

THE BRIDGE
Christmas Special 2023
by
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TAN REVISIONS
29 September 2023

SOUNDTRACK:
Carol of the Bells.
Home Alone soundtrack by John Williams.
Sc. 18 & 19, Prince Ali, from Aladdin.

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EXT. THE CHURCH ON RUBY ROAD - NIGHT

1

NARRATOR

Once upon a time. Late, on
Christmas Eve. A woman came to the
church on Ruby Road.

WINTER. SNOW. Heavy flakes in the yellow glow of a
streetlight or two. Houses far-off in the background.

And a WOMAN.

She's wrapped up against the cold, carrying a BUNDLE. She
walks towards THE CHURCH. It's a beautiful, simple, classic
church, WINDOWS glowing with LIGHT. A TALL SPIRE with a
CROSS on top. A village church, a small CEMETERY.

From inside: CHORALS, Carol of the Bells, that haunting song.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

She carried in her arms, t

RUBY (CONT'D)

I just think, if I'

A MAN, dancing like crazy, middle of the floor. And there's just something about him. Joy. Happiness.

Life.

She smiles.

But DURING THIS...

Ruby reaches for her drink -

- knocks it over -

- and it's CAUGHT! By the MAN. He hands it back.

THE DOCTOR

Careful.

RUBY

Thank you. But. You were just over there.

He shows her the PSYCHIC PAPER.

THE DOCTOR

Health and Safety, gin and tonic division. Can I ask, d'you get that a lot? Knocking things over?

RUBY

All the time. I'm just clumsy.

THE

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The Doctor walks over to the BOX. The You

The policeman stands there.

Tan

LONG HALL running the entire length, with KITCHEN

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DAVINA

Hi, is that Ruby? It's Davina here, Davina McCall.

Sc. 11, KITCHEN, and Sc. 12, PRIVATE HOSPITAL, INTERCUT.

RUBY

Oh my God. Hello! Um. Merry Christmas. Nice to hear from you.

DAVINA

Look, it's not the best timing. And it's not good news, I'm sorry, I know it's your birthday, but... there's no trace of your mum or dad. I'm really sorry, we did warn you, it happens sometimes.

RUBY

No, that's fine. Thanks. But. Can you keep looking?

Ruby turns on the BABY MONITOR. But then turns away from it, staying on the phone. Being polite. As her heart quietly breaks. But unnoticed, in the BACKGROUND...

The Monitor's LIGHTS blink. A noise? A...

DAVINA

There's nothing more we can do. If your parents aren't on any sort of database... We can't find them.

RUBY

Okay. But. Isn't that unusual, though? Not a single trace anywhere? In the whole wide world? Like, my mother's never left a blood sample or anything?

DANET Qq 1 0 0 -1 0 792 cm BT 12 0 0 -12

WIDER on DAVINA: she's in a WHEELCHAIR with her LEG IN PLASTER, and ONE ARM in a SLING.

She's in RECEPTION of a smart PRIVATE HOSPITAL, NURSES coolly gliding in b/g. Behind Davina, a huge 12ft CHRISTMAS TREE. It has a big, heavy, sharp GOLD STAR on top.

RUBY

What d' you mean?

DAVINA

Bad. Luck.

(a bit manic)

Cos ever since that day. It's never stopped. I've been hit. I've been thrown. I've been bumped. I fell off a boat. On dry land. I've had accidents and collisions and I got trampled by a moose.

~~see~~

And DURING THIS, ~~right behind Davina~~

A small, grey HAND creeps in, at the BASE OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE, which is held up by a HEFTY four-legged METAL BASE. The hand reaching for a big BOLT.

DAVINA (CONT'D)

And I can't help thinking. It all comes back to when I met you.

~~ve~~ RUBY

I suppose... Funny thing is. I have ~~been~~

The big, h

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MOUTHS of thin, jagged T

It's harder than it looks. The rope-ladder is hand-made, all twisted, KNOTTED ROPE, with struts of DRIFTWOOD as RUNGS. And to climb, in mid-air, is HARD. But she HAULS HERSELF UP. One step. Two. One more. And another. Struggling.

And now it gets WORSE, as the ROPE-LADDER MOVES!

Whatever's above, whatever the rope-ladder is ATTACHED TO, must be MOVING, as Ruby & ladder begin to sail over the ROWS OF TOWNHOUSES BELOW. The drop below! The street!

RUBY

No, no, no...

She's holding on, terrified. The ROPE is rough, it BURNS - she hoicks one ELBOW through the ladder to WRAP HERSELF in.

And then...

THE DOCTOR

What the hell are you doing?!

What?! There's that MAN. From the NIGHTCLUB.

And he is RUNNING ALONG THE ROOFTOP below, towards her.

RUBY

I'm. Just. There's.

THE DOCTOR

But what did you do that for? Who sees a ladder and just pops on?! A ladder in the sky and you thought, yeah, I'll give that a go, love?!

RUBY

They've got

13A EXT. SKY - DAY

13A

THE DOCTOR and RUBY on the ROPE-LADDER, flying above Notting Hill, and beyond, over the City of London, below.

Both exhilarated, and scared, CLINGING ON like crazy. And he looks right at her, as though willing her fear away.

THE DOCTOR
What's your name?

RUBY
Ruby. Ruby Sunday.

THE DOCTOR
Hello, Ruby Sunday. And it's Sunday right now, that's a coincidence, I'm the Doctor. Hi!

RUBY
I met you before.

THE DOCTOR
Yup!

RUBY
There. Are. Creatures.

THE DOCTOR
Goblins.

RUBY
Goblins.

THE DOCTOR
They're Goblins.

RUBY
Okay. I can't hold on!

She's struggling, clinging to the rope; it's even trickier because the ladder is half-scaled down to Goblin size.

THE DOCTOR
Oh right right right, wait! Wait!
(digging in pockets)
Cos I spend a lot of time hanging off things. So I invented these.

He gets out, GLOVES.

RUBY
Gloves?

THE DOCTOR
Intelligent gloves!

And he gets out TWO BIG GLOVES, black, with a fine gold-wire-skeleton. Gives one to Ruby, puts one on himself.

THE DO

THE DOCTOR
The Goblins. And d'y

IN

THE DOCTOR

What time were you born?

RUBY

I don't know, they kind of guessed,
around 2 o'clock. 2 pm.

THE DOCTOR

Right, so, language, tapestry
coincidence, that's the time for
the feast. What time is it now?

RUBY

Five to two.

The Doctor looks through GAPS in the PLANKS of the HULL.

BELOW: CLOUDS parting, AERIAL VIEW, Notting Hill below.

THE DOCTOR

And we're TIT 5ET ()0 -0 -

RUBY

We can't exactly sneak around.
We're like giants in this place.

THE DOCTOR

I think. Even a leaky old Goblin
Ship has got the equivalent of...

He

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Oh. My. RUBY
God.

A HUGE, FLESHY CREATURE, Jabba-like, but bigger, all
EXPANDI

The BELT has STOPPED DEAD. The Doctor & Ruby get to their feet - it wasn't that much of a drop, they're okay. The Doctor smiles at his Goblin audience - GRABBING LULU'S BASKET
a

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Cos the Goblin King, oh th

THE DOCTOR
If you reverse an intellig

THE DOCTOR
Love the glove, Ruby!

CU the GLOVE as th

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THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Only three per cent left.

And he shoves BOTH GLOVES in his POCKETS. Looks up. His POV, out of the WINDOW: DARK CLOUDS in the SKY ABOVE.

RUBY

Are we safe, though? What if that ship comes sailing down, what do we do? Can they get us?

THE DOCTOR

No, I don't think they invade. Their world is up there, and they creep into this one, on the edges.

He STEPS AWAY from the window - HIS FOOT CATCHES on a CABLE, it YANKS, and a TABLE LAMP goes FLYING, SMASH!

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Accidents! That's how they get us.

RUBY

Do they cause accidents?

THE DOCTOR

Maybe they do!
(he finds that amazing)
Wooh.

Then, fast, he's scuttling round, checking PLUGS, CABLES.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Check! Loose cables. Or glass. Or anything. Check the cot, check for splinters, or loose screws.

Ruby starts checking the cot. Both busy, busy, busy.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Trouble is. The coincidence has bound Lulu to Christmas Eve. I could take her out of the day, but she's too connected, I think that would actually cause her pain. So we're stuck, we've got to sit it out till midnight.

RUBY

What d'you mean, take her out of the day?

THE DOCTOR

Technical phrase.

RUBY

But what does 'take her out of the day' mean?

THE DOCTOR

Doesn't matter, cos I can't.

RUBY

But how would you take her out of the day?! Doctor, I still don't know who you are. When we first met, you said you were Health & Safety, is that true? And don't you dare say Elf and Safety.

THE DOCTOR

Ohh, I wish I had. But look...

He holds up the PSYCHIC PAPER. It's BLANK, but she reads...

RUBY

That's not what it said before.

THE DOCTOR

What does it say now?

RUBY

'I'm the Doctor. Trust me.'

THE DOCTOR

It's Psychic Paper.

RUBY

It's what?

THE DOCTOR

The paper is psychic. Shows you whatever I want you to see.

RUBY

What the hell does that mean?!

THE DOCTOR

Oh! Is there anything in the kitchen? Anything burning?

Oh! THEY BOTH RUN all the way down the long HALL -

- CHERRY watches them whizz past -

CHERRY

Ah wha de - ?!

- into the KITCHEN. All fine, but the Doctor goes along one wall, checking all the PLUGS and wires, kettle, etc.

THE DOCTOR

Death trap, check everything!
The wiring, and the plugs...

...and he sees the FRIDGE DOOR. Covered with all those PHOTOS of CHILDREN. And the Doctor stops, smiling.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Who are they..?

RUBY

That's the family. Mum's children.
They're all the kids she's fostered
over the years.

THE DOCTOR

Wow. So many.

RUBY

I know. Still in touch, some of
them, lots of them. She's amazing.

THE DOCTOR

You've got the

THE DOCTOR

There was. An incursion. Into this world. D'you know the giggle? When everyone went mad? That was caused by a Drastic Transgression known as the Toymaker. And he brought his legions with him. This is his legacy. Forces of nature, but forces of a different nature. Writing their own rules. And I'm out of my depth. Got no rules. I love, love, love the rules!

CHERRY

You're a crazy man.

THE DOCTOR

C'est moi, chérie.

Ruby's in the kitchen DOORWAY, cross:

RUBY

Don't leave the baby alone!

Oh! He runs into CARLA'S BEDROOM - Ruby runs down the HALL -

But Lulubelle's fine, awake now, happy in her COT.

THE DOCTOR

She's all right, she's all right,
she's all right.

RUBY

Don't leave her!

THE DOCTOR

You did too!

RUBY

I know, well don't!

In the HALL, FRONT DOOR OPENS, CARLA arrives, with SHOPPING.

CARLA

Here come Santa, laden with presents! Who's your friend?

Ruby & the Doctor in Carla's bedroom doorway, all innocence.

RUBY

This is... the Doctor.

THE DOCTOR

Hi ya!

CARLA

There's nothing wrong, is there?
Is she all right? The baby?

Carla worried, DUMPS her shopping, heads for them, fast.

RUBY

No, she's fine, she's fine -

CARLA

It's not mum, is it?

And she heads into CHERRY'S ROOM, all fine, gives her a quick
kiss on the forehead, and a BAG OF HUMBUGS.

CARLA (CONT'D)

What's going on? Everything all
right? Wah gwarn?

CARLA
Is that an eye?

RUBY
No.

THE DOCTOR
It's a toy. It's the eye of a toy.

CARLA
What toy?

RUBY
It's a toy that I... chucked out.

CARLA
She's too young for toys anyway,
where d'you get a toy from?

RUBY
Yes, it was just, it wasn't, I
didn't... Oh my God, mum.
(defence

(MORE)

RUBY

Are you?

THE DOCTOR

Yeah. Only found out recently.

CARLA

That's a coincidence.

RUBY

Oh don't say that!

BLE OF THUNDER from OUTSIDE. The Doctor & Ruby tense up!
a clearly gesticulating with the GOBLIN POLAROID in hand.

CARLA

D'you know who your parents are?

can't stop saying it, though he knows it's dangerous:

THE DOCTOR

No, I was abandoned.

CARLA

you're a foundling, just like
y. Even bigger coincidence!

THUNDER! Ruby runs to the WINDOW.

es. The CLOUDS are now LOWER, DARKER. Scared:

RUBY

Yeah, maybe we'd better not talk
about coincidence, okay?

THE DOCTOR

Could you maybe just put that photo
down..?

STILL holding up the photo:

CARLA

I took a photo of little lady Lu,
soon as she arrived. Look at her,
though. She's so gorgeous, don't
you just want to eat her up?

THE DOCTOR

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CARLA (CONT'D)

Spending our bloody taxes on
monsters. We haven't got monsters,

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CARLA

I've never had children, mate.

THE DOCTOR

You adopted her.

CARLA

I . . . Now don't be so stupid, I'm a foster-mother. I just do it now and then, that's all, I've had about five or six kids.

THE DOCTOR

No, but you've had -

He turns -

And the FRIDGE DOOR is BARE. No photos. Just a couple of Chinese menus and taxi firm cards. All the children, GONE.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

They've gone.

CARLA

Who has?

THE DOCTOR

Your children. All those lives. You fostered 33.

CARLA

Hah! How many?! Not me, darling! Don't be so stupid, that's too much like hard work. No way! I just put my name on the list when I need a bit of money.

THE DOCTOR

No you don't.

CARLA

800 quid per child.

THE DOCTOR

Don't say that.

The Doctor's reeling, staggered by her coldness. Carla almost talking to herself, bleak, cold, clipped:

CARLA

Think you've got me mixed up with someone else, cos there is no Ruby. There's just me. Stuck with my old mum. Up here in the attic.

(MORE)

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CARLA (CONT' D)

25A OMI TTED 25A

26 EXT. THE CHURCH ON RUBY ROAD - NIGHT 26

CLOSE on the DOCTOR as he OPENS THE POLICE BOX DOOR.

On to NIGHT and SNOW. As Sc. 1, the Police Box is near the CHURCH ON RUBY ROAD. And it's 19 YEARS AGO.

The Doctor looks round. Light catches his face, his tears.

The WOMAN is walking away, into the snow and the dark.

The Carol of the

32 INT. DINING HALL, GOBLIN SHIP - NIGHT 32

Poor BABY RUBY in her BASKET clanks along the CONVEYOR BELT.
GOBLINS chant! 100s of nasty, angry GOBLIN FACES.
And below...

CUT TO:

33 EXT. CHURCH SPIRE, PARAPET - NIGHT 33

THE DOCTOR...

....is NOT HELPLESS AT ALL.

As he lifts up his HANDS.

With...

THE INTELLIGENT GLOVES!

The SKELETON-WIRES GLOW.

He GRABS HOLD of the ROPE-LADDER. And with all the might he
can possess, he PULLS! He PULLS

The ROP

34 INT. DINING HALL, GOBLIN SHIP - NIGHT

A CRACK of LIGHTNING streaks across the stormy sk

The KING SCREAMS!

The WHOLE ROOM SHUDDERS, all the GOBLINS WAIL -

BABY RUBY'S BASKET slides off the side of the CONVEYOR BELT -

CUT TO:

38A OMITTED 38A

39 EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT 39

BABY RUBY in her BASKET plummeting DOWN through the sky!

BELOW, as the GOBLIN SHIP JAMS on to the SPIRE, it STOPS THE DESCENT of the ROPE-LADDER, and THE DOCTOR jerks to a HALT!

ONE FOOT off the ground!

Phew.

But he hasn't won yet, looks up -

TOP SHOT: there's BABY RUBY in her BASKET FALLING through the SKY. She PLUMMETS DOWN, DOWN, DOWN -

The Doctor readies himself...

...steadies himself...

...reaches out...

...and CATCHES HER!

Ruby safe in his arms.

He looks up...

The GOBLIN SHIP is IMPALED on the SPIRE, but it's starting to... CEASE TO EXIST. SNOW spirals around it, and a GREY, WINTRY SMOKE curls around the ship. As though pulling it back into another world.

The Goblins are now just SCREAMS and WAILS from ABOVE, echoing out into the NIGHT, fading, fading...

Beside

GONE.

Just the Doctor and Baby Ruby. Snow still falling, but ordinary December snow, calmer, peaceful, Christmassy.

The pattern still needs to close, so THE DOCTOR places BABY RUBY back in the CHURCH DOORWAY, where she was always meant to be, and folds her original BLANKET around her.

He smiles at her. Gives her a little kiss.

THE DOCTOR
Happy birthday, Ruby.

Then he stands, and...

CU CHURCH CLOCK. The minute hand goes to TWELVE.

THE CHIMES OF MIDNIGHT sound.

The Doctor takes a deep breath.

Ohh. ∩

HE FEELS TIME, clicking back into place.

CUT TO:

39A OMITTED 39A

39B EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS 39B

THE DOCTOR runs through the SNOW, away from the CHURCH.

Behind him, in the CHURCH D

The mother?

Is she watching? Did she see?

Should he go to her..?

Is she...

...is she looking at him?

But.

She left the child at the church. That was her choice.

So the Doctor turns and walks into the Police Box.

And the Police Box melts away from Ruby Road.

For now.

CUT TO:

40 EXT. RUBY'S STREET - DAY

RUBY

What happened?! I turned round,
you were gone, you were sort of...
(puzzled)
I don't know, cos I was here and
then... I got a bit lost, what
happened?

THE DOCTOR

Lots of things! Cos they went
back! You were gone! They took
you as a baby, so I went back, and -
(no!)
I forgot something!

And he RUNS OUT!

CUT TO:

43 EXT. RUBY'S STREET - DAY 43

THE DOCTOR RUNS out -

MRS FLOOD watching, happily.

- he RUNS into the POLICE BOX, SLAM!, and -

CUT TO:

44 INT. PRIVATE HOSPITAL, RECEPTION - DAY 44

As Sc. 13, the 12ft CHRISTMAS TREE FALLS - !

DAVINA McCALL in her wheelchair SCREAMS -!

- and WHAP! The Christmas tree is CAUGHT in one HAND. THE
DOCTOR holding the tree, standing above Davina, smiling.

She is in AWE.

DAVINA

You saved my life.

THE DOCTOR

Merry Christmas, Davina McCall.

CUT TO:

45 EXT. RUBY'S STREET - DAY 45

THE POLICE BOX door OPENS, and THE DOCTOR RUNS out. He heads for Ruby's front door, all smiles. But then... STOPS.

His smile falls. He wonders. Looks up at the flat.

MRS FLOOD still on her STOOL, with her HIP FLASK.

MRS FLOOD

Busy man, sweetheart. You and your
box of tricks. You look like
you've lost a pound and found a
sixpence, what's wrong?

THE DOCTOR

I'm just wondering. Maybe I'm the
bad luck.

CUT TO:

46 INT. RUBY & CARLA'S FLAT - DAY 46

CHERRY'S ROOM: CARLA hands CHERRY that longed-for CUP OF TEA.

CHERRY

Hallelujah, praise the Lord. I
thought the day would never come!
Mi tea reach at last!

CARLA

You're the least of my problems -

- CARLA storming out into

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RUBY (CONT'D)

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