

Doctor Who
Series 15, Episode X
Boom
by
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EXT. BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

An infernal sky, lit by explosions and fires. Occasional fighter ships droning through -

- panning down to -

- a muddy, hellish battlefield. Drifting fire-lit fog, huge craters. This area is deserted, the fighting is distant. Like a quieter stretch of No Man's land.

- and now staggering, through the murk, TWO SOLDIERS. JONN and CARSON. Carson has arm round JONN helping him along. Their uniforms are torn and ragged, barely recognisable. (In fact they're Clerics - as in The Time Of Angels - wearing standard soldier gear but with clerical collars.) Jonn has his eyes crudely bandaged - barely a rag wrapped round his head - and he is clearly sightless.

Carson, coming to halt, staring at something ahead.

JONN

What's wrong?

Carson, peering into the murk, trying to make something out.

JONN (CONT'D)

What is it, what's wrong?

CARSON

Shh!

Carson's POV. Somewhere ahead, there is ... something. It's eight feet tall, vaguely man-shaped, listing to one side.

JONN

(Whispering now)

Carson?

CARSON

(Whispering also)

I think it's an ambulance.

Jonn tenses. This is clearly not good news.

JONN

We should be okay. We're not bleeding.

CARSON

I am, a little.

JONN

Enough?

CARSON
I don't know. Probably not.

JONN
Is there another way round?

CARSON
No. We're right in the middle of
the minefield.

JONN
Then we'll have to go past it.

CARSON
Yeah, but ...

JONN
We have to.

CARSON
But you're blind.

JONN
I'm aware.

CARSON
But will it ... will it *know*?

JONN
I don't think so.

CARSON
You don't *think* so??

JONN
Doesn't matter, we don't have a
choice - we have to keep going.

Now they start making their cautiously forward. Slower now,
Carson's eyes fixed on looming thing they call an ambulance
ahead.

CARSON
Looks kind of dormant.

JONN
They power down when they're off
duty, but I think their sensors
stay active.

CARSON
Unless it's damaged.

JONN

Yeah.

CARSON

I mean it could be offline.

JONN

Could be.

Another few steps - a distant explosion, the ground rocks slightly. Carson and Jonn stagger for a moment.

On the Ambulance Creature (still barely visible through the fog) - it also rocks in the explosion. And slowly rights itself. It stands there, not listing any more.

Carson has stiffened to a halt.

JONN (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

CARSON

It moved. But I think ...

JONN

What??

CARSON

It was the explosion, that's all.
The vibration.

JONN

Are you sure?

On the mist-veiled ambulance. Silent, towering.

CARSON

I'm sure.

Carson is taking another step forward -

- but his eyes fixed on the Ambulance, he misses his footing, stumbles -

- and now staggers sideways, over the lip of the crater they are circling.

Now he's falling head over head over heels -

JONN

Carson??

Carson hits the bottom of the crater, his head smashes against a rock.

Jonn flailing - where the hell did he go?? He yells out in a frantic whisper.

JONN (CONT'D)
Carson, where are you??

On Carson: out cold.

JONN (CONT'D)
Are you okay.

And now a tiny trickle of blood just below Carson's head.

On Jonn: terrified, and isolated, breathing hard, trying to control his panic -

- and beyond him, something is happening that he can't see. On top of the Ambulance Creature and blue light has started to flash: a revolving blue light exactly like you'd see on top of a contemporary ambulance.

The whine of an engine, a clank, a grinding of gears.

Jonn: hearing this, terrified.

Now a sustained beeping, like a reversing lorry -

- and lumbering out of the drifting fog ... the Ambulance. Eight feet tall, a ramshackle construction, all pipes and cables and rivets. It look basic, welded together; brutalist, functional. In place of a head it has the revolving blue light, and in place of feet it has a pair of caterpillar tracks. In some places this thing could almost look comical - a tottering, Heath Robinson robot. Here it is terrifying.

A beam of light shoots out from the Ambulance, illuminating Jonn.

From a grill in the front, a calm, pre-recorded voice.

AMBULANCE
Injury detected, patient confirmed.
Please remain calm.

On Jonn: anything but calm. Scared out of his mind! He has shuffled back a few steps.

AMBULANCE (CONT'D)
Hold still for your own safety.

Terrified, shaking, Jonn halts his retreat. The Ambulance grinds closer and closer, now looms over him.

AMBULANCE (CONT'D)

Sharp scratch.

Two taser-like wires fire out from the Ambulance, attaching themselves to Jonn on his right arm and his chest. He cries out in pain.

AMBULANCE (CONT'D)

You're doing very well.

A sizzling noise as they activate. Now a rusty sort of clicking from inside the ambulance - computations are being made.

AMBULANCE (CONT'D)

Patient name: Jonn Francis Vater.
Confirm.

JONN

Confirmed.

More clicking, more computing.

AMBULANCE

Vital signs in normal range. Blood pressure high. Liver mildly inflamed. Diagnosis ...

Click. Click. Click. Click.

On Jonn ... hoping, hoping. Is he going to get away with this??

AMBULANCE (CONT'D)

Blind.

JONN

No! No, listen, I'm not blind, it's not permanent. A flare went off in my face, I'll get better. I swear I'll get better!!

AMBULANCE

Prognosis: unacceptable.

JONN

No, listen, please, it's temporary, it was just a flare, it went off in my face, right in my face -

A crackle of terrible energy. A burning glow reflects in the many facets and panels of the Ambulance. The tazer wires are snapped back into place and there is an awful silence. Staying on the ambulance: Jonn's fate unrevealed.

AMBULANCE

Next of kin -

The whoosh noise of an email being sent.

AMBULANCE (CONT'D)

- informed.

CUT TO:

THE OPENING TITLES

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

Another part of the battlefield, not far from where Jonn perished. From somewhere this is a faint insistent beeping.

The wheezing groaning of the TARDIS. The wind whips and swirls and there it is - the police box suddenly planted in the mud.

The door pops open, the Doctor sticks his head out. He has a face mask and snorkel round his neck. Looks around at the muddy devastation. His grin drops a notch.

THE DOCTOR

Ah. Okay.

RUBY

(From inside)

How is it?

He hoists his grin back up. He's in I-can-work-with-this mode.

THE DOCTOR

Yeah. I mean ... yeah.

Ruby opens the other door, looks out. Beach ready, complete with beach ball.

RUBY

Right. So it's not a beach then

THE DOCTOR

Give it time. Everything's a beach eventually.

RUBY

Try again?

THE DOCTOR

Yep.

She heads back into the TARDIS.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I mean there's a beeping ...

RUBY

(From inside)

A what?

THE DOCTOR

Just a beeping. It's probably nothing.

RUBY

(From inside)

Okay.

THE DOCTOR

Just, you know ... a mysterious beeping.

He pops his head back into the TARDIS, closes the door. A beat. He pops his.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I mean, it's not even a *good* mysterious beeping. We can totally walk away from this.

RUBY

(From inside)

Well come on then.

THE DOCTOR

Coming. Coming.

Pops back in, closes the door. Two beats - the door is thrown open and the Doctor comes striding, heading towards the beeping.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm just going to check out the mysterious beeping.

He's come a to a halt - turning, trying to figure out where they beeping's coming from.

RUBY

Doctor, are you tiny bit compulsive?

THE DOCTOR
I'm not compulsive, I just don't
like to skip planets.

RUBY
Which planet is this?

THE DOCTOR
Yes.

RUBY
You always say yes when you don't
know an answer.

THE DOCTOR
What a great character trait.

A tremendous, distant booming. A firey glow in the sky.

RUBY
Are we in the middle of a war?

THE DOCTOR
Or possibly this is the planet of
the really big fireworks.

RUBY
Doesn't the TARDIS tell you where
its landed?

THE DOCTOR
I don't like peeking.

RUBY
Peeking??

THE DOCTOR
You're not playing the game till
you turn off the Hints. Over there.

He scurries over to -

- a CYLINDER, just lying there in the mud. It's about a foot
long, and a SMALL GREEN LIGHT is flashing on top in time with
the beeping.

The Doctor quickly scans it with sonic.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Interesting.

RUBY
What is?

THE DOCTOR
Never mind.

RUBY
Never mind what?

The Doctor picks up the cylinder. Examines it.

A closer look. It is smooth and glossy and multi-coloured - in fact, round the surface of the cylinder is a collage of colours: the combat fatigues Jonn was wearing, mixed in with his flesh tones, his hair. There is something that looks like almost like an ear but stretched and pulled and flattened.

RUBY (CONT'D)
What is that?

He turns the cylinder over. There is LETTERING carved into it, which he now reads aloud.

THE DOCTOR
(Reading)
Jonn Francis Vater. Cause of death:
blindness.

RUBY
You don't die of blindness.

THE DOCTOR
(Reading)
Next of kin: informed.

RUBY
So there's a body in there, yeah?
Like ashes or something.

THE DOCTOR
Never mind.

RUBY
Don't say "never mind".

THE DOCTOR
Okay. There isn't a body *inside*
this - this *is* a body. This *is* a
dead body. This *is* Jonn Francis
Vater.

RUBY
Excuse me?

THE DOCTOR
Compressed somehow. Like he's been
... I don't know, smelted.

Ruby looks in horror at the cylinder.

RUBY
 Seriously?

THE DOCTOR
 It's a good word, smelted, isn't it?

RUBY
 Not at the moment.

THE DOCTOR
 I'm not sure I've ever said "smelted" before, it's never come up. New planet, new word.

The little green lights winks out, the beeping stops. Then the bulb projects a little beam of upwards from the cylinder -
 - and in the beam of light a hologram forms. The smiling face of Jonn.

HOLOGRAM JONN
 Hello. I'm Jonn Francis Vater and you have found my mortal remains. Please return them to my parents, Agnes and Millicent Vater. The correct address is being thought-mailed to you now.

There's a *whoosh*. The Doctor blinks, Ruby puts a hand to her head.

RUBY
 Ow!

THE DOCTOR
 Thanks, Jonn. Am I talking to an AI?

HOLOGRAM JONN
 I am an approximate AI reconstruction of the personality of the deceased Jonn Francis Vater. If you are a friend or relative of mine, I have a range of playlists to help you process your grief.

THE DOCTOR
 No, thanks, Jonn. I'm good.

HOLOGRAM JONN
 Copy that. See you later.

The hologram snaps off.

RUBY

Doctor!

She's pointing at something a little distance from them. The Doctor looks.

The Doctor's POV: half visible in the fog and half-light - the looming figure of the Ambulance.

THE DOCTOR

Ah! Now you're talking!

He bounds over to the Ambulance, starts sonicing. The Ambulance is apparently dormant.

RUBY

It's a robot.

THE DOCTOR

Love a robot.

RUBY

It's a dead robot.

THE DOCTOR

No, it's *dormant*. You've always got to say "dormant" with artificial life-forms, they're very easily triggered.

RUBY

But it's not working, yeah?

THE DOCTOR

Sleep mode, I'd say. I wonder what wakes it up.

He raises the Cylinder.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Hey, Jonn, you in there?

The hologram springs out again.

HOLOGRAM JONN

Hello. Perhaps you should look at old photographs of me to remind you of the good times.

THE DOCTOR

Jonn, what's this?

He revolves the cylinder so that the hologram is facing the Ambulance.

HOLOGRAM JONN
This is the planet designated
Kastarion 4.

THE DOCTOR
Yeah, but this fella standing right
here, what is he?

HOLOGRAM JONN
An ambulance.

RUBY
An ambulance? How's that an
ambulance?

THE DOCTOR
A battlefield ambulance.

HOLOGRAM JONN
Correct.

The Doctor is frowning, thinking, putting it together.

THE DOCTOR
Have you seen this particular
ambulance before, Jonn?

HOLOGRAM JONN
This is the ambulance responsible
for my recent and necessary demise.

RUBY
Why would an ambulance kill you?

HOLOGRAM JONN
I was humanely destroyed on
discovery of the fatal condition
known as blindness.

RUBY
How is blindness fatal?

THE DOCTOR
It's a battlefield ambulance. Life
is cheap - patients are expensive.

From off, a voice.

SPLICE
Dad?

They turn, look.

And there's the Splice, the little girl from the crashed ship.

She is stepping forward in horror and wonder.

SPLICE (CONT'D)

Dad??

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

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