



**Doctor Who**  
Christmas Day 6.00pm BBC1

**S**O THERE'S ME, in a hotel room in LA, and suddenly there's a phone call. And someone's telling me about a volcano in Iceland and that I won't be going home for a long while. And not only that, just to twist the knife, it's Christmas Day.

Not actual Christmas Day, you understand – this being April – but Christmas Day on my computer. Because, yes, at long last, after years of longing, I'm writing a Christmas Special! And because I've been an exceptionally good boy, and kept way off that naughty list, it's *Doctor Who*!

On the up side, I'm confined to a room with a bed and a desk, and that's a good place to be if you're writing. On the down side...

...well have you seen LA? It's not a proper city! It's not even trying. It's just all roads and cars and nobody on the sidewalks. It's like a motorway intersection without the atmosphere. You go for a walk there and street after boring street, you see no one. If it was one of those movies where a guy wakes up, and everyone else is gone, or dead, it would take the hero three days to notice. (And yes, there may be other parts to LA, but this was where I was stuck, and I didn't have a map or a clue, so I stayed there.)

And, me, I'm trying to think Christmas! Crunchy snow and roaring fires! Scarves and stamping your feet warm and spicy wine and mince pies. Clearly I was in the wrongest place ever! Two days of writing nothing, and I took emergency measures. I downloaded every Christmas song I could find, closed all the curtains, and turned up the air conditioning to Doctor Zhivago, and sat at my desk in a big coat and mittens. And I thought of the Rules of Christmas Movies. Here's what I came up with.

## 1 Santa Claus is real

And I don't mean as an idea or a legend or, God help us, a brand – I mean as a fat man in red, living at the North Pole with elves and flying reindeer. He's not a legend, or a story – he's just a nice guy with a beard who, once a year, on a whim, happens to give presents to children all over the world in a single night. Frankly, if there were 364 more men like him, we'd all wake up a lot happier every day. Really good Christmas movies affirm this simple truth. And anyway, surely if any man was likely to be a personal friend of the Doctor's, it would be him? They're probably up there right now, in the snow, high-fiving and laughing about sledges and police boxes, and who's loonier!

## 2 There should be flying

I don't mean in a plane, or a helicopter or something boring like that. I mean flying like you do in your dreams over towns at night, round chimneys, through washing lines, with people looking up and laughing because they can't believe their eyes. ▷

# Doctor Who is coming to town!

Steven Moffat, the man behind *Sherlock* and *Doctor Who*, reveals the four secrets of a classic Christmas special

**FESTIVE SPECTACULAR**

### THE FLYING DOCTOR

The Time Lord (Matt Smith) takes Kazran Sardick (Michael Gambon) and Abigail (Katherine Jenkins) for a night-time ride over Sardicktown



TURN OVER FOR MATT SMITH'S SECRETS... ▶



### 3 Snow!

Because this is a meteorological fact that I can prove with graphs and lying. It snows EVERY CHRISTMAS DAY. Oh, shut up, what do you know?? Forget what actually happens, nothing could matter less. Every Christmas morning, when you throw open your curtains, the world is covered in a giant white napkin, and even though they aren't actually open, schools close anyway.

### 4 The greatest Christmas story is *A Christmas Carol*...

...and there's no point trying to beat it. Hmm. Number 4 was a sore point. Because we all know that Charles Dickens is a personal friend of the Doctor's, so he obviously couldn't find himself re-enacting his mate's biggest hit, without noticing. It drove me mad, that one, as I paced my LA ice cavern, living only on roast chestnuts sold to me by street urchins (actually, I'm starting to wonder if those were real). The answer, of course, was obvious. And available to you on Christmas Day!

It's a very different adventure for the Doctor. The man who saves planets has to save a soul. Instead of fighting a monster, he's going to cure one.

"Instead of fighting a monster, the Doctor's going to cure one"



But just in case you think you're in for an easy ride, keep an eye on the fog – because I wouldn't be a bit surprised if there was something in them.

And keep that space clear behind the sofa – because in a very few months the new series is coming, and darker days for the Doctor and his friends. Silence will fall! River Song will, at long last, introduce herself. The true nature of the relationship between Amy Pond and her Doctor will be revealed. And most importantly, a good man will die – a good man, and a hero to many.

But that's for later! For now, Santa is real, flying is fun, snow is inevitable, and for goodness sake, watch your step in the fog...

MARK HARRISON

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## Matt: I believe in aliens

**Can you pick out three highlights from the past 12 months, things you couldn't have done without being a Time Lord?**

I travelled first class on a plane! Performed at the Albert Hall. Went on stage at Glastonbury. How's that?

**And you now believe in extra-terrestrial life?**  
Absolutely. I'd be a charlatan playing this man if I didn't. Having spent so much time thinking about aliens, and being an alien. There's definitely life out there.

**At Glastonbury you were on stage with Orbital as they performed the *Doctor Who* theme. What exactly were you doing?**

[Laughs.] I was fiddling! Turning up equalisers, pressing a piano that obviously was playing stuff! I was looking very busy. Just doing a bit of acting really. Actually, I was very nervous. I just thought there would be loads of people dancing to Orbital going, "Who the hell's this guy? Get him off!" Of course it was a real fun moment, and something I'll never get to do again. To be that side of the stage and looking over at Glastonbury, it's the closest I'll ever get to being a rock star.

**Following David Tennant as the Doctor can't have been easy, but you seem to have won people over as the series has progressed.**

I never set out with the intention to win people over, because I couldn't; it would have damaged every artistic instinct in me. So I always just set out with my instinct and being true to that. You hear about the press reaction from other people – I never read reviews. Either I'm Daniel Day-Lewis or I'm toilet, and all the stuff in between is irrelevant. And I'm far too sensitive and far too vain to be able to take the abuse on the internet.

**You must have developed a sense, though, of how your interpretation was being received?**

Actually, that has really been the coolest thing this year. I've met little boys of eight or nine and they'll see you and suddenly there's a silence and then, "Whoa! You're Doctor Who. Are you real? Wow!" And you know what? It's nothing to do with me – it's that character, that show.

**Where did you watch the first episode?**

We had a bit of a knees-up round at Steven Moffat's house. You're in a room full of 15 people



#### AGELESS APPEAL

As played by Matt Smith, the Doctor's childlike wonder makes him an ideal Christmas companion

you love, who have no other way but to be honest with you. It's the first time they've seen this thing, and you're waiting on getting the laughs and the aahs in the right place. It's exposing, but we got through it.

**It's been reported that you've boosted the sales of bow ties, tweed and even fezzes.**

I don't how they are doing but I was pleased to see lots of people with fezzes at the Albert Hall! I encourage it wholeheartedly. Apparently, Harris tweed has done quite well out of it.

**Did you know how they make tweed? Soaking the cloth in urine to make it thicker?**

I didn't. I tell you what, though, tweed is warm, and it keeps you dry. Ironically. I am partial to a bit of urine-drenched cloth!

**How do you feel the Doctor will develop?**

It's funny. We talked about the Doctor at the start and I didn't really know him. Now I can talk about him all day. I think I'm going to try and really push the boundaries of what the part is.

**Which three people would you most like to spend an evening with down the pub?**

Sinatra, Einstein and Cantona. I'm not a fan of Man U, but I'm a Cantona fan because he made football theatre. So, Eric if you're listening, come on, be in the next series! John Naughton

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Repeats of the 2006, 2007 and 2008 Christmas specials, with David Tennant's tenth Doctor.

**A Christmas Carol** Boxing Day **BBC Radio 7**

Go back to the original Dickens story with this 1990 dramatisation, starring Michael Gough.

**Flying Monsters** Christmas Day **Sky1, Sky 3D**

Got 3D at home? Then this spectacular David Attenborough documentary is surely a must-see.