't that horrible? She died speaking to me, and I have no idea who she was.'

'Doctor.'

He looked up. Mary-Lou looked directly into his eyes.

'I can't say I understand who you are, or the things you did today. I couldn't explain how you stopped the twister, I can't explain how that box of yours works, and I certainly can't explain this.' She waved the sonic screwdriver. 'And do you know what? That doesn't matter. I see that some things happen for a reason, and I accept that.' She stepped forward, and placed a hand on his shoulder. 'Not every question needs answering. You can't berate yourself for not knowing her.'

'I really can. The things she must have endured to get here – travelling through the time vortex in an unstable ship, with broken engines and no real controls – she did all of that just to speak to me. She deserved better from me.'

'You can't know everything, Doctor. No man can.'

The Doctor didn't respond to that. Instead he bent down and, slowly, picked up the ancient figure in his arms, his jacket still draped around her shoulders. Then, without saying a word, he began to walk away, towards the tiny smudge on the horizon that was the TARDIS. He didn't look back, not even once.

'Hey! Doctor!' Mary-Lou shouted after him. 'Where now? You're just going to fly in here, save my life and run away again?'

The Doctor stopped, and turned around, his hat casting a low shadow across his face.

'I didn't even mean to come here. I was meant to be looking for an old friend, who can help me solve a mystery... I picked up some weird energy signals and thought I would take a look, and now... Now I've got this.' He gestured to the body in his arms. 'Sorry, but I really do have important things to get done.'

Mary-Lou paused, and after a moment's thought, she just said;

'Who are you, Doctor?'

And the Doctor thought about it for a moment as well, and said, 'I'm not quite sure.'

He turned back and walked away towards his box, leaving Mary-Lou to stand with the empty alien pod and the horse, in a field devastated by harsh winds long since gone. In her hand, she still held the Doctor's sonic screwdriver. She clutched it tightly, and didn't move until long after the blue smudge had faded from the horizon, taking the Doctor, and all of his secrets, with it.



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The Northendale farm housed the Pickett family, the only family for hundreds of acres in every direction. The nearest settlement was Rinetown place, a small village that stood a long walk away from the isolated pastures of the farm. A gentle wind brushed the farm house, drawing Mary-Lou Pickett from her sleep and back into reality. Twisting the hay from her greying hair, she drew the blanket tighter over her granddaughter's curled figure. She kissed her forehead gently, and then pulled tightly at the sleeves of her own cardigan. She glanced around, looking for the source of the wind – and then the noise starting, a reverberating groan of grating engines, and the breeze picked up and swirled around the barn. Slowly, she turned around, and a familiar blue box stood lodged between the bales of hay behind her.

'Hello again,' said the man who stepped from the box. The Doctor. As young as she remembered him, like a living photograph, never aging with the passing of time. He still wore the hat, the scarf, though his jacket was absent.

'I think I left something with you. My sonic screwdriver?'

There was a faint smile on her face. 'Yes, you did. Though that was quite some time ago, now.'

'What do you... Oh,' he frowned, and checked the watch on his wrist. 'I'm sorry. You look so old.'

'Thanks,' she said, rolling her eyes. 'It's been sixty five years since we last met.'

'Years and seconds are confusable, especially when you're working with a typewriter.' He held out his hand. 'Anyway... Screwdriver, please.'

She shrugged, and pulled from an inside pocket a thin, worn metal tube.

'This?'

'That's the one. You've been carrying it all this time?'

'Not exactly,' she smiled, and tossed it to him. He caught it in one hand, and absent-mindedly slipped it back into his pocket.

'Thanks... Thank you.'

He stepped back, into the TARDIS, and pulled the door to behind him.

'Don't you dare, Doctor... Doctor!' Mary-Lou called, stepping forward. The door reopened, and the Doctor stepped back out.

'You called?' he asked.

'Of course I called. I've been waiting all this time for you, Doctor, don't you see? Waiting just to see you again. You can't leave!'

The Doctor seemed confused. Mary-Lou stared unwaveringly into his eyes. He looked away.

'I... Hey, I returned! I apologise for those sixty five birthdays that I missed. Here, I bought you a present...'

He pulled from his trouser pocket a glimmering blue stone. It caught the light in a beautiful way, refracting it in hues of blue across the faded walls of the barn. He took one step forward, and placed it gently into her palm.

'Thank you, Doctor.'

'Can I go now?'

'No.' she sat back down on the bale of hay, her granddaughter sleeping soundly through the loud voices beside her. The Doctor jumped up and sat down on a bale beside hers. He took off his hat, and began to play with the brim of it. 'Doctor – did you ever find out what happened, all those years ago?'

He stared at her strangely. 'Sixty five years... It's been five minutes for me.' Mary-Lou's face clouded. 'I'm sorry, but I really don't know anything. I don't know how... *She* got here, or why she died, I don't even know who she was.' He cradled his head in his hands. She patted his shoulder.

'Buck up! What was it I said to you so many years ago? Not every question...?'

'Needs an answer,' the Doctor replied, not looking at her. Then, slowly, he began to mutter under his breath.

'The web of time... It's a meta-structure, a net holding all of the loose ends of history together. Kind of like... A filing cabinet for time. Certain events are fixed, like the ascension of the third Hoovian king, or Abraham Lincoln's assassination. Others are in flux, and everything can change. She mentioned the web of time, when I asked her who she was. She must have known that the past cannot be altered. She knew all about time travel, but her ship... It was so amateur, so unsafe. Where did she learn all of that?' He looked up at last. 'How did she know so much about time travel? Do I teach her it, when we meet in the future? Questions, questions, I'm sick of questions!'

He stood up, pushed his hat back onto his head, and stared out of the open farm house doors to the fields beyond. Mary-Lou stood up behind him.

'Were you even listening to me, Doctor? Not every question has an answer. Not every question needs an answer. You have to accept that you can't know everything. I accept that I don't understand who you are or how you do what you do, and I'm as happy as I could hope to be.'

The Doctor nodded slowly, his eyes still resting on the middle distance.

'Maybe... Maybe you're right.' He turned back to face her. 'Thanks. You know, it's funny. I never asked your name.'

She smiled then, a happier smile than she could ever remember. 'Mary-Lou Pickett,' she said. 'And thank you for asking.'

He winked at her, his lip turning up in an ever-so-slight smirk.

'Now, it really is time for me to go, Mrs. Mary-Lou Pickett.' He stepped past her, to the TARDIS doors. 'I have an appointment, with a man who might just be able to put my mind at rest. I've had this mystery, weighing down on my head... He's going to help me solve it, I hope.'

He stood beside the TARDIS and smiled at her. 'You can come with me, if you like. Save the universe, home in time to do... Country stuff. Like milk cows.'

'It sounds exciting, Doctor. But I'm eighty six. My days are nearly up. I wouldn't be able to cope with a twister every hour of every day.'

'Hey, it's not just Twisters.' He hopped forward, and clutched her hand. 'There's warriors from Mars, gas creatures from Zi. We can see the stars. How fun does that sound? And if you're lucky...' He took off his hat and placed it on her head. 'I'll even let you wear my hat.'

Mary-Lou closed her eyes, and thought. Thought for a moment, nothing more. 'No... I'm sorry Doctor, I have a family now. Sixty five years ago, I might just have run away with you without a thought, but my family are far too important to me now.'

The Doctor smiled weakly, and nodded to her. Slowly, he flipped his hat from her head, and with a twirl of fingers, brought it back onto his own.

'Sixty five years, I've waited on this farm, Doctor. Waited for you. I've made a home here now, though.' She laughed gently. 'I've got all the stars right here.'

He put a finger to her lips, and said nothing. Then, he stepped back through the TARDIS door, and it swung gently shut behind him.

'Goodbye, Doctor,' she mumbled, and as she said it, the lantern atop the box began to flash. The gleaming blue stone he had given her reflected the light in a hundred different directions, and the farm house filled with an eerie glow as the Doctor faded from existence, out of Mary-Lou's life and into somebody else's.

He stood beside the TARDIS console, alone. He pulled a few levers, pressed a few buttons and then, with nothing else left to do, he stared at the time rotor as it jarred into motion. Down the steps, unmoving, the grey figure's body lay wrapped in his dark jacket. For him, mere minutes had passed since he had brought her here, dropped her down. It had taken a lifetime for Mary-Lou.

'I really am sorry,' he said to the body. 'Whoever you are. You know, not every question needs an answer – but I hope I get one, someday. Because I'd really like to meet you again.' He smiled, a true smile, sincere, and of course the body did nothing at all in response. His head dropped, and he moved to the console.

'First things first... I'm going to drop you off on Heitrol Two. Graveyard planet, the residents are lovely... And they know me well.' He sighed. 'After that... Well, I've got a friend I need to speak with.'

They landed, and the Doctor carried the alien corpse out of the TARDIS. He had seen so much death in his time, so much suffering, that it didn't mean a thing to him anymore. He was numbed to the loss, acclimatised. What he did feel, however, was worry.

'Mary-Lou wasn't so different to you,' he said to the body, as he placed it at the tall graveyard gates. 'She waited for me until the very end as well. Is that what happens to the people I leave behind? Do they waste their lives waiting for me?'

The body said nothing. The Doctor's face was unreadable.

'Alright then, don't tell me. Not every question needs an answer, after all.'

He walked back to the TARDIS, left the body where it lay, and did what he always did; left it behind.

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As the Doctor had flown away from the barn on Northendale Farm, Mary-Lou's granddaughter had awoken with a start to the sound of engines churning.

'Grandma! Was that the Doctor?'

Mary-Lou laughed softly. 'Yes, my dear, that was the Doctor. The magical Doctor.'

'I missed him,' the girl pouted. Mary-Lou patted her head reassuringly.

'He took his sonic screwdriver with him, at last.'

'But what am I supposed to play with now?'

Mary-Lou laughed louder at that. Her granddaughter, however, remained dejected.

'Will I ever see him, Grandma?'

'Maybe,' Mary-Lou said, quietly. 'If you wait long enough.'

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

# A Piece of Advice

## By Alex Smith

'Greetings, traveller...'

High atop a mountain, there stands an ancient monastery, a temple where the brotherhood make their home and live their lives. They are intelligent, thoughtful, wise, and they make it their duty to help those in need. Today, the man who needs their help is the Doctor.

## November 1<sup>st</sup> 2011

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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.



'Only fools run for the stars. And trust me, it never ends very well.'

Mary-Lou, a lonely girl from Rinetown Place, is about to be thrown into adventure, as she tries to stop a frightened alien from adapting to planet Earth. Can the Doctor save the day with a girl who's never even dreamed of the stars?

