



## Chapter One

‘Best Team TARDIS film night ever,’ said Graham, as he looked down at the concrete pavement that showed the handprints and footprints of stars like Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin and the Marx Brothers. ‘Always wanted to come here, I did. Seeing the actual Hollywood premiere of Grace’s favourite film, too . . . yeah. Good stuff.’

‘Yeah. It’ll sort of make us feel close to her, you know?’ said Ryan. There wasn’t a day that went by when he didn’t miss his grandmother, Grace, and he knew it was the same for Graham, his grandfather-by-marriage.

‘Did you use to watch it with her, then, *The Wizard of Oz*?’ asked Yaz. That was why they were at Grauman’s Chinese Theatre on August 15th, 1939. It had been Graham’s turn to choose what they’d watch – any film, any time, any place. And this was what he’d chosen.

Ryan looked sheepish. ‘Weren’t really my sort of thing. But it’s special cos she loved it, yeah? Proper special. “You grow up a Black girl in Britain, there’re a lot of times you dream of going over the rainbow.” That’s what she said to me once.’

Yaz nodded. ‘I saw it when I was a kid,’ she said, staring back into her past. ‘Don’t really remember much, but I know I was frightened by some of it. The flying monkeys, they were dead scary. And there was that tree that attacked the girl – what was her name? Dorothy? And the shoes, of course.’

‘You were scared of the shoes?’ said Ryan. ‘Well, I guess they are pretty extreme.’ Ryan and Yaz both looked down at Yaz’s feet. She was wearing the reddest, most glittering pair of block heels that either of them had ever seen – outside of films, at least.

‘No!’ She nudged Ryan in the ribs. ‘You know what I meant. I wanted shoes like Dorothy’s so badly. But Mum made me get black lace-up ones for school instead.’ She sighed happily. ‘Never dreamed I’d really get a pair of ruby shoes one day. I love the TARDIS wardrobe!’

‘They’ll look good with your uniform,’ said the Doctor. Yaz wasn’t sure if she was serious – the Doctor’s fashion sense was suspect, to say the least. But it was safe to say that Sergeant Sunder would not have been impressed if Yaz had worn sparkling red heels on duty. They’d be really out of place.

And out of place was exactly how Yaz was feeling right now, despite the joy brought to her by the new shoes. The Doctor’s timeship, the TARDIS, had taken them to so many places – alien planets, the future, the distant past. But being this close to their own time was something she always found a bit disorientating. Things were similar enough to be familiar and different enough to be unsettling. Here, fur coats were envied rather than reviled. Toothbrush moustaches were

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widely in evidence. Nearly everyone wore hats! But even if you took away those surface differences, there would still be an atmosphere of something slightly *other*.

There was something else that didn't feel quite right here. 'I thought there'd be a red carpet!' she said. 'And people queuing up to get in! And paparazzi!'

'Maybe the film wasn't that popular when it came out?' suggested Ryan. 'Like, there're loads of famous films that flopped to start with. *It's a Wonderful Life*, that's one, and now it's on TV every Christmas.'

'*Citizen Kane*,' added Graham. 'That's another one, and that's the most famous film there is.'

The Doctor was frowning now. 'It's a Hollywood premiere at Grauman's. There should be, ooh, thousands of people here, whatever the film is.'

'Have we got the wrong day or something, then, Doc?' asked Graham.

Yaz went up to a uniformed doorman who was standing to attention next to one of the Chinese stone lions that guarded the theatre's ornate entrance. 'Excuse me,' she said. 'Can you tell me when *The Wizard of Oz* premiere is supposed to start?'

The man looked down at her and spoke very slowly. 'There – is – no – film – called – that – here,' he said, and made a little shooing gesture. 'You – in – wrong – place.'

Yaz felt Ryan suddenly jump forward to stand by her side, but she put up a hand to hold him back. Even in the twenty-first century white people spoke to her like that, sometimes, like she couldn't understand English, so it wasn't

a big surprise to find that attitude in the past. Not nice – but not a shock.

The Doctor and Graham joined her too. It was Graham – the white male – that the doorman automatically turned to. ‘I was just telling your –’

‘Friend,’ Graham completed, stony-faced. ‘My very good friend.’

‘Well, there’s no such film.’

‘We’ve got the wrong day, Doc,’ said Graham, looking at the Doctor. ‘Or wrong year. Or wrong planet?’

But the Doctor shook her head. ‘Fifteenth of August, 1939. Earth.’ She licked a finger and held it up to the wind. ‘Yep, proper Earth, not a parallel universe or whatnot.’

‘We need to investigate,’ said Yaz. ‘Find out what’s happened.’

Graham didn’t look keen. ‘Hold on a tick,’ he said. ‘I mean, I didn’t mind popping to 1939 for a movie evening, but we are not hanging around here. World War Two’s happening in, what, two weeks? Three?’

‘Eighteen days,’ said the Doctor automatically, still distracted.

‘Eighteen days . . .’ Now it was Graham’s turn to get distracted. His voice grew sombre. ‘Just think. Back in Essex, my old grandpa’ll be off to join the RAF. He’ll come back, though. Not many of his mates did.’

‘It doesn’t happen here in America yet, does it?’ Yaz asked.

‘Conscription starts next year,’ said the Doctor. ‘Year after that, Japan bombs Pearl Harbor. The US joins the war the next day.’ They all looked around them. How many of these young men in sharp suits and fedoras would still be alive come the end of the war in 1945?

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‘That’d be me, if we stayed here,’ said Ryan. ‘I’d have to go to war.’ He turned to Graham. ‘You’d be all right, though, Grandad.’

‘You call that “all right”? Sitting back and watching all the kids being sacrificed?’ began Graham, but Yaz jumped in with an idea.

‘Maybe someone tried to stop the war!’ she said. ‘Mucked about with history, killed Hitler, something like that? And it’s knocked out *The Wizard of Oz* as a side effect?’

The Doctor spun round and addressed a young passerby in his late teens. He had wavy, slicked-back hair and books under his arm. ‘Excuse me! Hiya! Is Hitler dead?’

The teenager looked angry. ‘He is not, ma’am, I’m sorry to say.’ Then, slightly embarrassed, he added, ‘Excuse me for speaking my mind.’

‘Don’t apologise,’ said the Doctor. ‘I like minds being spoken.’ She turned back to her friends. ‘That’s not it.’

Graham was laughing. ‘Hey, Doc – I’ve just thought of something! Back when you were a bloke, you’d have been called up. Now, you wouldn’t! Weird, huh?’

‘Always been a pacifist, me,’ said the Doctor. ‘Ooh, hang on, should’ve asked something else.’ She swivelled on her heel and spotted the youth she’d spoken to before. ‘Excuse me! Hi! Nice books. Do you read a lot?’

The teenager looked at her, startled at being addressed again, but said, ‘Yes, ma’am, I do. I read all the time. I reckon I’ve read just about every book that’s going.’

The Doctor grinned. ‘Aw, that’s brilliant! Books are brilliant! You’re brilliant! You’re gonna go far. One more

question, though. Have you ever read a book called *The Wizard of Oz*? No, hold on a second, I'm wrong, it was called *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Dropped a word later on.'

'Can't say I have.' The youth shook his head slowly. 'No, ma'am, reckon that's one that's passed me by.'

'You've heard of it, though,' the Doctor persisted.

He just kept shaking his head. 'Is it a new book? Sometimes it can be a while before the public library gets them in.'

'No, that's not it – it's 1939 . . . minus 1900 – ooh, that's a nice easy sum – it's been out nearly forty years! Plus, it's sold a million copies! There should be a whole series of books by now. L. Frank Baum? TARDIS databanks,' she added as an aside to the others.

Graham stepped in. 'The Scarecrow? The Tin Man? The Cowardly Lion?'

'No, sir, I – I don't know any of those folks. I'm real sorry, but I don't.'

The Doctor thanked the youth and turned to her friends. 'Yaz, Graham, Ryan – I don't think we're in Kansas any more.'

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'No *Wizard of Oz*,' the Doctor kept muttering under her breath as the four walked back towards the TARDIS. 'What does it mean?'

They looked from side to side as they went, trying to spot if there was anything out of place, anything that might give them a clue as to why this one aspect of the world had suddenly altered. 'Ooh ooh ooh!' the Doctor said after a few

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minutes. ‘I think I’ve got *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in the TARDIS library! The book, I mean, not the person. Yeah . . . I’m sure I have. Noticed it in there – ooh, a regeneration ago. Maybe two. Kept meaning to read it, but you know what it’s like – few Cybermen here, few Stenza there, and suddenly it’s half past the future and you’ve barely got started.’

‘If the book’s been erased from existence, though . . .?’ began Ryan.

‘The TARDIS will’ve been shielded,’ said the Doctor. ‘It’ll be there, trust me. Come on, let’s get back! Last one there’s the Wicked Witch of the West!’

The Doctor broke into a run as the TARDIS came in sight, with the other three following at a slightly less enthusiastic jog. She unlocked the doors and tore inside without even slowing down, the rest trailing at her heels as she dashed through the control room. As the Doctor vanished into the recesses of the ship, she called out, ‘Hold on while I get it!’

‘Hang on, better close the doors,’ said Graham, and went over to the central console where he operated the relevant control. The main doors swung silently together, isolating the ship’s crew from Hollywood, from the 1930s, from Earth altogether.

‘Yep! Told ya! Here it is!’ The Doctor hurtled back into the control room a few moments later, waving a small hardback book with a picture of a red lion on its green cover. ‘First edition, this is.’ She read out: ‘*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. By L. Frank Baum. Pictures by W. W. Denslow. Published 1900.’ She gave a nod. ‘Told you. One of the most popular works of children’s fiction ever!’



‘Then why ain’t I ever heard of it?’

All four spun round as a slim youth stepped from the shadows by the TARDIS entrance. It was the teenager the Doctor had questioned out on the streets of Los Angeles.

‘Oi! What d’you think you’re doing, lurking in the dark?’ shouted Graham. ‘You can’t be in here, mate!’

The teenager was gazing around now, wonder in his eyes. ‘This is some mighty fine place you got here. Why, it’s fancier than Grauman’s itself!’

‘We’re open to stowaways Tuesdays and Thursdays only,’ said the Doctor, who was already deep in the book. ‘Sorry. Graham, could you . . .?’

Sure thing, Doc,’ Graham advanced on the youth. ‘Out you go – and don’t you tell anyone what you’ve seen, right? Not. A. Murmur.’

Yaz was more gentle. ‘Yeah, you’ve gotta go,’ she said to the teenager. ‘I’m sorry. But this is – Well, it’s secret.’

‘But I heard the stuff you were saying! I had to . . .’

That made Yaz even more worried. ‘You need to forget everything you heard. I’m really sorry. Graham? Go and open the doors, will you? I’ll sort this out.’

Graham nodded and walked over to the console. The Doctor was there too. She’d abandoned the book after only a few pages and was now opening up various panels, searching for something. It was clear her mind wasn’t on the intruder. ‘You know what, this could be the last copy in the universe!’ she said to Graham, tapping the book. ‘The only one that’s survived . . . whatever it was that happened to

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history. So, what I'm hoping is, it'll give us some clues. First I'm going to get the TARDIS to analyse it and look for discrepancies – you never know, might get a few pointers . . .'

Then several things happened in quick succession.

The Doctor opened a panel and went 'Aha!' when she saw a large empty slot below.

Yaz led the youth to the TARDIS's main doors.

Graham reached out to operate the door control.

The Doctor plugged her copy of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* into the console slot.

The TARDIS doors opened.

And a wind began to blow . . .



The TARDIS whirled round two or three times and rose slowly through the air. Higher and higher it went. The Hollywood sign looked tiny; a landmark for ants. Yaz and the youth were hanging tightly to either side of the door frame. The teenager had dropped his books in the struggle to stay upright and he watched in dismay as they spiralled towards the ground far below.

'Hold tight!' yelled the Doctor over the howling of the wind, as she frantically checked instruments on the console.

'I was planning to!' Yaz shouted back. The air shell around the TARDIS meant they could still breathe, but she knew that if she relaxed her grip for even a moment she'd be following those books all the way down.

‘Is this my fault?’ the youth said, the wind whipping the tears from his eyes before they touched his cheeks. ‘Did I do this? I didn’t mean to, honest I didn’t.’

Yaz shook her head. She might not know what was going on, but she did know she had a responsibility to keep this youngster safe – and calm. Her police training came to the fore. Smile. Reassure. ‘Course not,’ she said. ‘Just hold on tight. The Doctor’ll sort everything out. I promise.’

Ryan was unsure on his feet at the best of times and the rushing wind had sent him staggering across the control room. He’d managed to grab hold of the hourglass that protruded (for some reason) from the console, but it was an effort just to keep upright.

Meanwhile Graham was trying to reverse the door lever – pushing this way, pulling the other – but it resisted his every attempt. ‘What’s happening, Doc?’ he yelled over the howling of the wind.

‘I don’t know! The TARDIS isn’t in flight!’

‘Yeah, I hate to be the one to point this out to you, but, yes, it is!’

The Doctor shook her head. ‘No. It’s not flying. It’s being carried somewhere. By the –’

– the tornado,’ Graham finished. It suddenly clicked. ‘Just like in *The Wizard of Oz*! Dorothy’s house gets carried away!’

‘The book!’ The Doctor tried to pull the book from its slot, but she had no better luck than Graham was having with the door controls. ‘Something in the book must’ve set it off! A booby-trap!’

‘Well, can you un-booby-trap us?’

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The Doctor stared at the book, then at Graham. ‘I don’t know,’ she said. ‘You’d better just keep your fingers crossed for a soft landing.’

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Back at the doors, Yaz was still trying to maintain her composure – on the outside at least. ‘Tell me your name,’ she said. ‘I’m Yaz. Short for Yasmin.’

‘Theodore,’ he managed to get out.

‘Well, it’s nice to meet you, Theodore.’

The world beyond the doors was dark now. Whether that was because of how high they’d flown or because they were somewhere else altogether, Yaz didn’t know. She no longer had a sensation of movement; she could feel the wind but without the visual cues her brain struggled to tell if the TARDIS was still whirling or climbing or if it had stopped still. But then the Doctor yelled, ‘Hold tight!’ and that all changed. Suddenly, it was obvious they were plummeting. Yaz’s stomach jumped into her chest with an unpleasant sensation that she associated with roller coasters or out-of-control lifts.

The descent seemed to go on forever. On and on and on. Could you fall forever? Was this some sort of bottomless pit? Yaz saw Theodore, his eyes screwed shut, his lips forming an endless prayer. She couldn’t turn to look for the Doctor, or Ryan, or Graham. It was all she could do to stop herself screaming. She shut her eyes too.

And still they fell.

## Chapter Two

Yaz had found a place of stillness inside, a way to ride out the fear. But the adrenalin and terror of the fall had burned themselves out; the TARDIS had been plummeting for so long that it just couldn't be sustained.

Now she was brought back to the moment by the jarring jolt of the TARDIS's landing. She opened her eyes and saw that Theodore was doing the same, shaking his head and blinking as if he had been torn from a dream. It took both of them several seconds before they were collected enough to observe their surroundings.

The TARDIS was no longer moving, and the outside was no longer dark. Bright sunshine flooded through the open doorway as the Doctor, Graham and Ryan joined Yaz and Theodore to stare out at a country of marvellous beauty. Had there ever been such colours? Reds, yellows, greens, blues, all recognisable yet richer, deeper, than anything found on Earth. Stately trees bore fruits like ripe jewels; birds had plumage that would make the brightest bird of paradise seem dull. The sun-sparkled Mediterranean could only dream of being as blue as the stream that wound through the emerald valley.

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Graham said nervously, as they left the ship: ‘D’you reckon we’ve landed on any witches?’

Yaz realised Theodore wouldn’t understand the reference, so explained. ‘*The Wizard of Oz* – the thing we’ve been talking about? It’s about a girl called Dorothy, whose house is caught up by a tornado, and it lands on top of a wicked witch, killing her. Dorothy gets the witch’s magic shoes, though.’ Yaz held out a foot and waggled it, showing off her sequined pump.

Theodore politely murmured something about ‘nice shoes’ but clearly hadn’t taken in anything she’d said. It wasn’t the incredible alien landscape that drew his attention though. He was staring in amazement at the TARDIS. ‘But . . . how is it . . . this size out here,’ he stuttered as he looked around, ‘and that size . . . in there?’

‘Ah, fact is, it’s dimensionally transcendental,’ said Graham (who was quite proud of having memorised the phrase). ‘A big thing in a small thing. You get used to it.’

‘It can go anywhere in time and space,’ Ryan added. ‘It’s not normally such a rough ride, though.’

Yaz was gazing at the land around them. ‘This place looks amazing,’ she said.

‘It’s beautiful,’ said Graham. ‘I don’t trust it.’

They all looked at him.

He shrugged. ‘Well, it’s obvious, innit? The Doc said there was a booby trap in the book. If we set off the booby trap and ended up here, it’s not going to be Disneyland, is it? And looking like this? All the colours and everything? Yeah, it’s trying to lure us in. Like a Venus flytrap. I vote we leave right now. Who’s with me?’