



**BBC TV Centre**  
 Commercially available by sale  
**Admit One**  
 Television Centre  
 Wood Lane  
 London W12

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**The Beat Room**  
 Doors open 7.0 pm  
 No admittance after 7.15 pm

EXCEPT FOR REMOVAL  
 OF SCENERY THIS DOOR  
 IS TO BE KEPT SHUT

**Barbara  
 in  
 WONDERLAND**

'As you,' said the Commissaire, with the satisfied smile of a man who had learnt to tell a Jake Box Jury from an International Concert Hall at a hundred yards. 'You're a BBC-2 Beat Room.' Barbara looked up at the building that towered like a space-age citadel above her, and tried to sound nonchalant. 'I have a ticket,' she said, fumbling for it in her otherwise empty green sling-bag. It might easily have been an airline ticket for a flight round the world—a trip to the moon... 'Of course, of course,' said the Commissaire rapidly, leaning to one side as if already looking for some more interesting customer. 'It's over there. Through that door, straight on, and follow your ears.'

Barbara had never been to the building before. It had hitherto been just an idea, a kind of floating cloud always beyond the horizon, full of faces and noises, of names and titles, the home of the watching, waiting, smiling, frowning, playing, laughing, wrath-pale figures of the unreal daily world who lived in a crackling blue light in the walnut box in the living room. Somehow she had never expected the bricks to be bricks, and the glass to be glass; or the doors in the corridor to open and shut if you pushed and pulled. Somehow she had never expected the clocks to be right or notices to be pinned on boards, or fire buckets full of sand and cigarette ends to lie around in passages... For a moment she stood and tried to recollect her thoughts. There were no signs saying 'The Beat Room'; nothing or no one to suggest that if you opened any one of the countless doors you wouldn't find Ponderosa hard at it, or even Gardening Club getting ready.

'I'll have to be careful,' she thought, imagining the

fury she'd cause if she walked unthinking into the middle of the football results, or a *Black and White Menstruel Show*. And then, suddenly, she saw ahead of her what at first seemed to be a huge metal wall, but from behind which she could just pick out the thump and beat, the yeah-yeah and yay-yay that spelt Beat Room. Nervously, she pushed open the door: an inch or two at first—then more until she could see clearly into the studio. She held her breath. The floor was alive with people; the ceiling was burning with hot, white lights, the cameras moving in and about the dancers, the interfering busy-bodies anxious to spoil the fun; but—most surprising of all—the studio was bright with colour. This couldn't be the place, she decided. This couldn't be the Beat Room— that was always just grey and—

'Over here,' said a sharp voice from nowhere. 'You, with the white socks and the green bag—over here by the bar...'. A hand reached out from the crowd and pulled



"He's got slight indigestion," said Dr. Who, "you'll probably get it yourself. Now open your mouth."

"I beg your pardon, Weatherman. I'd no idea . . ." she stammered, feeling a sledge of high pressure tightening round her head—

"And what is more," he added loftily, "you've created an impossible anticyclonic condition (that) may well deteriorate—

"I'm sorry, but—"

"I shouldn't be surprised," he added thoughtfully, "if you haven't built up a Force 6 or 7 outside that may back during the night and give rise to even stronger winds in the morning."

"I hope not," said Barbara. "I mean, is there anything I can do to stop it happening?"

The Weatherman shook his head. "You'll be lucky," he said gloomily, "if you don't fall to well below freezing before midnight, especially if you're up on the roof of the Weather Centre."

Barbara crept slowly away, shivering a little, and to her alarm found outside a gale of weather symbols blowing and buffeting her as she struggled to get away from the chaos she had caused.

For the first time since arriving at the Television Centre she began to feel hungry. "That's funny," she thought, as she pushed against the wind, "I can't remember how long I've been here—an hour, a day, a week, a month—or even a year. I've got a kind of time-ache, like other people get head-aches."

"In that case, my dear," said a voice from close behind her, "you'd better come and have a cup of canteen tea."

"Dr. How," said Barbara, recognising him instantly, "Who did you get here?" She began to correct herself, but he tapped the side of his nose and winked. "My car," he said confidentially. "In spite of what people think, that police box is hopeless in traffic. After you, my dear."



An antique shop cluttered with meaningless Uric-a-brac