

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



Doctor Who:
The Resurrection Casket

Justin Richards

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About the Book

Starfall - a world on the edge, where crooks and smugglers hide in the gloomy shadows and modern technology refuses to work. And that includes the TARDIS.

The pioneers who used to be drawn by the hope of making a fortune from the mines can find easier picking elsewhere. But they still come for the romance of it, or old-fashioned organic mining. Or in the hope of finding the lost treasure of Hamlek Glint - scourge of the spaceways, privateer, adventurer, bandit.

Will the TARDIS ever work again? Is Glint's lost treasure waiting to be found? And does the fabled Resurrection Casket, the key to eternal life, really exist? With the help of new friends, and to the horror of new enemies, the Doctor and Rose aim to find out ...

About the Author

Justin Richards is the Creative Director for the BBC's range of Doctor Who books, and has written a fair few of them himself.

As well as writing for stage, screen and audio, he is the author of *The Invisible Detective* novels for children. He has a new series of children's books called *Time Runners* due in 2007, and his novel for older children, *The Death Collector*, was published in 2006.

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DOCTOR · WHO

The
**Resurrection
Casket**

BY JUSTIN RICHARDS

BBC
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*For Julian and Chris,
who like pirate stories!*

Death was hiding in Kaspar's pocket.

Blurry-eyed, Kaspar slammed down the empty glass. Leaning heavily on the bar, he belched before making his uncertain voyage towards the door of the inn. He knocked against tables, jostled other drinkers, rolling and meandering on his way like a ship skirting the Outreaches. Laughter and abuse rang in his ears in roughly equal measure.

Then he was outside, gulping in the chill night air. It tasted of oil and tar. The sounds of the inn were replaced by the clank and bustle of the port. The creaking of ships and shouting of stevedores. The sign above the door squealed on its hinges as it moved gently in the breeze - swaying back and forth with the same lazy motion as Kaspar as he swayed on his feet. He stared up at it, trying to focus on the cracked, peeling image. It didn't help that the image itself was fractured - a painting of a telescope snapped in half.

The main picture reflected in fragments of painted glass.
The Broken Spyglass.

Someone pushed heavily past Kaspar, elbowing him aside. He staggered away, making a tuneless attempt to whistle an old shanty he remembered from his days as a deck swabber on a freight barge on the Jathros run.

As he turned into the alley that ran down the side of the inn, away from the main port, Kaspar realised he was still clutching the few coins Silver Sally had given him as change from his last tankard of grog. He stared at them for a moment, watched them catch the starlight, shining like real gold. Then he closed his hand and thrust his fist into his pocket.

That was when he felt the scrap of paper. Curious, he pulled it out. A folded piece of parchment. Pale and textured in the dim light of the alley. Kaspar grunted, about to drop the paper in the narrow gutter. But he didn't. Some spark of curiosity at the back of his woozy mind made him pause to open it.

And suddenly he was sober. Suddenly he was seeing clearly. Staring at the mark on the paper - a simple black shape. A smudge of ink. A vague form that meant nothing. Except to an old pirate. And Kaspar had done his time on a rusting galleon at the edge of the Gerossic Rift. He had seen the shape before, knew it instantly. Understood what it meant.

The Black Shadow.

Someone had put the Black Shadow on him.

Like a curse. A threat. Sentence of death.

Getting rid of it would do no good now, so he jammed the paper back in his pocket. Already he was running. Already he was heading back towards the light, towards people and safety. Though he knew that, really, nowhere was safe. Already he could hear the thump of feet on the cobbles behind him. He could imagine the glint of the knife in the starlight. He could feel the hot breath of the killer on the back of his neck.

His own heart thumped. His eyes watered, blurring everything. His breath rasped. He tried to tell himself it was all imagination. There was no one there. The alley had been empty. The paper - it was a joke, or a mistake. Or just a smudge of ink on a receipt from the Spyglass...

Except that suddenly it was real. A dark shape was materialising out of the air in front of Kaspar. A huge, shaggy form turning towards him. As if the night had somehow coalesced into a massive version of the blotted shape on the parchment.

Kaspar stumbled to a halt, turned, started to run the other way. Felt the heavy hand on his shoulder as it

dragged him back, turned him again. Only it wasn't a hand. It was a paw, covered in dark hair with fingers that ended in sharp claws. Eyes burned red out of the blackness high above him. Hot, rancid breath scalded the air and made him cough.

And a deep voice that grated like the broken glass on the inn sign said, 'Look, I'm really sorry about this.'

Claws glinted like knives as they caught the starlight.

'Really, *really* sorry. No, I mean it.'

Raked down at Kaspar's screaming face.

'But, well, you know how it is.'

Kaspar knew nothing except blackness. A body slammed to the ground. Blood ran in the gutter, washing a slip of folded paper away with it. And the smudge of darkness shook its head sadly and was gone...

The only constant light was shining up from beneath the floor plates. A pale yellow glow that tinged the air like faint mist and made the Doctor's face look shadowed and angular as the main lights flickered and flashed apparently at random.

'So what's going on?' Rose asked.

'Going on? It's all going completely mad. Every sprocket and wocket and mergin-nut. Mad, mad, mad.' He slammed a lever across as if to show how it made no sense at all.

The light was fading, the Doctor's face getting darker. Then, abruptly, it glared into brilliance, making both the Doctor and Rose screw up their eyes.

'Time for a service?' Rose suggested. She wasn't worried. Not really. Not yet. Whatever the problem was, the Doctor would fix it soon enough. Probably. 'Should have got a ten-million-mile service back on New Earth.'

'I dunno, you materialise for a split second in real space-time to take a bearing and see what happens?' The Doctor was shaking his head, clicking his tongue, moving quickly round the console. 'What's the scanner say?'

Rose glanced at the screen. 'Sort of whirly stuff.'

The Doctor paused, hand over a control. 'Whirly stuff? That could be bad. How much whirly stuff? I mean, a few whirls or the inside of a clock?'

'You know that screensaver Mickey has on his computer with pipes that keep growing till they fill the screen?'

He sucked in a deep breath. 'Well, that's not good. Here, let's have a look.' The Doctor was leaning over Rose's shoulder, his fingers tapping out a rhythm she could feel through her jacket.

'Problem?'

He nodded. 'EMP signature. Electromagnetic pulse. Like you get in a nuclear... whatsit.' He waved his hands to demonstrate. 'Whoosh. You know.'

'I know. Cities getting cooked.'

'Sort of thing,' he agreed. 'Only it just goes on and on. Look at it. Whirly stuff. Like there's a thousand bombs going off one after another. With no let-up. Must be hell out there.'

'Then let's stay in here,' Rose suggested. 'Where it's safe.'

'Ah.'

'It is safe?' She peered at him through the flickering light. 'Tell me it's safe.'

'Er.'

Then the console exploded.

'Stay exactly where you are, all right?'

'Er, why?'

'Wiring's gone a bit crazy. Anything could be live, anything could go wrong, anything could explode or collapse or... something.'

'Something bad I'm guessing, right?' Rose sighed. 'OK, not going anywhere,' she said, and was surprised that her voice was shaking. The light was strobing and flashing like a demented disco. 'Can't we stop the lights doing that?'

'Working on it. Not a problem. All under control.' His voice broke off with a cry of pain. The Doctor's face was suddenly white in a flash of sparks. 'Right,' he went on after a moment, 'that'll be the live one then. Nearly there now.'

Rose waited as the lights continued to flash and flicker.

'OK, lied about that, sorry,' the Doctor said. He was sucking his fingers. 'Not even close. The whole thing's gone barmy. That's a technical term, by the way. Barmy - means, well, barmy really. Tell you what...' His head ducked down behind the console and there was a scraping sound - a drawer opening perhaps? Then a rasping Rose recognised as the tear of a match head across the rough side of the box. A tiny flare of light as the Doctor stood up again, holding a match. 'Got it!'

'A match? All right, a whole box of matches. That's not very high-tech.'

'Works, though. No moving parts, no electrical circuits to be affected by the EMP. In case the lights go out and so I can see to work properly without the flickery do-dahs.'

'Right. So how long's that match going to last?'

'For ever.' He picked his way carefully across to her like he was dancing over stepping stones and held the match up close to her face so she could get a good look at it.

'What?'

'Everlasting match. Look - not burning down.'

'That's impossible.'

He grinned at her through the flame. 'Can't have had breakfast yet, then. It's made of Umbeka wood. From the Umbeka trees that grow on the planet...' He sucked in his cheeks as he tried to remember. 'The planet... The planet Umbeka. It has a long, cold, wet winter, lasts for centuries. But the summer's only a couple of weeks.'

'Sounds like England.'

'Much the same. Only the summer, when it does come, is hot. *Really* hot. The heat stimulates the wood and it grows.'

She understood now. 'So the wood of the match is still growing?'

'Yeah, stimulated by the heat of the flames, it grows at just the same rate as it's consumed by the fire. Neat, huh?'

'Yeah. Neat.'

'Good system. Just what you need on a planet with a long winter - everlasting firewood. Ecologically pretty sound too.'

'Just one question,' Rose told him.

'Anything - ask me anything. I'm an Umbeka expert. Got top grade in Umbeka, me.'

'How's it help us get the TARDIS working properly again?'

'Ah.'

'Ah,' she echoed.

'Er.'

'Er? Is "er" good? Doesn't sound good.'

'Well, no, not completely good. Good-ish. We either need to wait for the EMP to stop, which it doesn't seem is going to happen any time soon. Or we need to move the TARDIS out of its influence.'

'And how do we do that?'

'Oh, loads of possibilities there. Spaceship, lorry, fork-lift truck. Maybe a team of highly trained squirrels. We'd need a lot of them, mind.'

Rose was watching the match as it didn't burn down. 'Doesn't that mean going outside?'

'Mmm.'

'Through the doors that aren't opening because all the controls are knackered?'

'Mmm. Another technical term there, like it.'

'Into a nuclear... whatsit.'

The Doctor's head bobbed about as he considered this, then settled into a nodding motion. 'Exciting, isn't it? I'd better find some anti-radiation pills. Wonder where I put those. Under A for Anti-radiation maybe. Or R for

Radiation.’ He clicked his tongue loudly and rapidly before hurrying back to the console across the imaginary stepping stones.

‘Could be P for Pills,’ Rose suggested.

‘T for Tablets,’ he countered.

‘W for Whatsit.’

He sighed. ‘Blast.’

‘Yeah, could be under B,’ Rose agreed.

‘No, I meant *blast*. As in, they could be anywhere.’ He pulled open a little drawer on the console, apparently at random. ‘Yep – here they are.’ He took out what looked suspiciously like a plastic box of Tic Tac mints. ‘Right, next it’s D for doors,’ he decided as he passed her a small pale pill. ‘Since the door control now seems to turn the scanner on and off. Or possibly it’s C for Crank.’

There was a crank handle in a cupboard close to the main doors. Rose watched with a mixture of amusement and apprehension as the Doctor fitted it into a small socket under the telephone and began to turn. She was holding the match so he could see what he was doing as the lights continued to flicker and fade and flash around them. The pill the Doctor had given her was bitter and chewy – like a small, lemon-flavoured fruit gum. It seemed to take for ever to get rid of it – everlasting tablet, maybe. The doors creaked and groaned as he turned the handle.

‘So what else can cause this EMP thing, apart from a nuclear explosion?’

‘Oh, lots of things. Like, you know...’ He continued to turn the handle and the doors juddered and began to move. ‘Could be... well, anything really. Like I said. Lots of things.’

‘Give me a for-instance.’

‘What, off the top of my head?’

‘Off anywhere you like.’

There was a gap between the doors now. Outside looked dark, but not as dark as in the TARDIS.

The Doctor paused to get his breath back. 'Can you get through there?' he asked, meaning the narrow gap between the doors.

'Only in my dreams,' Rose told him.

'I probably can,' he said. 'Only teasing.' He set back to work. 'Outside,' he went on, more seriously, 'is probably a wasteland. Be prepared for that. Aftermath of a war on this scale isn't much fun. People suffering dreadfully, if they've even survived. Death, destruction, devastation. Lots of "D" words really. Bit of a disaster.'

The gap was wide enough now and Rose squeezed through. She stood just outside the door and stared at the scene in front of her. It was night, stars shining brightly above her, and the scene illuminated by what looked like gas lamps. She blew out the match.

'I can see something,' Rose said loudly, 'that doesn't begin with D.'

'What?'

'I think it's a pub.' She gingerly touched the business end of the Doctor's everlasting match. It was cool, so she pushed it into her jacket pocket.

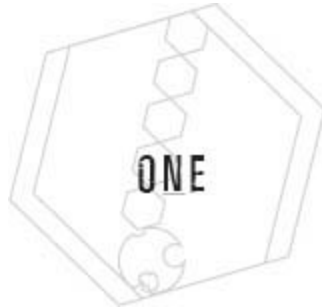
A shadowy figure was heading their way. The TARDIS was in a narrow street with high brick walls on either side. There was just about room for the figure to get past.

There was a lamp on a bracket high on the wall and, as the man stepped under it, Rose expected to see signs of the terrible mutilation or burns from the explosion. The man hesitated, looked up, and stared straight at Rose. His face was weathered and old, his beard grey and matted, and what hair he had left was in tufts round the edge of his balding head.

'Good grog, that,' he rasped. 'Do a good pint in the Spyglass, they do.' Then he gave her a short wave and carried on down the street.

'Well, I didn't expect this,' came the Doctor's enthusiastic voice from beside her. 'Pleasant surprise, isn't

it?' Rose watched as the Doctor's grin slowly changed to a puzzled frown. 'So I wonder what's up with the TARDIS,' he said.



ROSE WAS SAVED from having to answer the Doctor by the click of the TARDIS's doors closing behind him.

'Safety measure,' the Doctor said sadly. 'Keeps the interior in stasis till she gets back to normal.'

'So they close themselves till you open them again?' That seemed sensible.

'Yes, well. Not quite.' The Doctor peered into the distance, avoiding Rose's gaze. 'Absolutely correct, right up to the bit about opening them again.' His voice was fading as he walked briskly away and Rose ran to catch up with him - in time to hear him say, 'Once the doors are shut, they stay shut.'

'Stay shut? What, for ever, like the match?'

'No. That would be daft. Just till she can repair her systems and get everything working properly again.'

'And let me guess, we can't open them with that starting-handle thing either. Because that would be daft.'

'No, completely wrong. We can't open them with the starting-handle thing because it's still inside.'

'And so the plan is, what exactly?'

They were at the end of the alley, looking out across a busy courtyard that was much better lit than the alley. People were hurrying back and forth, carrying crates and boxes, pushing small trolleys, shouting and cursing.

'Market?' the Doctor wondered. 'Plan is to find out what's emitting the constant pulses, and stop it. Then the TARDIS will sort itself out and we'll be on our way. Easy.'

'Easy,' Rose echoed. 'And s'pose we can't? S'pose it's something important that we can't turn off?'

'Can't be anything too important. I mean, look - level-two stuff at most here. Low technology, pre-electricity.' His eyes narrowed and he nodded slowly. 'I think this is a port. Probably, what, eighteenth century. Might be Bristol.'

'Did they have steam power in the eighteenth century?' Rose asked.

'Just about. Pretty rudimentary but they were getting there. Why?'

Rose just pointed. Across the square, the crowds of people were parting to make way for something. Rose had heard it before she saw it - puffing and blowing, wheels rattling over the cobbles. Then the clouds of white steam. Finally the vehicle appeared through its own mist - metal, squat, functional and bland. It was just a large barrel of a boiler on heavy metal wheels, with huge pistons angled down between the body and the axles. It was pulling a long trailer loaded with crates.

'That is just a bit more sophisticated than I'd have expected,' the Doctor conceded. 'Let's see where it's going.'

The vehicle was turning in a wide arc which brought it quite close to where the Doctor and Rose were standing. As it passed, they were enveloped in warm, oily steam. The steam cleared, leaving the Doctor standing alone, looking round in confusion.

'Rose?' he shouted.

She waved to him from where she was perched on the back of the low trailer. 'Come on! Who knows how far this thing's going? I'm not traipsing miles through the night after it. Might be going to Carlisle.'

They sat side by side, swinging their legs. Rose watched the people as they passed them. The Doctor was right, the place seemed like a busy seaport. Maybe they were headed for the docks to load a ship.

The Doctor was leaning back against a crate and looking up at the sky. 'I don't think we're going to Carlisle,' he said at last.

'York?' Rose suggested.

He shook his head. 'Stars are wrong. And there's no moon.' He sat up straight again. 'This isn't Earth.'

'You're kidding.'

As she spoke, the trailer drew alongside a wall and stopped. Except it wasn't a wall. It was a vertical sheet of riveted metal. It stretched high above Rose and the Doctor. She looked up - and up - until she could make out the shape of the entire ship.

'OK, so you're not kidding,' Rose admitted. 'Wonder where we are, then. And when.'

It was certainly a ship. Smoke was rising lazily from several funnels; masts and rigging projected from the hull. But it was all at a crazy angle - as if someone had stood a steamship on its back end. And at the bottom, below the level of the quay where Rose and the Doctor were climbing off the trailer, they could see massive exhaust nozzles.

'Top half a mix of steam and sailing ship,' Rose said. 'Bottom half, space shuttle. Does that mean what I think it does?'

The Doctor's answer was drowned out by the noise. It came from further along the quay, where Rose could now see there were more of the strange metal vessels moored. One of them was shaking, steam erupting suddenly from beneath it. The masts slowly folded downwards until they were flat against the side of the metal deck.

'Amazing,' the Doctor shouted above the building rush and roar of the steam. 'To get that much thrust...' He whistled in appreciation.