

Your fantastic ten-page *RT* guide to the Christmas special!

EXCLUSIVE

Russell T Davies sets the Christmas scene

SEEING STARS

Interviews with David Tennant and Billie Piper

DOC FIGHT

Our amazing picture of the Doctor v the evil Sycorax!

ON LOCATION

We were there with the cast and crew

SUPER

EXCLUSIVE

Win a real Dalek – as seen on TV! See p46



THE
CHRISTMAS

INVASION

Christmas Day BBC1

Can't wait for Christmas Day? For a sneak preview of some of the action, just turn the page...

I'm dreaming of a RIGHT Christmas

Beware Santas bearing gifts! **Russell T Davies**, the writer who magically regenerated *Doctor Who*, sets the scene for the Christmas Day spectacular...

A killer Christmas tree! Deadly Santa assassins! Alien spies disguised as a brass band, complete with flame-throwing trombone! What else could this be, but *Doctor Who*? For me, that's always been its speciality – taking the ordinary world and twisting it, finding nightmares in the everyday. And with a surplus of tinsel, elves and jollity, what could be more sinister than Christmas itself?

2005 turned out to be a remarkable year, even for a Time Lord. Way back in January, the production team was covering in the caves of BBC Wales, dreading a big, loud, public failure. It seemed like some grand folly – an old, dead sci-fi show, revived in primetime? Madness! I had my bags packed and a one-way ticket to Albuquerque in my fist, ready to flee. But to everyone's surprise, people seemed to welcome back that rarest of things, a genuine TV hero. The Tardis came home. Christopher Eccleston and Billie Piper burnt their way across the screen, reinventing the concept of Doctor and companion. Best of all, we attracted an audience of children.

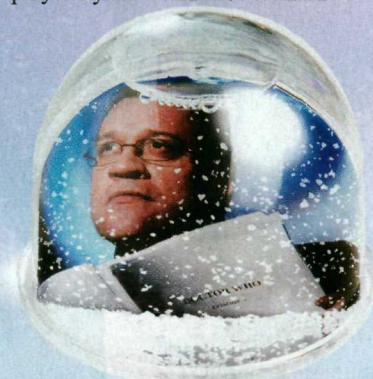
Recently, I attended a book signing in Cardiff, and I asked the kids: "What's your favourite monster?" It was astonishing to see so many faces light up with glee, all saying, "Daleks!" I'd worried that in this day and age, those old pepperpots might be obsolete, vanquished by Middle Earth and Harry Potter. But good ideas never die. Their metal malice has found a new generation of fans, kids who will still shiver or smile at the word "Exterminate!" in 80 years' time.

As a result of all this, I got my Christmas present early – a commission for a brand-new, 60-minute *Doctor Who* special. It took zero-point-six seconds to think of the title, *The Christmas Invasion*. Those three words just sum up the whole thrill of *Doctor Who* – the familiar and the dangerous jammed together to make something new.

Now, I'm a fool for Christmas. Stick a bit of holly on it, and I'm there. I've seen them all, I've lapped them up, every *Only Fools and Horses*, every BBC2

late-night ghost story, every *Lovejoy Goes to Prague*. No kidding, I refuse to do anything in that week between Christmas Day and New Year in case I miss some cartoon about a panda who's lost his stocking. So I knew right away what this script had to contain: Christmas, and lots of it.

By coincidence, it's exactly 40 years since *Doctor Who* was last broadcast on Christmas Day. That 1965 episode, *The Feast of Steven*, was something of a yuletide romp, in which the Doctor, played by the wonderful William



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Russell T Davies

Hartnell, actually turned to the camera and said: "A happy Christmas to all of you at home." In 2005, I didn't want to go quite that far. I wanted a proper adventure, and a proper threat on a worldwide scale, with added danger, laughs and heartbreak – because this is also the advent of a brand-new Doctor. With David Tennant now at the helm of the Tardis, bringing a wholly different dynamic to the show, we decided to make the story even more epic.

For the cast and crew, Christmas came in July. Which meant that our production base, Cardiff, had no choice but to join in. They're getting used to us now in old Caerdydd. They barely blinked as we decked the city centre with tinsel and then, in true *Doctor Who* style, blew it all up. Passers-by smiled and trudged

happily through the fake snow. And here's a funny thing – people see snow and think it's cold, even in summer. They shiver and stamp their feet! I wanted to tell them it was fake, that the snow was made of paper – except I was too busy flapping my arms to keep warm. But then the aliens arrived on set, and you can guarantee that as soon as some poor actor steps forward with his face covered in suffocating latex – take a bow, Sean Gilder, as Leader of the Sycorax – the temperature will rocket. Oh, he sweltered inside that suit! It's one of the inviolable laws of *Doctor Who* that heat increases in direct proportion to the number of people you've got zipped into monsters. I swear we could solve the UK's energy problem – just dress everyone up as a Zogronaut, and the sun will shine all day.

Right now, at the time of writing, the episode's almost finished. The final digital effects are being put in place – including a vast and very different spaceship, the spookiness of Blood Control, and the Tardis's most spectacular landing ever. And as soon as that's done, the production team hasn't got time to pause – we're forging on, since we've been commissioned to make two more series, stretching all the way into 2007 and hopefully beyond.

But for all the monsters, stunts and scares, right at the heart of this new episode there's that most Christmassy of elements: home. If the Doctor lacks one thing in his remarkable life, it's family. But beyond the family you're born with there's the family you invent, cobbled together out of lovers, mates and kindred spirits. And now the Doctor has created exactly that, on a London council estate, with Rose Tyler, her mum Jackie and Rose's on-off boyfriend, Mickey. It's a daft, strange alliance of ordinary folk, who all rise to the occasion because their lives have been touched by a Time Lord.

Mind you, I can't guarantee that this rackets group of humans and their regenerated friend will survive to see Boxing Day. This December, we're going to need the Doctor more than ever before, as hostile eyes turn towards the Earth. So good luck, everyone. Watch the skies. The invasion is coming!

