

DOCTOR WHO

AND THE ICE WARRIORS

BRIAN HAYLES



Introduction by **MARK GATISS**

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About the Book

The world is in the grip of a second Ice Age. Despite a coordinated global effort, the glaciers still advance. But they are not the only threat to the planet.

Buried deep in the ice, scientists at Britannicus Base have discovered an ancient warrior. But this is not a simple archaeological find. What they have found is the commander of a spaceship that crashed in the glacier thousands of years ago. Thawed from the ice, and knowing their home planet Mars is now a dead world, the Ice Warriors decide to make Earth their own...

Can the Doctor and his friends overcome the warlike Martians and halt the advance of the glaciers?

This novel is based on a Doctor Who story which was originally broadcast from 11 November to 1 December 1967. This was the first Doctor Who story to feature the Ice Warriors.

Featuring the Second Doctor as played by Patrick Troughton, and his companions Jamie and Victoria.

About the Author

Born in England in 1930, Brian Hayles spent time in Canada as a sculptor and an art teacher before returning to Britain. He continued his career as a teacher for a while, writing in his spare time until he gave up the teaching to write full-time.

He wrote for radio, including many episodes of *The Archers*, as well as for television and film. As well as writing for various series such as *United!* and *Z Cars*, Hayles's work on *Doctor Who* included adventures for the first three Doctors. His first story was the well-remembered *The Celestial ToyMaker*, though Hayles's scripts were extensively rewritten several times. After his historic adventure *The Smugglers*, Hayles wrote *The Ice Warriors* – introducing the creatures for which he is best remembered. He wrote three further *Ice Warriors* stories, the last two featuring the Third Doctor and set on the feudal planet Peladon.

Hayles's last work for television was the acclaimed children's serial *The Moon Stallion* – which starred Sarah Sutton, who later played *Doctor Who* companion Nyssa.

Brian Hayles died in 1978. His novel *Goldhawk* was published posthumously in 1979.

DOCTOR WHO AND THE DALEKS

David Whitaker

DOCTOR WHO AND THE CRUSADERS

David Whitaker

DOCTOR WHO AND THE CYBERMEN

Gerry Davis

DOCTOR WHO AND THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMEN

Terrance Dicks

DOCTOR WHO AND THE AUTON INVASION

Terrance Dicks

DOCTOR WHO AND THE CAVE MONSTERS

Malcolm Hulke

DOCTOR WHO AND THE TENTH PLANET

Gerry Davis

DOCTOR WHO AND THE DAY OF THE DALEKS

Terrance Dicks

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Terrance Dicks

DOCTOR WHO AND THE ARK IN SPACE

Ian Marter

DOCTOR WHO AND THE LOCH NESS MONSTER

Terrance Dicks

DOCTOR WHO

AND THE

ICE WARRIORS

Based on the BBC television serial *The Ice Warriors* by Brian Hayles by arrangement with the BBC

BRIAN HAYLES

Introduction by
MARK GATISS



Time travel is real.

There, I've said it. I make no claims, however, for cooking up something with mirrors and static electricity, achieving faster-than-light speed or even for having ironed out those annoying teething problems with the Zigma experiments. Nevertheless, what you hold in your hands is a time machine. A Target *Doctor Who* book!

Show a copy of any one of these glorious novelisations to people of a certain age and they are transported back to a simpler, cosier age. Some of my memories of them are imprinted with Proustian clarity, like my very own, Time Lord-flavoured Madeleine cakes. The *Three Doctors* (white spine) read as I lay tucked up in Dad's Hillman Minx in the car park of Strike's Garden Centre. Watching *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* the Saturday night Mam came back from a shopping trip to Leeds, bearing The *Auton Invasion* (brown spine) in her mittened hand. The genuinely unsettling, hard-edged face of the First Doctor gazing out from the cover of *Doctor Who and the Daleks* (purple spine) in Binn Darlington. It became a wonderful ritual, saving pocket money, then deciding which Target book to go for. I devoured them. Not literally. Though I did live in the north and was always hungry.

Faithful to the show they certainly were, but there were things the books – being books – could do better. After all, a typewriter can take you anywhere in the universe, not just to a Home Counties quarry. Doomed minor characters were brought out and developed. Alien races developed intriguing back-stories ('They became aware of the lack of love and feeling in their lives and substituted another goal – power!'). Then there was the joy of the house style. The multitude of chapters headed 'Escape to Danger'. The classic description of the TARDIS materialising with a 'wheezing, groaning sound'. The wonderful stock descriptions of the Doctor themselves. Hartnell was usually in the 'crotchety old man in a frock coat with long flowing white hair' area, whilst Troughton had 'baggy check trousers and a mop of untidy black hair' with 'a faraway look in his eyes', which were either green/blue or blue/green and which were 'funny and sad at the same time'. My Doctor, Jon Pertwee, had a 'old/young face', a 'beak' of a nose and 'a mane of prematurely white hair', while the new (!) Doctor, the great Tom Baker, routinely had a 'mop of curly hair', a 'broad-brimmed hat' and a 'long, multi-coloured' scarf which always contributed to a 'casual bohemian elegance'.

Perhaps my fondest memory, though, is my encounter with the book you're now holding. I had already revelled in the majesty of *The Abominable Snowmen* (blue spine) and completely fallen for the Second Doctor's impish charms. The snowy wastes of Tibet had taken an immediate, Yeti-like grip on my imagination and now here was another icy adventure. As icy, indeed, as it was possible to get. *The Ice Warriors!* Featuring Viking-like Martian reptiles described elsewhere as 'a once-proud race', they instantly became one of my favourite monsters. I'd seen them, of course, on TV in glorious colour in the two Peladon stories, but here was their first, long-ago adventure. What absolutely fired my imagination as a child was the wonderful, wild world of possibilities Brian Hayles's story suggested. A distant (but not impossibly distant) future in which Mankind's meddling had plunged the Earth into another ice age. The south east of England choked by glaciers and roamed by scavenging wolves and bears. And, within it all, a base housed in a Georgian mansion where a team of hard-pressed scientists attempt to stop the remorseless advance of the glaciers. It's also an extremely prescient story anticipating something of our current anxiety about global warming and with each side of the debate

neatly characterised. The coldly logical scientists with their misplaced faith in technology and the ~~conventional voices who mistrust change and prefer to remain on the outside of society.~~ It's no wonder that Troughton's scruffy, gorgeous, self-deprecating Doctor is immediately mistaken for a scavenger and threatened with transportation to Africa!

All the elements are here for a classic *Doctor Who* story, even though the idea of such a thing was really just being formed. An isolated base, a ticking clock, an unknown menace threatening life on Earth. But it's the idea of the Ice Warriors themselves that really stands the test of time. With their hissing, asthmatic speech and vaguely Nordic names, they're fierce and warlike but with strong codes of honour. The sort of alien Mars deserves. Although it is, quite rightly, the immortal Terrance Dicks who wears the Target laurels, Brian Hayles's writing here is terrific. Simple, clear and never patronising, he's also capable of as perfect, spooky and moving a moment of exposition as this: 'Suddenly, one year...' Clent paused, still remembering the terrible event, '... there was no Spring.'

We never got to see Hayles's mooted sequel, the marvellously named 'Lords of the Red Planet' but the Martians did return to menace the Doctor and, in so doing, deservedly cemented their place on the top table of *Doctor Who* monsters. A *still*-proud race, you might say. And, surely, somewhere out there in the freezing, snowy wastes, the Ice Warriors are still waiting...

The Changing Face of Doctor Who

The Second Doctor

This *Doctor Who* novel features the second incarnation of the Doctor. After his first encounter with the Cybermen, the Doctor changed form. His old body was apparently worn out, and so he replaced it with a new, younger one. The scratchy, arrogant old man that had been the First Doctor was replaced with a younger and apparently far softer character. The First Doctor's cold, analytical abilities give way to apparent bluster and a tendency to panic under pressure.

But with the Second Doctor more than any other, first impressions are misleading. The Doctor's apparent bluster and ineptitude masks a deeper, darker nature. But there are moments too when the Second Doctor's humanity also shines through. There is ultimately no doubt that his *raison d'être* is to fight the evil in the universe.

Jamie

James Robert McCrimmon is the son of Donald McCrimmon, and a piper like his father and his father's father. Coming from 1746, Jamie is simple and straightforward, but he is also intelligent and blessed with a good deal of common sense. Almost everything is new to him, and while he struggles to understand he also enjoys the experience. Jamie is also extremely brave, never one to shirk a fight or run away.

Ultimately, Jamie sees the Doctor as a friend as well as a mentor. While he relishes the chance to travel and learn and have adventures, he also believes that the Doctor really does need his help.

Victoria

Victoria Waterfield is a reluctant adventurer. She travels with the Doctor through necessity rather than choice after her father was exterminated by the Daleks, leaving her stranded on Skaro. Until she was kidnapped by the Daleks, Victoria had led a sheltered and unsophisticated life. But she is clever and intelligent.

Despite the fact that both tease her at every opportunity, Victoria cares deeply for the Doctor and Jamie. But while she enjoys her time in their company, she still misses her father. She remains forever an unwilling adventurer.

Battle against the Glaciers

'STAND BY ALL personnel! Base evacuation procedure, phase one. Section leaders report immediately!'

The urgent, metallic voice of the computer cut across the quiet bustle of the Britannicus Base Ioniser Operations Unit. Although the monitoring technicians continued to work at their places on the central control desk, the stand-by crews moved briskly to their assembly stations, ready for routine evacuation drill.

'Base evacuation procedure, phase one, general alert.' Senior Control Technician Jan Garrett hurried to the sleek control deck of ECCO, the computer's communications unit, and stabbed the 'personal response' button. The streamlined, artificial head containing ECCO's video-eye swung in line with Jan's tense face.

'Reference stand-by alert,' she said tersely, cold, grey eyes frowning behind her prim spectacles. *'Explain.'*

'Threat of possible Ioniser breakdown,' it replied crisply, without a trace of emotion. *'Reliability checks report malfunction build-up. Full data not yet available. All untraced Ioniser faults require evacuation stand-by...'* it continued.

As the voice clattered on, Jan Garrett hurried in the direction of the Ioniser Control room. She didn't need a lecture from ECCO – she was all too well aware of the dangers. If the Ioniser ever got completely out of control, it would mean total disaster. Not only would the entire unit be wiped out but this area of southern Britannicus would be plunged into a state of radiation half-life for the next five hundred years. And without the defensive barrier of the Ioniser's heat shield, the whole island would eventually become uninhabitable, locked in the grip of a new Ice Age. But the computer, at last, ever, had given timely warning of trouble ahead. With ECCO to guide them, they could not fail to hold their own.

The flat voice suddenly changed in tone, rising a pitch to a higher degree of quiet alarm. *'Phase Two, amber alert. Phase Two, amber alert. All unauthorised personnel to be located and documented for departure.'*

Jan fought her way through the orderly turmoil of the Grand Hall, and entered what had once been the library of the Georgian mansion that now housed the Britannicus Base Unit. It was in this elegant room, its paintings and its leather-bound books still preserved in their original twentieth-century state, that the compact but delicate Ioniser was housed in regal isolation, its power lines linked to the small but immensely powerful reactor unit contained in the cellars below. One glance at the machine was enough: all the tell-tale needles were sinking rapidly through amber into the red danger zones. Jan's hands began to operate the relevant controls, damping, adjusting, increasing; desperately trying to achieve stability.

Suddenly, the tension that gripped her was sharply increased by the sound of a man's voice at her shoulder. She turned. Leader Clent's face was dark with anger.

'Why has this been allowed to happen?' he snapped. *'The whole power series is barely above danger level!'*

As if in response to his angry words, the needles flickered upward and held, trembling on the very edge of breaking out of the amber zone. But Jan knew that the improvement could only be temporary. The flaw was basic and, as yet, its cause unknown.

‘Hold on Amber Two,’ rang out the distant warning system. ‘Prepare to return to Phase One standby.’

‘That’s better, Miss Garrett.’ Clent’s anger was now in check, and his eyes, although stern, held a calmness that reassured her. It was his strength of personality that gave backbone to this unit, many of whom had despaired of the success of a mission that had seemed doomed from the start. She was young, intelligent, well-trained; with Clent to guide her, she would eventually come to terms with the promotion he had forced upon her when the treacherous Penley...

‘There was a pulse stoppage,’ she blurted out, breaking his train of thoughts.

The nearly inaudible tone of the Ioniser was beginning to falter – as though the machine was sick. Clent looked grim. A pulse stoppage meant there was a danger of feed-back to the reactor: the resulting explosion would wipe the Unit from the face of the Earth. But what could be causing it?

Jan’s face tightened. She was close to panic.

‘I’m doing all I can to boost the power impulse—’

‘It can’t be allowed to fall any lower!’ grated Clent, studying the oscillator dials fiercely.

‘We still have time to evacuate,’ she muttered desperately.

‘We will *not* evacuate!’ he insisted. ‘We’ve beaten its ridiculous tantrums before.’

As they watched, the needles began to sag ominously close to the red sector again. Miss Garrett’s face grew pale with alarm. ‘It’s falling back again!’

‘Hold it steady!’ ordered Clent. ‘You must!’

‘I can’t! It won’t respond!’

Brushing Miss Garrett aside, Clent’s hands moved to the controls to make the necessary adjustments.

‘Then we’ll switch the stabilising circuits to computer control.’

Jan watched helplessly as Clent fought to retain control of the machine.

‘It’s still not holding...’ she whispered.

Clent was not giving up that easily. ‘All circuits, woman – *all* circuits! Don’t you understand?’

He snapped home a sequence of switches. Miss Garrett flashed a look of despair towards the dial showing the energy flow from the reactor. The readings were jumping wildly. She clutched Clent’s arm.

‘The feed-back...’

‘Not enough power for that...’ clipped the Leader. The scale readings were slowing at last. Clent smiled triumphantly. ‘Still just outside the danger zone. We should be able to hold it there...’

He turned to Miss Garrett for agreement. She shook her head without speaking. They both knew the bitter truth. In a matter of days – hours even – the Ioniser would be in a state of crisis again. But Leader Clent refused to admit defeat.

‘Well at least it gives us time!’ he insisted irritably, then moved to return to his personal office. He stopped, as if remembering something, and turned back. ‘And while you’ve got the chance, call Arden – I want him back at Base immediately!’

A geological map of the island which had once been called Britain covered one wall of the Grand Hall of Brittanicus Base. The line of electronic pin-point markers which divided the island horizontally into two seemed, at first glance, to be motionless; but they were in fact moving very slowly from north to south. Each pin-point of light represented a seismic probe set into the face of the river of ice that was threatening to engulf the island.

Brittanicus Base, the last, hastily-organised outpost of defence against the New Ice Age, was

plotting the movement of the glaciers which, minute by minute, threatened to engulf it...

But the sophisticated wall chart could not reveal the bitter Polar conditions that existed outside the Base on the Cotswold hills.

Those hills and valleys which had remained free of the ice were now unrecognisable beneath the thick mantle of windswept snow. At its best the Ioniser defence could only hold back the ice; any attempt to reduce the snowy wastes would have meant disastrous flooding of the southern lowlands.

The weird landscape – a nightmare of snow and ice which had been driven, part-melted, and had then re-frozen into bizarre grottoes and sculpted caverns – looked as bleak and unwelcoming as the wildest reaches of the Antarctic. It was impossible to imagine that this ice desert had once been green fields and gently rolling hills. Even the Scavengers – those grimly determined natives who had refused to emigrate to the more temperate climate of the equator – had fled from the hills and set up their shanty-town communes in the lowlands bordering the south coast. Only occasional fanatics determined to die amidst the snow rather than retreat, and scientists dedicated to the last-ditch Ioniser programme, could still be found on these snowswept ridges and escarpments. And no one travelled alone. Who would willingly run the risk of falling victim to wolves or polar bears?

But there were always jobs to be done, and Arden – once a keen archaeologist, and now the Base geologist – had a particularly important one at present: that of replacing a faulty seismic probe in the ice.

The weather conditions – fine and clear – had favoured the expedition so far. But now Arden was wondering, as he glanced up towards the towering glacier face, where it would be safe to insert the pencil-slim seismic probe. The first attempt had resulted in a massive section of the ice face fracturing and falling away. But it had revealed an ideal spot for a probe: a smooth face in a relatively sheltered position, and one which allowed easy access for the sled which carried the equipment. Arden turned his goggled and hooded face towards his two companions, Walters and Davis, and beckoned them to him.

‘Walters,’ he shouted against the low whine of the wind, ‘drill here!’

Walters, the armed member of the party, helped Davis, the seismology technician, to bring his drilling gear to the site indicated by Arden, who was already unwrapping and checking the slim seismic probe. While Davis assembled his pistol-shaped drill and connected it to the portable power pack, Walters moved to Arden’s side. With a nod of his head, Arden indicated the area he had chosen.

‘Clear away any loose ice, will you, Walters?’ he asked.

‘Sir,’ acknowledged the burly security sergeant, then turned towards the ice face, and began to clear it in preparation for the drilling. Suddenly, he turned round.

‘Mr Arden, sir, come quick!’

Arden hurried forward. Walters was desperately rubbing the already smooth surface of the ice with his heavy glove.

‘I’ll swear there’s something inside the ice, sir. Look!’

Arden’s passionate interest in archaeological ‘finds’ was known to everyone at the Base, and he wondered whether Walters was pulling his leg. He peered into the depths of the ice – and blinked. Something *was* there – and it looked like a man! Arden raised his snow goggles, and looked again, his face alive with excitement.

‘What is it, sir?’ asked Davis, pressing forward.

‘It’s... human. No, I can’t be certain—’ Arden spoke impatiently. ‘Bring me the power light, man. Quickly!’

Davis hurriedly made the necessary connections, and shone the beam deep into the ice. What the

now saw, deeply embedded and eerily green-tinted, left them dumbstruck: a massive form, possibly eight feet in height, and clad in what looked like armour – certainly its mighty head was shaped like the helmet of an ancient warrior.

Walters glanced eagerly at Arden. ‘Is it a find, sir?’

‘We’re going to find out! Davis – the heavy drill! We’ll have to start by—’

His plans were interrupted by a shrill signal from the video-communicator strapped to his wrist. He snapped it open impatiently. Atmospheric conditions were so bad that sound and picture were incomprehensible. He squinted at it for a moment – and then gave up.

‘Base can wait,’ he said impatiently. ‘This is more important than some routine message...’

‘What’re we going to do then, sir?’ asked Walters.

‘Excavate,’ replied Arden. ‘This could be the find of the century!’

Keen though he was to share Arden’s excitement, Walters was still a basically cautious man. ‘What about our schedule, Mr Arden? We must stick to that.’

‘Must we? Just because Base computer says so?’

Walters continued to look uncertain. ‘Leader Clent will be furious, sir.’

‘Damn the computer’ – Arden grinned boyishly – ‘*and* Leader Clent! For once let’s do something on our own account, eh?’

Walters grinned back at him.

‘Can’t see what Base can do about it, sir. The way things are, we can’t ask permission – and they can’t tell us not to, can they?’

‘That’s what I like to hear, Walters!’ Arden slapped Walters on the shoulder, and then moved towards Davis, who was bringing the heavy drill to bear on the ice face. ‘Come on, Davis, I’ll give you a line to work on—’

The geologist quickly gouged a simple, coffin-shaped outline of approximately the size and shape of the mighty form within the glacier. He turned to Davis. The technician was looking at him with an uncertain expression.

‘Don’t worry, Davis—’ Arden said firmly. ‘I’ll take the responsibility before Leader Clent.’

‘It isn’t him I’m worried about, sir,’ answered Davis. He glanced upwards at the massive ridge of snow towering above them. ‘There’s going to be a lot of vibration, you see...’

‘We’ll keep an eye on that. Anyway, we have to take that chance. Now hurry, man, hurry!’

In the Grand Hall, the stand-by units were still on Phase One alert. Leader Clent, in a typical move to establish order and confidence, had called a snap inspection of the Control Area. Accompanied by Miss Garrett, he strode calmly along the line of technical operators and recited their functions.

‘Emergency evacuation phasing? ... Yes. Ioniser stage fault check? Good. Reactor safety sequence in operation? Excellent.’ He turned to face Miss Garrett with a confident smile that embraced all his staff. ‘First class, Miss Garrett. You’re to be congratulated – and, of course, your technicians, too.’

He then moved across to the computer communications deck, drawing Miss Garrett with him. As he drew alongside he murmured a dry aside. ‘You’ll make a qualified First Class Technical Organisation, yet, Miss Garrett...’

‘Thank you,’ she replied with a tired smile, adding firmly, ‘but we need Scientist Penley.’

Clent didn’t alter his expression or even look in Jan’s direction – but his voice took on an edge of cold steel.

‘That person is no longer a member of this Base...’ He looked sharply at Jan, his eyes chilly and commanding. ‘I look to *you* to ensure that the Ioniser works properly, because *you* are loyal. Am

correct?’

The look in his eyes dared her to disagree.

‘Yes, Leader Clent,’ she nodded, the moment of uncertainty gone. ‘You are an example to us all.’

Clent relaxed and, nodding his acknowledgement of Jan’s polite submission, brought ECCO to life with a brisk tap of his finger.

‘What is the latest report from the Intercontinental Ioniser Programme HQ?’

ECCO’S sleek head revolved to face its questioner, and answered flatly: *‘All bases on phase interlock. America – glaciers held. Australasia – glaciers held. South Africa – glaciers held. USSR some improvement claimed...’*

Clent pulled a face, and flicked a politely amused look at Jan, who didn’t respond. ‘They would be better than the rest of us,’ he muttered. His face changed as ECCO continued coldly.

‘Brittanicus Base, Europe – slipping out of phase. Glacial advance imminent unless conditions stabilised immediately—’

Clent cut the voice short. His face tightened angrily. ‘Nonsense!’ he snapped. ‘We’re holding our own! Can’t they read the seismic print-outs?’

‘It isn’t the seismograph programme that’s at fault,’ Jan replied sharply. ‘It’s the Ioniser. We are still on a Phase One alert, remember!’

‘My dear Miss Garrett, that is being taken care of by the computer.’

Clent’s words were lost beneath the jagged urgency of the computer public address system. Without waiting for the message to end, Clent and Jan made straight for the Ioniser Room.

‘Emergency, emergency – Phase Two, Amber Alert! Amber Alert! Emergency, emergency!’

Clent reached the Ioniser controls first – Jan read the disaster signs from a distance. Every monitor was flickering on the verge of red – the next step, bar a miracle, would be total breakdown. Clent switched the controls over to manual, and began fighting to raise the power levels even fractionally from danger. Jan stared in despair at the elegant machine.

‘We’ve failed,’ she whispered.

‘We will *not* fail!’ clipped out Leader Clent. ‘The glaciers haven’t beaten us yet!’

‘What more can we do? Inside two hours, the Ioniser will be useless! The whole European programme of glacier containment will be in ruins!’

‘Not while I’m in command!’ Clent, eyes fixed on the flickering needles, was adjusting the controls like a madman.

‘The glaciers will start to move again,’ she murmured sadly, glancing towards the electronic map. ‘Five thousand years of history crushed beneath a moving mountain of ice...’

‘Not yet, Miss Garrett. We’re not finished yet!’ Clent exclaimed triumphantly.

She glanced at the improved readings, and breathed a sigh of relief. But how long would it last? Clent indicated that she should take over the controls. In the near distance, the computer warning chimed on.

‘Phase Two, amber alert! All unauthorised personnel prepare to evacuate!’

Clent punched a communication switch and spoke firmly:

‘Personnel Control – advance that evacuation order. I want all unnecessary people cleared from Base. Only the emergency skeleton staff to remain. All senior grade scientists to report to me for control. Effect immediately!’

His determination had infected Jan, and she didn’t hesitate to speak her mind.

‘Penley could handle this. We need experts like him—’

‘Don’t talk to me about experts and their crazy ideas!’ He paused, frowning. ‘Where’s Arden?’

‘He’s still at the ice face – completing the instrumentation project...’

‘Hasn’t he been warned?’ demanded Clent in alarm. ‘I gave you explicit instructions—’

‘I couldn’t get through. Conditions on the ice face made video contact impossible.’

‘Miss Garrett,’ snapped Clent, ‘you have an unhappy habit of giving up, haven’t you? I need Arden – here! Trained men are vital to our survival!’

The computer warning system had changed pitch, and carried a new urgency. ‘*Emergency, Phase Two evacuation. Key personnel only to remain. Red alert to follow!*’

Clent switched the communicator to UHF frequency. ‘Leader Clent to Scientist Arden. Come in Arden! For heaven’s sakes, man – answer!’

The videoscreen that should have carried Arden’s image was blank. Clent repeated his call – but quickly realised it was hopeless. He moved quickly back to Miss Garrett’s side.

‘Hold it whatever you do,’ Clent insisted harshly.

‘It’s slipping again. I can just about hold it by keeping it on manual... but the time interval between pulse loss is decreasing.’ She looked at Clent calmly, almost resigned. ‘It’s not far from total disintegration...’

‘Hold on, Miss Garrett,’ commanded Clent quietly, ‘hold on. And try everything you know!’

It was the closest thing to a prayer that Clent could manage.

The battered blue box lay toppled on its side, half-buried in a snowdrift. Seconds previously, the snow had been disturbed only by the keen sifting of the wind; then, to the accompaniment of a strange groaning rattle, the blue box had slowly materialised from a vaguely transparent shadow into solid blue reality. What would normally have been its door was now its lid. The lid opened, and from the box popped the head of what looked like a dazed jack-in-the-box. With its puckish features, tousled hair and bright-as-button eyes, it gazed at the snowy world outside in mild amazement. Soon it was joined by two companion heads – that of a rugged-faced lad and, at his shoulder, a pretty, doll-like girl.

‘Y’re no flying a boat, are ye, Doctor?’ The young Scot smiled at the older man. His companion looked pained.

‘It was a blind landing, Jamie,’ he replied apologetically.

‘Aye, that’s for sure!’ exclaimed Jamie, starting to clamber out and offering a strong arm to the others. The girl was obviously delighted by the sight of the untrampled snow.

‘There’s no harm done,’ she cried gaily. ‘And just look at the snow...!’

‘Thank you, Victoria,’ said the Doctor with dignity. ‘It’s good to know that someone still has faith in me.’

‘Snow again,’ groaned Jamie in mock-disgust. ‘Tibet was bad enough. Y’ve not landed us farther down the same mountain, have ye?’

The Doctor, having closed the door of the police box, and placed a somewhat battered, tall-crowned hat on his head, looked thoughtfully around. He shook his head.

‘No, Jamie my lad – this isn’t a mountain,’ he mumbled, grabbing at his hat as he ducked out of the way of the snowball which had been thrown at him by Victoria. He began to gaze at what looked like a wall of ice which reared up only a foot away from the blue box. ‘It’s something altogether more peculiar than that.’

Intrigued by his voice, and puzzled by the curious way in which he was sweeping the snow from the ice face, the two youngsters scrambled to join him. Victoria stared at the smooth, dull grey substance that he had uncovered, then looked at the Doctor with laughing, rounded eyes.

‘It looks like a great wall of ice,’ she exclaimed. ‘Perhaps it’s the Palace of the Snow Queen!’

‘It’s not ice, Victoria,’ commented the Doctor, ‘it’s plastic.’

Jamie put his hand on the material, then nodded. ‘Aye,’ he agreed, ‘it’s no really cold. But it’s smooth and curved, can ye no see?’

The Doctor took a pace or two backwards, nearly falling as he did so. ‘It’s a dome,’ he declared. ‘Some sort of protective dome...’

‘But it must be huge,’ Victoria wondered aloud. ‘I can’t see any end to it, can you?’ She turned to the Doctor eagerly. ‘I wonder what’s inside!’

‘There’s no door,’ observed Jamie with dour Scots realism. No sooner had he spoken than the quiet hum of electrically operated machinery reached their ears. The youngsters, reacting quickly to the Doctor’s warning gesture, huddled down behind a drift of snow. Now they could see without being seen...

A door in the plastic surface beneath the ice slid back, and two ragged, unkempt figures stepped out. Having glanced furtively to left and right, the smaller of the two dropped several of the parcels he was carrying; his companion, burlier, and with a wild shaggy beard that made him look like a pirate, snapped at him irritably.

‘What’re you doing? Come on, man, hurry!’

The smaller man hurriedly picked up what he’d dropped, and stowed away his obviously precious prizes in a number of the many pockets which seemed to be concealed beneath his layers of protective animal skin. He seemed much calmer than his irritable comrade.

‘Don’t worry. That alarm wasn’t because of us.’ He started off again, his ill-gotten goods tucked safely away in his poacher’s pockets – then paused, and looked back thoughtfully. ‘I wonder what’s wrong, though...’

‘That’s their problem,’ growled the bearded scavenger. ‘Come on, let’s get away from here!’

For all his bulk, the big man moved through the snow as swiftly as a hunter. The little poacher followed him energetically but with less skill, floundering through the drifts as though unused to legwork. Soon, both men were out of sight. The Doctor and his companions emerged from behind the snowdrift and hurried eagerly towards the sliding door. It fitted perfectly, and seemed to be without handles or catches. It seemed impossible to open – until the Doctor found a pressure control in the plastic moulding which surrounded the entrance. He pressed it. With a gentle whine of power, the door panel slid back. A small vestibule faced them – with an identical door beyond. Jamie saw the opening device there, strode forward, and pressed it – but it wouldn’t budge. He turned back to the Doctor, and shrugged helplessly.

‘It’s locked.’

‘For a very simple reason, Jamie.’ Seeing the exasperation on Jamie’s face, the Doctor quickly supplied his explanation. ‘It’s an airlock. It won’t open until we’ve closed the outer door.’

‘But why?’ asked Victoria. ‘There’s nothing wrong with the air outside, is there? We were able to breathe all right.’

The Doctor smiled, and ushered Victoria into the airlock before shutting out the world of snow. ‘My guess is right,’ he said, ‘I think we’re in for a pleasant surprise...’ He pressed the button. The inner door slid back to reveal a scene that made even the Doctor wonder. There, under an immense plastic dome that kept the Arctic weather conditions at bay, stood a gracious and elegant Georgian country house in a state of perfect preservation. Ahead of them, across a short stretch of lawn, a terrace and a side door opened into the stable block. The Doctor’s eyes twinkled with appreciation. ‘Absolutely charming,’ he said, with a smile. ‘Shall we go in?’

Two Minutes to Doomsday

CLENT STOOD BEFORE the electronic chart that dominated the Grand Hall of the Base HQ. Beads of perspiration broke out on his forehead as he watched the line that represented the glacier flow minutely forward... With the Ioniser now operating at less than half power, the ice could barely be held in check. And if it failed completely, there would be nothing to stop the glaciers' advance to the Channel, and beyond. What is more, his own career would be in ruins.

'Leader Clent!'

Miss Garrett was hurrying towards him, her face alert and, for once, pleased.

'We've made contact with Scientist Arden!' she announced.

Clent strode to the nearest video point, and Miss Garrett channelled the call through to him. In spite of interference and atmospheric noise, Arden's goggled face was plainly visible.

'Arden' – the Leader ordered firmly – 'you must return to Base immediately!'

'Sorry, Clent,' replied the geologist, 'but we haven't finished yet. Another hour, and then we'll be back.'

'Now!' insisted Clent. 'The Ioniser is close to breakdown – you know what that means!'

'Chilly weather ahead,' joked the grinning face on the interference-flecked videoscreen. 'I wonder if Penley's ears are burning?'

Stung into anger, Clent barked out his reply. 'I'm giving you an order, Arden. You'll return now and no arguments!'

'I've got good reason to delay,' replied Arden without flinching. 'A fantastic discovery in the ice...'

'Your task was to replace a probe!' Clent's anger boiled over. 'You are not there to indulge in amateur archaeology! Do you hear?'

Arden was unimpressed. 'Even when the discovery is a man?'

Jan, standing at Clent's shoulder, could see he was surprised, even impressed, but his reply was typically crushing.

'Congratulations – it makes a change from pottery fragments! Now leave it and return – ordered!'

'As soon as I've got the body loaded on to the airsled,' commented the grinning geologist. 'I'm bringing it back with me, Clent. These blasted glaciers owe me that much!'

Clent fumed. He was helpless – and Arden knew it.

'There will be a full disciplinary enquiry!' he snapped.

'Can't hear you, old chap... too much interference... see you shortly.'

The screen went blank.

At the same moment, the computer warning system went into Phase Three – Red Alert.

*

The door from the stable courtyard led directly into a passageway connecting the servants' kitchen with the main body of the house. There was no sign of life as yet – except the distant repetition of the warning relay. Leading the way, the Doctor paused at the heavy door. He placed his ear against it, and

listened intently. Victoria was gazing round, wondering whether she was in a dream – the house so much resembled the Victorian mansion that had once been her home!

‘It’s a lovely old house,’ she sighed. Jamie, like the Doctor, was more concerned with the possible dangers ahead.

‘What’s that they’re saying, Doctor...?’ he queried.

The Doctor could only frown and shake his head. He opened the door a fraction, so that the warning voice could be heard more clearly.

‘Phase Three. Red alert. Evacuate. Evacuate. Transport section leaders report to loading bay. Phase Three. Evacuate!’

‘There’s something wrong...’ the Doctor murmured.

‘It looks peaceful enough to me,’ commented Victoria.

‘Come on. Let’s see if we can find out.’ The Doctor opened the door into the broad main corridor beyond. For a brief moment, they stood alone in the deserted corridor; then, as though summoned by bugle call, a small group of grimly determined men erupted from a corner passageway and charged straight at the Doctor and his young friends. With no possible chance to run or hide, they stood resigned to being captured – the Doctor even going so far as to raise his arms above his head in surrender.

To their astonishment, the task force ran straight past them, down the corridor, and disappeared out of sight. Almost disappointed, the Doctor called after them half-heartedly, ‘I say, could you tell me the way to...’ His voice trailed off, and meeting the puzzled faces of his young companions, he shrugged. ‘It’s all very strange...’

Another man ran up from the opposite direction, but, like the previous party, his face looked determined and set. The Doctor smiled and tried to catch the runner’s eye. He stretched out his hand. ‘Excuse me, old chap—’

The only response was a shove in the chest as the runner dashed past, that sent the Doctor staggering into Jamie’s arms. Victoria could only stand and giggle as the Doctor, a look of bewilderment on his face, set his hat straight.

‘They don’t seem to think much of you, Doctor...’

‘I can’t understand it,’ muttered the Doctor. An attractive girl now walked up to them and, without uttering a word, briskly attached numbered plastic tags to their lapels. She had finished the job and moved on before Jamie had recovered sufficiently from his surprise to call out to her – but she paid no attention.

The Doctor smiled. ‘She doesn’t want to know, Jamie...’

Victoria had twisted her tag so that she could read it.

‘It says we’re on Evacuation Flight Seven!’

‘Not very hospitable, is it,’ commented the Doctor. ‘We’ve only just arrived.’

‘Hey, and have ye seen *this!*’ Jamie showed them the reverse side of his tag. ‘It says we’re scavengers! I’ll not have that – I’m no beggar!’

Victoria couldn’t help laughing at the insult to his Scots dignity, but the Doctor had moved to a nearby doorway and was listening intently to a faint sound coming from within.

‘Shush a minute, Jamie lad,’ said the Doctor.

At that moment, the relayed warning call drowned the sound from beyond the door as it repeated its ominous broadcast.

‘Phase Three, red alert. Evacuate immediately. Flights One to Five now on departure circuit. Flights Six and Seven, stand by. Phase Three, red alert...’

When the warning had ceased, the Doctor beckoned Jamie and Victoria back to the door. They could hear vague humming – but nothing they could identify.

‘What is it, Doctor?’ asked Victoria, intrigued.

The Doctor looked thoughtful, and not a little worried. ‘I’d say it’s electronic machinery of some kind – perhaps a computer – but there’s something badly wrong with its pitch...’

‘It’s no ours – let’s leave it’, suggested Jamie. He knew all too well from past experience where the Doctor’s curiosity could lead them – usually into trouble. Victoria agreed.

‘It could be dangerous,’ she pointed out.

But the Doctor had already made up his mind, and quietly opened the door. ‘Stay out here if you like,’ he murmured, ‘but I’m going in.’

In the Ioniser Room, the tension was electric. Jan Garrett was standing poised over the main control deck; Clent strode nervously from monitor to monitor, noting the figures presented by each. At the door leading into the Grand Hall, stood two security guards, their backs to the library interior. Because of this, the Doctor – followed reluctantly by Jamie and Victoria – was able to enter unnoticed. While they paused to take in the bizarre contrast of the ultra-modern electronic gadgetry and the antique library setting, the Doctor moved stealthily behind Clent, and began to jot down the monitor readings on his shirt cuff. His face grew more and more disturbed.

‘Still out of phase...’ muttered Clent, unaware of the bizarre onlooker at his shoulder. ‘Seven two point four...’

‘Seven two point four?’ repeated the Doctor to himself. ‘That’s bad...’

‘We must balance those readings, Miss Garrett!’ declared the Leader. ‘Seventeen degrees off the norm!’

Jan heard, but could do little; her eyes remained glued to the control panel.

Clent paused anxiously before the final monitor screen; he mopped his brow with his handkerchief and whispered the desperate figures to himself.

‘One three seven nine already... If it reaches fifteen hundred...’ He took a deep breath. How long could they last?

‘One three seven nine!’ echoed the Doctor, his face expressing equal alarm. Unable to keep quiet any longer, he tapped Clent on the shoulder. Jamie and Victoria held their breath. What was he doing?

‘Excuse me,’ said the Doctor politely, ‘but I’m afraid you’re in serious trouble here, old chap...’

Clent turned on the Doctor. The sight of the oddly dressed, obviously non-scientific intruder brought a flush of justifiable anger to his face.

‘Who the blazes are you?’ he demanded. Without waiting for a reply, he shouted an order to the security guards. ‘Get these scavengers out of here – quickly!’

‘I’m trying to help!’ protested the Doctor as he and his young friends were expertly bundled towards the corridor.

‘Get them on to the next available flight out of here!’ shouted Clent. He turned back to the control panel dismissively.

‘In two minutes thirty eight seconds,’ cried the Doctor, as he was pushed out of the door, ‘the Ioniser is going to explode. The readings say so. Why don’t you do something about it?’ The effect on Garrett and the guards was startling; even Clent froze in shocked alarm.

‘You can’t possibly know that!’ he snapped. ‘I haven’t even processed the figures through the computer yet!’

‘My dear chap, I don’t need a computer!’ replied the Doctor.

For once, Clent paused, unsure of himself. Garrett flung a look of grim desperation at her leader.

‘If he’s right, it’s already too late to escape,’ she stated icily. The security men, uncertain what to do, made no attempt to check the Doctor as he slipped quickly back into the room.

‘It doesn’t *have* to happen. If you’ll just allow me...’ he said brightly, his hands already hovering over the controls.

‘Don’t!’ shouted Clent. But his cry came too late. The Doctor had gone into immediate action and as though mesmerised by the stranger’s personality, Miss Garrett was actually helping him!

‘Uncouple the stabilising circuits and the reactor link for a start,’ the Doctor directed, his eyes taking in the monitor readings. Jan obeyed automatically.

‘Raise the density phasing to par... quick as you can!’

Miss Garrett frowned. ‘There isn’t enough power—’

‘Then we’d better produce some, hadn’t we? A short burst from the reactor link – now!’

Without arguing, Jan switched on a heavy duty connector; there was an immediate hum of power.

‘Now off!’ commanded the Doctor. Then, without waiting for her to complete the action, he snapped home a series of switches. ‘Tie in each of the circuits to the reactor link... *now* bring in the computer stabiliser...’ He paused, then smiled to himself, obviously pleased. ‘That should hold it, think...’

He turned. Clent and Miss Garrett were looking at him in sheer amazement. That a ragged clown could perform such a miracle! Remembering his earlier brusqueness, the Doctor began to apologise.

‘Not a perfect job, mind you...’ he murmured genially. ‘You ought to get an expert in really...’

Clent, remembering his position as Leader of the Base, snapped out of his reverie and tried to reassert his authority.

‘It was all bluff, wasn’t it – that business about two minutes thirty-eight seconds to destruction?’

The Doctor looked modestly pained, but spoke quietly.

‘Not in the least. It was near enough correct – give or take a second or two.’

‘Rubbish!’ snapped Clent, irritated by the thought that a human being could be the equal of his beloved computer.

The Doctor looked offended and angry.

‘Check it on your precious computer then – go on!’

Clent stared at him, then smiled arrogantly.

‘Miss Garrett,’ he ordered, ‘process those figures, please.’

Jan activated ECCO and read out the relevant figures, while Clent hovered over her, smiling smugly.

‘Ioniser fall rate – seven two point four... Ion compensator – minus seventeen degrees... Ion flow rate – one three seven nine. Assessment, please.’

The computer’s reply was virtually immediate. As it spoke, the smirk was wiped from Clent’s face, and he stared at the Doctor with something akin to respect.

‘*Immediate emergency!*’ announced the computer. ‘*In two minutes thirty-seven seconds, the reactor will suffer feed-back and explode! Action must be taken—*’

Miss Garrett ended its panic, and looked towards Clent. It was a long time since she had seen him accept another scientist as his equal. Would he reject this one, as he had rejected Penley and so many others before him?

‘I apologise for the odd second,’ muttered the Doctor modestly. ‘But we can’t all be perfect, can we...’

‘Leader Clent,’ interjected Jan, barely restraining her excitement, ‘it’s steady on half power now. We can hold our own!’

Its oscillators steady, the machine's operating purr was soft as silk – the healthiest it had been for weeks. This stranger certainly knew what he was up to... Clent frowned.

'Even Penley couldn't have done better,' he admitted. 'But where on earth have you sprung from?'

The Doctor threw a sharp look back at Jamie and Victoria, and raised his eyebrows. Then he turned back to Clent, smiled and shrugged his shoulders. He didn't want to have to enter into a full explanation – and fortunately Clent was in no mood for it. In spite of being desperately tired, he was elated. Perhaps they could still win! He clapped the Doctor on the shoulder, and then read the details on his plastic tag. His mind was made up.

'Flight Seven, eh?' he repeated. 'There won't be any need for that. Come with me to the laboratory – I think there's something we need to discuss...'

At last the great block of ice stood free from the glacier face! Arden gazed in excitement; even Walters and Davis were impressed. And within it: the massive figure of an armoured man, which looked like a monument to some ancient king...

'Amazing...' whispered Walters.

'A giant among prehistoric men,' agreed Arden, his mind racing. This discovery must go back at least three thousand years!

'Is it a sort of armour he's got on, sir?' asked Davis.

'Yes,' replied Arden. 'And that's the most exciting thing about it. You see, he looks pre-Viking... but no such civilisation existed in the prehistoric period before the first Ice Age.'

'Proper sort of ice warrior, I'd call him,' suggested Walters, smiling.

'A good description, Walters,' Arden agreed. 'Even from here you can see how cruel and terrifying he must have been...'

He recalled the old legends of the Viking raiders; brutal, bloodthirsty killers, whose only ambition had been conquest.

'I reckon even Leader Clent'll want to take a second look, don't you, sir?' asked Walters.

'I should hope so. And what do you think that blessed computer will make of it, eh?'

Davis had finished packing away his drilling equipment.

'We'd better be getting back, sir,' he said, looking up at the sky, 'while the weather holds...'

Arden nodded in agreement. Time for celebration when they'd got the Ice Warrior back to Base. What Clent would say was anybody's guess – but he couldn't deny that it was a find of great importance.

'Bring the airsled as close as possible,' Arden ordered, 'and we'll get him loaded up.'

The three men, now fully absorbed in their difficult task, were totally unaware of being observed. Less than a hundred yards away, hidden by a wind-scoured outcrop of ice, the pirate and the poacher crouched and watched intently.

'What're they up to, Penley?' asked the big man suspiciously. He smelt potential danger in anything that Clent's scientists got up to – and he didn't like the look of this particular bunch one little bit...

'I don't know, Storr old son,' cheerfully replied Penley, shrewder and more thoughtful. 'Arden must've found something buried in the ice, something to take home to Clent.' He smiled knowingly. 'It won't be appreciated though...'

Storr glowered, his wild beard making his fierce gaze look even more ferocious. 'Why don't they leave well alone?'

Penley knew all about Storr's hatred of technology. He tried to explain what he knew would be

Arden's mind – a quality he'd once admired when they'd been working colleagues.

~~'Arden was always a searcher. He was an archaeologist once.'~~

'Archaeology!' sneered the burly hunter. 'What good's that?'

'It's good to know things, Storr – even if they're dead.'

'Nothing's sacred to you blasted scientists, is it?'

'It's in my character to ask questions, I suppose. Sorry.'

'You swore you'd give all that up! Changed your mind, have you?'

Penley turned to Storr, his dirty face full of patience – and determination. 'Look, old so discovery is as exciting and purposeful to me as hunting game is to you.' He could see that Storr wasn't convinced, and continued sarcastically, 'We're not all like Clent, you know. He's the kind that uses scientist's skulls as stepping stones to the top jobs...'

Storr smiled at this manifestation of Penley's bitterness and then changed the subject.

'Come on, we've got to move. Let's leave them to their stupid games!'

He turned away from the sight of the scientific party loading their airsled, and moved skilfully across the snow, followed by Penley. Coming to a small crevasse, he paused. Beyond it was a glacier overhang that would give them all the cover they'd need. But to get there would mean a leap across the open fissure that would bring them into full view of the scientists. Storr motioned Penley to wait and watched for the moment when the distant trio, who were still working on the upper glacier face, were turned away from them. Suddenly he saw that something had distracted them. Pushing Penley ahead, he prepared to spring across the gap...

It was Davis who first heard the ominous rumble. He looked up, and saw a tell-tale spume of blinding snow was almost on top of him! Of the three, his position on top of the ridge of ice was the most vulnerable. He screamed a desperate warning to the other two below, then dived for cover.

'Avalanche!'

Arden simultaneously heard the cry and the terrifying roar of approaching snow and ice. He instinctively looked upwards to locate Davis – but he was hurled to the ground and dragged into the shelter of the airsled by Walters before he could catch his breath to reply.

The avalanche, sweeping diagonally across the ice face, caught up Davis and continued toward that same crevasse that Storr and Penley were on the point of crossing.

Storr thrust Penley violently forward into the protection of the overhang, and tried to hurl himself forward after him. Penley watched in horror, as the ice and snow, raging over and past him, caught Storr's arm and shoulder, and snatched him into the drifts farther down the slope.

Suddenly the avalanche had passed; all was still once more. Half afraid of what he would find, Penley staggered out from safety to look for Storr – but it was Davis he reached first. The angle of the technician's neck told him there was no hope there. Hearing a growl of pain to the left, Penley scrambled through the churned-up snow and found Storr struggling to dig himself free. His left arm hung ominously limp and twisted.

'Storr!' gasped Penley. 'Are you all right?'

'My damned arm...' groaned the hunter. 'It's broken.'

Penley strapped the shattered arm as tight as he could against Storr's body.

'You're lucky,' he gasped. 'There's one over there who'll be staying on the mountain for good.'

Storr shook Penley off, and lurched to his feet. 'Come on,' he gritted through the haze of pain. 'they'll be here any minute, looking for him. Let's get away from here!'

Penley hesitated, wondering whether Storr was capable of the effort. Storr glowered back at him, sneering bitterly.

‘Unless you fancy turning me over to your friends?’

~~Penley met his gaze squarely and replied without hesitation. ‘Six months ago, they were my friends – but not now.’~~ Uncertain how to best help his surly companion, he stepped back and frowned. ‘Can you walk...?’

‘Just make sure you keep up!’ grunted Storr, and strode off, calling back over his shoulder, ‘Come on!’

With a last sad glance at the dead man in the snow, Penley hurried after Storr beneath the ominous shadow of the glacier.

Walters had struggled to his feet, and was now helping Arden up. There was no sign of Davis.

‘I’ll go and look for him, sir,’ Walters said curtly, to Arden’s unspoken question. He wasn’t going to waste his breath offering unnecessary hope. Arden watched him go, sensing his despair. If Davis was lost, Clent would tolerate no excuses – least of all an archaeological find. While he busied himself completing the job of lashing the block of ice to the airsled, Arden’s mind raged with self-doubt: they had ignored the Ice Warrior; if they hadn’t used the heavy drill; if they’d left when Davis had indicated... Would he have still been with them? Arden wasn’t a superstitious man, but he paused and stared into the ice block at the ominous, helmeted figure, and wondered...

Abruptly, he dismissed from his mind the ridiculous thought that there might have been some ancient curse attached to disturbing this ice-bound giant from his deathly sleep. But when he heard Walters’ dejected call, and saw him point miserably at the snow some two hundred yards away, the chilling thought needled his mind again. Had the Ice Warrior claimed his first victim?

The laboratory had been established in the part of the house that had once been called the gun room. It was, in fact, a complex series of small rooms, each of which served a purpose related to the laboratory’s central unit: storerooms for expedition equipment, weapons, geological analysis; and a medical centre that had proved invaluable to the mental and physical well-being of the Base scientists.

The tensions created by the importance of their mission, and the conflict of personalities under the continuous pressure of work, had brought several of the staff near to breaking point. Only Clent had seemed impervious to strain so far.

But now he willingly relaxed in the vibro-chair. Its effect was to relax the mind and tone up the body cells. The expression on Clent’s face also showed that it was extremely enjoyable into the bargain. Even so, although reclining and at ease, he lost none of his authority as Leader. If anything, the quiet hum of the electronic chair seemed to give an added keenness to the questions he threw at the Doctor who, like Jamie and Victoria, was immensely intrigued by the compact technology of the medicare unit.

‘You call yourself “Doctor”,’ continued Clent, ‘yet you have no proof of your qualification. Why’s that?’

‘Aren’t we wasting time?’ replied the Doctor evasively. ‘If you really want my help, hadn’t you better explain the whole situation?’

‘Explain the situation?’ Clent raised his eyebrows in surprise and glanced towards Miss Garrett who echoed his reaction. ‘My dear man, where have you been all these years?’

The Doctor threw a quick look at Jamie and Victoria before replying with a nervous smile. ‘As a matter of fact, we’ve been on a sort of... retreat – in Tibet.’

Victoria had to turn away slightly to hide the smile that threatened to flood her face.

‘Oh... really?’ replied Clent. ‘Tibet... of course.’ He looked towards Miss Garrett for her opinion – but she was gazing silently at the floor.

‘Well,’ continued Clent, ‘as for the general situation, Miss Garrett can give you all the details later. Before we get to that stage, I want you to take a simple test.’

‘I’m not much of a one for examinations,’ observed the Doctor drily.

‘This is a verbal exercise in deductive logic. It’ll tell me whether you’re up to the standard I require. I don’t tolerate charlatans, you know.’

‘And if I don’t come up to scratch?’ enquired the Doctor.

‘You’ll be evacuated with the other scavengers.’

‘Where to?’ asked Jamie bluntly.

‘To one of the African Rehabilitation Centres, of course,’ replied Miss Garrett with cold formality.

‘Oh, no!’ objected Victoria. ‘Not Africa!’

The Doctor shared her alarm. It wasn’t the country that was objectionable, so much as the fact that their only means of escape from this particular time zone lay outside the Base – half-buried in snowdrift! To be transported to Africa would mean being parted from the TARDIS – and probably for good.

‘Let’s hear this problem then,’ the Doctor demanded quietly.

‘Very well,’ said Clent. ‘All the major continents are threatened by destruction beneath the glaciers of the New Ice Age. How would you halt the ice surge and return the climate to normal, using the equipment you’ve already seen?’

The Doctor frowned, and puffed his cheeks at the enormity of the question. Both Jamie and Victoria stared at him anxiously. Smiling blandly, Clent sat up in the vibro-chair and reached out his hand to the chronometer by his side.

‘You have just ninety seconds,’ he murmured, ‘from now!’

Victoria and Jamie could only stare at the Doctor’s fiercely concentrating face, as he fired off questions and comments that left them completely baffled. Clent, relaxed, had closed his eyes; Miss Garrett studied the Doctor with sharp interest, noting with approval the scope and alertness of his mental responses. This man was certainly no charlatan!

‘Possible causes, then,’ rapped out the Doctor keenly. ‘A reversal of the Earth’s magnetic poles?’

‘No such change has occurred,’ replied Clent, without opening his eyes. The smile had vanished. Only a trained scientist could have asked such a question.

‘Interstellar clouds obscuring the sun’s rays?’

Clent shook his head.

Negative again. But the Doctor hadn’t finished.

‘A severe shift in the Earth’s axis of rotation?’

Once more, Clent indicated that the suggestion was wrong. The Doctor looked thoughtful; he had been given a problem without clues – the most difficult sort. And time was slipping away...

‘Come on, Doctor!’ urged Victoria. ‘Think!’

The Doctor looked at the recumbent Clent, and a slow, wicked smile spread over his puckish features.

‘Ah! A gigantic heat loss – is that it?’

The Leader’s face gave nothing away. He glanced briefly at the chronometer, then again closed his eyes before replying to the question.

‘I require an answer – not a question. You have rather less than thirty seconds left, Doctor.’

Clent’s carefully concealed reaction wasn’t lost on the Doctor. He grinned inwardly – two could play at that game!

‘In that case, it’s perfectly simple...’ he said airily, then paused, apparently lost in an attempt to

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