

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS OF MODERN DOCTOR WHO!



OUTSIDE

**INSIDE OUTSIDE IN 2:
AN OUTSIDE IN EXTRA!**

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INSIDE OUTSIDE IN 2

ROBERT SMITH?

(Originally published in the *Nethersphere* fanzine)

The first two *Outside In* books cover Classic and New *Who* reviews, but with a twist. Well, technically a gimmick and a twist. The gimmick is that, in each volume, there is precisely one reviewer per story. So, in the first volume, there were 160 writers covering 160 Classic *Doctor Who* stories (including *Shada*). In the second (recently out from ATB Publishing), that meant 125 writers for 125 New *Who* stories. How did we get to 125? We counted pretty much everything! So if it had a title and a narrative, then it was included. Which meant everything from *Space/Time* to *Rain Gods* to *Time Crash* to *Music of the Spheres*. Not to mention all the televised stories of course.

However, while a logistical triumph/headache/nightmare (delete as appropriate), the gimmick is simply that: a way to anchor the collection — making it, incidentally the most diverse professionally published *Doctor Who* collection in existence — meaning that there are multiple styles. Much like *Doctor Who* itself, if you don't like this week's offering, something else will be along shortly.

The twist though, is rather more delicious. The first volume was created as a reaction to so many reviews of Classic *Who* stories saying the same old things. So the aim with that one was to say something different. Which, in a way, wasn't that hard. *Doctor Who*, like the weather, is endlessly discussable. So pulling out a new perspective on, say, *The Seeds of Doom*, wasn't all that hard.

One of the best things I discovered along the way was just how different some people could be. I was envisioning new insights and clever arguments, but some authors took "different" to mean precisely that. So they played with the format, giving us letters, a menu, insurance claims and a review of the Quarks as though they were a new iPhone. I loved this. It took my central idea and made it sing.

With the second volume, this was a bit more of a challenge. Many of the later stories were only just out, so fan reaction hadn't gelled into knowing which were the default classics and which were the stinkers. So instead I decided that the remit this time around was to say something interesting. As a result, I pushed for the variations in format even more. So now we have musical numbers, poems, a choose-your-own-adventure, songs (complete with sheet music), letters to the Daily Mail, you name it.

As editor, my job was to a) recruit writers b) make sure they were able to truly say something interesting and c) make each article be the best version of that article that it could be. You'll have to judge how well I succeeded, although I will note that the early reviews have been uniformly positive. *Outside In 2* is not only the book I'm

most proud of, it's (so far) the best-received as well. And that includes one endorsed by Neil Gaiman.

To give you some insight into how the editing process works, I'm going to present some DVD extras: pieces that were cut or significantly altered, as well as two new reviews. The collection runs up to *Last Christmas*, so we decided to give you two entries for the two prequels to Series 9.

Here are the four pieces that didn't make it, for various reasons. All of the original writers have given their blessing for their piece to be reused here. I'm extremely grateful for that, because it's not always easy to let the joins show. But one of the sheer joys of doing an *Outside In* is working with all the different writers, who are invariably lovely, gracious and professional individuals. I'm still astonished at how generous they can be, both with their time and money. (All writers, along with the designer and your humble editor, donated their fees to the HIV/AIDS charity Avert. A percentage of each book sale goes there as well. Check it out at avert.org if you want to make a donation.) This is fandom at its best.

First up is a piece that was submitted for *Father's Day*. I really liked this piece and likely would have used it, had external factors not got in the way. As first drafts go, I think it's excellent.

7. FATHER'S DAY

OLD GLORY

MICHAEL S. COLLINS

Beware the Doctor. Hidden in the ruins of the old. He destroys.
(Film blurb)

A series of letters on a recent blockbuster film, made public by a disgruntled source

* * *

Dear Sirs,

I hear you are planning to construct a film out of the catastrophe surrounding the Doctor. I presume it transpired so long ago as to have acquired a mythical essence.

I've caught a glimpse of the studio advertisement: "Eight young soldiers, on their concluding assignment before decommissioning, are delegated to a listless, blue planet in an undisturbed section of time. A simple disinfection routine goes

wildly wrong when, one by one, they are picked off by a disturbed individual who seems to walk through time itself.”

I spoke to the widow of the sole survivor of this atrocity decades ago, when she was nearly eighty. She still felt her loss, and the loss of seven other families, as keenly then as in the days right after the tragedy. We have a cenotaph to our fallen comrades in the city centre square to mark the loss, and every year I am there to remember them, so to make a film out of this devastation feels a degradation of disaster.

Yours,

Professor A.J.H.

Academy for Reaping

* * *

Dear Professor A.J.H.,

As director of this documentary, please let me encourage you that I understand your feelings acutely. The horror of our communal loss remains potent, even with the passing century. I want this to be an accurate portrayal of what happened that day, without shirking on the details. As a result, I have you the draft script to have a look over.

Best,

Sgt. 4561

* * *

Dear Sirs,

I have read over the script for this film, and wish to make the following corrections, based on the testimonies of the widow. As you know, her husband didn't live too long after the event, and his mind was broken, but he did speak something of what he saw.

1. The dwellers of the planet in question seemed to be comparatively peaceful. They ran away a lot, but their weaponry was too elementary. The scene in which a human shoots and injures one of our men is therefore unrealistic.
2. The Doctor arrived in a blue box, not a red one.
3. His companion was female, not male. Some tribes use female soldiers.
4. Whilst the Doctor using a cave makes sense, logistically, I'm afraid the truth is far more sinister. As a base of attack, the Doctor and his team took refuge in what appears to have been a religious

institution. Under the Sontar Convention, use of religion as a pretext for attack is illegal. This was not a case of our boys undone by a trick, but actually a war crime.

5. You seem to be playing events as a horror. Certainly, they were horrific, as any war event is, but to treat it as titillation is, to my mind, a dereliction of duty.

Yours
The Professor

* * *

Dear Professor,
As my final response to you,

1. They fought back, didn't they? These humans. Doesn't sound too peaceful to me. Pockets of those infected resisted all across the affected time zone. Our brave boys have sterilised time issues for centuries, and this is notably the only time we have suffered losses.
2. Fair enough.
3. The sole survivor mentioned this in his ramblings too. I took it to be the sign of a diseased mind. I mean, the idea of this all-powerful Doctor needing an equally powerful aide alongside him doesn't feel realistic to my mind. I am aware also that the sole survivor suggested this female aide was linked in some way to the older man, who committed self-sacrifice in the Doctor's final destruction of time itself. Audiences like a good bit of sacrifice, so we may use this scene. However, we will have to give it over to one of our own fallen — seemingly, noble gestures among villains are not cinema friendly.
4. A church in which the Commander of the division was murdered trailing the Doctor's team. I'm afraid this scene was axed by the censors. It was deemed to make the Doctor too unrealistically villainous. Also, it involved showing our own boys trying to break into the church, which would cause too many moral questions for our audiences.
5. Time itself was collapsing inwards. I find it hard to think of anything more frightful! One by one, every single one of our boys were forced to travel backwards through the time vortex without preparation or protection. That even one survived that is a miracle itself.

The film will be released in six months' time. We are weeks behind schedule and on a strict military timetable. As such, I shall be unable to respond to any further correspondences. However, I am sure the studio would be able to give you a free ticket to the Premiere.

Best wishes

Sgt 4561

"Father's Day" (named after the Day of Remembrance held each year for the squadron) was released on schedule. Critics praised its gritty, unflinching qualities, and the director's braveness in leaving the Doctor mostly in the shadows so audiences never quite saw him fully. It is unrecorded if Professor A.J.H. saw the film.

Here were my notes back to Michael:

- I think there needs to be a bit more here. It took me two reads (with several hours in between) to get what you were doing... but most people will only read it once, of course.
- Specifically, I think you need to beef up the professor's part a bit. As a professor myself :-) we don't talk like that. We ramble, making long and torturous asides that delve into our own research. He needs to do that here (where his own research can make more points about the episode). Eg he wouldn't just mention the Doctor outright, he'd have a lengthy preamble about his theories surrounding this time-active being.
- I like the 5 points that get answered, but I think there could be a couple more. If this is from the point of view of time-active creatures, maybe they could be concerned with things like two Rose's coexisting.
- Also, some humour would be very welcome. What about the fact that the Doctor says the reapers attack older things last, but then avoid the bride to attack the much older vicar? We could maybe see this issue from their point of view.
- I like the blurb, but maybe give it more substance. Perhaps a whole movie poster or voiceover? (eg "If you only see one time-distortion disinfection movie this summer...") Then end with the blurb (which I want to stress is really good, but I think it's a punchline, not an opening).
- I also need a one-line bio of you. It can be descriptive, funny or related to your piece.

- Anyway, the above are all suggestions, not hard and fast rules... but I do think there needs to be more there, there.

Unfortunately, Michael had some health problems that prevented him getting to the revisions. And someone else had requested *Father's Day* in the meantime... although that person couldn't do it either. Fortunately, Thomas Cookson sent me a review of it for *The Doctor Who Ratings Guide* (a review website I host at pagefillers.com/dwrg) around the same time, which proved to be perfect. I was particularly interested in including some well-thought-out criticisms of the New Series at some point, so that the book wasn't simply a love fest. Thomas had an interesting take on that, while nevertheless loving the story, so that worked out in the end.

I gave all the authors of rejected pieces right of reply for this article. Michael had this to say about his experience:

Coming up with an idea for Outside In was quite intriguing. Father's Day arrived early, and the concept of telling it akin to the letters that start M.R. James' "Casting the Runes" appealed greatly. As you can see from the extract above, the idea works (well, I would say that!), but the execution needed some fine tuning. A natural occurrence in these matters, but, alas, timing is everything in writing. Yours truly managed to combine the editing process with becoming a father for the first time (a wonderful but knacker experience), and tempus fugit led to the project becoming unfulfilled.

Next up is a piece for *Death is the Only Answer*, a short mini-episode written by schoolchildren. I was a bit reluctant to include all these bits and bobs at first, but eventually decided that there was actually a lot of potential to be mined there. (Mainly for jokes, but that was fine.) I'd held a number of good writers (primarily drawn from contributors to the Canadian fanzine *Enlightenment*, as I knew they could work fast) in reserve in case other pieces hadn't worked out... but a lot of those pieces did actually work out, so most of my backup writers ended up writing for minisodes. And they usually brought something quite special, so now I'm really proud of including all the bits and bobs!

Kenyon Wallace is a reporter by day, so he writes very differently to anyone else in the collection. Specifically, he doesn't mind at all what he writes about and instead asks me to pick a theme and then he'll do whatever his assignment is. Which makes sense, but it's quite odd from my position. Back in *Outside In 1*, I decided I wanted a piece on music, so he wrote about that for *Full Circle*. This time around was more of a struggle. I tried to push Kenyon out of his comfort zone and get him to come up with the idea himself. So this is what he came up with.

84. DEATH IS THE ONLY ANSWER

TIME MACHINE CONSTRUCTION LOG

ALBERT EINSTEIN (AS TOLD TO KENYON WALLACE)

September 18, 1945

Weather: Light precipitation, regular planetary axial tilt

Timeflow velocity: normal

I am so beyond words at the moment, I hardly know how to express the strange and wonderful occurrences of today. In short, the task on which I have spent the last 20 years of my life toiling away has finally borne fruit, albeit in a most unexpected way. It all begins with my most mysterious of friends, he of the ever-changing face, the blue box, the enigma known only as the Doctor.

I began my work today by attempting to perfect the mixture of time ions and particle accelerators, I call it my Bionic Fusion Liquid — a great name there if I do say so myself! — for preparation to be poured into the bicarbonated processing machine. This mixture, when processed, is essentially the fuel on which my time machine will run. I was just about to pour the liquid into the processor when, lo and behold, there sitting on the inner plane of the time “rotor” mechanism, was my old fez! I thought it was gone for good when I lost it during that business with the Doctor and the Daleks a few years ago (he still hasn’t given me back my toothbrush!). But there it sat, so, naturally, I reached in to grab it when, whoosh, the air seemed to shimmer and bend for a second, and I found myself standing in the Doctor’s time ship! Somehow, during the “trip”, the fez had replaced itself upon my noggin!

As I took in the surroundings of the new console room — the Doctor always seems to be redecorating — the man himself turned to face me, albeit a much younger version! I really must ask him sometime how he does it. There are so many areas of science and physics I have yet to tackle!

Anyway, the Doctor explained, rather simplistically so if I say so, that I was transported to his ship via a time window created by the fez. Turns out the Doctor can be a little clumsy sometimes, and he accidentally knocked a lever that sent the old piece of headgear back to me, leaving a time trail leading back to the TARDIS. When I made physical contact with the fez, it returned itself from whence it came and, voila, brought me along for the ride!

The Doctor must be able to read my mind because just as I started thinking about how I would borrow his TARDIS for, oh, just a little while, he warned me not to even go there.

It suddenly dawned on me that if I was able to travel through time through a window created by a link between two objects over the time continuum, my Bionic Fusion Liquid perhaps wasn't the best way to engage in time travel, let alone a good way to market the stuff. I insisted that I carry out the tests on the liquid myself to see just what I had created. For a time ship from the future, I must say the equipment the Doctor had on board could hardly be categorized as futuristic! He never did answer my question about where he kept my other bicarbonated processing machine onboard!

I was then seized with the most obvious answer to my questions about how I alone could time travel. If the liquid was calibrated properly, then infusing those ions and particles into my own body would surely allow me to disperse my physical being through the timestream. The theory seems so simple in retrospect! The thing to do would be to simply drink the liquid and see where I ended up.

Instead, what occurred opened my mind to the endless seas of emotion, music and energy throughout the universe. Suddenly the thoughts of hundreds of thousands of beings from across the universe flooded my mind, music pulsed in my now pin-drop-sensitive ears. I found I could express my thoughts as speech through a white glowing orb attached to my cranium. It was a most enlightening experience. But then, as my brain became the vessel for an increasing level of emotion and thought, I felt me, my real self, start to slip away. I was becoming one with the universe to the point where there was no individual, no person. Something inside of me urged me to stop this universal absorption and I blurted out the only thing I could think of that would stop it all — death. "Death is the only answer" I told the Doctor, hoping he would understand that individuality is the mother of invention.

It seems he was able to parse my meaning and immediately created some kind of forcefield around me that isolated my mind from the beautiful chaos of the universe. Without the infinite stimulation, whatever being I had become could not function. As the creature poured out of me and away from me, I felt my old self returning, the isolated thoughts, the ones we never share with even the dark. I took a step forward and found myself back in the control room of the TARDIS, the Doctor smiling at me and complimenting me on my hair! If only Elsa could see me now!

The Doctor described my temporary transformation as ood, not odd, and I thought that odd, but perhaps it was just his pronunciation or my slowly fading hearing — now there's a new project, how to stop the old drums from ringing!

Still reeling from my exposure to the energy of the cosmos, I asked the Doctor to kindly take me home.

So here I sit back in the lab ruminating over my extraordinary day, a day for celebration. I say that because I now know that the time "rotor" — stole that term from the Doctor — was able to propel me through time when the fez created the window to the TARDIS. My time machine, at least in partial practice, works! Proof

that time can be traversed, light can be bent, gravity can be curved, harvested and used to propel oneself through history! But, perhaps most importantly, stories can be told.

Kenyon Wallace is a reporter for the Toronto Star. He once wrote a story on a mathematical model of zombies that just happened to use the editor of this volume as its focus. So now it's payback time.

I was initially quite happy with this and accepted it as is. However, Anthony Wilson, my proofreader, had issues with it. Here's what he had to say:

Reading this, I am reminded of Lance Parkin commenting that the review of Arc of Infinity in About Time felt like it was longer than the novelisation. Not entirely fair, but this review almost fits that bill! Not that I have any problem with that.

Also musing on such things, I note that, whilst my memory of, say, The Seeds of Doom, which I've only seen twice, and the most recent time about 4 years ago, is flawless, I can't remember what happened in Death is the only Answer at all. I may have to watch it on YouTube before I can decide quite whether this review is committing that sin of simply being a rehash of the episode as told from the point of view of one of the characters that I so clearly dislike. However, I fear that it is.

In which case, I ask the following question (and, actually, I ask this anyway, even if it wasn't a complete rehash): why, with so very many things that could be discussed here — Einstein in the TARDIS, the ludicrous (and very poor) use of the man and the idea, the fact that this was actually written by children in the ultimate fan-boy dream (and that this one won) and that's just scratching the surface — would you write a 'review' that discussed nothing of the episode whatsoever? Odd. Or Ood. Whatever.

24 hours later...

OK, watched it. It's crap. Which, of course, isn't the point right now. Where there's more of a problem is that the events in the episode don't actually match the review. Not only is it a retelling of the episode, it's an inaccurate retelling of the episode! Specifically, the fez does not just appear in Einstein's time machine, but the whole machine starts shaking and juddering, which is not mentioned. Similarly, the Doctor, being the Doctor, doesn't mention that he hit the lever accidentally, so Einstein would not know that (or at the very least, should state that he has deduced the fact from the Doctor's obvious excuses). Most importantly, he doesn't drink the liquid; instead it splatters onto his face and causes his (admittedly utterly inexplicable) change into an Ood. While we're here, I have no idea what the sentence "Death is the only answer," I told the Doctor, hoping he would understand that individuality is the mother of invention' actually means (a fault with the episode which could be brought out in the review but, instead, is actually

compounded). And the characterisation of Einstein between the mini-episode and the review are way out.

OK, as you might expect, I'm not a huge fan of this one. Somewhere deep inside it, I have a suspicion that it's been designed to make you realise (should you need to have this prompt) that the whole thing was completely ludicrous and nonsensical, even within the grand tradition of ludicrous and nonsensical within Who. There are no explanations and, to be honest, not even the slightest nod towards the laws of cause and effect and I think the review might, just might, be trying to make that point. But not in any way clearly enough — having the diary entry written as though Einstein is utterly confused by what happened might be closer, and having him actually examine the ridiculous nature of what happened, might be more powerful. As it is, we get an Einstein who is, if possible, more stupid than the one we get in the episode, relating what happened inaccurately (and for a scientist, there is no excuse for that whatsoever) and not actually drawing any conclusions whatsoever. In short, I don't see what this review is trying to achieve and I'm certain that, if there was an intent hidden in there, it hasn't achieved it. I'd get a rewrite on this one.

That said, I quite like the last line.

Because I'm dealing with so many essays of so many different styles, I give Anthony veto power over all of them, my own included. (He cancelled 14 pieces from the original *Outside In* — and quite rightly too, as it turned out.) Anthony has very sharp instincts for what works and what doesn't and should probably have been credited as co-editor on these volumes! I can't praise him enough. We have a book in the works that's coming out from ATB Publishing in a while, so you'll get to read more of his writing in due course.

But still... Anthony Had Spoken, so that was the end of Kenyon's original piece.

However, as I knew Kenyon could write, I sent it back to him for a rethink. Kenyon graciously took this on board, adding 'I thought I had represented what was on screen, but I guess I need to watch it again. In the paragraph where I describe Einstein's mind suddenly absorbing the "thoughts of hundreds of thousands of beings," it was my attempt to describe his transformation into an Ood, without actually saying "I turned into an Ood."' I'd actually run into Kenyon the weekend before, where he'd talked about how tough an episode it was to get a handle on, so I think he was quite receptive to this feedback.

We tossed around some ideas, this time coming from me. I suggested looking at the science (and lack thereof), which I thought would be a research-heavy piece. But then Kenyon had an utterly brilliant idea and decided to do it as a journalist (which was his day job) interviewing Einstein about the science. This was the lotion in the basket. Suddenly, it all flowed: the jokes were glorious, the format worked and the only tweak I made was to make Kenyon a slightly more aggressive interviewer than

he clearly was by day.

I should also note that, in the time since Kenyon wrote his bio, I published an academic article that cited his Toronto Star interview with me. So we seem to be on a bit of a professional back and forth about this. In the spirit of which, I decided to grill Kenyon about his writing process by interviewing HIM for a change...

What were your intentions when writing the original piece? How did you come up with the original idea?

To be honest, I thought this “adventure” was little more than a silly indulgence meant to appeal to the very young, and one that made almost no sense. As such, I found it difficult to find an angle from which to approach. I realize now that my mistake was approaching this story from a serious, critical viewpoint. I thought that an interesting way to do this would be to look at the story from Einstein’s point of view simply because there weren’t really any plot points, moral lessons or unique stylistic elements to hinge a review on. The total lack of any coherent message in the adventure made it difficult to find something worthy to write about.

Give time and distance from it, do you think the original piece still has merit?

I do, actually. If the reader can get over the serious tone, the earnestness and the quiet desperation to find something worth reviewing, I think the piece captured what might have been going through Einstein’s mind in a passable way. Again, this was me scrounging for something redeeming in the adventure to write about, and, given that there’s really not much redeeming in the adventure, I don’t think my attempt at a review is too terrible.

How did it feel to get the rejection email?

Fine. I’m used to criticism from editors and actually welcome the opinions of others. It can only help to make the piece better. What was actually more disheartening was knowing that I had to wrack my brain again to find another approach.

What’s it like to pick yourself up and rewrite the entire thing from scratch? Is that what you do in your day job or is it a completely different process?

I was actually grateful for another kick at the can. I had put so much time into thinking about how to write the first version that I was hoping it wasn’t all for naught. Once I realized that the best approach would be to look at the story in a less serious, more playful way, writing the second version was much less arduous. The downside was that it forced me to watch the story a few more times.

In my day job, when you have completed most of the reporting and you are sitting down to write, you usually have a sense of what the story is and how you are going to construct it. In my experience, you don’t normally have to rewrite a news story

from scratch, unless the news changes. Editing plays a big role in my job, so rewriting sentences and re-ordering paragraphs are par for the course.

Do you think the revision process was ultimately successful?

I will leave others to make that judgment.

Would you write for Outside In again?

For that tyrant of an editor Robert Smith?!?!?!? You've got to be kidding. Just joking. Of course.

The third piece that didn't make it was by Jason A. Miller, who's one of my favourite writers. Jason has an ability to take something personal and make it interesting, which is a skill that many people think they have, but few actually do. He's a proud New Yorker, so when he signed up for *The Angels Take Manhattan* — which had aired only a few weeks earlier — it seemed like the perfect fit.

This was actually the third submission for the book I received... which gave it the dubious distinction of being the first to be rejected. But not for the reasons you might expect.

94. THE ANGELS TAKE MANHATTAN

HE DOESN'T LIKE ENDINGS

JASON A. MILLER

I hate endings. But I was prepared to make an exception for *The Angels Take Manhattan*.

I'm in love with my co-worker. We'll call her Liz (as in "Sladen"). Not the romantic, New Series "love", but the desperately platonic Classic Series sense where you just want to have wacky co-ed adventures all day.

I've known "Liz" for four years. I trained her when she joined my old law firm, and then, when she left to take a much better job, she took me with her. She was the Sarah Jane to my Fourth Doctor, the Amy Pond to my Eleventh.

Then she announced that she'd been transferred to a different city. I couldn't go with her. First thing I did when I got home, the day I heard the news, was put on *The Hand of Fear* Part Four — where the Fourth Doctor and Sarah finally part company — and, predictably, didn't quite make it through the prolonged departure scene.

The night after her last day at work, *The Angels Take Manhattan* aired. Amy and Rory were leaving the TARDIS, never to come back. Another Steven Moffat epic — grand sweeps of emotion, with lightning-quick action scenes and enormous but airtight plot sweeps. Grand, epic, legend. The ending, we were told, would be “heartbreaking”. I needed that catharsis.

Amy and Rory had become to my TV-watching habits what Liz is to my career. I had serious lustful thoughts about Karen Gillan somewhere in the middle of that slow pan up her legs in *The Eleventh Hour* (i.e., about three seconds after I met her), but within weeks, she was my (desperately) platonic TV girlfriend. When Rory came on board, I was jealous but loved him anyway. I wanted to be Matt Smith in that TV love triangle. I was no more interested in a TV series without Amy and Rory than I was in a workplace without Liz.

And *The Angels Take Manhattan* was filmed in my city. Picnic in Central Park, TARDIS parked under the Brooklyn Bridge, and a scene that appeared written for Brooklyn’s Green-Wood Cemetery, with its jaw-dropping views of the Manhattan Skyline. I live a short walk away, on Greenwood Avenue. Until I found out those scenes were shot in Wales, I thought the TARDIS had landed on my block.

So *The Angels Take Manhattan* was destined to become my personal *Doctor Who* episode: shot in my city, possibly on my block, written by Moffat and giving closure to the two other edges of my triangle. I wanted to take those lessons and get over the ache of losing Liz, my own work companion.

I watched in enraptured silence. By the end, I was in tears, along with the rest of fandom.

Then, I sat down to write my review. And it fell apart. The episode, which should have had the brilliant plotting of every other Steven Moffat script ever, became something far less: a weird mix of *Timelash* and *Fear Her*, illogical and poorly plotted.

I’m a New York native and live in Brooklyn (Greenwood Avenue). Geographical errors set my teeth on edge. Detective Garner announces that he’s going to an apartment near Battery Park (Manhattan’s southernmost tip)... superimposed over a glamour shot of the Chrysler Building (on East 42nd Street). You can imagine the furore if I announced that, for the episode “Jason Takes London”, I was visiting a flat in Brixton... over a shot of Big Ben.

And I feel bad bringing up the Statue of Liberty thing, because it’s such an obvious target. But you don’t come into my town and mess with my landmark like that. Forget about it.

The Angels work because the idea is creepy and the rules are simple: monsters that only move when you’re not looking. But in this episode it was decided that Lady Liberty was also an Angel. And could, somehow, walk on water from Bedloe’s Island to Battery Park. The Statue of Liberty may be the most continuously observed object on planet Earth, not counting Donald Trump’s Twitter feed or Karen Gillan’s

legs. Under the Angels' rules, the Statue should never be able to move. What's that you say? The Angel walked in the middle of the night? Well, they call New York "the city that never sleeps". What part of "quantum locked" does Steven Moffat not understand? It's not like he invented the term or anything... oh. Wait. He did.

The notion of Winter Quay is also, at first blush, creepy. The Angels keep a farm of humans, from whom they derive a never-ending source of temporal energy. Anyone living in the building must stay there until they die and can never, ever leave. But... how do these people eat? What happens to the grocery store delivery boys? Who pays the taxes? What happens to census takers every 10 years? You're not making any sense...

Yes, the emotional beats are gorgeous. Darvill sells with calm desperation the scene where Rory attempts suicide by jumping off the roof of Winter Quay. He convinces Amy to join him, and the time paradox works; the Angels no longer can claim Rory, who had died an old man in Winter Quay. But then the Angels come back for him anyway. When Amy decides to allow the Angel to zap her back in time so she can join Rory in the past, never to return, and tearfully calls the Doctor her "Raggedy Man", that's when I lost it the first time, as did you...

...until you realise that the director framed the shot in such a way that it appears the Angel zapped Amy with some combination of Amy, the Doctor and/or River staring right at it.

The following TARDIS scene shows a dejected Doctor weakly asking River to travel with him; an obvious consolation prize. River refuses, with the T-shirt-ready observation: "One psychopath per TARDIS, don't you think?" That's facile writing. Better for Alex Kingston to have stared down the camera lens and said, "Sorry, you can't afford me 13 episodes a year. Sweetie."

At the end, it's suggested that the TARDIS pays a visit to Amelia, the girl who waited, to give her hope for the future. The final freeze-frame of Caitlin Blackwood looking hopefully toward the sound of the TARDIS is another lump-in-the-throat moment... until you realize that it creates another paradox with *The Eleventh Hour*. Amelia/Amy turns from "The Girl Who Waited" to "The Girl Who Kept A Previously-Scheduled Appointment".

So we're left with a story with some grand emotional beats, and true moments of heartbreak. The triangle is broken, and the Doctor's all alone at the office... except River, for as many episodes a year as Moffat can afford.

But to be truly epic, the episode needed more than just emotion. It needed Moffat's wrapped-like-a-mummy tight plotting; no plot holes, no timey-wimey handwaving. This was supposed to be the *Doctor Who* episode written exclusively for my own grief. Instead, it delivered a short-term high with a bitter, chalky aftertaste, as if someone swapped out my jelly babies for jelly Cherubs...

I still love this review. But it suffered from a unique problem: I'd written a review of the same story myself just a few weeks earlier for *Enlightenment* and raised essentially the same points (well, with a little less New York focus).

This raised one of the key issues I was having with *OI2*: namely, because the later episodes were now airing so close to the writing of reviews, I was desperately worried that the book was going to meld into "received wisdom" rather than "outside perspective". This wasn't helped by the fact that the first volume of *Outside In* was now being used as a guide to the Classic Series by newbies. I desperately didn't want to become Peter Haining.

I figured that if I could notice all these points in my first attempt, then so could everyone else. I decided that both Jason and I were still reacting to the episode, rather than analysing it. So I basically told Jason that I knew he could do better! In the first volume, he'd reviewed *The Time Warrior* and made the point that this was the first Classic *Doctor Who* story to be from the point of view of the villains. That insight had made me gasp out loud, and I wanted something similar.

Since it was early days, most of the slots were open, so Jason opted to switch to *A Town Called Mercy*. Instead of using his native geography, he used his day job as a judge to talk about the law, from the perspective of an Old West judge, which was suitably off the wall. Although I did briefly suggest that he rework his *Manhattan* review into a New York subway map somehow. I have no idea if that would have been doable, but it could have been awesome.

I also hosted his review at the *Ratings Guide*. It might not have quite met the very particular mandate of *Outside In*, but it was still one hell of a "straight" review.

Afterwards, I cycled through a number of possibilities for *The Angels Take Manhattan*, but everyone seemed to be going for the obvious choices. Which is no failing when something is so new (I'd done exactly the same in my original review). Until Cameron Dixon, editor of *Enlightenment*, inverted the process entirely, with a review that took the nonsensical aspects of the story and entirely flipped them on their collective head, complete with having a hilarious breakdown in the middle of the review. Now that's the kind of thing I was looking for.

Looking back, though, while Cameron's piece knocked it out of the park, I'm not entirely convinced I made the right call in rejecting Jason's submission. It's quite lovely, and I might have just as easily opted to get him to revise it so that the list of errors wasn't quite so obvious. I'm happy with how things ultimately panned out, but if submissions as good as Jason's were the ones that *didn't* make the grade, then this was going to be a very special book indeed...

Jason had this to say about his writing process:

Robert was absolutely correct to reject my Angels piece. It commits the double sin of A) being rather vanilla, and B) suffering from the syndrome of "This Is The Best Thing

I've Ever Written And You Must Love Me". I suspect that I wrote the piece more to impress Robert with my cleverness and depth than in an effort to review a story in an interesting and unique way. Bear in mind that I had joined the first Outside In volume very early on in the assembly process, before the book evolved into its final brilliant form, so I still didn't grasp that my O12 piece needed to be at a higher level. And so I didn't take the "funny" remit into account when I trashed Angels, which is painfully obvious to me today.

I should also point out that, Robert being an incredibly efficient and visionary editor, he saw through all of those flaws immediately. Let the record reflect that his rejection e-mail came to me within 2 hours of my submission, and worded almost exactly the way that it was for this article. Robert urged me — very kindly — to find something different to say, and then to say it in a different way, which I hadn't had to do with the first Outside In. So, I took a weekend, stinging from the rejection, and wound up sending him 5 different ideas at once, some of which I think are still viable (I proposed reviewing The God Complex as if I were grading the hotel for TripAdvisor, or Fear Her as if it were a Loose Canon-style recon of a lost 1968 story that was now considered to be the greatest of all time). Robert immediately seized on the trial-transcript format for A Town Called Mercy and ended up understanding that idea better than I did myself. I think my ultimate submission is still one of the weaker pieces in O12, but all credit goes to Robert's editing genius (and infinite patience!) for guiding me towards a drafting a piece worthy of his high standards.

The final piece that didn't make it was for *Night of the Doctor*. I'd asked author J.M. Frey to write something creative and she really took me at my word, as you can see.

110. THE NIGHT OF THE DOCTOR

NOT THE DOCTOR I WAS EXPECTING

J.M. FREY

I am wrongways up, and it *hurts*. My swimming pool has leaked all over the cloister again, and the bottles of the library books are akimbo on their shelves. My Time Lord is not within me. I moan, wheeze futile, and then open my external scanners wide, and search for the two hearts I cradle within my own.

He is so far away.

And He is gone such a long time.

I wait, because this is what I do. He runs. I remain.

When He returns his face is new. Younger. But etched with agony, determination, pain and promise. He wears bandeau of bullets between His hearts and it makes my corridors quiver with horror. I say to Him the same thing I always say to Him. The thing I've been trying to say out loud to Him for eight hundred years.

Hello, Doct—

I stop.

Something has changed. I flex my telepathic circuits, a slight shiver and curl, having to work harder than I've ever needed to in nearly a millennia.

This is my Time Lord.

But this is not my Doctor.

There is an approaching storm in His head, a void between His hearts.

I cannot find Susan in Him. I cannot find Ian or Barbara, Jamie or Peri, Leela, Ace, Sarah Jane or Grace. Even our most recent guests are gone: Charley, C'rizz, Lucie, Tamsin, Molly. They are locked away. They are the beloveds of a man who is not this man, a man whose two hearts are greater in capacity than the sum of the universe, and they do not belong in this head.

When the last Him was born, he asked for gun, holding out his hand, palm up, fingers splayed in the San Franciscan rain. This perhaps should have been my first clue. And now he decides to become one.

Oh, my Doctor. If we are not healers, then what are we? What is the point of us?

When He approaches my console, He does not pet. He does not croon. He does not call me His dear, dear old Girl, his Sexy, and I wheeze in horror.

He fights always, and instead, with words. "Please don't." "Think this through!" "I can find you a planet, I can take you far from here where no one needs be harmed and you can start again." "No more!" He pleads, he whispers, he promises, he bullies, he threatens, he warns. And, if that fails, then — and only then — does He fight with something bigger, stronger, sharper and more terrifying. Only then does the great dark anger of Him froth and boil. Only then does he make the decisions that no one else is qualified to make; the choice to amputate to save the Universe, our eternal patient.

We have abstained from the Time War, but when lives are at stake, when the universe crumbles, again and again He lifts His palms, splays His fingers and asks, "Please. Please. Give it to me."

What He means, what he always means is: *I shall be the weapon.*

The truth of my Doctor is this: He will never hold a weapon. But He will always allow Himself to be one. That, always and forever that, rather than let another.

It must never be another.

He is the Doctor, and He will take responsibility for being the purgative, the tincture, the radiation, the laser, the cut, the stitch. When it comes time for a blade to be hefted and blood to run, He — and He alone — will wield the scalpel.

That is the promise that is hidden in His title. The Bringer of Darkness, the

Oncoming Storm, the Predator, the Valeyard, Time's Champion and now... the Warrior? A Time Lord, yes, my Time Lord. But the Doctor. Always and forever my Doctor.

If someone has to make the hard choices, if someone must sacrifice in order to save, my Doctor will always and forever choose Himself first.

And when that time is over, when all the genocides committed, when all our hearts have broken and our eyes are sore with the burden of their tears — when the Moment has passed — I shall hope and pray for the return of the Doctor I know and love so well.

I shall pray that, when he has finished this terrible, costly surgery, he will become His own patient. That he will return to me, to my open doors, my open halls, and rest. Find joy. Find love, laughter, and guests.

Physician, I plead. When this is over, please, please come back to me as you were and... heal thyself.

J.M. Frey is an actor, award-winning SF/F author and pop-culture scholar.

She contributed to Doctor Who In Time And Space, has appeared on Space Channel's InnerSPACE and is the designer/wearer of the cosplay Steampunk light-up TARDIS gown. www.jmfrey.net | @scifrey

This was one that Anthony put his foot down over. His basic point was that it didn't address any of the truly interesting things about *Night of the Doctor*. Which is true... although it did fulfill my remit of being creative. So this became the only piece I've ever rejected for being too gonzo. Which hurt a little, but I had to stick to my guns. Fortunately, J.M. was very professional about it and asked if she could host it on her website at <http://www.jmfrey.net>. Which I was very happy about, as it felt strangely more at home with her other creative writing than it did in *Outside In*.

We were right up against our original deadline at this point (as we were originally going to publish the book in February 2014, containing everything up to *Time of the Doctor*). So I was in something of a panic and had to find someone very late in the day. I met David Adler in New York on New Year's Day that year, and he mentioned being in the Paul McGann Estrogen Brigade. A guy in the PMEB? Well, now that was interesting... could he perhaps write about Paul McGann's appearance in *Night of the Doctor*. And do it quickly?

One of the unofficial remits I set myself with the *Outside In* series was to feature contributions from previously unpublished writers. Partly this is because needing hundreds of writers to fill hundreds of slots naturally lends itself to this practice. But it's actually because of another books series entirely.

My first *Doctor Who* publications were two books called *Time Unincorporated*,

co-edited with Graeme Burk and published by Mad Norwegian Press. The aim of these books was to feature the best of fan writing, be it from fanzines (these books are the spiritual descendent of *Licence Denied*) or original commissions. One covers the Classic Series, the other covers the New Series.

These books were a miserable failure.

It pains me to say it, but it's true. Oh, sure, they sold some copies and TU3 is now available as an ebook, so there's a bit of life in it. But they weren't the runaway success we were hoping for. (Unlike our next book, *Who is the Doctor*, which totally was. It won awards, sold out of its massive print run and was endorsed by Neil Gaiman and everything.)

Personally, I think their content was quite good... not perfect, but quite good. Unfortunately, several of the external factors weren't right — the title is dull, the subtitle misleading, the cover uninspiring etc — so nobody particularly cared to see what was inside. I learned some very valuable lessons about the publishing business from these failures. These days, I make sure I have a lot more input into the external aspects of the book. It turns out you can — and so many of you do — judge a book by its cover.

However, while I do think the content inside is pretty good, I will note that it isn't perfect. One of my failings here was that I wanted to feature good writing from fandom (which I did), but I hadn't mastered the ability to search widely for all the voices that weren't being heard. So a lot of it is familiar names or my buddies. There's some diversity in the two books, but frankly not enough. The original conception of *Outside In* was to force myself to do *Time Unincorporated* again, only getting it right this time. And I'm very pleased to say that I did, in large part because I mastered the very difficult art of finding new voices.

People sometimes ask about this process. I can tell you that a) I ran out of my contacts after about 50 slots, which wasn't even a third of the way through the first volume and b) getting the last few is like crawling on bloodied limbs to the final peak of the mountain, screaming in pain, but determined to reach the summit. Every time I finish a collection I need a serious break before starting on a new one. There's a reason no one had done this kind of thing before.

All this is a roundabout way of saying that I'm immensely proud of the fact that these books gave so many people the opportunity to be published. Fandom can sometimes be quite insular; professional fandom doubly so. But to survive, we need to regenerate. Since publishing the first volume of *Outside In*, several writers have used that as a jumping-off point to launch their own books. I'm avuncularly proud of that.

So, as promised, we now present an exclusive: two brand-new entries that didn't appear in *Outside In 2*, as they aired after the book was published. And, appropriately, the first is from David Black, a writer I've never worked with before, making his *Outside In* debut...

126. PROLOGUE

SISTERS ARE DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES

DAVID BLACK

Friday, 11 September 2015
Prologue

This week we are delighted to share a guest blog from self-confessed Sisterhood Superfan Ellen Murray...

Ahead of the new series, an online mini-episode has emerged online. Modestly entitled *Prologue*, it serves as a prologue to the latest television adventures of *The Sisterhood Of Karn*. Karn itself appears against a starry backdrop and is initially labelled simply as “The Planet”. Such is its importance to fans of *The Sisterhood Of Karn* that it almost doesn’t need spelling out. Where else could we be?

Prologue is a two-hander between everybody’s favourite high priestess Ohila, ably played as always by Clare Higgins, and the current Doctor Who, Peter Capaldi. The two work very well together. Higgins asks all the right questions, and Capaldi almost answers them. As we’ve come to expect from Ohila, she sees through the Time Lord’s deceptions and knows him better than he knows himself.

Ohila: Why do you always lie?

Doctor Who: Why do you always assume I’m lying?

Ohila: It saves time. The truth, will you go?

Doctor Who is wrestling with a dilemma and naturally Ohila is the only one that can help him. Higgins plays what is essentially a confession scene with aplomb and Doctor Who follows her lead. The lines are delivered like a rally in a tennis match, but with words instead of balls and no net. Or maybe Doctor Who is playing tennis against himself and Ohila is the umpire.

Doctor Who: He and I’ve known each other a long time.

Ohila: You’ve been enemies for all of it.

Doctor Who: An enemy’s just a friend you don’t really know yet. Sorry. What, was that me being cynical again?

Who is Doctor Who talking about? Does it matter? Why is he being so rude to our heroine? Could it be that she has touched a nerve? The umpire strikes back? As we

have come to learn from our years watching, discussing and absorbing episodes of *The Sisterhood Of Karn*, the answers to these questions are not as important as the act of asking them. The revelations that may come will be fleeting, but their ramifications could last a lifetime or more. It's a scene reminiscent of a similar scene between Sisters Mawea and Canda from the Season 43 finale, *Warlock!*, by Lawrence Miles, and we all know how that storyline turned out, don't we?

Ohila: You are embarking on an enterprise that will end in your destruction.

Doctor Who: You could say that about being born.

A famous writer once wrote "What's past is prologue". It was Louis Marks in Season 9's *Sunset on the Edge*. What happened before leads us inexorably to what is happening now. Every effect has a cause. It's a theme that *The Sisterhood Of Karn* has returned to again and again, most notably in those episodes set in the spaceship graveyard during the nineties. Neil Penswick's *Beyond The Mountains* and Kate Orman's *Lost Properties* are two obvious examples that have set the stage for recent storylines. Doctor Who may have done something to bring him to Ohila's door, and eventually we may find out what it is, but personally I hope not. Raika said it best way back in Season 2's *The Cave of Secrets*: "It is in the not knowing that we truly learn about ourselves." That the episode is itself missing from the archives and we only have David Whitaker's script and a sparse number of John Cura's telesnaps to go on is both ironic and tantalising in equal measure.

When is a *Prologue* not a prologue? Possibly when it takes place within the action of another episode. Rumour has it that this scene takes place entirely within *The Sisterhood of Karn*'s season premiere, *The Magician's Apprentice*. Is *Prologue* still a prologue if it takes place in the middle of the story? Can the middle of a story be a prologue simply if it is presented to an audience first? Isn't every episode a prologue for the one that follows? That is, of course, except Lance Parkin's *Persona Non Grata*, for obvious reasons.

Ohila: Wherever you go, there are people who care enough to find you.

Doctor Who: Look after the universe for me. I've put a lot of work into it.

Fans are reminded that Doctor Who is no stranger to *The Sisterhood Of Karn*'s universe. This is another in a long line of crossovers that have seen the world's longest running science-fiction series continually lend its credibility to *Doctor Who*. This began way back with 1975's *The Brain of Morbius*, which saw Thomas Baker tangle with Cynthia Grenville, rejuvenate the sacred flame but also slay the popular character of Mehendri Solon, played to perfection by Philip Madoc. This controversial act meant that Doctor Who wasn't welcomed back for over thirty years and, when

he finally was, we couldn't bear to look at him in 2008's radio episodes *Sisters of the Flame* and *The Vengeance of Morbius*. Five years later, Paul McGann returned to Karn again in 2013's *The Night of the Doctor* and never left; the episode also featured a youthful reflection of a photograph of John Hurt.

Fittingly, it is our leading lady Ohila who is given the last word: "Anyone can hide from an enemy, Doctor. No one from a friend." *The Sisterhood of Karn* returns to BBC1 with its record-breaking fifty-third season, and it shows no signs of stopping anytime soon. Don't make any other plans on Saturdays for the next twelve weeks (and a Christmas special later in the year). Stoke the sacred flame, and make up a batch of stewed apricots, no custard.

There is, as yet, no word on whether an *Epilogue* will be forthcoming.

Posted By: Kalia at 21:47

Tags: DOCTOR WHO, ELLEN MURRAY, GUEST BLOG, OHILA, PROLOGUE, SEASON 53, THE SISTERHOOD OF KARN

No Comments

David Black is an actor and writer. He has written articles, comedy sketches and scripts for Noiseless Chatter, Cult Britannia, Behind the Bike Shed, Newsrevue and Hat Trick TV's YouTube channel, Bad Teeth. In an act of extreme arrogance, he was forced to reinterpret The Cherry Orchard and write new Chekhov dialogue. He blogs a blog at <http://davewrotethis.blogspot.co.uk>.

People sometimes ask me which takes more work, writing a book or editing an *Outside In*. The answer is easy: doing an *Outside In* is way more difficult! You have to liaise with writers, coax revisions out of people, edit, proofread, suggest alternatives, format sheet music, map out a choose-your-own-adventure, find people who can write even though *you've asked everyone you know and then some, argh!*

It would, in fact, be significantly faster and simpler to simply write the thing myself. So why don't I, then? The answer is because it's the diversity of opinion that makes these books. People bring their A-game to the table. And when you only have one slot to make your pitch in, you'd better make it a good one. I've seen takes on the series that have made me gasp with surprise or laugh out loud or that break my heart.

Yes, it's a lot more work. But boy is it worth it.

With that all said, here, finally, is a piece by some guy with a question mark in his name.

127. THE DOCTOR'S MEDITATION

YOUR ASTROLOGICAL HOROSCOPE

ROBERT SMITH?

The mysteries of the stars hold the key to all our destinies. Invisible patterns that swirl and coalesce, orbit each other and occasionally form faces in the opening credits are intrinsically tied to our fates. From the very dawn of humanity, people have looked to the heavens and the planets for guidance. The past explained, the future foretold, the present... apologised for.

Aries: You will find yourself attempting to meditate. Good luck with that, because there's no way you'll be able to sit in silence for more than about three hours. The digging of wells features prominently in your future, as does a visitor's centre. On the bright side, you've seen your last battlefield, which might come in handy. If an old friend is dying, best to pop off to a rock somewhere for a few weeks to have a bit of a think. If all else fails, spend your time practising the old "which hand is my coin in" trick. This will be in no way offensive for your forthcoming visit to your old friend, unless of course said old friend only has one hand, in which case it might seem a bit insensitive. Lucky number: 12.

Taurus: *Some sort of donut-shape, isn't it? Maybe a bagel? Either way, your future is clear: you're going to be eaten, most likely for breakfast.*

Gemini: You are an idiot. But you already knew that. Still, you're good at magic tricks. You will find yourself drawn to a tall stranger. Serve him loyally... at least until you find yourself swallowing a snake and being overcome by the inner Dalek agent inside you. That sucks, but, sometimes, sarff happens. But until then, carry scrolls, provide distractions and generally hang around a bit, making it appear that you'll be a major character in events to come, only to have that rug ripped out from beneath everyone's feet when that Dalek eyestalk pops out and your plotline is left entirely unresolved. Presumably you'll just stand there for all eternity, much like the nearby tank and electric guitar, which will throw a bit of a wrench into archaeology, when it's finally invented. The celestial heavens move in mysterious ways.

Cancer: *So... your star sign is named after a disease. I'm sure that's nothing to worry about. Nothing at all.*

Leo: You enjoy chalices, fire and wearing red robes. Chanting will feature heavily

in your future — and your past. You will be entrusted with a friend's last will and testament. You know who to give it to. (So don't go making a terrible mistake and handing it to his worst enemy or anything like that.) Remember: an enemy is just a friend you don't know yet... unless you're unlikeable. So keep up the good work.

Virgo: *Mrs Sauskind, it's under the couch.*

Libra: Getting old sucks. Especially when you're stuck in the same chair all that time. But remember, you can always go home. Even if that home has been bombed, destroyed, time-looped, retconned, renamed and made invisible for reasons that elude me right now. Still, you've got to laugh, haven't you? Best to send for your oldest living frenemy, because some arguments never seem to end.

Scorpio: *You are one twelfth of the population. You enjoy breathing, eating several times a day and sleeping. You are often found sitting, standing or lying down. You may find yourself either thinking or doing. Eat nothing except food, and drink nothing except liquids.*

Sagittarius: You're a democracy, so vote wisely. But best to avoid the snake-oil sellers, regardless. You'll find yourself running missions to all corners of the galaxy to find a being who can travel to any place in the universe at any point in its entire history. Your primary means of accomplishing this goal is to stand in a variety of rooms, saying "Where is the Doctor?" You might be doing this for some time.

Capricorn: *You are the central planet of the twelve colonies of Kobol, the place where the first Cylons were created. No wait, that's Caprica. And what series are we talking about anyway?*

Aquarius: You so fine. Remember that friendship is so much better than the reproductive frenzy of the noisy little food chain. Your long-term prospects are looking good, because death is for other people. On the other hand, you'll discover to your horror that you don't quite put the "arch" into arch-enemy. Probably best to avoid air travel in the near future.

Pisces: *You are much too fat, and you insist on wearing that stupid hat.*

Robert Smith? is the inventor of the academic sub-discipline of mathematical modelling of zombies, a bona fide ambassador of mathematics and a non-fiction writer and editor in all that spare time he has. He lives in Canada, but his roots are in Australian fandom. And they always will be.

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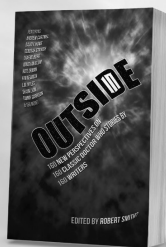
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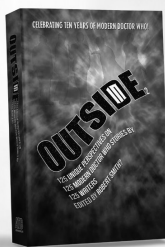
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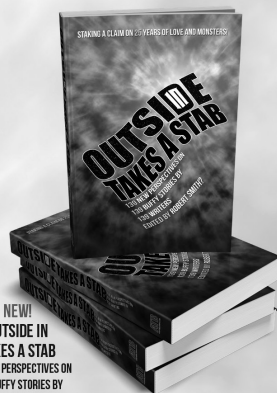
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