From the recordings of Dr. Grace Holloway's Laptop - June 12th 2009: 5:05pm

I hate radio stations. They're always dull and boring things. Lies chocked out of the announcer's mouth. But still... my name's Doctor Grace Holloway – and this is the story of my life. Ten years ago – I met a man: the most amazing man in the universe. He saved my life and offered me an escape from Earth. But I turned it down. I carried on. And now: I lie in my bed, alone. So I'm speaking to you. If anyone listens... this is the story about my...

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The laptop fell to the floor with an almighty "SMASH." Static appeared around her – she was trapped. A white light burned brightly in the sky. Voices sang:

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound!

Our race has gained a friend!

We once were lost, but now are found:

The DOCTOR's life must... FND!"

And then... darkness. With the slightest hint of light...

Eight minutes later.

"And in conclusion - the battle against AIDS will be won as soon as we obtain the funding for the injection. And being that we have both tested, and made the drug - why wait Mr President? It can save lives!" I said.

"Well then Mrs Holloway - why would I say no?" the President responded. My team and I were thrilled! We'd just obtained another PERFECT ending to a horrible disease. So back to my life recording. Today I saved the world. Again. My

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husband is taking me out for dinner too! Well after all - what more would a married mother with two beautiful daughters, who also happens to be the greatest Doctor in the world, want? Dinner over the next Nobel Prize success. This is all so PERFECT! I'm thrilled and overjoyed. But still - lets not get too excited: life goes on, and everything is PERFECT...

The static re-arose. But only briefly. Grace failed to notice this time. Because why would you, in a world of perfection?

June 15th 2009 - 5:06am

A few days ago I met a man. A strange man. A funny man. A dark man. I was shown the truth. And now I'm dying. I don't know where I am or what I am doing.

But I know this will save lies. He's here now. Holding my hand - comforting me in this hour. I never wanted this - but at 6:00am I will die: and so will this world.

"For record Grace," the man stated, "tell them what happened."
"Why?" I asked.

"Because without it I can't convince you that you are stronger than you think."

"Okay," I told him. This is the story of what happened in the world that never was. A world of perfection – and a world full of lies. The story begins June 13th 2009 - outside the *Good Morning America* studio...

"Mrs Holloway!" my security guard shouted, "we need to move Ma'am!" He called over the bustling cheers as I left the studio. It was unreal. They were chanting things, amazing things, like I was a miracle worker (well, I kind of am); and I was pushed into the car and me and my guards drove off.

"That was a marvellous speech ma'am," the guard said, wearing a slick black suit with dark sunglasses."

"It was nothing. And please stop calling me "ma'am"!"

"Sorry ma... Mrs Holloway."

"That's better," I responded with pleasure. There was a brief moment of silence. A silence so silent it was perfect. A chance to breathe and think about how

perfect my life was. My phone buzzed from the depths of my purse. I leaned in to pick it up: it was my husband.

"Hey baby - well done on *Good Morning America*!" he said, in his sweet American accent.

"Thanks. How are the kids?"

"Buzzing to see you - they've been missing their mama!"

"I'll be back later tonight."

"Why not now?"

"I've got to work! Congratulate my team! Tweet! Blog! Vlog! It never ends!"

"All right - I'll see you tonight."

"Love you."

"And you." I ended the call with a subtle kiss noise.

"That the husband?" the guard questioned.

"Yes - I saw him last night but my kids haven't seen me in weeks."

"We could always take a diversion."

"No - they can wait." My eyes glanced at the road - and in the distance, a figure stood tall, right in the middle of the road. This was the man who would change my life...

"LOOK OUT!" I shouted. The guard suddenly noticed the man.

"HQ - we've got a man in the middle of the road. Proceed?" he said into his communicator. Closer and closer we got until he nodded. He kept driving.

"What the hell are you doing?" I shouted.

"It's a murder!" he spurted. "An assassin league trying to kill you!" I could tell there was some form of lies being spewed. I wanted to warn him – but who should I trust?

The man stood exactly in the middle of the road. We plummeted towards him, our horn honking louder than ever before. We were getting closer. I wanted this hell to end! Closer. Why can't it just *stop*. Closer until... we stopped. As if my wish came true. The guard looked puzzled. He tried to rev the engine up but he failed. He and the other guards exited the car to talk to the man – and I was left alone, slightly shell shocked.

I couldn't hear the conversation, but the man seemed urgently to need to speak to me.

I stepped out of the car, slamming the door behind me. "Well, if he has something to say after that stunt then I think he should be heard."

He was a strange man: I could see him clearly for the first time. A long green, (or was it black?) velvet coat, a golden neck tie secured to a crisp white shirt. On top of this, a grey patterned waistcoat complete with a dangling fob-watch hidden in his pocket. Grey trousers and perfectly polished black shoes. He looked old and young at the same time – a face which looked mid-forties, but eyes that were far more ancient. A mop of curled brown hair completed his figure. He came towards me, making the guards ever so slightly suspicious.

"Grace Holloway - I need to speak to you alone." He spoke with a broad British accent.

"Have we met?" I asked.

"Yes – well, no. Not in this world. But listen - this time line is a lie *because* we never met." In the back of my mind it twigged - could this be the man? The man which the other woman "told" us about on the night before New Year's Eve?

"Who are you?"

"There's no time for names - you need to come with..." And then he vanished. A static glow shattered him out of existence. The worst part: you could hear him screaming... The screams of an old man – dying.

"Come on, Mrs Holloway," my guard instructed. "We need to get to the labs immediately." I nodded and he led me back into the black security car.

"Who was he?" I asked as the guard managed to restart the car.

"No one Mrs Holloway. Just forget him." And I did. I completely forgot. But I would soon remember. That wasn't the last I would see of him on that day – for he would arrive again four hours later.

Four hours later...

The room erupted with cheers as my speech ended. It was so surreal - people who I don't properly know approaching me with a handshakes, messages of

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congratulations and even flowers and chocolate. After an hour of this I pushed my way into my personal lab. You've probably seen the pictures but if not this is the lab: its perfect. Two rows of perfectly kitted out scientific equipment – coolers, test tubes, the works; the periodic table's elements in period order; acids, alkalis and frozen diseases all in there place. To the side of this is my desk: images of my family all displayed in the perfect frames in perfect HD quality. Perfect.

I slumped down onto the chair and pulled up my laptop.

"10000 tweets!" I exclaimed, on sight of Twitter. I blanked out the huge number of emails listed on my Mail account. Never mind – they'd be easy. I was just opening up the search engine when he returned: the man. The screaming man.

At first I didn't recognise him: he was dressed in a different attire, a guards uniform. In fact - the uniform my guards were wearing! The simple long-coat, stab proof vest and gun holsters suited him well. He looked like a soldier – an old soldier.

"Mrs Holloway – I have the..." I hadn't noticed he was behind me. He grabbed my shoulders. "Grace - listen to me please." He pulled out a long metal stick creating a bubble around us.

"Who are you? I could have you arrested!" I threatened.

"There's no time for threats - the balance of time is at risk. You need to remember me. Remember earlier – the near car crash?"

My mind flashed back to that tragic moment. All the emotion and the man returned to me. "I remember," I replied.

"Listen to me Grace. And believe what I say. This world is a lie - you've been given perfection for some reason, and I don't know why."

"Why is this bad?" I asked.

"Because you're living in a lie, Grace. A lie where you never met me."

"When did we meet?"

"New Years Eve 1999 – ten years ago. We saved the world from imminent destruction. Time was folding in on itself – and now someone or something has bent time in half. Making you not take that call to save me. Making your husband stay with you. We can't meet for long here. There's a weak spot in this world. Here." He

passed me a card stating the location: a riverside. "Come alone Grace. No phone, no guards, nothing."

"Why?"

He paused and stared. "Because I'm going to show you the truth..." And then he vanished. Not like before. He simply "faded away." I looked at the card, puzzled – until suddenly the door crashed open. It was my personal guard: "Ma'am - your car's waiting."

"I'll make my own way home."

"I insist Ma'am." He stood there almost statue-like. He'd donned a pair of sun glasses to accompany his suit. He was who the man told me to avoid. I cautiously stood and grabbed my bag whilst picking up a small assortment of keys from the work bench. He still stood in the same position - almost perfect.

"Lets go then." He took a moment to respond.

"Yes Ma'am." He responded robotically.

"Oh sorry - I forgot something."

"What?"

"This?" I grabbed the nearest bottle of acid I could find and I threw it at his face. The bottle smashed into him with an almighty crash. Acid flew everywhere knocking him to the ground. The worst part was it started to burn his face. His glasses fell off revealing a sight so fearsome: he was eyeless. The holes where the eyes are meant to be were nothing but static.

The static made Grace pause for a second. A glimpse of reality peered through.

I carefully grabbed the keys to the car, and then I started running. People were confused, shouting, trying to stop me. I wouldn't let them. I hadn't even begun to think what the repercussions might be. How could I say that guard wasn't a human?

I flashed the fob on the car keys lighting up the black jeep. I revved the car up and drove. Drove as fast as I could. There were more shouts and screams calling for me. I ignored them, focused on the task ahead – getting to the "riverside."

Several hours later I arrived. The riverside was picturesque and almost familiar.

Behind it were several steps, a small grassy patch and a walkway. From the distance stepped the man: the mad man. The only many who knew what was really going on.

"You came!" he announced with his broad British accent.

"With great difficulty," I replied.

"It's fine – honestly. I can sort that." We stood looking at each other in silence.

"What's going on?" I asked, full of questions. "Why am I here? And who are you?"

"Grace, you need to trust me. I've brought you here because this is a weak point in time. A place where the Static can't reach us."

"The static?"

"What is your first memory?"

"Falling of my bike when I was 4."

"No, think Grace – think hard. What is your first memory of this world?"

"The bi..." I looked at him in horror. "Yesterday morning."

"Do you understand now?

"No!" I stormed off: frightened, scared and confused.

He shouted after me: "Grace!"

I turned, then returned to the pavement he was standing on. He held my hands. "This world is a lie. A world created to kill me."

"What?"

"I've only just left you. The TARDIS picked up a reading which indicated distress. I fell down and suddenly I was encompassed in a static field. Then I realised their intention - they want me dead. And who's the first person in my mind? You."

"I don't understand."

"Grace – you control this world. You wanted perfection – a world free of Malaria, AIDS, illness and suffering... and you created it! The static are using your mind to create a parellel to what really happened. A universe where someone else took that call and ended up killing me."

"I kill you?"

"I'm not human. Well - sort of. I regenerate: my cells repair and I become a new man. I was Scottish last time."

I looked at the man: it explained how a dashing young man could look so old at the same time. "What can I do?"

"I need to show you the real world." He grabbed me closer and we kissed.

This felt SO familiar. SO real. SO perfect. And then I turned around.

"But we haven't moved?"

"This is June 2nd 2009 in the real world. Come on." He took my hand and we walked. We approached a high street so familiar to the one I had been down. In fact – it was the same. With differences.

"Where are we going?" He ignored my question. I glanced around at this world. It lacked so much perfection: there were homeless people, charities fundraising for AIDS and Malaria projects. Things I had defeated in the other world. Who would want to live here? By the time I'd stopped thinking we were at the front gate of a house. It was a small building – almost a bungalow.

"Who lives here?" I asked – feeling I knew the answer.

My fears were correct: "You."

"But it's far too small for my family!" I joked. He just stared. My smile turned into a small cry and whimper. "I don't have a family?" He didn't need to respond. He just stood there. I stared at the house thinking, what if this was my reality? I'd be alone. He opened the gate and beckoned me over. We arrived at the door which he'd already opened. I stepped inside.

The house was very me: cosy, small, science and facts plunged all over the place. A microscope positioned holding down piles of data and information.

"Welcome to the real Grace's world," he said. He scavenged through a drawer of odd bits and bobs before pulling out a laptop.

"That's my laptop. In my world I mean."

"Well, this is your world!"

"You know what I mean." He smiled at me as I walked over to him. "I want to show you this. On the June 12th you recorded a podcast, a diary. I want you to hear it." He hit the space bar and the sound started to play.

"I hate radio stations. They're always dull and boring things. Lies chocked out of the announcer's mouth. But still... my name's Doctor Grace Holloway – and this is the story of my life. Ten years ago – I met a man: the most amazing man in the universe. He saved my life and offered me an escape from Earth. But I turned it down. I carried on. And now: I lie in my bed, alone. So I'm speaking to you. If anyone listens...

This is the story about my..."

The recording stopped. I was in tears. The man came to hug me but I refused.

"Are you that man?" I asked tearfully.

"Yes."

"Then tell me your name!"

"You know, Grace. In the back of your mind, you know. I had to show you the truth. But you have such a brilliant life! Friends, caring parents, all of whom are still part of this world! The other world is a lie created on your dreams. You can't live in..." He stopped mid sentence. The lights started to flicker. Then the noise came - a static noise blaring out the stereos, the laptop and everywhere. "RUN!" He shouted grabbing me by the arm.

He and I belted out of the house like a dog to a bone. We ran down the path and out of the gate with the static blur following us. The man halted to a stop, pulling out the same metal rod he used earlier. He held it and zapped the creature to the ground.

"Is it...?" I asked, before being interrupted.

"Out cold. But not for long: the static know we are here. There's little time..."

He responded with fear in his voice.

"What do you mean?"

"Grace - they will now make sure you say no to my demands. They will make the Grace world SO perfect that you would have no reason to leave that world."

I stared at him, glaring into those ancient eyes. "Take me home," I demanded.

He stood – nervous, sad and broken. He took my hands.

"We all have a fate, old man," I said. "You can't change everyone's mind for your own benefit."

We kissed - and we were back. Back into my world - my perfect world. And before I could say another word the man was gone.

My guard ran towards me. "Mrs Holloway!" he shouted. "Mrs Holloway, are you all right?"

"I... I..." I stuttered.

"It's okay, Grace. Just forget that man." I failed to notice the person saying this to me was my enemy, and not only that but that I'd burnt his face off with acid hours earlier.

"I hurt you, didn't I?" I demanded.

"No – nothing happened," he replied. "Just imagine nothing ever happened.

Because if you do – it won't happen. You just went for a walk. That's all." I obeyed this command as if I was being hypnotised.

"I just went for a walk..." I said robotically.

"Good. Now then Mrs Holloway – let me take you home."

"Yes. Thank you."

"You're welcome." I hadn't realised I'd just been hypnotised. I wouldn't remember all the events that just took place. It was as if the nightmare had faded and had become a perfect dream... I stepped into the car and the guard revved the engine up. Nothing had happened. And it's only today I realise what really had...

The journey back to my house was silent. I didn't speak to the guard, look at my phone or anything. Any photographers hurling themselves at the car were ignored alongside the bustling fans. As we drove up my gated driveway I thanked the guard and stepped out of the car. He sat there smiling – almost a smirk, with no real lip movement. I placed the front door key into the door lock and entered hell. I screamed at the pure horror in front of me.

My family: stabbed, beaten and dead. I knelt to the ground in tears holding my husband's head. "WHY?" I shouted. "I DON'T WANT THIS!" And then it went away. My husband approached me with a smile as if that had never happened.

"Evening Doctor!" He spoke with his broad American accent. He was dressed in a casual shirt and short combination. "Is everything all right?"

I lied: "Everything's perfect!" My kids leapt onto me with hugs and kisses. I was stunned – not only by their amazing capability to understand what I'd done but the fact I had seen them dead and slaughtered only a few moments ago. I was confused – I had no idea what had just happened. At first I thought it was a vision – an echo of the future. Then I remembered – I felt him. I felt my husband's dead head in my hands! It must have been real!

The guard stepped in. "Everything all right?" he asked.

My husband approached him: "Jim! Long time no see. How you doing?"

"Fine sir," he replied. "Just taking care of your wife!"

"I bet she's been a pain the past few weeks."

"Not at all." He said with a smile. I turned to greet him. "And how are you Grace - I heard a scream." He knew.

I stuttered out an explanation: "It... It must have been from down the road."

"It sounded like you."

"It wasn't me."

"Okay Grace. Why don't we just forget about that scream and restore the perfection?" I accepted this demand. "See you later," he announced whilst walking away to the car.

My husband stared at me and I stared at him. For a second I saw another man in him: the man with me as I report these words. The British man with the look of demanding help. I gasped.

"What's wrong?" my husband asked.

"Nothing." I stuttered – again lying. "I need a glass of water and some fresh air."

He smiled - "Go on kids. Mommy will see you shortly." My children left and my husband left me alone outside.

For the first time in a long while I managed to sit back and think. I looked up at the brisk sunset: an algorithm of colours - bright oranges, dark blues and the bright prefect yellow sun glowing away like a beautiful raw fire.

"You know the sunsets are never like this." A familiar but distinct voice spoke. I turned: it was him. The British man.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Grace – they've made you forget. So please – remember. Remember me, remember the real world, remember the static, remember that this world is a lie." And I did. It all came flooding back like a tsunami in my mind. I remembered the man: how we met in this world, the real world, my guard being a liar, the attack, and the sad, sad Grace. I partially fell back landing on the levelled walls of my Garden. "GO AWAY!" I shouted.

"No one can hear you," he said with fear in his eyes.

"Who are you?"

"I can't tell you."

"And you expect me to help you? After all you showed me. After all you made me do!"

"Grace, you are the most important person in the whole universe right now! Without you – I will die. The Static are very close to catching me and only you can stop them."

I smirked. "Why should I die for you?"

"Because..." He paused - remembering I didn't know everything.

"Exactly." I turned away and began to walk. Until he shouted:

"That vision of your dead family wasn't a vision – it was me!"

"What?" I bellowed in fear.

"It's to show you the truth - you make this world, Grace. You changed everything because the Static don't want you falling for me."

"Why does this 'Static' want you dead?"

"Because in the future there's a war – a war which I have fought in. This war involves the Static in some way and they want victory over all who take part. They nearly did – but I stopped them. So – a small fleet of Static forces found the one person on Earth they could use to shape a perfect world against me. And they found you - a sad, lonely Grace with ideas beyond anyone's thinking capabilities. From your mind they shaped a world of everything you desired and loved. This world was your

perfection – a family, a world free of disease, you: the best scientist in the world and anything you hated was removed from existence. That's why it's so important that you die. Because if you die and accept it then you will save everything! The static will have lost making them weak enough for me to destroy them."

"Then are you no better than them?"

He paused – almost reflecting. I stared into his eyes: he had done this once before. He ignored my question: "It's time to stop living the lie Grace - you have to come with me."

I stared at him before he approached me with something else. "I didn't want to have to show you this - but I'm going to have to. He pulled out a video camera and pressed the play button. It was horrible – the footage was of him slaughtering my family. My husband tried to protect them but he failed. He was stabbed in the heart as well as my children. He ran and hid as I entered the house. And it was true – I had changed that situation. My will and decision did this.

I thought to myself: no one has the right to have this power. But then, him defeating the Static – isn't that just as bad? But then I saw him in another light – he didn't want to do that. He wouldn't have killed my family if he didn't know that my trust in them would damn me for eternity. He may be a dark man but there was something else about him: he was a soldier waiting for war. Not by his own thoughts but by being forced. I knew it was war – whether this was only the beginning of something new or not...

"Ok." I told him nodding. "Ok. Let's go." He led me around the side of the house and into the street. My husband didn't notice at first - probably because I had made him forget I was leaving. But as soon as we left the gates the Static stood there: Jim (the guard) and two orbs of static footage.

"There's no escape Doctor. Leave her alone."

"No," he replied.

"Then we'll just kill you here. Static – absorb him."

The static orbs glazed around him. He tried to grab the metal stick from earlier encounters but it fell to the ground. Jim was distracted. I snatched the rod off

the ground and pointed it at the orbs. They let the man go by falling back and onto the ground. I then pointed it at the Guard who repeated the orbs' action.

I helped the man to his feet. "Let's get this over with!" I shouted. We ran down street after street until we came to a halt at the riverside area – the place where he showed me the truth... "What do we do?"

"I need you to focus Grace. I want you to channel everything you believe to be negative and wrong and send it into this world," he instructed.

"Why?"

"Because it will catch their attention," he responded.

"But they control what happens? You're not making any sense!"

"They'll come to us. I'll then lock onto their teleportation signal with the Sonic Screwdriver..." (the metal rod?) "...and we will end this hell." I stared at him – nervous, scared but ever so slightly excited. "Ready?" He asked.

"Let's do it." Everything bad, everything that makes the cold hearted fear and cry, everything that I perceive to be hell was thrown into the world. And then they arrived: the Guard and the Static.

"Mrs Holloway – you've been a bit of a pain. We no longer need you in this operation." He turned to the orbs: "Static - get her."

Suddenly the Doctor heroically flung his arms around me and with a definitely high pitched squeak – which I hope emerged from the screwdriver! – we arrived.

The spaceship was a murky, dark place. Long metal pipes coated the walls like a tacky wallpaper. Every so often a petite amount of steam would whistle out a broken pipe. A slight hum echoed down the corridors. The corridor we stood in was lit by a small blue bulb which glowed, occasionally flickering on and off. And then there was a window, a small circular glass window: it showed the Earth. I felt SO small yet so big standing on high above the planet of which I was a part.

"Beautiful isn't it?" the man commented. "And that's not the only amazing world out there. There are planets which shine like diamonds containing oceans of pure sapphire and at night, the moons sparkle like disco balls."

"But this is different: this is my world - a place I am a part of. And what better place to die than standing above it." The man and I glared into each others eyes. For the first time I felt something - A connection stronger than I've ever felt with someone before. "Who are you?" I asked.

He didn't reply. A minute passed as we shared a moment glaring at the pure beauty of Earth.

He then spoke: "We need to go."

"Can't I die here – looking at this?" I begged.

"No – we must be at the core of the machine. If not then your death would not affect the planet. If you died standing in the middle of that world then nothing would have changed."

I understood his reasoning. "Okay," I replied with a slight tear in my eye. He held my hand and we walked down the corridors, like a couple lost in a maze of madness...

After what felt like years of walking we finally arrived at the central hub. It was surprisingly quiet - no static, no guard, no... anything. The man noted however that they could spring up at any moment. He walked to a computer and began typing in commands on the touch screen panel.

He sighed: "Stupid touch screens - they never work properly." Finally he completed the task he had planned. And he sat me down on the floor. "Grace - before we do this, you need to do something for me."

"What?" I asked.

"I need you to explain the events – what has happened over the past few days."

"Why?" I questioned.

"Because." He didn't need to say anything else – I did as he requested...

And we arrive here. That is my story - the story of how perfection can destroy a million lives. He's just passed me the liquid. It's in a small blue vial with...

"What's that?"

"No!" he said. "They're here!"

The static surrounded us and so did the guard. "Time's up, Time Lord." "Grace – take the liquid," the man pleaded.

"Why did you have to do this?" the guard demanded of me. "Your life was amazing - you had it all! Money, family, perfection! Why give it up for one man?"

I stood up from the ground: "Because we don't need perfection. We can never have it all – the world would suffer and die if we had perfection. And why do I deserve it? I'm a Doctor, not a miracle worker. And you know what? You could offer me the universe and I'd turn it down. Because I'm only human!"

And then it ended.

The man ran to her and held her tight. He whispered his name: the Doctor.

"Game's over, Static."

"We can still kill you!"

"You can't." The room filled with a bright blaze of white light. It blinded the Time Lord, causing him to fall back from the light. The static screamed in pain as they burst into flames. And then it ended.

Grace returned to her desk on June 12th 2009 – after finding she'd fallen asleep.

How long has this been running? Good god. Three hours! I've missed American Idol! Still. I had a strange dream – of the Doctor. And how I saved all of time and him. Again.

So anyway - this will be fun to edit. Goodnight listen...

VWORP! VWORP!

What is that noise? No way! Doctor?!

"Grace!" he said. "How are you doing?"

"Fine. I just had a dream about you – we saved the world! And you!"

"That wasn't a dream Grace - it was real. The static perfection reflected into your brain as a dream. Still – you did very well."

"I'm confused," I honestly responded.

"Oh Grace - Amazing Grace! You'll never get it."

"Hey!" We paused for a moment. "I miss you Doctor."

"Yes - I know. But you don't need me. That's why you turned me down that New Years Eve. So get out there Grace - be the woman you want to be. Be brilliant! Be amazing! Be the best of all humanity. And save lives! You saved a wretch like me – now go and save the world!"

"Will we meet again?"

"Who knows? I hope so."

"Thank you Doctor – until the next time."

"Until the next time." He smiled and headed for the door. And then he left – the engines of his ship echoed around my home.

We may never get perfection - but what I have is close enough.

