

RICHARD BREWER

LETHBRIDGE
STEWART

SHADOWS IN
THE GLEN



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There was a distant squeal of metal wheels on rails as the sixteen-twenty-five to Glasgow finally came into view.

Alone on the platform, Sylvia watched eagerly as the little train lurched across the bleak moorland towards the remote highland station, her teeth chattering from the biting east wind.

Shuffling up the aisle with her two heavy suitcases, Sylvia found her carriage sparsely populated; a young man in skinny jeans and a hoodie was slumped in his seat listening to music, while a little further away from him sat a middle-aged couple dressed in matching outdoor wear, deep in conversation over an open guide book. Across the aisle were a mother and her young son, they too were involved in a lively discussion – the son protesting over having to surrender his handheld games console. Then lastly, in the far corner of the carriage sat a large, familiar figure, dressed in a dog tooth jacket and a light brown cap.

‘Alistair?’

Sylvia remembered him from the journey up from London the week before.

He looked up, his hooded eyes tired and watery, quickly twinkled with recognition.

‘Ah,’ his voice growled through his bushy, white

beard like a big old cat. 'Sylvia, wasn't it?'

'Yes, that's right,' replied Sylvia, putting down her suitcases. 'How did the Highland genealogical hunt go?'

'Rather more of a Highland goose chase, I'm afraid to say,' huffed Alistair.

Sylvia gestured to the seat opposite to where he was sitting. 'May I?'

'Of course,' Alistair answered with a warm smile. 'Here, let me help you with those cases.'

After a few moments wrestling Sylvia's luggage into the overhead hold, the two of them sat back down and made themselves comfortable.

'I'm sorry to hear it was a wasted journey for you. Luckily the same couldn't be said for me!' Sylvia winked, as she produced a bottle of whisky from a jute bag. 'It's a single malt from the distillery near my sister's. Would you like some? I only have plastic cups I'm afraid.'

A broad smile cracked across the old man's face. 'Why not!'

Then with a judder, the little train pulled away from the lonely station, continuing its long journey to the big city.

*

Out on the moor, it was growing ever colder, and the sky was rapidly darkening as night fell early. Beyond the lights of the station, *something* was gliding over the heather at incredible speed, passing through the frigid autumnal air like a phantom.

Halting high up on the hillside, its cold, inhuman eyes gazed out across the desolate landscape, and watched the little train as it clanked its way through the gloom.

The prey had been located.

The train had only been travelling for about ten minutes before it reached the next stop. At first, Sylvia wondered if anyone was going to get on, but then the calm of the carriage was suddenly shattered by the frenzied barking of a dog.

‘Come on gal! Whist up will ya!’ somebody shouted.

Sylvia turned to see a man dressed in tweed and green Wellington’s step into the carriage with a black and white collie in tow.

‘Sorry,’ he said, looking at everyone with an apologetic expression. ‘She’s not normally like this. I think something’s got her spooked. The daft barmpot!’

Sylvia, who had been staring at the newcomer, heard Alistair cough, and from the corner of her eye

she saw him finger something in his jacket pocket.

‘Everything all right?’ she asked, as the train set off again.

Alistair didn’t answer her at first. The old man’s gaze was shifting around the carriage and out of the window. It seemed like he was looking for something, or was expecting something to happen.

‘Yes,’ he said at last. ‘It’s just...’

He was cut off by a loud sigh from across the aisle.

‘That’s better!’ The man with dog threw himself down into a seat. ‘Bloomin’ freezing on that platform!’

The collie jumped onto his lap, but was still shaking, Sylvia couldn’t help but notice that it seemed to have the same pensive expression on its face as Alistair.

The man leaned over to her.

‘That’s a nice drop you’ve got there,’ he said, nodding toward the opened bottle of whisky. ‘Just right for an evening like this. I’m Sandy, and this is my wee girl, Mallaig. We’re off to Glasgow to visit my son and my daughter-in-law for a few days.’

‘I’m Sylvia. Pleased to meet you, Sandy.’

The two shook hands.

‘English?’ asked the newcomer.

‘Oh,’ Sylvia feigned surprise. ‘Did my accent give

me away?’

Sandy chuckled.

‘Travelling light I see.’ Sylvia noticed that Sandy had no luggage to speak of except for what looked like a large gun cartridge bag.

‘Aye,’ replied Sandy. ‘Being a widower living in a little old bothy, you find you don’t collect many possessions.’ He gestured toward Alistair. ‘Forgive me, but is this your...’

‘Oh no,’ Sylvia laughed lightly with embarrassment. ‘This is Alistair, we met on the journey up here last week. Alistair’s been researching his family history.’

‘Is he all right?’ asked Sandy, sounding a little concerned.

Both he and Sylvia stared at Alistair, who was still gazing out of the window – flakes of sleet now gathering on the pane.

‘It’s getting colder out there,’ he murmured. Then his eyes seemed to snap back to their old sparkling selves. ‘Sorry, how rude of me, old boy. Yes, I’m Alistair Lethbridge Stewart. How’s your dog now?’

The little collie was still trembling.

‘Ah, I’m sure she’ll be grand in a wee bit,’ said Sandy, smoothing Mallaig’s fur.

‘Perhaps it’s the cold?’ suggested Sylvia.

‘Perhaps,’ agreed Alistair. ‘Maybe Sandy would be better off in the next carriage? Could be a tad warmer in there.’

Neither Sylvia nor Sandy replied, having now struck up a conversation between themselves.

The door connecting to the next carriage hissed open and two burly men dressed in bomber jackets entered. One flicked a glance in Alistair’s direction before moving on down the aisle. It was the subtlest of glimpses, but not so subtle that Sylvia didn’t see it.

Mallaig started to whine and Sylvia noticed Alistair visibly tense.

‘Would you like some more whisky?’ she asked.

‘No thank you, my dear,’ he replied, looking over to where the young couple were sat. ‘But I think you had better brace yourself.’

Outside, a black, shapeless mass detached itself from the darkness of the hillside and began racing down the glen toward the train below.

‘What do you think you’re doing?’ somebody shouted. It was the voice of the young mother.

Sylvia turned to see the men in bomber jackets hauling her and her son out of their seats and into the

aisle.

‘Hey!’ exclaimed Sandy, jumping out of his seat. ‘What are you boys playing at?’

The two men ignored him as they hustled the mother and son down to the next carriage.

Sandy set off after them.

‘Sandy!’ Alistair called out to him in vain.

Then there was something over the sound of the excitement, a scream, coming from somewhere outside the carriage.

‘Sylvia, my dear,’ said Alistair slowly. ‘I really must insist that you get down – now!’

Sandy stopped his pursuit as the sound grew to a deafening climax.

‘What is it?’ The colour started to drain from Sylvia’s face as she slowly realised something terrible was about to happen. ‘Terrorists?’

‘Not quite, now please – get down!’

There was a tremendous smash as the carriage windows shattered.

Sylvia watched Sandy turn and freeze – a look of fear and confusion etched across his face.

Sylvia wasn’t exactly sure what happened next – she saw a black *thing*, like a cloak, sweep over Sandy, and then he was gone. As for the thing, it seemed to

have vanished out through another window.

The screaming too had ceased as abruptly as a thunderclap.

Sylvia tried to stand, but found her legs trembling too much to support her.

‘Ali... Alistair...where did he go?’ She fought to get the words out of her mouth. ‘Wha...what was that thing?’

‘It’s alright, Sylvia,’ said Alistair calmly.

‘But what was it?’ Sylvia stared in horror down the empty aisle, where, only moments ago, Sandy had stood.

Little Mallaig leapt from her seat and ran to the spot from where her master had been taken. She sniffed the floor and began whining again.

‘You knew, Alistair. You knew it was coming?’ said Sylvia, her wits slowly recovering.

‘Regrettably so.’ Alistair nodded. ‘Blasted thing got the jump on us. I hadn’t expected it to strike so soon. I was hoping to get everyone off first.’

‘How? How did you know?’

It was only then that Sylvia noticed that there were others now standing over them. It was the rest of the passengers from the carriage and the two big men.

Alistair looked up at them.

‘Everyone all right?’ He now spoke with an air of authority.

‘Yes, Brigadier,’ they answered in unison.

‘Good, now it’s highly likely that it’s going to make another pass very soon, that first strike was just a show of strength.’ Alistair now fixed his attention on the young man in the hoodie. ‘Michaels, are Bravo team in position and fully appraised of the situation here?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Good man. Get ready to give them the signal.’ Alistair ordered. ‘All right, everyone else, we need to get the driver and the passengers off at the next stop. After that, take up your positions in the next carriage and wait. But first,’ Alistair’s voice rose as he found himself competing with Mallaig’s whining, ‘would somebody get that dog out of here.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Sir?’ It was one of the big men.

‘Yes, Phillips?’

‘What about the lady?’

Sylvia looked up and studied the man’s pockmarked face like a cornered animal. ‘You can keep your hands off me!’

‘Yes, thank you, Phillips, leave the lady with me for now. Dismissed.’

The group dispersed, leaving Alistair with a look of satisfaction on his face.

'*Brigadier?*' hissed Syliva. 'What the hell is going on? I thought you said you were retired?'

'Ah, well, that part is true,' said Alistair. 'But it's just that I like to dabble in a little freelance work now and then. It keeps me active in my old age.'

'Is this some sort of joke to you?' Sylvia's voice was rising. 'I'm presuming poor Sandy wasn't one of your, what? Team you have here?'

'No, he wasn't, and this is most certainly not a joke.' Alistair's features crumpled with annoyance. 'But when you've seen what I've seen, and been around death as much as I have, well...'

'Well what? You develop a certain gallows humour I suppose? Well, that's not good enough!' Sylvia raised a handkerchief to her face and composed herself for a second. 'You're going to tell me exactly what that thing was and what it wants!'

Alistair raised an eyebrow. 'Am I indeed?'

Frozen air poured in through the smashed windows, as Alistair and Sylvia sat huddled and alone in the darkness, the lighting having now failed. Their breathing the only sound in the stillness.

‘We’ve been stopped nearly an hour. Shouldn’t be long now, I suspect,’ whispered Alistair, steam streaming from his lips.

‘How do you know?’ replied Sylvia, her earlier fury now totally drained away.

‘Because we’ve stalked these things long enough to know their little patterns of behaviour by now.’ There was a grimness in Alistair's voice. ‘It’s toying with us.’

It was sometime later before they heard the familiar noise. Faint at first, but growing louder like before, and seemingly even more frightening now that it no longer had to compete with the sound of the train.

‘Now, are you sure you don’t...’ began Alistair, as the screaming drew closer.

‘Absolutely not,’ Sylvia cut him off before he could finish. ‘I’m sticking with you!’

‘Very good, my dear.’

Sylvia couldn’t see the broad grin across Alistair’s face.

The screaming once again crescendoed and then ceased. But this time, the silence was replaced by something even more sinister. A rasping voice, so cold and alien that it chilled Sylvia even more than the frozen air.

‘Where are you, *little man*?’ it called out through the blackness. ‘I know you are here, hiding in the dark. But I will find you!’

The voice seemed to be getting ever closer.

‘Our kind fell from the void between the stars, where we have lived for eons, and now we have come to claim what is ours. We know you have it!’

Alistair stood up with a groan and a creak from his hips.

‘Have you quite finished?’ he said.

‘Ah, there you are!’ the creature’s voice seethed.

Sylvia could see the apparition quite clearly now as it hovered in the gloom. It did not appear to have a fixed form, more like a black mist in a constant state of flux.

‘Yes, I know quite enough about your kind – Scavorix.’ said Alistair.

‘What do *you* know of us?’ the creature rasped. ‘What could you possibly appreciate? You tiny, insignificant *thing*!’

‘Oh, I know that you are quite a remarkable species – a parasitic blight on the galaxy, I understand, but still remarkable,’ Alistair goaded. ‘But not *you* so much, no. The female of your species is far more interesting. You see, an old friend of mine once told me that, being

monogamous, your kind always hunt in pairs. The female scouts ahead and locates the prey. Her tracking skills are quite excellent, almost unequalled, and when she finds what she is looking for, her subconscious brain acts like a psychic beacon for the larger male to home in on.'

Alistair had expected the creature to interrupt, but it did not, perhaps it sensed something was wrong, so he went on.

'But you know what's more fascinating about the female? She's not only a brilliant tracker, she's also an unrivalled shapeshifter. She doesn't simply assume a form, she becomes it! The perfect cover – so deep that for the duration of the hunt she doesn't even remember what she truly is.

'Isn't that right, Sylvia?'

Alistair turned slowly to his travelling companion, her face white with confusion and horror. 'I'm so sorry, my dear. I had to be sure, it was the dog you see,' Alistair continued. 'Perhaps there was a real Sylvia. Maybe there still is, back in London, or up in the Highlands with her sister? But you two have been tracking me for quite some time.'

Sylvia just couldn't understand it. *Alistair must be mistaken*, she thought. Perhaps this was some horrible

dream that she would soon wake from. In fact, yes, it was becoming clear now, she had been slumbering. Instinct had drawn her to the old soldier, and she had watched the woman talking to him on the train on the way up from London. They had talked for quite some time. Then she followed the woman when she got off the train – she had flown at her and wrapped her blackness around her. Then...

It *was* true, and now she was awake. The old hunger had returned.

Alistair slowly backed up the aisle of the carriage, as now, two black apparitions hovered above him.

‘Ah, that’s better,’ he said. ‘No more tricks now, eh?’

‘You know what we have come for!’ cried the male Scavorix.

‘Something is not right, my sweet mate,’ hissed the thing that was once Sylvia. ‘He is not alone.’

‘No matter,’ dismissed the male. ‘Give it to us, little man!’

Alistair fished into his jacket pocket and produced a gleaming diamond the size of his thumb, it radiated a brilliant light the colour of sunset.

‘What, this?’ Alistair was smiling again as he held out the jewel. ‘No, I couldn’t do that. This is a Void

Shard, one of the most powerful articles in the known universe. Why, I understand this would give you unlimited ability to travel between worlds. Your kind could consume all of creation!’

‘Give it to us!’ the creatures cried in unison as they floated toward Alistair.

‘No further!’ roared the old soldier. ‘For all its immense power, you know that its shell is quite fragile. One squeeze from my finger and thumb...’

The Scavorix retreated.

As they did so, the whole carriage was suddenly bathed in a blinding white light.

The Scavorix screamed, being creatures of the void, such brightness was an anathema to them.

‘Ah,’ said Alistair with an air of satisfaction. ‘The cavalry.’

‘What is this?’ roared the male Scavorix.

Alistair slowly reached into his other pocket.

The two creatures turned to flee through one of the broken windows, but found their path blocked by an invisible barrier – the gaping hole buzzed and crackled with the sound of static electricity.

The Scavorix recoiled in shock and pain.

‘What is happening?’

The creature that was once Syliva noticed that

Alistair was now stood on the other side of the internal carriage door, in his hand he held a small remote control device.

‘You’re trapped,’ he said, his voice muffled through the glass. ‘You see, we’ve known about you for a long while. We know you’ve been hunting for the Shard, and that you had to be absolutely sure I had it before you attacked. But we’ve made certain preparations, like this railway carriage we commandeered – fitted with its own force field cage. Quite ingenious.’

‘And what will you do with us?’ screamed the female Scavorix.

‘Oh, my colleagues outside will be very interested in you,’ replied Alistair. ‘They’ll want to keep you detained for a long time, I’m afraid. Study you, that sort of thing.’

‘And what of you? Will you wish to study us?’

‘Me? Good lord no, I’ve met quite enough like you already,’ Alistair grinned wearily. ‘All I want now is a pub – if I can find one, and then my bed.’

RICHARD BREWER

LETHBRIDGE
STEWART



THE
Ever-Running

Candy Jar Books is pleased to announce the latest Lethbridge-Stewart book, *The Ever-Running* written by Richard Brewer.

This book is very different to the ongoing Lethbridge-Stewart series and the anthology books, *The HAVOC Files*. Instead, *The Ever-Running* is a collection of short stories with an arc, taking the Brig into situations and locations that he has never encountered before.

If you are a fan of dystopian melodrama or futuristic space operas, then this collection is just for you. However, this book offers something for everyone, especially if you are fond of the classic *Doctor Who* stories, *The Daemons* or *The Android Invasion*.

Richard says: “Back in 2018 my story *Shadows in the Glen* was featured in the first *Lethbridge-Stewart Short Story Collection*, and since then I have kept in contact with Candy Jar.”

Candy Jar’s Head of Publishing, Shaun Russell, says: “I was very impressed with the quality of Richard’s work, and after he submitted *A Message from the Brigadier* – a companion piece that featured alongside the free *Lucy Wilson* story *Copy/Paste* during lockdown in 2020 – we began to talk about him writing

a full book.”

The Ever-Running sees the Brig facing a new enemy, one who has the ability to manipulate his timeline and beyond! “I wanted to take the Brigadier to places that he has never been before,” Richard says. “It was tremendous fun to drop him into unknown territory!”

But then Richard received some terrible news. He continues: “I started writing *The Ever-Running* during a particularly difficult time. My wife was diagnosed with a brain tumour at the beginning of last year. At first, she and I shared a deep sense of powerlessness and frustration at the news. But after the initial shock, and following some investigation into the current state of research into brain tumour treatment, we both knew that we desperately wanted to raise some money. I approached Shaun about writing a selection of short stories to raise funds for this urgent cause and he readily agreed.”

Every year some 16,000 people are diagnosed with a brain tumour; a disease which is responsible for more deaths of children and adults under the age of forty than any other cancer. Sadly, despite this startling fact, the funding into research is very low, as is evidenced by the fact that the prognoses for brain tumours have not changed in forty years. However, helping lead the

fight against this devastating and indiscriminate disease is the Brain Tumour Charity.

Coincidentally Shaun found himself working on *The Ever-Running* under similar circumstances. Sadly his daughter was knocked down by a car, fracturing her lower back and pelvis on both sides leaving her unable to walk. Shaun says: "COVID restrictions meant that I had to stay with her as she recuperated in hospital, so as she was sleeping (or playing on her Nintendo Switch) I edited Richard's book, and I am so grateful that I was able to do this during the obvious worrying times I was facing. As a cancer survivor, I wholeheartedly support this book and encourage all readers to support Richard, either by buying this book, or donating to the Brain Tumour Charity (www.thebraintumourcharity.org)."

Blurb:

Brigadier Alistair Lethbridge-Stewart, the stoic and ever dependable defender of Earth, is about to discover that reality is under attack from an enemy that strikes from beyond the boundaries of space and time. The Ever-Running have vowed that they must never be caught, and to prevent capture they are willing to destroy all that Alistair has sworn to protect.

Explore six new adventures throughout Alistair's life and beyond, including a desperate battle for survival on a distant ice planet, General Lethbridge-Stewart facing the outbreak of World War 3 in the 1980s, a young girl escaping a remote Hampshire village where the sick never return from an idyllic island, and three further adventures that take the Brigadier to the far future, and a realm beyond the universe itself.

The Ever-Running is written by Richard Brewer, the author of the short story File# 161229 and Shadows in the Glen. Proceeds from this book will be donated to the Brain Tumour Charity.

The Ever-Running is available to pre-order [HERE](#) and will be released in early July 2021.