Santa showdown

Father Christmas teams up with Doctor Who and Clara to battle fearsome festive foes at the North Pole
Santa to the rescue

The Time Lord has an unlikely ally in

DOCTOR WHO
Christmas Day (BBC1, 5.30pm)

In the ultimate meeting of two Christmas icons, Doctor Who teams up with Santa Claus for this snowbound special that’s sure to charm and chill fans in equal measure. Nick Frost plays the portly purveyor of gifts, who crashes his flying sleigh into the roof of Clara’s home. The Doctor’s companion, played by Jenna Coleman, is delighted to meet the bearded jolly gift-giver. However, when the Time Lord himself turns up, he’s somewhat less thrilled to see Santa: “He and Doctor Who are at each other’s throats,” Nick, 42, explains. “There’s some kind of long-standing beef between them.” Peter Capaldi, who plays the 12th Doctor, expands on their festive feud. “There’s conflict and competitiveness,” he says. “They both feel that they’re unfairly accused of being fictional characters.” “It’s great because this is the very first time the Doctor has come face-to-face with Santa. It’s not an evil robot or an alien merely dressed as Father Christmas – it’s the real deal.” Despite their chilly relationship, the Doc and Santa soon have to put aside their rivalry when a greater threat looms. Trapped on an Arctic base in sub-zero conditions, The Time Lord and Peter, 56, ‘Viewers will see lots of seasonal set-pieces such as sleigh rides... and the Christmas tradition of being attacked by an army of zombies in the snow! The threat from the monsters – the Sleepers and Dream Crabs – is very powerful, deceptive and lethal.’

Father Christmas when he and Clara are attacked by slimy creatures on an Arctic base

In recent weeks, rumours have suggested that this will be Jenna Coleman’s last appearance as Clara. But Peter refuses to give too much away about his co-star’s future, or whether Clara will be killed off. “Is she going?” he muses. “Hmm, you’ll have to wait and see. Clara is in a lot of danger and some strange things happen to her.” Since the classic sci-fi series was re-booted in 2005, the annual seasonal special has become as much a fixture of Christmas Day as turkey and the Queen’s speech. Although Peter made a brief appearance in the 2013 festive adventure, when his predecessor Matt Smith bowed out, this is his first proper special – and the Relong Doctor Who honours to be part of a show watched by around 10–12 million viewers.

In previous years I’d built December 25 around Dr Who,” he admits. “Little did I know that one day I’d be the star of it myself.” “And when I was a kid I wouldn’t always get a Doctor Who annual as a gift, but just the other day I wandered past a newsagent and was stunned to see my face on the cover of this year’s, so I’ll be very proud to add that to my collection.” Nick Frost adds, “I’ll be watching myself on Christmas Day, Me and my wife Christmas will tune in, and enjoy a glass of Bristol Cream.”