

I'm old enough to know there is a logical explanation for everything—even when you are traveling with the Doctor. I'm sure I could work this out mathematically, given enough time. I don't care if the Doctor says we are in the wrong era to really see Anne Boleyn. I do not believe in ghosts! Not even in England!

The Ghost Train

by the Badger in the Tardis

Two days ago, we were in the Tardis. Just the Doctor and me. No girls. Nyssa and Tegan were on the giant shopping mall moon above the planet Mylydponi. I was helping the Doctor fix the Tardis. We were always doing that. But I was thinking about something else. *Someone* else.

“Hey Doctor, do you know anything about Anne Boleyn? I read something about her in the Tardis library and I saw her portrait. I think she was beautiful.”

“Mmm,” the Doctor replied as he reached for a tool that was just beyond his fingertips.

I handed him the tool.

“Did you know that she was concerned about the poor? Don't you think that's remarkable?”

“Ahhh,” said the Doctor.

I handed him another tool.

“I don't know why, but some people hated her and said she was a witch with eleven fingers, and three—”

Bam!

"Nonsense," said the Doctor very quickly.

I think he hit his head on a piece of equipment. He certainly didn't seem to be listening to me. I handed him another tool anyway.

"Say, Doctor," I said at last, "I was thinking. I mean, if you have the time and can get the Tardis working again..."

"Have faith, Adric," he told me, taking all three tools at once.

"...could we go see her?"

"Go see Anne Boleyn?" the Doctor asked me. His voice sounded funny since his head was stuck inside an open panel under the Tardis console. "Are you sure you want to go there? It was a cruel era in Earth's history."

All I could think about was her face in the portrait I had seen. She had such pretty eyes. I just knew that *she* wouldn't be cruel.

The Doctor set the controls for before Anne had even met the English King named Henry VIII. He said it was best if we arrived before 1536, but he didn't explain why. Maybe she was too busy after that. After all, I had read that she eventually became a queen.

The Tardis landed on Earth. In England. I was impressed. The Doctor told me to wait. He seemed worried about the date. He was tapping on the control panel, trying to get the coordinates right. I wasn't worried because he never got us to places on time. I hit the door release and ran outside into a warm, spring night. The dark sky was full of stars and it smelled like flowers. The Tardis was stood near a big wooden door in a tall, stone wall. The Tardis door shut behind me.

Across the road, I could barely see something coming toward me. It looked like an old-fashioned carriage like the ones in the pictures I had seen of old Earth. The Doctor had a lot of books and data about Earth. He seemed to really like that planet. The carriage came closer. I couldn't hear the wheels turning or the clip clop of horses' hooves. That was spooky.

The carriage came closer and closer. It stopped right in front of the Tardis and that's when I saw that the horses had no heads. Neither did the driver! A woman stepped out. I could tell it was a woman because of how she was dressed in a long, golden gown. A gold tiara was on her head, but her head was in her arms. I stepped back because I was

surprised, not frightened. Well, maybe I was, just a little bit. Who wouldn't be? She slowly placed her head on her shoulders and I almost screamed when I saw her face. It was her! It was Anne Boleyn!

"Adric, I may have got the date wrong," the Doctor said as he came out of the Tardis. He looked at the ghostly face in front of us. "Ah. You already know that, don't you?"

"This is impossible," I said. "Is this really her?"

"I shouldn't think so. Not really. No offense Your Majesty." The Doctor tipped his hat.

She just smiled at us and her whole face lit up. Then she walked back to stand near the carriage as if she was waiting for something.

"Pardon me," I said to the ghostly queen, "but I have to ask. What happened to you?"

"Life took its course," she said.

The Doctor stepped up and pressed his lips together. "Adric, how much about her did you read?"

"Only a little..."

"Ah. I'll explain later."

I didn't believe him.

As we were standing there, another spooky thing happened. A train appeared without a sound. It was hard to make out at first, just a big shadow in the night. Grey light shone through the windows. It looked like it was made of mist. Anne boarded it when it stopped.

"I still don't understand." I did not like things that I did not understand.

"Well," the Doctor said, "there's a legend that on May 19th, the ghost of Anne Boleyn can be seen at Blickling Hall and a few other places. According to my instruments, today is May 19, 1936."

"It was supposed to be 1536," I told him.

"I was close," the Doctor said. "Time travel isn't simple, Adric. There are all sorts of things that can go wrong. For instance..."

"What about the train?" I interrupted him. Too much explaining was as bad as saying he would explain later.

"Ah. That is not part of the legend."

"Where do you suppose it goes?" I asked, looking up at it and seeing nothing but shadows and eerie light. It made me think about what people on Earth called Halloween.

"Only one way to find out. Did I ever tell you that I liked trains? All Aboard! I've always wanted to say that."

"But, Doctor...!" I had to run to catch up with him. I really wanted to follow Anne, but on a ghost train? I was sure there would be a logical explanation. There is always a logical explanation. I really should stop expecting one.

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I followed the Doctor onto the train. Right away it began to move. We were standing in a dark train carriage, surrounded by what I thought must be ghosts because they were so pale. Everything was smoky and I could see right through the walls and the floor. Before we knew it, we were going quickly through the country. I could tell because the moon was shining and I could see trees and fields. I could see train tracks under my feet, but we didn't fall through the floor. We couldn't hear the engine, but it felt like we were moving. It was like being in a dream.

"Well," the Doctor said, "this is unexpected."

He could say that again. In fact, he did. Then, he walked over to introduce himself to a woman he called Amelia. She was wearing a leather jacket, a light pink scarf and a close-fitting cap with large goggles.

I looked around for Anne. She was sitting on a seat at the back of the room. She shouldn't be alone, she was a queen. Where were her Ladies in Waiting? She looked sad sitting there all by herself.

"I'm called Adric."

She smiled. "What a fine name that is, Adric."

"Where are your Ladies in Waiting?"

"I have no need of them. It is my turn to wait." She gazed out the window into the night.

"What are you waiting for?" I asked, looking out the window to see what she might be looking at. Maybe it was the ghostly ship sailing beside us through the night.

"For death to rock me asleep."

I didn't know what to say so I just down near her and looked out the window. Anne sang softly to herself.

Toll on, thou passing bell;

Ring out my doleful knell...

The song made me feel sad.

When the train stopped again, a tall, thin man with a tall black hat that made him look even taller stepped into the car. He was wearing all black except for his shirt, which was white. He had a black bow tie. When the Doctor turned around, he looked excited.

"Mister President!" He shook the man's hand. "How good to see you again."

"Have we met before?"

"Yes. I'm the Doctor."

"The Doctor? That's good because I have a terrible headache."

"Yes, I suppose you would. Perhaps you should sit down?"

As I watched, a wound in the back of the man's head started to fade away. This was getting stranger and stranger. When I turned back around, Anne was gone. I could still hear the sound of her singing. I looked all around the room, but she wasn't there. I decided to go and find her while the Doctor talked to the man he called Mr Lincoln. Just before I slipped through the door into another room, I heard the Doctor tell Mr Lincoln that he really liked his books. When we got back to the Tardis, I planned to look at them. I loved books. Especially books about mathematics. Mathematics made sense. The things that were happening to us did not and I did not like it one bit.

I went through the dining car but I could not find Anne anywhere. It was empty. I keep going back through the train, jumping from one door to the next. I found a lot of spooky people. Most of them were grey like Anne had been when I first saw her and some of them were carrying their heads. What a terrible place this Earth must be. I could not understand why the Doctor liked it here so much.

In the very last seat, I finally found Anne. She was asleep and she did not look like a ghost anymore. Beside her were two books, one with her name on it. It was in her arms. I didn't want to wake her, so I picked up the other book. It had a plain, brown leather cover. Just then I realized that everyone I had seen on the train had a book.

I sat down by Anne and opened the book. Anne woke up then and asked me what I was doing.

"I was just looking at this book. Do you realize everyone seems to have one?"

"Adric, don't look in that book—"

But it was too late.

Anne and I were suddenly somewhere else. There was a woman with dark hair and a fancy dress and she was holding a book. Across the room, sat the Doctor and a man I didn't know. But, it wasn't the Doctor like he was now. It was the Doctor like he was when I met him. I ran to where he was sitting, playing cards with the strange man.

"Doctor! Doctor! It's me, Adric!"

The Doctor was smiling, but he was looking right through me. I waved my arms and said his name again. For just a second I thought he looked at me, but then he went back to the card game. I could see them, but they couldn't see me. And the Doctor! This wasn't at all right. It was like seeing a ghost. Did that mean we were ghosts, too?

"Much like that one," the man with the Doctor said. "So lovely on the outside, sir! It makes a man wonder what beauty must lie within."

I wondered if he meant the woman, because she really was a beauty, or if he meant the book. I decided I must have a closer look. But before I could look at more than a few words on the page, Anne grabbed my arm. She didn't feel like a ghost when she did that.

"You aren't supposed to be here," Anne said, and just like that I was back on the train, and she was gone.

Toll on, thou passing bell;

Ring out my doleful knell...

I hurried back to find the Doctor and tell him what I had seen. I noticed that the train had begun stopping again and people were getting off one by one. A man with a rope around his neck walked past me, and then another man with a sword sticking out of his back. It was just awful!

"Doctor, I think we're in danger here." I was out of breath and could hardly talk.

"Yes," the Doctor agreed. He didn't seem surprised. "I think you may be right. You see, I've been talking to Abraham Lincoln, but I don't believe he is the real thing. The real Mr Lincoln would know his own autobiography better."

"I thought you said these people couldn't be real."

“What then? Ghosts?” the Doctor laughed.

“I do not believe in ghosts,” I told him, but I didn’t know what to believe. I told him about the book that I had found, and how he looked, and about the pretty woman and how Anne seemed real then suddenly disappeared. It was all very confusing.

The Doctor told me that that couldn’t be a ghost because the woman was called Leela and he was sure she was still alive on Gallifrey.

“Maybe you better show me that book, Adric. One can find a lot of answers in books.”

I led the way back through the train. It was a lot emptier now. Almost all the passengers were gone. One big man, with a crown on his head, went by us quickly, like we weren’t important enough to even talk to. I kept looking for Anne, but I did not see her. I wondered if she had already got off the train.

We got all the way to the back of the train without finding Anne or the book. I thought that maybe I had dropped it when I ran to find the Doctor, so we went back. At last, I found it, and sitting next to it were two more books. The top book had my name on it, but when I reached to pick it up, the Doctor pulled me away.

“No, Adric. I don’t think you should look.”

“But why” I asked. “It has my name on it.”

“Yes,” the Doctor said, “but the story of our lives isn’t written yet. If we look, something terrible could happen!”

Just then, the woman the Doctor had called Amelia appeared as if out of nowhere. As we watched, she changed into the king and then into the man with the rope around his neck. Finally, it was Mr Lincoln smiling down at us. Even without his hat he was taller than the Doctor used to be.

“The Doctor is right,” he told us. “Their stories have ended. Yours isn’t. Yet.”

“What are you?” I asked, then felt sort of dumb for asking.

“He’s a shape shifter of some kind,” the Doctor told me. And as he said it, Abe Lincoln went away and a pirate was standing there instead.

“What about Anne?”

“Her story ended a long time ago,” the alien said.

I thought about Anne when I first saw her, before the train came. I thought about her head in her hands. It made me very angry. "No! Not like that! Doctor, we can't let that happen."

"Only a Time Lord could do that," the alien told us, "but they do not get involved, do they, Doctor? Unless it is for their own good."

I didn't know what he meant, but the Doctor seemed to. His eyes opened very wide and he looked worried.

"Come along, Adric," he said, pulling me after him. "Run!"

"But..."

"Run, Adric! Run!"

As we ran, the train began to fade away. It got colder and colder and darker and darker. We were almost back to the place where we had first got on when I saw Anne. She was sitting in the same seat by the window, paging through the book. Her book. I could hear her singing. This time I could hear the words. The Doctor told me not to stop, but I grabbed the book away from her, grabbed her hand, and let the Doctor pull both of us through the open door.

It was dark like a night without stars. Then it was bright like the sun.

I was cold and hot at the same time and wind blew hard on my face. I wasn't sure if I was still holding Anne's hand or not. It felt like I was falling through the air, like in a dream where there is nothing under you, It wasn't a nice dream. The train ran over us very fast and the next thing I knew, I was lying on the ground near the Tardis. I jumped up, but the carriage and the train and Anne were all gone. it was just me and the Doctor.

"Where is Anne!"

"She must have gone back to her own time," the Doctor told me. "Remember, this is 1936."

"But, I can still hear her singing. Are you going to tell me what happened to her."

The Doctor picked up the book that I had been holding when we jumped off the train. He dusted it off then handed it to me.

"I think it would be better if you read it yourself."

I took the book and walked away into the Tardis because I didn't want the Doctor to see how upset I was. Then I sat down and I read. And all the time, I heard the words of the song. I turned to face the wall so the Doctor wouldn't see me crying.

*DEATH, rock me asleep,
Bring me to quiet rest,
Let pass my weary guiltless ghost
Out of my careful breast.
Toll on, thou passing bell;
Ring out my doleful knell;
Let thy sound my death tell.
Death doth draw nigh;
There is no remedy.*

*My pains who can express?
Alas, they are so strong;
My dolour will not suffer strength
My life for to prolong.
Toll on, thou passing bell;
Ring out my doleful knell;
Let thy sound my death tell.
Death doth draw nigh;
There is no remedy.*

-oOo-

*Alone in prison strong
I wait my destiny.
Woe worth this cruel hap that I
Should taste this misery!
Toll on, thou passing bell;
Ring out my doleful knell;
Let thy sound my death tell.
Death doth draw nigh;
There is no remedy.*

*Farewell, my pleasures past,
Welcome, my present pain!
I feel my torments so increase
That life cannot remain.
Cease now, thou passing bell;
Rung is my doleful knell;
For the sound my death doth tell.
Death doth draw nigh;
There is no remedy.*

When I was finished reading and the song was over, I closed the book.

The Doctor had not said anything for a long time. He just kept walking around the main control room of the Tardis, dusting the same things over and over. He stopped and looked at me.

"He killed her," I said. How could Henry the VIII be so cruel? Anne was the mother of his daughter, Elizabeth. She grew up to be a great queen. I did not understand.

"That was unfortunate, yes. Shall we try again, though? See if we can get there before that nasty business? You could still meet her."

“Could we save her?” I asked. But I already knew the answer to that question. The alien shape shifter had been right. Time Lords don’t get involved. I wished that they did. At least sometimes.

I looked at the picture of Anne in the book and thought about the face I had seen on the ghost. Or was it the alien? I still wasn’t sure. But her face had been so nice. Not when her head was in her hands, but when she was put together properly. She had looked sad. But she was still beautiful.

“No,” I said at last. “I have had enough of trains and ghosts.” I had wanted more than anything to see Anne. Now... I just wanted to forget. But how could I? I wondered how the Doctor kept going on, even after sad things happened.

He was looking at me and his blue eyes looked worried. I didn’t want anyone worrying about me.

“Well, come on,” I told him. “Nyssa and Tegan will wonder where we are.”

“Not if we arrive before we left,” the Doctor said with a smile as he turned dials and moved levers on the control console. “Are you sure you’re all right?”

The truth was, I wasn’t all right. But I would be.

*Toll on, thou passing bell;
Ring out my doleful knell...
Death doth draw nigh;
There is no remedy.*

