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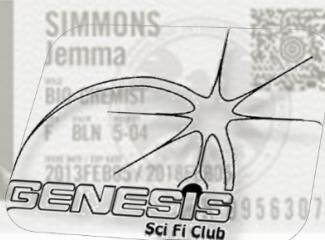
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THE
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2013FEB05 / 2018FEB05



GENESIS
Sci Fi Club

The Magazine Of Genesis Sci-Fi
October 2013



**AGENTS OF
S.H.I.E.L.D.**



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October 2013

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KEEP CALM
AND
GO TO ARMADACON

GOLD CHANNEL

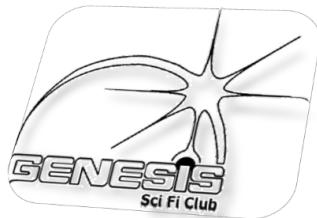
Hello, one and all, welcome back to Genesis.

First of all, I would like to thank Paul Belsey for last month's programme, and it was so good to see some old favourites not seen in a long time. This month sees the return of Matt as programme editor and quiz master. Now, this month I have already seen a copy of the programme; unlike last month; and know it is up to Matt's usual high standard of illustrious innovation (*We're also showing the original Star Trek episode Spock's Brain - Ed*). The choices for the film vote are somewhat different, but what else would we expect from Matt?

Now I am "semi" retired, and by this I mean working longer and harder than I ever did when in full time employment, it was with some surprise that I looked at my calendar and noticed it was already October! Now of course this is probably not news to you, but I thought 'oh my goodness, where has the year gone to?' The drawing of the evenings, the fact that I am now going to work in the dark (often returning in the dark as well) could, of course been construed as clues, but as I have often remarked before I can sometimes be 'not the sharpest tool in the box'. Now, dear reader, I know by now you have either given up on this Gold Channel (not looking at you Rob honest), or your wondering where is my life heading , or even where the Futurama is this tale going? Well, so am I! I began this ramble and lost the plot myself. Oh yes now I remember, October, season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, of hunters moon and time to consider another holiday. Also it is heading towards Armadacon, and my annual trip down to Plymouth to this small book-heavy sci-fi convention.

At said Con, there will be a first showing of a small, little (*in more ways than one - Ed*) filmette. Something that a few of us have thrown together involving knitted puppets, and a *really* bad pun, this is I believe taking the place of the usual reading of a *Janet & John* skit which I have had the pleasure (*you didn't use the word 'pleasure' last year! - Ed*) of participating in for the last two years. A great honour for which I am truly grateful, and if you ever get the chance to see the recordings of this show you will understand why. (If you were here at the start of today's meeting you would have got a chance to see last year's recording as I have used it for the sound check). (*Thanks for the warning! - Ed*)

Prus (Chairperkin)



Club Events For Your Diary



ArmadaCon 25–15th, 16th and 17th November 2013 at Future Inn, Plymouth.

This is **ArmadaCon's** 25th Anniversary year; guests already announced include Doctor Who make-up supervisor / guru Neil Gorton, and the weekend will also feature the filming of the ArmadaCon 25th anniversary short film.

Find out more at www.armadacon.org.

Cinema Trips

Films being released over the next few months which we may be going to see...

- > *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire (November)*
- > *The Hobbit: Part 2—The Desolation Of Smaug (13th December)*

MEETING DATES UP TO END OF 2014

List of Pub Meeting, Book Club and Club Meetings elsewhere in the magazine.

Please remember that our next pub meeting is in THREE WEEKS time, on Sunday 10th November, there will then be a gap of five weeks until the following meeting, on Sunday 15th December.

Pub night dates are adjusted as appropriate.

The four-weekly interval between Book Club meetings is unaffected.



Post-Christmas Meal Friday 27th December, Longbridge Mill, Sherfield On Loddon.

Our traditional post-Christmas gathering, Table will be booked for 1.00 pm, food to be ordered at 2.00.

We're moving the pub meetings— as from the next pub night, on Thursday 31st October, we'll be back at The Swan in Sherbourne St John.

The Genesis Book Club is at South Ham Library, Basingstoke, on the dates listed, from 10.00 am to mid-day.

The club's on-line discussion board is open for business; you'll find it at our website, www.genesis-sf.org.uk

NEWS

CONFIRMED YETI SIGHTING IN NIGERIA!

Nine missing episodes of 1960s *Doctor Who* have been found at a TV station in Nigeria, including most of the classic story *The Web of Fear*.

The black and white story sees Patrick Troughton's second Doctor battle robot yeti in the London Underground. Also recovered is a complete version of Troughton's six-part story *The Enemy of the World*. It represents largest haul of missing episodes recovered in the last three decades.

"It's thrilling," said actor and writer Mark Gatiss, "Every single avenue seemed to have been exhausted, every now and then something turns up - but to have two virtually complete stories out of the blue is absolutely incredible."

The BBC destroyed many of the sci-fi drama's original transmission tapes in the 1960s and 1970s. However, many episodes were transferred on to film for sale to foreign broadcasters. It is often these prints found in other countries that are the source of retrieved episodes. In this case, 11 *Doctor Who* episodes were discovered, nine of which were missing, in the Nigerian city of Jos.

The find was made by Philip Morris, director of a company called Television International Enterprises Archive. He has been described as "the Indiana Jones of the film world". Mr Morris said: "The tapes had been left gathering dust in a storeroom at a television relay station in Nigeria. I remember wiping the dust off the masking tape on the canisters and my heart missed a beat as I saw the words, *Doctor Who*. When I read the story code I realised I'd found something pretty special." He said it had been a "lucky" find given the high temperatures in the African country. "Fortunately they had been kept in the optimum condition."

Only episode three of *The Enemy of the World* already existed in the BBC archive. The Nigerian discovery of episodes one, two, four, five and six complete the story. Episode one of fan favourite *The Web of Fear* existed, with the rest thought lost forever. Now episodes two, four, five and six have been recovered.

Episode three is still missing, but has been reconstructed from stills to enable restored versions of both stories to be made available for sale via download. The latest find means that the number of missing episodes of *Doctor Who* has dropped from 106 to 97.

One episode from each story - both last seen in 1968 - were shown at the special event in London on Thursday 10th October by BBC Worldwide, the

BBC's commercial arm. Among the guests were actors Frazer Hines and Deborah Watling, who played Troughton's Tardis companions Jamie McCrimmon and Victoria Waterfield, who said they were "thrilled" with the discovery.

Episode one of *The Enemy of the World* is a James Bond-style thriller

complete with an exploding helicopter, a hovercraft, gun-toting henchmen and a foreign-accented villain, Salamander (also played by Troughton).

The story opens with the TARDIS arriving on an Australian beach where the Doctor strips to his long johns and goes for a dip in the sea. *The Web of Fear* is a claustrophobic tale that sees the Doctor battle his old foe, the Great Intelligence, and the yeti in the tunnels of the London tube system.

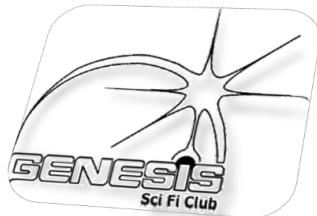
"It's the quintessential Doctor Who story," said Gatiss. "It has the return of the Abominable Snowmen in an iconic location." He said it showed Troughton "at the height of his powers".

Frazer Hines recalled that the underground station sets had been so realistic that London Transport accused the BBC of filming at a tube station in secret. The story also featured an appearance by Deborah Watling's real-life father Jack, reprising his role as Professor Travers.

Her only other complete story in the archive had been *The Tomb of the Cybermen*, all four instalments of which were discovered in Hong Kong in 1991.

Source: bbc.co.uk





MEETING DATES UP TO END OF 2014

	Pub	Book Club	Main meeting	Program/ Quiz
October / November	31st October	9th November	10th November IN 3 WEEKS	The Committee
December	5th December	7th December	5 WEEK GAP 15th December	Robert Green
December / January	27th December (Post Christmas Meal, Longbridge Mill)	4th January	12th January	Louise Stanley
January/February	30th January	1st February	9th February (AGM)	Paul Russell
February/March	27th February	1st March	9th March	Robert Green
March/April	27th March	29th March	6th April	David & Susan Offen-James
April/May	24th April	26th April	4th May	Paul Belsey
May/June	22nd May	24th May	1st June	Steve Brice
June	19th June	21st June	29th June	Matthew Greet
July	17th July	19th July	27th July	Paul Russell
August	14th August	16th August	24th August	Jeremy Ogden
September	11th September	13th September	21st September	Peter Taylor
October	9th October	11th October	19th October	Rob Green
October/November	30th October	1st November	9th November	Antony Walls
December	4th December	6th December	14th December	The Committee

We're moving the pub meetings— as from the next pub night, on Thursday 31st October, we'll be back at The Swan in Sherbourne St John.

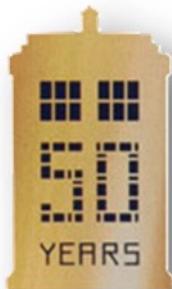
The Genesis Book Club is at South Ham Library, Basingstoke, on the dates listed, from 10.00 am to mid-day.

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

(YOU WON'T SEE THIS ANYWHERE ELSE!)

Here it is, a picture from the set of a Doctor Who 50th Anniversary Special, which has not been published anywhere else.

For 'contractual reasons' (and to avoid spoilers) part of the picture has been obscured.



STEAMPUNKIEPIE

HOUSTON SPACE SHUTTLE RE-NAMED INDEPENDENCE

Houston's space shuttle mock-up has been re-named *Independence*, its new name symbolizing the spirit of Texas.

Officials at Space Center Houston, the visitor centre for NASA's Johnson Space Centre, revealed the name — the winning entry from its recent "Name the Shuttle" state-wide contest—during a public christening ceremony on 5th October.

Richard Allen, the president of Space Center Houston, said. "It was a tough decision, but we ultimately chose a name that celebrates the Lone Star State and highlights its distinct contribution to America's space shuttle program." Richard Allen, the president of Space Center Houston, said.

The "Name the Shuttle" competition was open to all Texas residents of adult age, between July and September. Entrants were asked to submit names that captured the state's qualities of "optimism and can-do attitude." Over 10,000 entries were received.

Independence was unveiled on Saturday 5 October printed on the body of the 123-foot-long (37 meters), high-fidelity shuttle replica, which since June 2012 has been exhibited outside at Space Center Houston. The newly-named space shuttle *Independence* will eventually sit atop NASA's original 747 Shuttle Carrier Aircraft jumbo jet, as part of a \$12 million, six-story attraction currently under development. The mock-up, which was called *Explorer* for the 18 years it was on exhibit at NASA's Kennedy Space Centre Visitor Complex in Florida, was stripped of its name before being barged to Houston last year.

Tim Judd of Kingwood, Texas, who was the first to submit *Independence* for the replica's new name, participated in Saturday's unveiling ceremony. Judd, who is 29, will have his own name and hometown incorporated into the exhibit

once construction is completed in 2015.

"When I first heard about the 'Name the Shuttle' contest, *Independence* was the first thought to pop into my mind," Judd said. "This concept is important, not just to the state of Texas, but to all Americans. We enjoy freedom every day, striving for a greater sense of independence," Judd added. "It was that exact mindset that brought settlers here in the first place and what drives explorers into space today."

This isn't the first time *Independence* has been raised as an appropriate name for a space shuttle. The name was the second highest ranked (after *Constitution*) among the 15 suggested for the first shuttles in 1978. The names were ranked based on their "relationship to the heritage of the United States, or to the shuttle's mission of exploration."



Nearly two decades later *Independence* was the name of one of the shuttles featured in the film *Armageddon*, the other being *Freedom*. Ultimately, the fleet of shuttles were named after sea vessels that were used in world exploration. A prototype, originally called *Constitution*, was renamed *Enterprise* after fans *Star Trek* staged a successful letter-writing campaign.

For winning the "Name the Shuttle" contest, Judd received a multi-day trip for four to Houston, including a VIP tour of the visitor center and a "behind-the-scenes experience" at the Johnson Space Center.

The state-of-the-art space shuttle *Independence* attraction will give guests the unique opportunity to climb aboard the Shuttle Carrier Aircraft, a modified Boeing 747 airliner that was used to ferry the orbiters across the country. Visitors will also be able to explore the inside of the space shuttle mock-up while it is mounted atop the SCA.

Source: www.space.com

Which incarnation fought in the Time War? What was The Cartmel Master-Plan? Who are Big Finish Productions, and how have they influenced the series since it came back in 2005? Some, more or fewer of these questions may be answered in.....

DOCTOR WHO

Who Are Big Finish Productions, What Influence Has Their Work Had On The Revived Doctor Who, And Where Have They Over-Lapped?

As you know, I've been a long-time supporter of Big Finish Productions, back to their first forays into officially, BBC licensed Doctor Who audio drama in 1999, the first new Doctor Who in a non-printed media for over three years. I think they deserve a lot of credit for maintaining the interest in the series in the years between the TV Movie and the announcement in September 2003 that the series was returning to TV, credit which sometimes I don't think they get, but which fortunately they have received from the people who were instrumental in bringing the Doctor back to TV, not least, Russell T Davies.

I'm not going to relay the entire history of Big Finish Productions, and how they came to be BBC licence holders for producing new Doctor Who on audio, or indeed the surprisingly rich history of Doctor Who in the audio format which already existed prior to BFP obtaining their licence, because that is a an article in itself (and indeed has been in the past), but the basic facts are that many of those involved with BFP at the start were also instrumental in producing the Audio Visuals, a series of unlicensed fan-made *Doctor Who* audio plays, released on audio cassette. BFP's first output were audio dramas starring the character of Bernice Summerfield, the character created by Paul Cornell, from the Virgin *New Adventures* novels, played by the very talented and versatile Lisa Bowerman, and released their first Doctor Who story, *The Sirens of Time*, on CD and cassette (remember them?) in July 1999. The story starred Peter Davison, Colin Baker and Sylvester McCoy as their respective Doctors, solo in one episode each, before

they came together in the final episode to resolve the situation. The three actors all jumped at the chance to reprise their TV roles and have all been Big Finish stalwarts from the start. The story was generally well received, and soon Big Finish embarked on a schedule of releasing a story every two months, which soon became monthly, starring one of their three lead actors and (usually) a TV companion played by an original cast member, and generally written by well-known BBC Book range authors or Virgin Adventures writers.

Paul McGann recorded his first stories in 2000, and they were released in 2001. McGann's involvement was a real coup, as he returned to the role for the first time since the 1996 TV movie. Tom Baker declined numerous invitations to record stories for Big Finish but finally agreed in 2010 to record a series of stories as the Fourth Doctor. Big Finish have released Doctor Who and related stories in various formats in numerous ranges over the years and also have produced audio drama based on many other SF TV series such as *The Tomorrow People*, *Stargate SG-1*, *Dark Shadows*, *Sapphire and Steel*, and recently, *Blake's 7*, boldly going where the long-time rights holders for Terry Nation's space opera have often failed to go, and actually producing something *Blake's 7* related. This is all well and good, I hear you say, but what have Big Finish actually done to influence Doctor Who since it was announced it was coming back in 2003, and since it actually reappeared on screen in 2005?

Well, firstly, at a basic level, several writers

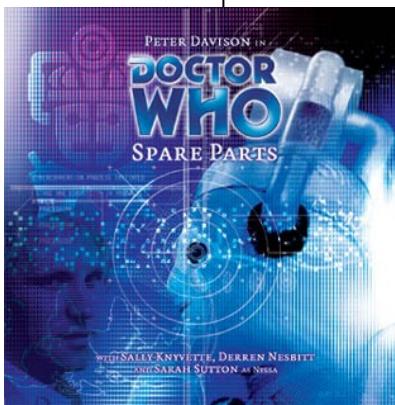


who have worked on *Doctor Who* for BFP have gone on to write successfully and repeatedly for the TV series - Rob Shearman (more of him later), Paul Cornell, Mark Gatiss, Gareth Roberts, and, in a round-about way, Marc Platt. In addition, Alan Barnes has also written the animated story *The Infinite Quest*, shown on Children's BBC. In the same way as many *New Adventures* writers crossed over to Big Finish due to their knowledge and love of *Doctor Who* when Big Finish started, so the first series of the revived *Doctor Who* in 2005 featured episodes written by writers who had worked with Big Finish (and indeed on the *New Adventures* novels - Russell T Davies himself, as well as Mark Gattis were no stranger to the novel range.

Also, at various times a number of guest actors have starred in both Big Finish stories and TV stories, although that has more to do with the practicalities of hiring lots of actors than any conscious crossover of acting talent. Actors such as Danny Webb, Colin Spauld, Rupert Vansittart and of course the ever popular Bernard Cribbins have done both, and then of course there's the multi-talented Nicholas Briggs, who with his trusty ring modulator has long been established as the Voice of the Daleks (and many others) for Big Finish, and is now the well-established TV voice as well. Briggs has been the executive producer of the main Big Finish range since 2006 when his predecessor, Gary Russell left the comfort of Big Finish Towers and headed to Cardiff to become a script editor for the TV series, and liaised closely with Big Finish on upcoming story-lines over the series in which he was involved in order to avoid potential clashes and conflicting story-lines.

Another key member of the Big Finish production team, Barnaby Edwards, who in his time has written, acted in, directed, script edited, produced and been casting director for various Big Finish series and stories also has acted as a Dalek operator on the TV series.

So the crossover of personnel has been quite extensive, but what about Big Finish's influence on actual stories for the TV series? Well, very early on in the development of the revived TV series, wrangling with the Terry Nation estate over the use of the Daleks in the new series hit the headlines, and when the dust had settled, and it became obvious the Daleks would be back, it came to light that one episode was going to be an adaptation, albeit a very loose one, of a Big Finish story. The episode in question was of course, *Dalek*, and the Big Finish story was the brilliant *Jubilee*, by the aforementioned Rob Shearman, and this episode would go on to be one of the most popular of the 2005 series, as it re-established the Daleks into viewer's consciousness and made them scary for a new generation of viewers. The surviving strands of Shearman's original story was the empathy and sympathy the Doctor's companion showed for a stranded, incarcerated Dalek, and one particular scene where the Doctor confronts the Dalek in its cell, which for the large part of the exchange is word-for-word, almost identical to the equivalent scene in *Jubilee*, which for the record, featured Colin Baker as the Sixth Doctor, and Maggie Stables as his companion, Evelyn Smyth. Inexplicably, Shearman has yet to return to the TV series and seems to have drifted away from *Doctor Who* - another Sheaman-written episode is certainly near the top of my wish list for the Twelfth Doctor era which is nearly upon us.



The following year, with David Tennant now firmly established as the Tenth Doctor, another 'Big Bad' from the past made a comeback. The Cybermen were back on TV, re-designed and re-imagined, but this wasn't the race of Cybermen we'd seen before. Instead of originating on Earth's twin planet, Mondas, as they had in the 'Classic' series, these Cybermen came from an alternative Earth, giving the TV series the chance to tell the Cybermen's origin story, which anyone unfamiliar with Big Finish would probably not know was a story previously told a few years before in the audio story *Spare Parts* written by Marc Platt (of *Ghost Light* fame). The story, spread over two episodes (*Rise of the Cybermen* and *The Age of Steel*) was actually very different, in terms of setting, theme and tone and characters, not to mention a different writer (Tom MacRae), but it's no secret that *Spare Parts*, which Russell T Davies once described as "some of the finest drama ever written for any genre, in any medium, anywhere" was a heavy influence and inspiration. Marc Platt received a fee, and a mention on the credits ("With Thanks To Marc Platt") and there a couple of nods in the dialogue to Platt's story (such as Mickey Smith referring to himself as a 'spare part' and a scene with a dying Cyberman with its emotion inhibitor switched off. MacRae said of the story "My story isn't the samebecause once we started talking, the whole thing developed in a very different direction. But as Russell says, we wouldn't have started this whole line of thinking if he hadn't heard *Spare Parts* in the first place."

The next TV story to be based on a *Doctor Who* story from another media appeared in the 2007 series, but this wasn't based upon a Big Finish story. But the episodes *Human Nature* and *The Family of Blood*



were written by Paul Cornell, who of course had frequently for Big Finish in its earlier years, having created the character of Bernice Summerfield, around which Big Finish's early forays into audio drama was centered, for the *New Adventures* novels, and later for its *Doctor Who* range, so it gets an honorable mention here. The basis of this two-part story was the *New Adventures* novel with which the first episode shared its name, one of the most popular and well-received novels of the *New Adventures* series. The TV story was also highly acclaimed, and indeed award winning. Both share a lot of common themes and events when compared. In the novel, the Seventh Doctor seeks to experience what it is like to be a human, and uses a device from a family of Aubertide shapeshifters to do so, unaware that the Aubertide are looking to acquire the Doctor's Time Lord essence that would be stored in the device after its use. The Doctor leaves his current companion, Bernice Summerfield posing as his niece, with a similar list of instructions of things to prevent him from doing as featured in the TV story, also omitting what to do if he should fall in love.

From here, many of the characters and plot elements are similar. In particular, both novel and episode occur near the Great War in a small English village that is home to a school for boys. Joan Redford is the object of Smith's attention in both works, and Timothy (with the surname Dean in the novel) is the schoolboy that finds the object containing the Time Lord essence (a cricket ball in the novel, a fob watch in the episode), and experiences some mannerisms of the Time Lord personality. Smith writes a book that draws from his Time Lord personality - in the novel, this is a children's story borrowing terms like "Gallifrey" and "TARDIS", while this manifests as the "Journal of Impossible

"Things" within the episode. The Aubertide, like the Family of Blood, take on forms of the villagers, including a little girl with a balloon, though in the novel, the balloon is a sentient and deadly creature controlled by the Aubertide. Both resolve with Smith learning about the Doctor, and forced to take the Doctor's persona to end the threat to the village, and though as the Doctor tries to bond with Joan, she turns him away, as it was the Smith persona that she fell in love with.

The next time we see a Big Finish influence is a somewhat veiled one. The 2005 Christmas special was titled *The Next Doctor*, and created huge speculation that David Tennant's successor (Tennant having announced a couple of months earlier that he was leaving the show after the 'Gap Year' of specials in 2009) would be putting in an early appearance, and that it would be guest star David Morrissey. After the pre-title sequence was previewed on children In Need in November 2008 showing an 'impostor' Doctor, there was more speculation that the story would be heavily influenced or based upon the Big Finish story *The One Doctor*, released in 2001, written by

Gareth Roberts and Clayton Hickman, in which the Doctor (Colin Baker) and Mel encounter an 'impostor' Doctor (Christopher Biggins) and his companion. However, with the writer's credit going to Russell T Davies, despite Roberts having written for the TV series before, this theory didn't really stand up, and what we ended up with was much more similar to 2001's *Minuet In Hell*, the final story in the first season of Eighth Doctor audios, which itself was the story with perhaps the most

contentious and troubled journeys from script to release in the history of *Doctor Who*, due to 'creative differences' between the story's writer, Alan W Lear, and producer Gary Russell. The troubled life of *Minuet In Hell* would constitute an entirely different story. In *Minuet In Hell*, the Doctor's consciousness appears to have been swapped with a British journalist called Gideon Crane (played by Nicholas Briggs), in a strikingly similar plot line to the way in which Jackson Lake thinks he is the Doctor in the TV story, although no mind swapping, as such actually occurs. The TV episode title turns out, inevitably to be something of a red herring, and there is no official

link between the two stories, neither Lear, who wrote the original version of the story for the pre-Big Finish Audio Visuals fan-made stories of the 1980s, nor Russell got any writing credit and there is no similarity widely cited or acknowledged. In fact,

tragically, Lear, who had long suffered from chronic fatigue syndrome, passed away the day after *The Next Doctor* aired. I wonder if he saw it?



This was the last instance of any influence, actual or perceived, from Big Finish on the TV series, although Big Finish are still going strong with a large range of Doctor Who and related releases. I would very much like to see a return at some point to some of the writers who shaped the TV revival's early couple of years and who helped Big Finish keep the flame of interest in Doctor Who alive in the wilderness years of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Jeremy Ogden

FRESH PERSPECTIVES

Star Trek V: The Final Frontier (It's Not THAT Bad, Honest!)

Spock: Please, Captain. Not in front of the Klingons.

This is the latest in the series looking at classic film franchises and examining them with a fresh pair of eyes. We're up to the fifth *Trek* film (even though I didn't start writing the reviews until *ST IV*), and this is the one that gets all the dark mutterings, particularly about lack of budget and writers' strikes and a certain professional ...rivalry between William Shatner and James Doohan, culminating in Scotty being made to look a right fool. *Galaxy Quest* satirised the lack of a rock monster attacking Kirk in the end scenes, but in a sense paid homage to the film, which in my opinion is a profound exploration of the human condition ...IN SPAAAAACE :D.

Not to be too clichéd, it's a film of two halves. The first half is space fantasy, looking like a desperate need to attract *Star Wars* fans with the desert planet of Nimbus III and a 'wretched hive of scum and villainy' known as Paradise City, where even the Federation consul has gone native with apathy and exhaustion.

The second half centres around the *Enterprise*'s odyssey to the centre of the galaxy (which I'll excoriate in a moment), and the Vulcan Sybok's takeover of the *Enterprise* and journey to the Promised Land of Sha-Ka-Ree at the centre of the Galaxy. (OK, I'll excoriate the bad science and bad continuity now. *Star Trek* Galactic geography would make the Great Barrier unreachable in the time it took the all new *Enterprise*, NCC 1701A (which I might add, was suffering from a few 'teething troubles') to apparently get to its destination. I personally thought it was a metaphor for Heaven and Sybok a suicide

bomber trying to get his 72 virgins in attempting the impossible, so let it pass. But the second bit of bad science in it is...a planet at the centre of the Galaxy. Think about it. No. Just no).



The premise is, unlike the science, watertight. The execution is gorgeous, considering the limitations on the budget. Sybok is a convincing villain, pulling out all the stops to get on board the *Enterprise*, and actually saving them from the Klingons, still with a grudge against Kirk from a couple of films ago, only to end up with the crew at his mercy. Somehow, he manages to get Sulu and Uhura hypnotised and overcomes Chekov by some method we

don't know quite yet. Kirk, Spock and Bones are flung into the brig. Cue banter between Kirk and Spock, who couldn't kill Sybok because they miraculously share the same father (despite twenty years of not knowing this, another convenient ass-pull for the writers, and I see how it could infuriate some fans) and an explosive entrance from Scotty, who has escaped Sybok's slow takeover of the ship.

Let's stop there and go back a bit. Firstly, the dusty desert of Nimbus III are balanced well with the stunning backdrop of Yosemite, where Kirk and co are relaxing on 'shore' leave. The tone of the film is set well by their discussion of the theme of *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*, an odd choice of song to revolve a plot around, but the more we get into the film, the more the idea of rationality versus irrationality takes over. This film, despite its reputation, was beloved of Sheldon Cooper, him off *The Big Bang Theory* who

makes Spock look positively warm and empathetic and everyone laughed at him for saying so. It seems superficially obvious why – Sybok's main tool of manipulation is of the emotions and inner pain of the Enterprise's crew. It could be seen as antipathetic to the notion of human warmth and the need for the assertion of control over the instinct and emotion within us – a very Sheldonian notion. However, the message is actually embodied by Kirk: that inner pain is not a source of shame to be exploited – Sybok is turning uncomfortable memories against the crew, even targeting Spock's soft half-human underbelly – but an integral part of one's identity. Confront this, and like Kirk you gain mastery over the self, such that other people cannot wield it as a weapon against you.

This is a message that runs deeper than keeping a cold, unemotional front up as a shield against the world. I've always felt that some fandoms don't quite get that message – one example being the brouhaha over a *My Little Pony* episode (*Feeling Pinkie Keen* from Season One, if you wish to look it up) which seemed to tick skeptics off for not being able to make leaps of faith reverberates around fandom to this day. Many disgusted bronies feared allowing their kids to watch that episode, lest they fall into an anti-logical trap designed for them by people of an anti-intellectual bent. At the other end of the continuum, It's like the evangelicals who fulminate against Harry Potter because he uses magic, but don't see J K Rowling's real message about the nature of good fighting evil. Both sides, etc. But I think that *MLP* episode had a similar message to this one: that not everything is a battle solely between reason and unreason. Sometimes those who are too dependent on reason forget the inner senses and refuse to put their trust in things they can't immediately see. Friendship and family ties

are some of those magical properties where a leap of faith is sometimes required to create a bond between two people. After all, Spock is the one who refuses to kill Sybok, something Kirk might not have hesitated to do. He, the stony-faced high priest of Reason, takes a leap of faith that Sybok will not destroy them all.



In confronting what is really there on Sha-Ka-Ree, Sybok is mistaken. The arch-manipulator has been hoisted by his own petard; he was manipulated himself by an entity he thought to be God, but turned out to be an evil entity that needed a starship to escape his prison. Just as Kirk looks like he is ridiculing and rejecting God, however, the end of the film sends the message home that God isn't 'out there'. He's 'in here'. Warning people about pursuing false Gods – whether in the pursuit of power, money or other selfish concerns – is a message Christianity shares with *Trek* philosophy and other humanist doctrines.



I think I can safely give this one 5 Plutos out of 5. As you know from previous reviews, I have a low threshold for verisimilitude, and I don't think I could find a single major fault with the film. It was engaging from the start, the last battle which Jeremy thought all a bit simple for the Klingon ship to destroy the evil entity wasn't really that bad (to prolong it at that point would have cost money the crew didn't have, and actually might have made the film a bit too long), and the comic bookends have some genuine warmth and emotion in them rather than just being a bit silly and trite.

Watch this film again. I dare you.

Louise Stanley

"I'm a nervous wreck! If I'm not careful, I'll end up talking to myself...."

UK EXCLUSIVE!

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ALE JE VZPOMENOUT, VY
VZPOMENOUT, VY MOC
NEODOLAT...

KAPITÁNS
HELIERU —

— PRVÝ DŮSTOJNUK
BIGGS DARKLIGHTER
RE HLAŠÍ DO SLUŽBY
PANU!



* That's because it's in Czech!

STOP THE MOVIE! EXPLOSIONS DON'T GO IN SPACE!



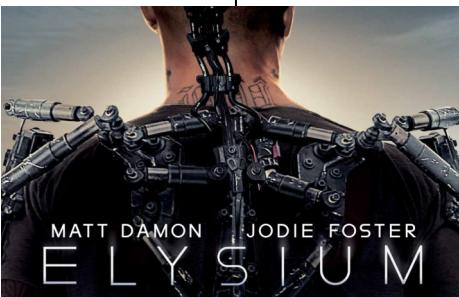
Sci-Fi Action Thriller Elysium Gets 'Greet-ed'

Elysium is a film about a terminally ill convict, played by Matt Damon, who wants to steal miraculous, medical treatment on the space station Elysium, a colony reserved for the ultra-rich, rather than die on the overpopulated, Third world-like nation that Earth has become. The political message is so thick, it even smothers the plot holes. But that doesn't stop them from annoying me.

An important plot point is every household in the prestigious Elysium has a medical bed that can perform medical miracles, including total facial reconstruction and curing leukaemia, but such beds don't exist on Earth. Thus, people will pay a high-tech criminal gang to transport them in unauthorised shuttles, land inside Elysium, break into the nearest house and use its medical bed as a last ditch cure. These beds refuse to work for non-Elysium citizens unless they have a marking on their arm, supplied by the criminal gang, which is linked to the owner's DNA. As this means the DNA is scanned, to prevent future incursions, the bed could ignore the markings, consult the Elysium computer and refuse non-citizens. As the criminal gang cannot access the Elysium computer, future trips would be pointless. If the gang is getting access, even as an inside job, plugging the security leak would also stop future incursions.

Also, it seems the station's interior is exposed to space, even though it takes several hundred miles of a gravity well to contain an atmosphere. Or they're using a *Star Trek* style techno-babble in a semi-hard sci fi setting. *Elysium*'s Secretary of Defence, Jessica Delacourt, played by Jodie Foster, regards such intruders as threats and orders the unauthorised shuttles to be destroyed using

missiles launched from a shoulder-mounted rocket launcher on the Earth's surface, not from the station itself. This is needlessly expensive as, compared to station-based defences, such missiles must suffer atmospheric drag, escape the Earth's gravity, catch up with its target and are limited in fuel capacity to make them man-portable. As they're only fired after the station's airspace is breached, they have to catch up really fast. That it takes the space shuttle eight minutes to reach orbit reminds us of the timescales involved. Of course, this creates 'plausible deniability' so *Elysium*'s residents can tell themselves they don't murder unarmed people looking for medical help. Except it requires believing another criminal gang can access military grade munitions and is expending them merely to suppress a rival's operations, which is conveniently defending *Elysium*. If people are willing to believe that, just brand the intruders as terrorists or infectious and use more effective station-based defences.



The aforementioned convict, Max Da Costa, has given up crime and works on an assembly line in Los Angeles owned by Armadyne Corp., the same company that built *Elysium*. One of Max's tasks is to load partially assembled robots in a room to be irradiated. The purpose of a process that destroys biological contaminants, but not dust or chemical contaminants, on devices unaffected by biological contaminants is not explained. As Max works, the door to the radiation room is jammed by a incorrectly loaded palette, halting its operation and, thus, the assembly line. Max's foreman orders him to enter the room and clear the blockage. As Max does so, unsurprisingly, the door closes, trapping him, the operation resumes and Max suffers a massive radiation dose.

What a dumb ass. Max already knew the dangers, hence his reluctance to clear the blockage. He could have used a broom whilst standing in the door entrance or used something heavy to stop the door closing. The radiation process should also have the safety features of cancelling if the door doesn't close, a button that confirms the operator is outside isn't pressed, or an emergency stop inside the room is pressed. I suppose lack of safety features is part of the film's political message except a machine display shows it detects Max and automatically halts but only during the radiation dose, not before. There is one safety feature and it's useless. This is unlikely anyway as ionising radiation usually plays havoc with electronic sensors.

The radiation poisoning means Max only has five days left to live and with plot device drugs that allow him to be active the whole time, he is discharged from work. As the medical beds on Elysium are Max's only hope of survival, he agrees to work for his old gang and steal valuable access codes from the brain of Armadyne Corp's CEO as payment for passage. However, as Max's team brings down the CEO's shuttle and steals the access codes, Jessica dispatches agents to defend an important citizen. Only Max escapes the counter-attack, meets the gang leader and demands passage to Elysium but is denied because navigation in Los Angeles airspace * is being jammed. Navigation signals are not needed when flying towards a large and highly visible structure in space. Much like a car driver can still find London without signs or a sat nav.

The stolen codes, transferred to Max's brain, actually grant access to Elysium's security system and Max realises he can trade this with the Elysium agents for passage to Elysium and a cure, with a live grenade acting as a dead man's switch to ensure compliance. The gang leader secretly follows in a second shuttle, which, despite their concern over intruders, Elysium fails to notice or stop. A fight breaks out on the first shuttle, the grenade goes off and the shuttle crashes into a house in Elysium. This gives Jessica the excuse to declare a state of war and ignore orders from her President. A state of war that does not need a hostile nation to be identified, can be triggered by one shuttle

controlled by Elysium's own agents crashing into one house and the President can be pushed aside. It's as if the creator of that political system wanted military coups.

Max is arrested and his stolen security codes discovered. Jessica plans to use this to take over Elysium but is murdered by one of her deranged agents. Murder and mayhem ensues until the agent is defeated, the gang leader finds Max and uses his security codes hack the Elysium computer, making everyone on Earth an Elysium citizen. As the President enters to restore order, his security droids refuse his order to arrest the intruders because they're now citizens of Elysium. No mention is made of any other security droids with legal authority to arrest citizens. So, no one in this capitalist haven could be arrested for murder, fraud or drunken fighting. That's so stupid, I can't even criticise it.

One consequence of the hacked computer is that it dispatches shuttles containing the miraculous, medical beds to Earth. So, Earth-bound people are prepared to purchase shuttle rides and risk being killed to access these beds, there are spare beds, transportation and robotic staff, and no one noticed the business opportunity? Even though the film shows at least one business executive. You could argue that exasperates Earth's overpopulation problem but callous businessmen wouldn't let that stand in the way of profit. Also, the beds are dispatched because the computer believes everyone on Earth is an Elysium citizen, not that it received any payment. A service delivered because of need, not payment. So, despite the anti-capitalist vibe throughout the film, the evil, callous and uncaring Elysium were socialists the whole time. Wait, what?

MATTHEW GREET

* *Airspace is stated in the film but is the Earth's atmosphere claimed as sovereign territory and, therefore, doesn't exist for space stations. As all space-faring nations have agreed, by treaty, not to claim sovereign territory in space, no space equivalent term currently exists.*



AFTER SHE EXPLAINED...

PERHAPS IF YOU
WERE ABLE TO HEAL
CHISLENKO OF HIS AFFLCTION?

HE'S GOT TO
ACKNOWLEDGE
IT HIMSELF.

IT'S CAUSED BY
GUILT.

HE BELIEVES HE'S DOING
RIGHT BY PEOPLE

BUT HE'S A DOCTOR -

HE KNOWS HE HURT
PEOPLE - SENT PEOPLE
TO THEIR DEATHS... IN THE
NAME OF THE EMPIRE...

... HIS WIFE LYUBOV WAS ABUSED
BY THE LENKS DURING
THE FIRST WAR AND HE BEARS
US ILL-WILL DESPITE NO OBJECTIONS TO US IN PRINCIPLE.

THERE IS A LOT
GOING ON IN HIS
SOUL.

I AM NOT SOME
GOOD LUCK FAIRY SENT
TO TAKE HIS PAIN
AWAY.

COME BACK
TO BED...



BUT I COULD BE RIGHT?

PERHAPS. YOUR GUILT STILL
PLAGUES YOU. IF ANYONE
CAN PERSUADE DR. CHISLENKO
TO ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE HEALED -

IS SHE STILL NOT
WITHDRAWING THOSE
RIDICULOUS ACCUSATIONS
ARVID?

IT'S LYUBOV NIKOLAYEVNA HERSELF.

by Louise Stanley