

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-73085-3 - Exits and Entrances: A Drama Collection from Stage and Screen

Edited by John O'Connor

Excerpt

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# 1 Identity

When we watch a play we begin to understand a little bit more about what it is to be a human being. We learn about the different ways in which people behave with one another and, in particular, we see that every person has his or her own identity, something that makes them unique and special.

All of the main characters in this section are trying to understand more about themselves, how they relate to the people around them and how they fit in to the society in which they live.

## **Activities**

- 1 Who are you? What makes up your own identity? Draw a spider diagram with you in the middle. On the outside add details about yourself. You could include, for example:
  - people and places important to you
  - your interests
  - your ambitions
  - your fears.
- 2 Think about experiences you have had when you felt out of place. It might have been when you joined a group in which everybody else knew each other, or where you were the only person to disagree with a generally held opinion. Write a paragraph describing how you felt in that situation, and what happened.
- 3 In pairs, devise a role play in which somebody has to stand up for themselves. Perhaps they have been wrongly accused of something or are being forced to do something they know is wrong. Decide on the characters and situation first, so that you are clear about who you are, what the problem is and what has happened so far.

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2 Identity

## Doctor Who: Human Nature

by Paul Cornell

This is the opening of an episode of the long-running television series, *Doctor Who*.

*The central console<sup>1</sup> of the TARDIS<sup>2</sup> is sparking crazily as MARTHA and THE DOCTOR start to pick themselves up off the floor. THE DOCTOR dashes to MARTHA, grabs her hand and pulls her up, then pulls her eye to eye.*

THE DOCTOR *(urgently)* Did they see you?

MARTHA I don't know!

THE DOCTOR Did they see you?

MARTHA I don't know, I was too busy running!

THE DOCTOR Martha, it's important – did they see your face?

MARTHA No, they couldn't have!

*THE DOCTOR runs round the console and starts playing with controls.*

THE DOCTOR Off we go!

*MARTHA comes to stand next to him as he watches the time rotor intently. As a warning beep cuts in, we see symbols on the console screen.*

THE DOCTOR *(annoyed)* Ahhh!

*THE DOCTOR grabs the console screen and reads it.*

THE DOCTOR They're following us.

*He goes back to the controls.*

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<sup>1</sup>**console** unit holding the main controls

<sup>2</sup>**Tardis** the Doctor's time-travelling ship

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Doctor Who: Human Nature 3

- MARTHA** How can they do that? You've got a time machine.
- THE DOCTOR** Stolen technology, they've got a Time Agent's vortex manipulator. They can follow us wherever we go, right across the universe –  
(*pause*) they're never going to stop.  
*He runs a hand through his hair nervously and stares; then an idea comes to him.*
- THE DOCTOR** (*quietly*) Unless . . . I'll have to do it . . .  
*He stares into MARTHA's eyes.*
- THE DOCTOR** Martha, you trust me don't you?
- MARTHA** Of course I do.
- THE DOCTOR** 'Cause it all depends on you.  
*He dives below the console to retrieve something, MARTHA watches on in confusion.*
- MARTHA** What does, what am I supposed to do?  
*THE DOCTOR reappears holding an ornate pocket watch aloft.*
- THE DOCTOR** Take this watch, 'cause my life depends on it. The watch, Martha – The watch is –  
*THE DOCTOR is lying in a bed sporting a pair of blue striped pyjamas. His eyes flick open suddenly, cutting in from the last scene. He blinks in confusion a few times, and we see he is in an ornate Victorian room, wood panelling and framed paintings. After a couple of seconds, he pushes himself to sit up, feet on the floor. As he rubs his eyes, we hear a knock. Shortly after, there is the sound of a door opening.*
- THE DOCTOR** (*calls*) Come in.  
*MARTHA enters, wearing a Victorian maid's uniform and carrying a tray of breakfast. As she sees THE DOCTOR sitting on his bed, her eyes widen and she turns back.*

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- MARTHA** Pardon me, Mr Smith, you're not dressed yet.  
I can come back later –  
*She turns to go as THE DOCTOR stands, pulling and tying a dressing gown around himself.*
- THE DOCTOR** No, it's alright, it's alright. Put it down.  
*MARTHA walks to a table in the middle of the room and sets the tray down, keeping her eyes lowered. THE DOCTOR watches her thoughtfully.*
- THE DOCTOR** I was, um . . . *(pause)* Sorry, sorry. *(thoughtfully)*  
Sometimes I have these extraordinary dreams.  
*MARTHA crosses to the window and pulls the curtains open.*
- MARTHA** What about, sir?
- THE DOCTOR** I dream I'm this . . . *(he searches for the right term)*  
Adventurer. This . . . daredevil, a madman. 'The Doctor', I'm called. And last night I dreamt that you were there, as my . . . companion.  
*MARTHA crosses back to the tray on the table – THE DOCTOR's eyes have been following her across the room.*
- MARTHA** A teacher and a housemaid, sir? That's impossible.
- THE DOCTOR** Ah no, a man from another world, though . . .
- MARTHA** Well it can't be true because there's no such thing.  
*THE DOCTOR has moved to the fireplace and looks at the mantel – where the watch is sitting.*
- THE DOCTOR** This thing . . . *(he picks up the watch)* The watch . . .  
*MARTHA watches him, hopeful; but after holding it for a second he replaces it on the mantel with a sigh.*

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Doctor Who: Human Nature 5

**THE DOCTOR** Ah, it's funny how dreams slip away. (*He turns back to MARTHA*) But I do remember one thing; it all took place in the future. In the year of Our Lord two thousand and seven.

**MARTHA** I can prove that wrong for you sir, here's the morning paper. (*She hands it to him*) It's Monday, November tenth, nineteen thirteen, and you're completely human, sir. (*She smiles at him*) As human as they come.

**THE DOCTOR** Mmm, that's me; completely human.

*He smiles.*

*The Union Jack flag is being raised to full mast as a choir of boys sing a hymn. We see an impressive old school building, almost like a fortress, and a group of schoolboys, marching in regimented lines into the school grounds. An early motor car beeps its horn as it drives past the gates to pull up near to the main door. THE DOCTOR, in a suit, mortar board<sup>3</sup> and teacher's gown, walks past a group of students before turning into the main door.*

**BOY 1** Morning, Sir.

*He passes a young boy in the corridor.*

**BOY** Morning, Sir.

*A bell rings, calling the start of school. Further into the building, THE DOCTOR passes more teachers and nods to one who is heading for a flight of stairs.*

**THE DOCTOR** Headmaster.

*A little later, and we see THE DOCTOR taking a history lesson, cane in one hand and textbook in another. The neat copperplate<sup>4</sup> writing on the chalkboard reads*

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<sup>3</sup>**mortar board** an old-fashioned hat that teachers wore, with a flat top and tassel

<sup>4</sup>**copperplate** neat handwriting style

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*'Battle of Waterloo, 18th June 1815'. THE DOCTOR is reading aloud from the textbook while the class look on attentively.*

**THE DOCTOR** – impediment. The French were all but spent, with only two battalions of the old guard remaining. A final reserve force was charged with protecting Napoleon. By evening, the advance of the Allied troops had forced them to retreat.

*Out in the school corridor, MARTHA and JENNY, another maid, are on their hands and knees scrubbing the tiled floor. THE DOCTOR walks past, making MARTHA smile. Her eyes follow him as he passes.*

**MARTHA** Morning, Sir.

*THE DOCTOR slows down a little and answers distractedly.*

**THE DOCTOR** Yes, hi.

*He disappears up the stairs.*

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Doctor Who: Human Nature 7

**JENNY** Head in the clouds, that one. Don't know why you're so sweet on him.

*She smiles slyly then they both carry on scrubbing.*

**MARTHA** He's just kind to me, that's all. Not everyone's that considerate, what with me being –

*She points to her face – we assume she means the colour of her skin. JENNY smiles.*

**JENNY** A Londoner?

**MARTHA** Exactly. *(She grins)* Good old London town!

*Two senior boys, BAINES and HUTCHINSON walk over the area MARTHA and JENNY are cleaning, and look back as the girls laugh.*

**BAINES** *(authoritatively)* Ah, now then, you two.

*MARTHA and JENNY stop laughing and look up.*

**BAINES** You're not paid to have fun, are you. Put a little backbone into it.

**JENNY** Yes Sir, sorry, Sir.

**HUTCHINSON** *(looking at MARTHA)* You there, what's your name again?

**MARTHA** Martha, Sir. Martha Jones.

**HUTCHINSON** Tell me then, Jones. With hands like those, how can you tell when something's clean?

*The two boys laugh cruelly and leave. MARTHA and JENNY watch them.*

**MARTHA** *(deadpan)* That's very funny, Sir.

**JENNY** Careful now, don't answer back.

**MARTHA** I'd answer back with my bucket over his head.

*JENNY laughs as they both go back to scrubbing.*

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JENNY Oh I wish!

*JENNY thinks of something and stops, looking after the two boys.*

JENNY Just think though. In a few years' time boys like that will be running the country.

MARTHA (*quieter*) Nineteen thirteen. They might not.

*In one of the upper corridors, MATRON JOAN REDFERN passes a student.*

BOY Excuse me, ma'am.

*THE DOCTOR is overloaded with a stack of books as MATRON JOAN REDFERN approaches.*

JOAN Oh, good morning, Mr Smith.

*THE DOCTOR fumbles with the top book and it falls to the floor. He quickly steps on it to stop it falling away.*

THE DOCTOR There we go.

JOAN Let me help you.

THE DOCTOR No, no, I've got it, no . . . (*He wonders how he is going to pick the book up with his arms full*) Um . . . ah . . . Just to . . . retrieve . . . ah . . . If you could take these – (*he hands her the stack of books, then bends to pick up the book*)

JOAN Good. (*She smiles warmly*)

THE DOCTOR No harm done. (*He smiles back at her*) So, um, how was Jenkins?

JOAN Oh just a cold, nothing serious. I think he's missing his mother, more than anything.

THE DOCTOR (*sympathetically*) Aw, can't have that.

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Doctor Who: Human Nature 9

**JOAN** He received a letter this morning so he's a lot more chipper. *(She looks down at the stack of books she is still holding)* I appear to be holding your books.

*THE DOCTOR is still staring at MATRON JOAN REDFERN's face, then suddenly snaps back to life.*

**THE DOCTOR** Yes, so you are! Sorry, sorry.

*He starts to relieve MATRON JOAN REDFERN of the books awkwardly.*

**THE DOCTOR** Just let me –

**JOAN** No, why don't I take half?

**THE DOCTOR** Ah, brilliant idea, brilliant. Perfect. Division of labour.

**JOAN** We make quite a team.

**THE DOCTOR** Don't we just.

*He is still all smiles, daft in the presence of MATRON JOAN REDFERN.*

**JOAN** So, these books. Were they being taken in any particular direction?

**THE DOCTOR** Yes. Um . . . *(He looks up the corridor, thinking – then turns to the other direction)* This way.

*Ever the gentleman, he lets MATRON JOAN REDFERN lead on. In another corridor, he has finally settled into a coherent conversation.*

**THE DOCTOR** I always say, Matron, give the boys a good head of steam, they'll soon wear themselves out.

**JOAN** Truth be told, when it's just you and me, I'd much rather you call me Nurse Redfern. 'Matron' sounds rather . . . well, matronly.

**THE DOCTOR** Ah, Nurse Redfern it is then.

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JOAN Though we've known each other all of two months, you could even say 'Joan'.

THE DOCTOR Joan?

JOAN That's my name.

THE DOCTOR (*flustered*) Well, obviously.

JOAN And it's John, isn't it?

THE DOCTOR Yes, yes it is.

*A wooden noticeboard is on one wall of the landing –  
MATRON JOAN REDFERN spots a particular notice and  
heads towards it.*

JOAN Have you seen this, John? The annual dance at the village hall tomorrow. It's nothing formal, but rather fun by all accounts. (*hopefully*) Do you think you'll go?

*THE DOCTOR stammers for a moment, unsure how to answer.*

THE DOCTOR (*flustered*) I hadn't thought about it.

JOAN It's been ages since I've been to a dance, only no-one's asked me. (*she laughs nervously – there is a short tense silence*)

THE DOCTOR (*trying to rescue the conversation*) Well, I should imagine that you would be . . . um . . . I mean I never thought you'd be one for . . . I mean there's no reason why you shouldn't – if you do, you may not . . . I probably won't, but even if I did then I couldn't . . . um, I mean I wouldn't want to –

JOAN The stairs.

THE DOCTOR It – what about the stairs?