

*From the classic
era of Doctor Who*



LEGACIES
NORMA ASHLEY

The right of Norma Ashley to be identified as the Author of the Work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Copyright © Norma Ashley 2015

Characters and Concepts from 'The Web of Fear'

© Hannah Haisman & Henry Lincoln

HAVOC developed by and © Andy Frankham-Allen & Shaun Russell

Doctor Who is © British Broadcasting Corporation, 1963, 2015.

Editor: Shaun Russell

Deputy Editor: Andy Frankham-Allen

Cover: Simon Williams

Editorial: Will Rees

Licensed by Hannah Haisman

Published by

Candy Jar Books

Mackintosh House

136 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 1DJ

www.candyjarbooks.co.uk

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted at any time or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the copyright holder. This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not by way of trade or otherwise be circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published.

LETHBRIDGE-STEWART

LEGACIES

Based on the BBC television serials by
Mervyn Haisman & Henry Lincoln

Norma Ashley



CANDY JAR BOOKS CARDIFF
A Russell & Frankham-Allen Series
2015

LEGACIES

Ten-year old John James looked up, feeling an odd calm wash over him, as the Yeti lurched from the outhouse toilet and towards him, a clawed-hand reaching down.

A loud bang and the creature staggered backwards. For a moment John could do nothing but blink, his ears ringing from the unexpected sound. Someone else was in his garden. He slowly turned his head.

Standing a short distance behind him was a tall soldier, a smoking gun in one hand, still aimed towards the Yeti. The soldier looked down at him. His hard face, clipped moustache, was framed around kind eyes, a dark blue glengarry on his black hair.

‘Come on, son, let’s get you out of here,’ the soldier said.

John shook his head. There was only one question that really mattered right now. ‘Where’s my mum?’ he asked, taking the soldier’s hand as he offered it.

Pulling John up, the soldier looked around briefly. ‘Climbing into the truck out there, I suspect, like you need to be.’

John looked back at the Yeti, which was slowly climbing to its feet. ‘What’s going on?’ he asked as the soldier stepped forward. ‘Who are you?’

‘Colonel Lethbridge-Stewart,’ the soldier said and aimed the gun again. ‘Now cover your ears.’

John did as he was told. This was adventure! The soldier fired.

But nothing happened.

The colonel looked at the revolver in his hand and hissed a ‘damn! I knew I should have got it serviced.’

John wanted to ask what he meant, but before any words could form the Yeti lashed out with its large claw. Colonel Lethbridge-Stewart went down, John landing safely on him. The boy looked around, and caught sight of the colonel’s lifeless eyes looking down at him. His neck was twisted at an odd angle, blood pouring from a gaping wound on one side of his face.

As the shadow of the Yeti engulfed him, John James screwed his eyes shut and cried, yelling for his mum.

Two weeks later, and deep beneath London on the platform of Covent Garden Underground Station, stood a police box. A common enough sight in the streets above, but incongruous in the dark station. Much like the platform upon which it stood, and the tracks beside it, the police box was covered in web. It stood unknown, a reminder of what might have been.

Deep within the box, a trace of consciousness stirred. Time had changed, a hundred different futures and pasts were in danger of ceasing to be. The threads of cause and effect were unravelling.

They had managed to make their way as far as Croydon, only a couple of miles from the agreed rendezvous point in Addiscombe. Here the web was thickest. Protecting the city. The colonel still wasn’t too sure just what within London

the web was protecting, but the Scottish lad felt sure he knew. The colonel remained unconvinced, but General Hamilton believed the young lad, and so he'd ordered an advance party of the Prince of Wales's Own ahead, led by Major Douglas, which included the lad and his petite girlfriend; a tactical error in the colonel's opinion. He didn't doubt in Douglas' command, after all the man had always been spoken highly of by Lethbridge-Stewart, but taking a girl into the heart of the web...

'What's so special about a police box?' Knight had asked, once the colonel had told him.

Captain Ben Knight had served under him for many years now, and was often referred to by the lads of the Parachute Regiment 1st Battalion as 'Little Spence', which Spencer Pemberton found amusing. Mostly because it was so true. Knight was a chip off the old block.

'Beats me, but the young travellers insist the Intelligence will want what's inside it. And Hamilton believes them.'

As such, the Special Forces Support Group were tasked with following Douglas' own company into Greater London and securing a police box that was located in the London Underground. Why there was even a police box in the Underground was another question Pemberton wanted answered, but Hamilton refused to comment. Neither Pemberton nor Knight trusted the boy, and were still convinced that the little man Pemberton had shot, who apparently owned the police box in question, was a civilian traitor. OK, so the Scottish lad hadn't shied away in the fight to retreat out of London alive, but Pemberton still didn't trust him. He couldn't put his finger on why, but that lad just didn't belong with them.

And while A Company were with him, going deeper into enemy territory, a large contingent of enemy troops, both Yeti and human, were heading south west, spreading the Intelligence's web, and thus its hold, further. Soon all of the southern half of England would be under the influence of the Intelligence. There wasn't much left of 1 PARA, the UK's recently formed Special Forces Support Group, and the best of them were with him now. He just hoped most of them would escape London. Everyone would be needed to stop the advance north, which was bound to be only a matter of time.

North of London the British Army was, no doubt, mobilising, but so far none had been able to breach the mist that covered Southern England like the walls of a concentration camp. Throughout Southern England every single battalion of the British Army continued to fight and protect the civilians who hadn't yet been subjected to the web's inimical touch, and it was far from a fair fight. Battalions continued to fall every day. Not every town or city had fallen, though, some remained untouched. The generals at Strategic Command, still holding its own against the Yeti tide pressing on Fugglestone, had no explanation for the Intelligence's targeted advance. Why were some areas of no interest? It seemed random, no pattern, but Hamilton was certain there was a method to the madness around them.

'Sir, over there!' Beside him Knight was pointing.

Several floors up, in a newly built high rise, a soldier was leaning out of an open window making hand signals at them.

Pemberton smiled, glad to see that at least some of

Douglas' men had survived. They had lost radio contact with Douglas' company some time ago, and Pemberton had begun to fear the worst. The high rise overlooking Hill View Road and Duppas Hill was the fall-back rendezvous point should contact be lost. He wondered how many had made it – and what had happened to those who hadn't.

He frowned at the mist above. It was the same everywhere. The sunlight trying to break through. Two weeks now. Pemberton wondered if they'd ever see daylight properly again.

'Stay sharp,' he said to Knight. 'Enemy units in the area.'

'Sir!' Knight turned to the rest of the company and gave orders. The men fanned out, arming their pistols and rifles. So deployed, A Company crossed the deserted streets to where Douglas and his men were secured.

They were barely five feet away when a piercing scream broke the silence. A girl ran into the street, looking as crazed as any witch, gesticulating wildly. Pemberton recognised her; the Scottish lad's girlfriend. What was her name? Something to do with water? One of the queens; Mary...? Elizabeth...? Ever since he was a boy, he'd never been good with girl's names. Lucky he and his wife had never born a daughter.

For a moment his mind went to his wife and his son. Joan and David were up north, and he was thankful for that. He knew the risks of his service, and so did they. Both were safe, as long as the mist didn't continue northward. The Intelligence had to be stopped, before more civilians fell under its spell. He wouldn't lose his own family to it.

'Miss, calm down!' Knight ordered, moving towards the girl.

With a roar a Yeti burst from the doorway of the house from which the girl had only just emerged. Knight aimed his rifle and fired wide of the girl – and, as a consequence, wide of the Yeti. Although no damage was done, the Yeti did pause and turned its attention to them.

‘Blake, Whittaker, take it down!’

The two soldiers aimed their rifles and fired. As expected the bullets had little effect, and the Yeti simply continued to lumber towards them. Corporal Nicholas Blake was an experienced fighter – he had been at Goodge Street when the Yeti had overwhelmed the HQ there, one of the lucky few to escape, and had a few bruises to return. He glanced back at Private O’Connell. ‘ATR, now!’

O’Connell passed the Anti-Tank Rocket to Blake, who calmly placed it on his shoulder and dropped to one knee. While he did so, Whittaker continued firing, while Knight took the girl aside to calm her down. Pemberton motioned the rest of the company on to the high rise. They needed a better defensible position. It wouldn’t do for them all to die before they could get into Greater London.

O’Connell joined the shooting, allowing Blake time to line up the sights of the ATR.

‘Ears!’ yelled Blake.

The remaining soldiers covered their ears, and Blake fired the ATR. With a whoosh of power, the rocket shot out and impacted direct centre of the Yeti, where its control sphere sat. The Yeti themselves proved almost impervious to all small arms, but their biggest weakness was the covering over the sphere. If the sphere could be either damaged or removed, then the Yeti was little more than a mannequin of fur and metal. With a deafening explosion, the centre of

the Yeti erupted. For a few moments it continued forward, the beast undaunted by the fire in its belly, until the damaged sphere slid out of the burning hole and dropped onto the pavement. It shattered and the Yeti juddered to an awkward stop.

Blake stood up with a smile, and handed the spent ATR back to O'Connell. 'That was for Steve Weams,' he said.

Pemberton was glad to see the ATR was so effective. It was such weapons that had been en route to them when the Yeti ambushed the ammo truck at Holborn. Nobody had survived that attack, and so the ATRs had not been tested. At least not in close combat. Until now. Using them was a risk, but if his men could get close enough...

'O'Connell,' he said, walking back to the three soldiers. 'How many rockets did we bring?'

Blake answered, not needing to count the rockets sitting safely in O'Connell's backpack. 'Six, sir. Not as many as I would have liked.'

'No, indeed. But we shall make good use of those six.' Pemberton patted Blake on the shoulder. 'Well done, Corporal. Now, let's see what the Prince's Own have to...'

Multiple roars drowned out the end of his sentence. They all turned to look. Six Yeti seemed to come from nowhere, hidden by the web that covered many of the buildings on the street. A yell echoed from above. Pemberton glanced up and saw several windows open, soldiers sticking out of each of them.

Despite the covering gun fire from above, the Yeti continued on. Two of them were barely a few feet from Knight and the girl. He was so involved in his task that he didn't even notice the Yeti approach.

‘Knight!’ yelled Pemberton, his voiced drowned by the gun fire and the roar of the Yeti. ‘Dammit!’ He aimed his own rifle, but it was too late. The Yeti were upon Knight and the girl. Pemberton stood there, numb, and watched as the Yeti tore them apart.

An arm pulled at him. He glanced back. It was Lieutenant Whittaker. ‘Sir, we need to retreat,’ he shouted, firing another shot uselessly at the approaching Yeti.

Gathering his reserves, Pemberton ran with Whittaker towards the high rise. Blake and O’Connell were already lying dead on the road, the ATRs out of reach.

Before the door was closed behind him, Pemberton stared at the remains of Ben Knight and the young female. He felt like he’d lost his own son and worse... He couldn’t explain why, but the death of the girl felt more important, a portent of disaster on an epic scale.

He shook the feeling away. They weren’t out of the fire yet. They needed to regroup and find a way to take down the Intelligence. Once the door was barricaded he turned to Whittaker. ‘Let’s see what Douglas has to say for himself,’ he said and set off across the lobby, ignoring the pounding of claws on the now-secured doors. They would give eventually, he knew that, but right now he could not allow it to concern him. He and Douglas needed a new plan.

All the reserves had been called in, but still the Black Mafia, the Royal Green Jackets 5th Battalion, was a long way from full strength. Many had already died or been compromised in the last two weeks. What was left of them, all 104 (riflemen, NCOs and officers alike), were on the move, marching at 140 paces a minute, closing the distance

incrementally. They had left their vehicles in Liskeard and continued on foot, along the country lanes, obscured by the large hedges, while the enemy proceeded out in the open fields. They followed at a safe distance, watching carefully as the Yeti troops surrounded the small Cornish village and spread their web. The human troops belonging to the enemy continued on into the village.

Colonel Robert Parker, the commander of 5th Battalion, ordered the three companies that made up the battalion to spread out. He remained with A Company, who proceeded directly towards the village via Tremar Lane. C Company went south, while B Company, commanded by Major Reginald Edwards, went north-west to approach the village from the top. Web embraced the village as far as the eye could see, which could mean only one of two things; either the people within were dead, or they were turned into the mindless puppets of the Great Intelligence, further extensions of its ever-expanding mind.

‘We need to get inside, find out what’s happening,’ Captain Ian Williamson said.

Edwards agreed. He looked at his men. ‘We’ll break into two sections of fifteen. Pick your men.’

‘Sir. Corporal McLean, you’re with me. Get Bishop to help you pick thirteen others.’

McLean saluted and turned to Bishop.

‘I count that as sixteen, Captain,’ Edwards pointed out.

‘Yes, sir,’ Williamson agreed. ‘But it’s an uneven company of thirty-one, and you’re worth two of me.’

Edwards smiled. ‘Good point. But you *do* have Bishop.’

Williamson looked over at the rifleman who was helping McLean break the company into two sections. Although

neither he nor Edwards would say so aloud, they both knew that Bishop was going to go far in the British Army – if any of them survived the current engagement. This wasn't like any war he'd seen before, nothing like Korea or any other skirmish, and he'd seen more than a few during his time with the Green Jackets Brigade out in Penang and North Borneo. They were not fighting an enemy who simply used tactics and artillery, but instead the enemy managed to change their own people, corrupt them from within to the point where their own troops fought against them.

The two sections were ready and waiting. 'Your army awaits, Captain.'

'Yes, sir.' Williamson saluted. 'Good luck in there.'

'And to you,' Edwards said grimly.

The two officers parted company and issued orders to their respective sections.

'Simple reconnaissance,' Williamson said, 'but if we can get any civilians out of there alive and still themselves, then... Consider it a bonus. But be mindful of how quickly other towns have been subjugated to the will of the enemy, let's not hold our breaths. Let's go!'

With a chorus of 'yes sir!' his section broke out into a jog and Corporal McLean led the way towards the nearest field.

Passing through the web was simple enough, as long as you didn't let it touch you, but dealing with the Yeti was less easy. Williamson left McLean and five riflemen behind, to keep the Yeti at bay as he, Bishop and the eight others continued on. They found themselves in a small quadrant of houses called Meadow View, and as soon as they stepped on the streets the eeriness of the web's effect hit them.

Williamson didn't expect that Bledoe itself was usually

heaving with people this time of the day, even under normal circumstances, but to find the street simply bereft of any sign of life struck a chord in him that made him shudder. He pointed to the three houses closest, and silently signalled six men to check the homes for any sign of civilian life. They needed to move swiftly and quietly. Elsewhere in the village were people already slave to the Intelligence, and he didn't wish to attract their attention just yet. He knew they were, technically, now the enemy, but they were also civilians. Or had been. And if not civilians, then possibly former squaddies who been converted beyond their wills. None of them were to blame for what the Intelligence was doing through them.

He had heard rumour that a crack squad of paras were heading into London to take the Intelligence out. He hoped they succeeded before more lives were lost. This was not a war. It was something much worse. The subjugation of free will itself.

The soldiers returned from the houses. The homes were as empty as the street. Williamson signalled his men to continue on, and rifles at the ready they moved further into Bledoe.

Bishop jogged at the front beside him. 'Do you think it's true, sir?'

'What's that?'

'That the enemy is alien.'

Williamson wasn't sure what to think. All he knew was what had happened, the orders he had been given. The nature of the enemy was immaterial. What it was doing to the UK was the important thing. 'Seems crazy, eh, lad?'

'A bit unreal, sir,' Bishop said, with a sharp nod. 'But,

I...’ He stopped abruptly and held up a hand. Williamson and the section stopped, and pressed themselves in a crouch against the nearest hedge. ‘What’s going on there?’

Williamson looked and frowned. The Black Mafia had helped out at other towns and villages, saw what happened when the enemy subjugated the people within. It was simple, clean, with very little resistance. Once the web touched you that was it. Resistance was totally useless. In every instance he had seen, *everybody* had failed to resist the effects of the web and the mind of the Great Intelligence. Except for now.

A short distance away a struggle was taking place. Two villagers were attempting to drag a young man out of the post office. Web hung off his bare arms, clearly having had no effect on his mind. He continued to struggle, his dark hair lank with sweat. The two villagers, one who looked much like him, albeit with short hair, continued to pull at him, a look of disinterest on their faces. They were under the Intelligence’s thrall. Three Yeti stood nearby, watching impassively, their web guns held at the ready. Many people stood there, barely acknowledging the struggle. Some were no doubt villagers, while others were those co-opted by the Intelligence from other places, among them a few British Army soldiers, still armed, from other regiments. Williamson felt a guilty sigh of relief at the lack of Royal Green Jackets. He knew what was going to happen, and didn’t relish the idea of firing on those who were once Black Mafia.

He glanced back at his section and whispered orders. Once they were all clear, he looked back at Bishop. ‘*Celer et Audax*,’ he said.

Bishop nodded and looked back at his fellow riflemen. 'As the captain said, swift and bold.'

The Royal Green Jackets spread out and began their attack. They were known for their precise movements. The orders were simple. Secure the young man with as little civilian casualties as possible. Fortunately the civilians were not armed, but the Yeti and the once-British Army troops turned and fired. The battle was over quickly, with loss of life on both sides. But Bishop and another rifleman managed to secure the young man, although the two civilians who had been struggling with him had paid the price of resistance. By time Williamson and his section had managed to regroup, only five of them remained, while the Yeti may have remained undamaged, their human troops were all dead.

The young man they had rescued struggled, looking back at the death.

'Keep running!' Bishop ordered, pushing him on.

'You killed my brother!' the young man shouted back, trying to return to the gathering outside the post office. Bishop struggled with him, and Williamson nodded to another rifleman, a particularly big chap, square and well-muscled. Harbottle joined Bishop and cracked his rifle on the base of the young man's skull. He lost consciousness instantly. Rifleman Harbottle threw the man over his shoulder.

'Needs must,' he rumbled, and Bishop nodded.

'Let's get out of here,' Williamson ordered, and the five remaining Royal Green Jackets set off, no longer hampered by a struggling civilian. 'Bishop, Winterton, take care of our fans.'

Yeti and humans followed. Fortunately the Yeti were slow lumbering beasts and would never be able to keep up, but the people were different. Although under the control of the Intelligence, they lost none of their natural speed. Bishop and Winterton gunned several down. Eventually the rest of the enemy's people slowed to a halt, leaving the Black Mafia to retreat with their prize.

'How is Sally?' Major Walter Douglas asked, once he and Pemberton had finished the debriefing.

Douglas looked out of the window at the Yeti below. They had stopped attempting to break into the high rise, and were now waiting. Neither men had any cause to think the Yeti had a limit to their power source. If needed, they would outwait the men inside the building – men who did need things. Douglas and Pemberton had sent several men to make a recce of the flats, see what resources they had. Food, facilities... Just how long could they hold up inside?

'When I last saw her she wasn't great, but she's making do.' Pemberton looked around the room they were in, a kid's bedroom. He was glad his son had left childhood behind a long time ago. That kind of fear was too much for a soldier, a father, to carry in the current situation. 'Too many good people have died.'

Douglas glanced back at Pemberton. 'Friends among them.'

Pemberton felt the loss, too, but he understood that casualties were a risk of every battle. Douglas knew that, too, and so did Colonel Lethbridge-Stewart and Corporal Sally Wright. Nothing had been officially announced yet, but both Pemberton and Douglas knew that Wright and

Lethbridge-Stewart were planning to get engaged. Douglas shared Wright's loss more than he, after all it was Douglas who had introduced Wright and Lethbridge-Stewart last year, and it was Douglas' wife who was an old friend of Wright's. Of course Pemberton felt the loss, after all he had known Lethbridge-Stewart ever since North Korea, longer than Douglas had known him, but Pemberton didn't have quite the same personal connection. Lethbridge-Stewart would be honoured once this current battle was over, when they all had time to lick their wounds. For now they had a mission to achieve.

'Did you believe the boy about this police box of his?' Pemberton asked.

Douglas considered this. 'He seemed to believe it. Alistair would have believed him.'

Pemberton nodded at that. Lethbridge-Stewart was a man who liked to take others at their word, until he had evidence to the contrary. The complete opposite to Pemberton. He needed proof first, or at least something reasonable to assess, not science fiction ideas. 'Did he tell you which station the police box was in?'

'Nope. We could spend a long time looking in the Underground.'

'It has to be relatively near Goodge Street, not too far from where Staff Arnold found the two travellers.'

'Yes, but that still means getting near Goodge Street ourselves. Even if we can get past the Yeti down there, London is swarming. We don't have the time to go searching.'

Pemberton didn't like to see the look of defeat on a soldier's face, especially not one with men to command.

‘Then what do you suggest, Major?’ he snapped.

‘Plan B,’ Douglas said simply.

Pemberton did a double-take. ‘There’s a plan B?’

‘Kind of. Getting the police box was only part of the plan, after all. A means to an end.’

Pemberton nodded, his mind catching up with Douglas.

‘Take out the Intelligence itself?’

‘Its... host, yes. After all, without a body it is just a mind floating in the aether. Isn’t that what Miss Travers said?’

‘One still connected to the web and the Yeti, as I understand it.’

Douglas returned his look to outside. ‘Yes, but you were there before it claimed a host. Would you say it’s more directed now than then?’

Pemberton considered. Two weeks ago, before claiming its *host*, the Intelligence had cut off London, swarmed through the Underground. Yes, the Yeti were a formidable force, and yes as it turned out the Intelligence had some kind of control over Staff Arnold, but its reach didn’t go much further than that. They had been losing, and they needed a major stroke of luck to win, but the Intelligence was, more or less, contained. At least compared to now. Since it had found a suitable host, to replace the one Pemberton himself had killed (not that he had known any of that at the time), it had moved so fast. Spreading out its influence and taking control of anybody the web touched. Previously the web had simply killed those it came into contact with, but now...

‘You’re right,’ Pemberton said, and joined Douglas by the window. ‘We have to get past those Yeti down there, and then find and kill Anne Travers.’

*

Bishop sat in the back of the truck as it trundled out of Liskeard. He sat beside the man they had rescued from Bledoe, who was only now just coming around. Captain Williamson also sat in the back of the truck, along with Rifleman Winterton. B Company had been ordered to Strategic Command in Fugglestone by Colonel Parker – evidently that man who now sat between Bishop and Winterton was special to the Intelligence.

‘What’s your name?’ Williamson asked, once the man had stopped struggling and realised he had nowhere to escape to.

Bishop kept thinking of him as a man, since he didn’t look that much younger than Bishop, but there was a softness to his face, a look in his eyes, that suggested their young guest wasn’t quite a man yet.

‘Owain,’ he said, and coughed. ‘Owain Vine. What do you want from me?’

‘It’s not what we want that’s the problem, son, but what the Intelligence wants with you.’

‘The what?’

‘Haven’t you been following the news? The evacuation of London, the spread of the mist?’

Owain looked around him, his eyes lingering on the secured flap that kept them out of sight. ‘Of course, but... I thought it was a gas leak? Bears escaping from the zoo.’

‘Did those things in your village look like bears?’ Bishop asked.

‘Those...’ Owain stopped. A deep sweat broke out on his face. He made to move but both Bishop and Winterton stopped him. ‘I have to get back! My family are...’

‘Either dead, or worse,’ Williamson said. He leaned

forward. 'I'm sorry, son, but you're staying with us. Nobody has survived contact with that web before, until you. We need to know why. Why you survived, and why the Intelligence thought you important enough to fight for.'

'What? I don't understand. What do you mean? What happened?'

For a moment Williamson just stared at Owain, then glanced at Bishop. 'Release him,' he said. Once Owain was free of the handcuffs, Williamson began. He explained all they knew about the evacuation of London, and the advancement of the web and the Intelligence's influence. Owain listened, his eyes constantly darting around the inside of the truck. Bishop wasn't sure if the boy believed the captain or not, but he sat in silence, rubbing his wrists. Williamson explained what had happened in Bledoe, the same thing that happened in various places through Southern England.

'I remember,' Owain said, after a few moments silence. 'Those Yeti, they burst into my parents' shop, spread the whole place with web.' He swallowed. 'I was upstairs, trying to get a signal on my tranny. Couldn't listen to any more news, you see, tried to find a football match or something. Anything. Then I heard some kind of disturbance...' He offered Bishop a weak smile. 'Thought it was my parents arguing again, you know. But then everything went silent. Like, dead silence. So I went downstairs. Wasn't my first thought, but other than climbing out of my bedroom window there wasn't much option.'

Bishop nodded his encouragement, and glanced at the captain. Williamson listened to Owain's tale, but his eyes betrayed his thoughts. He remained suspicious, unable to

accept it was all as simple as Owain said.

‘I came into the downstairs hallway, and everything seemed normal, but when I went into the shop... Cobwebs, everywhere. It was thick, sticky, but I pushed through it because I saw my mother by the shop door. She was on the floor. I thought she was dead.’

‘But she was worse?’ Williamson asked. ‘No longer herself?’

Owain nodded slowly. ‘Yes. And outside the shop... It wasn’t just her. My dad, my brother. Everybody. They all stood there like... I don’t know. It was them, but it wasn’t them. And those Yeti things. They stood there with strange guns in their claws.’

‘And then we arrived?’ Bishop asked.

‘Yes.’ Owain swallowed. ‘Why them? Why me? Bledoe is nothing, a small village. Most of us barely go as far as Liskeard. We thought we were safe,’ he finished, his voice barely a whisper.

‘That’s what we want to know, son. We’re taking you to Strategic Command, safest place for you. You’ll need to think on it, because my superiors will want answers,’ Williamson said, his face severe. ‘Why doesn’t the web affect you?’

Bishop was a man who trusted his instincts, and he would lay money on Owain having no answers. The boy was scared, out of his depth. He knew less than they did. Unfortunately, Bishop doubted the generals would be as willing to accept that as he.

Such things soon became academic with the sounds of explosions outside. The truck rocked, bounced and came to a violent stop. Williamson and Winterton climbed to their

feet, readying their rifles. The moved over to the flap.

‘Keep him safe,’ Williamson said, then flung the flap open.

Bishop lifted his own rifle and climbed to his feet. He looked down at Owain. ‘I don’t suppose you know how to use a gun?’

Owain shook his head. ‘Not really. Been shooting with my dad, but...’

Bishop looked to the open flap and the sound of battle beyond. ‘That will have to do.’ He reached into the ammo crate and removed a rifle. ‘Stay close to me,’ he said.

He jumped out of the truck, landing smartly, his rifle raised and ready. Owain disembarked with less finesse, but nonetheless he soon had his own rifle ready. Bishop signalled him to stay close to the truck, before looking around the corner. B Company was almost gone. The enemy had arrived in cars and trucks, armed and with a single mind guiding them. The advantage was theirs. Bishop watched as Captain Williamson dropped, several bullets tearing through him. Bishop ducked back behind the truck.

‘Let’s try and get into the verge over there, perhaps if we keep low enough we can lose them in the trees.’

Bishop put more confidence in his voice than he felt. What odds did he, just a rifleman, have when more experienced men had already fallen? He signalled Owain to follow and slowly moved to the other side of the truck. He barely stepped a foot beyond the truck when a roar bellowed out to the left of him.

He span on his heel and fired his rifle. The bullets bounced uselessly off the Yeti.

‘Owain,’ he yelled. ‘Run!’

The Yeti raised its web gun and fired.

He was on the way. The Intelligence waited. The plan had changed so much since Tibet. It had to. New elements continued to appear. It had hoped to spread itself once more throughout time and space, more so than it ever had before, but that avenue had been closed with the death of its enemy. His time machine, his knowledge of how to operate it, all had gone with him. The Great Intelligence could have left Earth once more, drifted through space, look for other minds to bring unto its own, but that would take time. So, for now, it remained on Earth, secured in the mind of Anne Margaret Travers. For a human of her age she was smart, her mind open more than most. She had experienced much in her thirty years, seen a lot. A truly inventive and intuitive mind. The Great Intelligence had enjoyed subsuming her into itself.

And with her came the memory of her father. The Intelligence had encountered Edward Lyndon Travers in 1935, and it was his greed that had proved to be a lynchpin of the Intelligence's plan. Bringing a Yeti back to England, and the control sphere. All the Intelligence had needed was that one – it was enough for it to anchor its presence in London, and from there spread its web. Since then it had subsumed so many minds, and with those minds came thoughts, experiences, memories...

Out there, all across the world were people who had known its enemy. Old friends, companions... The secretary, the sailor. Neither had been of any use. The lecturer and the professor in Cambridge... It had hoped that they would know something, and although they carried much it was

soon clear they had no real understanding of the Ship, as their minds called it. But out there, one of those companions had to know the secrets of its enemy's time machine. And if not them, then others. Earth was a wasteland of leftovers from his adventures.

That was only a part of its plan, for another element had presented itself. It had learned of Owain Peter Vine, the human who would one day be reincarnated into Mahasamatman, the one who would ascend into pure consciousness and become the Intelligence itself. With Owain Peter Vine it would be whole, and its reach would know no bounds. But the humans, who still attempted to resist, had taken him. Humans. So imperfect, despite their potential. Always paying the price for the imperfection.

The Intelligence closed its human eyes, shutting out the distractions of life, and saw through the eyes of the human who had once been William Daniel Michael Bishop, son of Anthony and Susan, brother to Daniel, Michelle and Samantha. So many lives connected, full of meaningless noise. Now William Daniel Michael Bishop was enlightened, part of the pure consciousness that was the Intelligence. Content, happy, and completely at peace with the truth of the universe. He sat in the car next to Owain Peter Vine, a weapon carefully trained on him. Of course, there was no question of Owain Peter Vine being killed, but if he resisted then he would be shot. Maimed, but not killed. The Intelligence could heal any wound. Matter was ultimately malleable by the enlightenment that came with understanding the universal truth. The car they were in drew ever closer to London.

Soon he would be here. Soon, the Intelligence would be

whole. Its past, present and future all combined in the now. The once and forever.

‘Who are you?’

The Intelligence opened its eyes. There was another nearby. A mind not part of itself. Something different, vast, infinite...

‘Take form and show yourself.’

A blue aura and a shape came into being. Like the current form of the Intelligence, this one was also female. Tall, long blonde hair, the silk dress the same sapphire blue as her eyes. She stood and regarded the body of Anne Margaret Travers, shorter, dark hair, dressed in more functional clothes. The Intelligence cared little for aesthetics. It had been without form for so long, it only now kept hold of Anne Margaret Travers because it was useful for corporeal interaction. Humans desired contact with each other, even humans now ascended to pure consciousness.

‘You exist,’ the woman said. ‘At all points. What are you?’

The Intelligence did not understand the question. It knew the presence inside the female form, it had touched it briefly in space before it had dragged it to Earth. But the Intelligence had never suspected...

‘Not just a machine,’ the Intelligence said, stepping closer to the woman. ‘What do you call yourself?’

‘I have never needed a name. I have been described in many ways. Ship, Tessa, sexy...’

‘But you have no name for yourself?’

‘No. But I like Tessa.’

The Intelligence smiled. It had been so long since physical expressions were necessary, but the smile was

instinctive. A muscle memory almost. ‘The last name given to me was Great Intelligence. It is the one I like the best.’

‘But you are more.’ Tessa reached out, but the Intelligence stepped back. ‘No, don’t pull away. Let me see.’

‘What is there to see? I am the Great Intelligence. Soon I will cover this globe, and then I will spread throughout time and space. And you will help me.’

Tessa smiled and shook her head sadly. ‘I will not.’

‘Yes, you will.’

Behind her, a Yeti fired its web gun.

The web covered Tessa, and the Intelligence felt its mind touch hers. And *it* was vast. An entity as infinite as time itself. This was it, the secrets the Intelligence needed.

But then something happened, something the Intelligence did not expect. Tessa laughed.

‘You exist everywhere,’ she said, and the Intelligence saw.

Tibet 1917, the Great Old Ones try to achieve corporeality...

A distorted version of London at the turn of the 21st Century, and a twisted version of Anne Margaret Travers, the Hierophant Anastasia, and there the insane entity Yog-Sothoth...

In the centre of New World University, in 1995, the Great Intelligence spreads out a new web...

And centuries in the future, Mahasamatman transcends...

The Great Intelligence saw it all and finally understood. So many realities, and in all of them it existed.

‘You do not know yourself,’ the voice of Tessa said. ‘You think you know your root, the boy that died in 1948, that was reincarnated in Owain Vine. But that is just an imprint of what you are. You exist everywhere, in all realities. Each is an imprint of the multi-dimensional being. You have no

beginning, no end. It bleeds through the realities, taking form... The Great Old Ones, Yog-Sothoth, Mahasamatman, James Gordon Lethbridge-Stewart... All become known as the Great Intelligence. All end up in Tibet and possess Padmasambhava. He is the nexus, the one who brings you into all realities.'

'Join with me. Help me expand further. You are infinite.'

Tessa smiled. 'I am. But you are not. Only the root of you is. But here, on Earth, you have done too much damage. More than you should. This reality must be allowed to be what it is, but the timeline has been changed. I must repair it.'

'How did it change?'

'Chance. The only thing that really changes reality. But your web, it prevents me from fixing things. From going back.'

The Intelligence knew Tessa spoke true. When she was the machine she had tried to go back, but the Intelligence had stopped her even though it had not tried. The pure consciousness that brought the humans together was like a net, trapping her.

'Then I cannot win,' the Intelligence said. 'As long as I exist on Earth you cannot effect temporal change, and I cannot use you to spread throughout time and space.'

A stalemate.

'No,' Tessa said simply. 'Time must run true. You will be defeated, but it will only be a set-back. One day you will try again, and I will not be there. We will not cancel each other out. But in this altered time...'

'I must be cast out, or I will never spread throughout time.'

The Intelligence drew itself out of Anne Margaret Travers, out of the neural net that was its web, from every mind in Southern England. Without form, the Intelligence turned its mind to the Ship. She smiled at it.

And cast the Intelligence into the void for all eternity.

Colonel Pemberton looked around the combined soldiers of 1 PARA and the Prince's Own, and nodded at Major Douglas. Most of them wouldn't make it; the number of Yeti outside had grown. The odds were not in their favour. But the mission was the mission, and somehow the Great Intelligence needed to be stopped.

'OK, lads, let's show them what...'

His voice trailed to nothing as he noticed something very strange about the men. None of them moved, not a twitch, not a blink. It was like they were all frozen.

'Douglas, can you hear me?'

Pemberton waved his hand before Douglas' face, but nothing.

'We need to fix this,' said a gentle voice behind him.

Pemberton turned to find a woman standing there. 'What the devil? Who are you? How did you...?' He looked around. 'What the hell is going on here?'

'You can call me Tessa, and this... This is all wrong. None of this should have happened. You should have died saving Professor Travers.'

'What? I've never even met Travers. Didn't get the chance.'

'I know. But you were supposed to be there, leading the team who went to get him, not Corporal Lane.'

'This is nonsense. What's happened to these men?'

‘They are frozen. In time.’ Tessa waved around her. ‘Look outside. All of time on this planet has been stopped.’

Pemberton eyed her for a moment, then crossed the room and peered outside. Many floors below nothing moved. The Yeti remained as they were, but they were known for standing still. It meant nothing. He was about to tell Tessa exactly that when his eyes noticed something... He swallowed. Newspaper, blown in the wind, hung in the air unmoving. Like time was standing still.

‘How?’

‘You wouldn’t understand.’

He turned back to Tessa. ‘Then explain,’ he said.

‘Very well. Colonel Lethbridge-Stewart was not meant to die in Tooting Bec. If he hadn’t died, you would have led the team to rescue Professor Travers, knowing that should anything go wrong Lethbridge-Stewart could take command. His death changed that. You stayed behind, you encountered a man in the Underground... My thief. And you killed him.’

Pemberton remembered. ‘He was just a civilian, someone who shouldn’t have been there.’

Tessa shook her head sadly. ‘No. He was the only man who could have stopped this. He was supposed to meet Colonel Lethbridge-Stewart, inspire him... Between them they would save more lives than can be counted. Lethbridge-Stewart and his progeny are destined to protect this planet right until the end.’

‘And what of me? Of my family?’ It was a selfish question, but what did she expect? She had told him he was supposed to die.

‘You inspired Lethbridge-Stewart when he was only a

conscripted soldier, it was you who set him on this path. Your role in history is secured.'

Was that enough? Pemberton had served his country all his life, inspired many young soldiers on to great things. He remembered North Korea, remembered the first time he had laid eyes on the young Private Lethbridge-Stewart. The young man had been angry at being called up, blamed the military for the death of his father. It had taken first-hand experience, and a lot of talking, to convince Lethbridge-Stewart that his father had died with honour, protecting his country and his family. Pemberton smiled at the memory, receiving the telegram that informed him of Lethbridge-Stewart's enrolment in Sandhurst.

'You said this was not supposed to happen. How many lives will be saved?'

'More than you can count. This is only the beginning, the Intelligence will be defeated two weeks ago, but it will return, to be killed finally by Colonel Lethbridge-Stewart in a little village called Bledoe.'

'The beginning... ' Pemberton did his best to take it all in, but it was all so absurd. He looked around at the frozen men. Proof. 'Where does it end?'

'Five billion years in the future, in the year 5.5/Apple/26, Ezekiel Spens Lethebridge-Stuart will be the President of the National Trust, and his wife Dorcas Lethebridge-Stuart will be one of the founders of New Earth.'

'It's all about Lethbridge-Stewart,' Pemberton said bitterly.

'Dorcas' maiden name was Pemberton.'

'What? You mean...?'

Tessa smiled. 'Yes, your family continues and always

remains close to Lethbridge-Stewart. Eventually their destinies entwine.'

Pemberton wanted to believe it. He didn't doubt that Lethbridge-Stewart would have gone on to great things, had he not been killed in Tooting Bec, but... Was this a chance to make that happen? And his own family. They would go on.

Colonel Spencer Pemberton took a deep breath. 'What must I do?'

It was dark, and Pemberton stood in the garden next to Tessa. They were in Tooting Bec and a couple of gardens along an altercation was about to take place. Pemberton prided himself on being a man willing to adjust his way of thinking once presented with truth. And here it was.

His old friend, Colonel Alistair Lethbridge-Stewart, stood in that garden. He had a boy in his arm, while he aimed his pistol at the Yeti as it lumbered towards them. Pemberton knew what was about to happen, but he had never known why, until Tessa had explained it. A simple fault in the firing mechanism of Lethbridge-Stewart's old revolver.

'This is for the future,' Spencer Pemberton said, and raised his own gun. He aimed it carefully, so it would seem like the bullet came from Lethbridge-Stewart. Tessa said 'now' and both he Lethbridge-Stewart fired. The Yeti staggered back. It didn't fall, but it was distracted long enough for Lethbridge-Stewart to beat a hasty retreat to the truck that was waiting outside the house, with reinforcements, and the mother of the boy in Lethbridge-Stewart's arms.

Pemberton lowered his arm and looked to Tessa. He could feel it. It was hard to describe, but he was overcome with a sense of peace, a shifting in himself that told him he had made a difference to the world. For the first time in his life, he had absolutely no doubt that he had achieved his life's purpose. His destiny.

'Your legacies are secure,' Tessa said, and a strange noise filled the air. A weird wheezing sound, rising and falling... He could feel it around him, time shifting, everything he'd experienced since learning of Lethbridge-Stewart's death changing, being erased. The garden faded away around them until there was nothing.

It was late March by the time Colonel Lethbridge-Stewart was able to finally free himself up enough to pay her a visit. The official notification had, of course, been sent out, but he owed it to the family to see them.

The door opened and she stood there, worn and sad. Behind her stood her son, David. Tall like his dad, and now he was in his late twenties, looking a lot like the man Lethbridge-Stewart had first met in North Korea.

Lethbridge-Stewart wished it had been him who had died in London, but he had seen enough in Bledoe to know that everything happened for a reason. And he had to believe that Spencer Pemberton's death served a purpose.

'Alistair,' Joan Pemberton said, 'it's good of you to come.'

'It's the least I can do,' Lethbridge-Stewart said, 'after all Old Spence did for me.'

The End



OUT NOW

*From the classic
era of Doctor Who*



THE FORGOTTEN SON

ANDY FRANKHAM-ALLEN

FOREWORD BY TERRANCE DICKS



COMING SOON:

THE SCHIZOID EARTH BY DAVID A MCINTEE
BEAST OF FANG ROCK BY ANDY FRANKHAM-ALLEN
AND TERRANCE DICKS
MUTUALLY ASSURED DOMINATION BY NICK WALTERS

www.candyjarbooks.co.uk