THE DOCTOR'S
WOMEN

Hurrah, Rose is back! As the companions draw together in the build-up to the series finale, we ask what makes them so important to the Doctor

Rose Tyler (Billie Piper)

"The Doctor and Rose just complete each other," says Davies. "She had a humdrum life, wandering around the world, even under the threat of a new relationship. She's self-absorbed - superficial, brash and perceiving herself only in terms of her marital status. This week's episode shows what would have happened if the Doctor hadn't liberated her from that."

"The Doctor's companions are our eyes and ears, our gateway into the Doctor's extraordinary world," says Russell T Davies (left). "He needs companionship, as they are his family."

In return, the Doctor offers his companions the trip of a lifetime. "He changes their lives, mostly for the better," says Davies. "Whether it's a man, woman, alien or robot dog", the single woman companion tends to be the show's staple. Rose Tyler (far right) returns this season, having left Rose Tyler (far right) returns this season, having left the Doctor out of the Ninth, which forecaster Benjamin Cook believes is the Doctor's fault. While this season of the show is a trip of a lifetime, Rose Tyler has turned her site on the Doctor and the whole planet is about to fall into a black hole, the murderous Ood are on the rampage... but still she won't leave. "The Doctor and Rose just complete each other," says Davies. "She had a humdrum life, wandering around the world, even under the threat of a new relationship. She's self-absorbed - superficial, brash and perceiving herself only in terms of her marital status. This week's episode shows what would have happened if the Doctor hadn't liberated her from that."
"Martha came along at just the right moment for the Doctor," says Russell T Davies, "when his heart was broken after losing Rose. They forged a brilliant friendship, underscored by absolute trust - the tragedy being that she fell quietly in love with him, and he barely noticed." He laughs, before adding, "Who hasn't been there?"

The irony, then, is that Martha meant everything to the Doctor, except what she wanted. "Yes, but that's hardly his fault. If anything, that brought out his alien side, his sheer inability to cope with ordinary human relationships. No matter how wonderful and dazzling he might seem, he's still an alien, from a different time and place, and he still has so much more to learn about people.

"By this series, it's a measure of how much Martha's relationship with the Doctor has matured that they don't need to miss each other; she's got him on tap, at the end of a phone! Her mobile is still on board the Tardis. When she needs him, she rings. He's never allowed anyone else to do that." Martha has already called him home to fight the Sontarans, and Davies hints that the phone will be "very important" to the series finale.

Martha Jones (Freema Agyeman)

"She's had a right old journey!" says Freema Agyeman of her character. She's not wrong. Seconded to Unit (the military/scientific elite), battling for Torchwood and back at the Doctor's side recently when the Sontarans threatened Earth - it's all in a season's work for the doctor with a small 'd' but a big heart.

"Inevitably she's harder, just because of all she went through," Agyeman explains. "It affected her so much that she decided not to travel with the Doctor any more, because she needed to concentrate on her own life. When you see her again, she looks more capable of doing alien investigations solo. She's continued to develop her knowledge, based on Earth and working with Unit, she's in a relationship and her family are close by. So she's a lot more grounded.

Martha's return comes next week, when the two-part finale line-up suggests a Doctor surrounded by adoring females: Martha, Donna, Rose, Sarah Jane... "And Captain Jack!" laughs Agyeman. "Actually, it doesn't quite work like that. There's a lot going on and there's a wonderful moment that just emphasises how much he needs them all in different ways, and how they are very much part of a team within his life. It was really great to be a part of that." Nick Griffiths

"She looks more capable of doing alien investigations solo" Freema Agyeman
Donna Noble (Catherine Tate)

"The Doctor and Donna are the best of friends in the whole of time and space," says Davies. "A good mate, to laugh with, to run with, and to battle the enemies alongside. There's none of that fancying nonsense with Donna! She brings out the Doctor's sense of fun, but she's brilliant at bringing him down to earth. She's a breath of fresh air, after the intensity of Rose and the complications of Martha. I think Donna is the first one to truly understand him. He can be completely honest with her, admitting when he's scared, or lost, or powerless."

It's taken the Doctor a long time to find this best friend — but can he keep her? "Huge events are in store for Donna," promises Davies. "The returning companions have incredible status — as the finale swings into action, we've got Rose, with her ability to stride parallel worlds, alongside Captain Jack and his Torchwood team, plus Martha with the military might of UNIT behind her, and Sarah Jane with her alien-busting career — and yet it's still Donna at the heart of events. The ordinary human! It's what Doctor Who is all about." BC

Catherine on Donna

Doctor Who's end-of-season episodes find Donna fighting for survival. And this week's episode Turn Left, says Catherine Tate, "will show Donna very much stepping up to the plate. Really rising to the occasion. What that occasion is, I can't say."

Donna's changed. The harridan in a meringue from 2006's Christmas special, The Runaway Bride, has, like the companions before her, found a sense of purpose. When the chips are down, she's no longer content to add them to the wedding menu. "Donna's learnt to trust herself," says Tate. "She learnt that she isn't silly. I think she had her eyes opened."

"In The Runaway Bride there was this brilliant speech Russell wrote in which her fiancé (played by Don Gilet), summed her up: that the height of excitement for her was a new-flavoured Pringle. 'Text me, Big Brother, text me!' She was into her pop culture and that was kind of it. And as the stories unfolded, all of that was stripped away and she became hungry for more adventure. She realised what a fantastic opportunity this was for her."

"The Doctor is not unaccustomed to people seeing him through a rose-coloured tint. Donna doesn't do that with him, so she brings him down to earth. They're very blunt with each other, so she allows him to be more of himself."

"She says to Martha at one point, 'I'm never going to stop wanting to do this' — because all the companions get to a point where they know it's time to go. But she says, 'I'm going to travel with that man [the Doctor] for the rest of my life.' She doesn't tire of it, she will never tire of it." NG

DEFINING SCENE

"For me," says Davies, "it's in this week's episode, Turn Left, when Donna returns to the circle of mirrors. It's the most blazing performance from Catherine, so full of fear and hope and bravery. It's just about my favourite performance in anything I've ever done. Even then, it's still fry compared to what she does in the final episode ... but let's not get ahead of ourselves!"

"As the stories unfolded, she became hungry for more adventure" Catherine Tate

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