STALKER HELL
THE MAN WHOSE LIFE WAS DESTROYED BY A ONE-NIGHT STAND

KATE FORD'S CORRIE COUGAR SECRETS

FINAL COUNTDOWN
MATT SMITH AND KAREN GILLAN ON THE EXPLOSIVE END TO THEIR OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD ADVENTURE
Matt Smith spills all on the return of the Doctor, *almost* being Sherlock and how he'll cope without co-star Karen Gillan

WORDS PAUL SIMPER

**EVERYTHING TO DO WITH THE NEW**

*Doctor Who* series is cloaked in secrecy - but then, that's all part of the show's timeless thrill, isn't it? We've lost count of the number of times over the years Matt Smith has teased us with a smile and told us he could reveal a gripping new twist... but if he did, he'd have to kill us.

Which makes the story he's divulging to *TV Magazine*, while cheerily supping tea in a carefully secured room at the show's Cardiff HQ, all the more extraordinary.

"We were auditioning for the Doctor's new companion in the deepest bowels of the BBC," he says. "It was all top secret. We'd been filming with these wonderful actresses for three or four hours, when we heard a cough from behind a partition. We looked behind it and there was this security guard sitting there with his feet up."

Matt laughs incredulously. "We said: 'Man, do you know what this is we're doing here?' He was like: 'What?' Of course he's never been seen again. I called the Daleks up and said: 'I've got a favour to ask, boys...'

Sensibly heeding that warning, we wouldn't dare reveal the mind-blowing secret that lies behind the first episode of the new seventh series, *Asylum Of The Daleks*. The opener marks the beginning of the final five episodes featuring the much-loved Amy Pond (Karen Gillan) and her stout-hearted husband Rory (Arthur Darvill) - before the Time Lord will be joined at Christmas by new assistant Clara Oswin, played by former *Emmerdale* star Jenna-Louise Coleman.

"This series is all about the fall of the Ponds," says Matt, whose *Doctor Who* journey started the same time as Karen and Arthur's in April 2010, when he replaced David Tennant. "That's where we start - saying goodbye to our friends. The read-through for the episode where we say goodbye was very emotional, and I'll be sad to see them go. But one has to embrace change in *Doctor Who* otherwise it leaves you behind. So it's business as usual. Forward is the only way to look. We're just intent on making our last episodes together the very best they can be for our journey to come to its climax."

**TIME FLIES**

And *TV Magazine* is delighted to be watching that unfold before our eyes on a chilly April day at Bute Esplanade, a quiet corner of Cardiff Bay that's the exterior location of Amy's mid-Victorian terraced home. As we watch Matt attacking the TARDIS' controls with his usual enthusiastic vigour, it's hard to recall a time when he wasn't the Time Lord.

"I remember when me and Karen were sat in a restaurant in Cardiff with Alex Kingston [who plays River Song] a week before our first scene two years ago," says Matt. "Alex said: 'You have no idea what's going to happen to you, do you?' "That's what it was like with Jenna-Louise at her audition. I just tried to put all the
After two epic years, it’s almost time to say goodbye to Doctor Who. How was filming your final episode? It’s always a long day and this one was no exception, but there was this just really serene feel. It hit us when we wrapped on our final ever scene. All three of us were in the TARDIS and Matt pulled the door for the last time and we all just kind of broke. It was the craziest thing actually.

We’ve heard the final read-through was emotional, too... I couldn’t physically get the words out. Then I looked up and most of the women in the room were crying as well and it just really set me off. Then Matt was patting me on the back just trying to support me.

Even now, can you get your head round the fame the show has brought? It’s difficult to get completely used to something like that. There was a moment when we were filming in New York when I’d just joined Twitter and Steven Moffat joked: “Imagine if you hadn’t turned your email notifications off!” [By default, Twitter emails you when you gain a follower.] Of course I hadn’t. I was like: “Oh no, guys! My emails!”

Steven, Matt and Arthur just laughed at me for about five minutes non-stop. I’ve abandoned that email account...

Who has helped you keep your feet on the ground? My family are so down to earth. If I ever got above my station they wouldn’t have it. And my friends don’t really care about it, they’re so down to earth. If I ever got above my station they wouldn’t have it. And my friends don’t really care about it, which is really nice. But it’s been weird – like living a double life.

Is there anything you wish you’d known before this whole adventure began? If anything, I wouldn’t want to know what it’s going to be like. That’s why I didn’t want to push too much advice on Jenna-Louise Coleman. I was like: “You’ve got to see this for yourself – it is the best thing ever!”

And did Jenna-Louise have any questions for you? No, not really. We’ve been texting each other a bit and she’s been winding Matt up with the fact we’re in cahoots. So that’s good – I’m still getting to him even when I’m not there! It’s like a conspiracy of companions.

What makes a good companion? A bit of naughtiness and mischief. I love the fact that it’s a strong female role, rather than just chasing round after a man.

But this show is so much about Steven’s thinking: ‘Oh my God, these poor girls.’

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Were you given any nice leaving gifts? Arthur and I got these massive pictures of ourselves, which was kind of strange! I feel a bit weird having a big picture of myself in my house, so it’s just leaning against the wall. All of Amy’s outfits are in exhibitions, though, so I’ll come back for them when nobody cares about Amy any more. Oh, and I stole the binoculars from the TARDIS...

Has it been hard to keep the secrets of what’s going to happen from your family? I don’t think Dad knows what’s going on anyway, but my mum is a massive fan of the show and is relentlessly badgering me for answers. I’m not saying a single word!

So, what’s next? I’m making a film called Not Another Happy Ending – I play a writer who works better when she’s a bit unhappy. I’ve also decided that I’m going to learn to drive.