**Time and Time Again**

“Wiltshire, in the year 1942,” The Doctor declared as the TARDIS materialised on a gentle grass covered slope leading down to a pleasant valley.

Pleasant except for the Regency era mansion nestled there. Vislor Turlough looked at in disgust, not because he inherently disliked Regency architecture, but because of so many less than pleasant memories of this particular example.

“The Brendon School,” he sighed. “Why?”

“There’s something a bit odd going on there,” The Doctor answered. “I want to check it out.”

“The war is on,” Tegan noted. Even from a distance windows with blackout curtains fixed in place and the criss-crossed tape to prevent flying glass changed the character of the building from peacetime. The meadow by the cricket field was turned into garden plots where the boys were ‘digging for victory’.

“The school is still open?”

“Oh, yes,” Turlough answered in a bored tone. “It stayed open all through the war, ‘providing a safe refuge and a sense of continuity in the face of national upheaval’. We were always told about how Brendon School stood up against the Nazi plan to destabilise the nation.”

“Bravely teaching Latin verbs in the countryside while the bombs rained down on the cities?” Tegan remarked just a little too sarcastically. As much as he had hated his years at the school and complained about it himself Turlough bristled at any slur upon the old place from anyone else.

“Everyone did what they could,” he answered before turning back to The Doctor. “So… we’re going in undercover to investigate? Does that mean I have to be a student again? I don’t think I could bear it.”

“Not at all,” The Doctor assured him. “The war inevitably takes a toll on staff. Three positions have just been filled. History master, junior science master – that’s you, Turlough - and school matron.”

“That would be me, of course,” Tegan accepted with a deep sigh. “What else could a woman do in a boys’ school in this time? Just be warned. I’m going to prescribe castor oil for everything from collywobbles to broken ankles and they can like it or lump it.”

She was joking, of course. She did have an advanced first aid qualification from her air hostess training. She would be able to use those skills, at least.

Thanks to some TARDIS trickery it had all been arranged in advance. Impeccable references and introductions from the best academic agencies saw the three accepted straight into the school faculty. Despite the war that was the subject of the headmaster’s sermon at every morning assembly, the school in its pastoral setting provided a peaceful, untroubled life.

This lack of intrigue led Tegan and Turlough to both question The Doctor about his motives for bringing them here.

“You said there was something strange going on,” Turlough pointed out on a Sunday afternoon as the three of them walked on the hill near the place where The Doctor had hidden the TARDIS. “But it’s all just the same as I remember it except without a TV in the common room. Boring, endlessly repetitive….”

“Yes,” The Doctor said to him. “That’s exactly the problem. Haven’t you two realised… the repetition, the monotony… it’s not just school life. It is a chronic hysteresis.”

“I think there’s an ointment for that in the sick bay,” Tegan remarked.

“Unfortunately, not,” The Doctor answered her, though he smiled at the joke. “A hysteresis, at least in temporal physics, is an effect, usually localised, in which history repeats itself over and over again.”

“You mean like déjà vu?” Turlough asked.

“Déjà vu is a very short, usually just a few seconds, natural occurrence of hysteresis,” The Doctor explained. “Usually quite harmless unless it happens repeatedly. Chronic hysteresis can trap whole communities, sometimes whole planets, in an endless loop.”

“And… we’re in one, here?” Tegan asked, thinking back over the weeks they had been at the school already. She had found the routine of it all surprisingly easy to fall into, the morning bell, breakfast in a noisy refectory, assembly with the exhortations to defeat the enemy with every action, every day, the arrival of each morning’s ‘sick parade’ with real or imagined ills to be treated…..

Turlough had fallen even more easily into the routine, enjoying it a little better as a teacher than as a student. The only problem was the dull curriculum, lessons that never seemed to advance in any way.

Which was exactly The Doctor’s point.

“I’ve been teaching them the same stuff every week,” he admitted.

“I’ve dealt with Andrew Caldwell-Brown’s rugby injury at least four times… maybe more,” Tegan calculated. “I hadn’t even realised until now. It feels like a mist has cleared in my head and I can see it all.”

“That’s because you’re near to the TARDIS up here,” The Doctor explained. “It’s letting you see beyond the hysteresis. Back at school it will be harder, but you will need to try to keep that awareness. We need to work out how long the hysteresis stretches and how far its effects are felt. I’m pretty sure it centres on the school.”

“Does that mean that somebody in the school is making it happen?” Tegan asked.

“Well that really is the question,” The Doctor admitted. “Creating a hysteresis is very advanced physics. More advanced than a teacher or student at a school like this ought to be capable of. That suggests some kind of alien influence over the school, but so far I’ve found nothing of the sort. We just have to keep looking for the answer.”

“But... what if we forget again?” Tegan asked. “We could just get sucked into it all and never know.”

“You might. Your minds are too easily susceptible,” The Doctor agreed. “That’s why I prepared these for you.” He handed Tegan a silver chain with a small red crystal pendant. He gave Turlough a silver pocket watch with a similar crystal embedded in the lid of the case. “The silver and the jewels are from Gallifrey. They are imbued with Artron energy, the stuff that makes the TARDIS ‘go’. They’ll act as personal filters to keep your mind aware of what’s going on around you.”

Turlough put the watch in his pocket and Tegan fastened the pendant around her neck. Neither felt any different, but they took The Doctor’s word that it would work.

They walked back down the slope towards the school. It was six o’clock on Sunday evening. Boys who had been given afternoon passes to go off school grounds were coming back in time for the supper time curfew.

One boy caught Tegan’s attention. She recognised him as Kenneth Price who she had treated for a stomach ache on Friday afternoon. He looked as if the same problem was troubling him now. She spoke kindly to him.

“No, I’m all right, thank you, Miss,” he assured her. “Just a bit down in the dumps. I’ve just spent the day in Trowbridge with my mother. It was nice. We had lunch and tea together. But… now she’s gone back to Cardiff on the train and….”

Turlough was the one who understood best. He put a gentle hand on the boy’s shoulder.

“I’m afraid Miss Jovanka has nothing in her medicine cupboards for missing your mum,” he said. “That’s just something we have to work through by ourselves. Chin up, meanwhile. Don’t let the other chaps know you’re homesick.”

He knew well how bullies could take advantage of those sort of ‘weaknesses’ in a place like The Brendon School. Kenneth Price obviously did, too. He visibly straightened himself and put on a cheerful face before he hurried off to the common room before supper.

“If the hysteresis lasts a week, at least Kenny gets to see his mum again,” Turlough noted. “Even if he doesn’t realise it.”

Tegan imagined the boy setting out hopefully every seven days to the same day out with his mother, the same lunch, the same wander around the few tourist sites of Trowbridge, tea with its inevitable dainty sandwiches and cakes, then waving her off on the train and walking back to the school and its closed gates, its institutionalised life of bells and timetables and very little privacy for a boy to be alone with his own thoughts.

Maybe for Kenny those few hours of happiness were worth it.

Even without a chronic hysteresis Monday morning would be much the same. Awareness of it meant that Doctor Epping’s exhortation to resist the enemy in every deed, word or action was familiar already. As she went up to her sick bay after assembly Tegan pondered whether a deed and an action were the same thing. She would have said something like ‘thought, word or action’. But it wasn’t her sermon and she couldn’t correct it.

The sick bay had one patient, Vincent Rhodes, who was recovering from appendicitis. He had been whipped into hospital last week and sent back to the school once he was stable.

Of course, this had happened in ‘normal’ time, before the hysteresis began, before Tegan came as matron. Poor Vincent had been trapped in bed with his stitches driving him crazy every time the days were reset. Fortunately, he was blissfully unaware of it.

After assembly there were the usual suspects who came for treatment for various minor sports injuries and general ailments. The older ones fell instantly in love with ‘Miss Jovanka’ and tended to blush and stutter a lot. The younger ones looked at her like a surrogate mother. Either way she saw a softer side of a group of boys who spent the rest of their time at odds with each other either in competition on a sports field or fighting any number of petty battles in the dormitories.

This morning she tended to a bad case of poison ivy with a large bottle of camomile lotion, a septic finger with witch hazel and a bandage, a sprained wrist with a cold compress and aspirin, and three obvious time wasters with castor oil. It was the same group with the same complaints as last Monday, and several Mondays before. The only difference was that she didn’t bother trying to find out what was wrong with the malingerers. Instead she dosed them and dismissed them straight away.

On Tuesday morning, after Doctor Epping had praised the great work of the RAF in keeping Britain’s skies free of the Luftwaffe threat and urged the boys to emulate them in their aspirations, Tegan treated three more cases of poison ivy and advised the boys to stop chasing cricket balls into the patch by the boundary until the gardener was able to tend to it. There was another sprained wrist and two malingerers for the castor oil. She guessed, based on the previous week, that there would only be one more of those tomorrow before the boys caught on about the ‘cure’.

She was right. Wednesday’s culprit really didn’t enjoy his medicine any more than the others had. Thursday found only genuine medical problems. Another sprained wrist led her to question a new dormitory game the boys called ‘French Wrestling’ which involved twisting each other’s wrists until one opponent surrendered.

A ban on the game was included in Friday morning’s assembly before the headmaster told the boys to look to King George VI’s example of an upstanding, courageous leader of the British people, a man to admire and emulate at all times.

On Friday afternoon, as she expected, Kenneth Price came into sick bay with stomach ache. His mother had given him a large bag of sweets on Sunday afternoon, and in a homesick moment after lunch he had eaten most of them.

“You’ll see her again, soon,” Tegan promised. “And the holidays are only a few weeks away.”

“Our house is in Cardiff,” the boy explained. “I’m not going back there in case of bombs. I’ll be staying with my aunt and uncle in Powys. They have a farm. It is… nice… but I’ll still be missing my mother.”

“I’m sorry to hear that,” Tegan told him. “But… keep your spirits up. Things might change. The war won’t be forever. Nothing is.”

Kenneth looked at her as if he might disagree with her. Was he aware of the endless time they had spent in the hysteresis? But his mood changed again. He smiled and thanked her and left the room. She turned her attention to Vincent, changing the dressing on his wound and assuring him that he would be up and about next week.

“I hope so,” Vincent answered. “Seems like I’ve been here for ages.”

He, too, seemed for a brief moment to have guessed something, but the moment passed. The boy propped himself up with pillows and lost himself in a book.

Turlough’s position was as junior to an elderly science teacher, Professor Burnham, who tended to fall asleep halfway through his lessons. The set experiments with chemicals and Bunsen burners invariably continued without him until the lesson ended or something exploded loudly enough to wake him.

The junior class next door was a boisterous bunch, prepared to test a new teacher with their tricks. Turlough, this time around, at least, was ready for the itching powder in his lab coat, stink bombs and mousetraps in his desk, glue, ink and any other hazard. The boys realised they were beat by Tuesday morning and gave up. The rest of the week in which he set them to drawing a human heart for biology, constructing crystal sets in practical physics and using litmus paper to test various liquids for their PH balance in chemistry were uninterrupted.

It was hard work with most of them. They didn’t care about science and were bored. Only one of the boys showed any aptitude. Kenneth Price’s drawing of a heart was excellently done with all the correct labels. His crystal set worked first time. His notes on the PH experiments excellently done.

When he had finished the set work he quietly opened a book and read. It didn’t escape Turlough’s notice that it was an advanced physics book.

Very advanced. Turlough wondered where he got it from. The school library wasn’t much to speak of in the way of science. It was mostly stuffed with Victorian treatises about classical history. The same dusty leather-bound tomes would still be there in his own time as a student, still unread.

He asked the boy about his reading matter.

“Please don’t confiscate it,” Kenneth pleaded. “It belonged to my father. He was a scientist. He died last year. His books are all I have of him.”

“I’m not going to confiscate them,” Turlough assured him. “Do you like science?”

“Always. My father said I took after him. He taught me a lot of things before I came to school. I made a crystal set when I was seven.”

“You’d better just carry on at your own speed,” Turlough told him and left him to it. He glanced at the clock and noted it was two minutes past two. He stepped towards the connecting door to the other room.

Professor Burnham was asleep as usual, lolled over his desk in a thoroughly undignified way. His mouth was open and a low snoring noise could be heard.

A boy, Edward Morris, was creeping towards the teacher with a beaker containing something noxious and faintly smoking. It was, essentially, a home made stink bomb, but Turlough knew, from remembering what happened last time around, that it was going to go wrong.

“Put that in the sink, quickly,” he ordered. “The caustic soda is effervescing. It’s going to overflow and burn your hands at any moment.”

Morris looked at him, a junior teacher only a few years older than he was. He was making a decision – to obey or not to obey.

He obeyed, lobbing the beaker into the deep ceramic sink. The glass broke and the stink bomb material expanded, sending out a horrible chemical smell.

“Did you really want that all over your hands?” Turlough asked him, remembering that he had only intervened last week after hearing the screams of pain. Tegan had used an ointment and bandages on the burns, but this time she was saved the trouble.

Professor Burnham woke up as he was swilling the mess down the sink and carefully picking out the broken glass. Turlough thought of several barbed remarks about controlling the class but bit them back. The Professor was the senior teacher and would pay no attention.

That was the trouble with the school even in his own time, he reflected. None of them were as bad as the Professor, to be sure, but too many of the staff were old and had antiquated ideas about teaching.

“So, you changed one part of the week,” Tegan noted when they walked up to the TARDIS together on Sunday afternoon to compare notes. “I didn’t get Morris with his burnt hands this time around.”

“That’s interesting,” The Doctor commented. “Events can be changed. Small ones, perhaps large ones, too.”

“We only have small events in school,” Turlough commented. “The big things, like the war, are outside of this little world even without a chronic hysteresis. It is always like that at boarding school.”

“Yes, it is,” The Doctor agreed with a not so fond remembrance for the Prydonian academy. “But the big events do impact here, too.” He was thinking about his junior in the history department. Harold Cooper was a nervous Welshman with one leg shorter than the other which was why he hadn’t been called up for military service. His special boot made a distinctive clumping sound in the corridors as he arrived every morning.

Yesterday the clump had been heavier and slower. The Doctor had spoken to him in the morning break and learnt that Cardiff, Cooper’s home town, had been bombed that night. He didn’t know if family and friends were alive or dead. Junior history was not in the forefront of his mind at that time.

“I know when it happens,” Tegan said.

“When what happens?” The Doctor and Turlough both asked.

“The hysteresis... the reset, when it swings back to the beginning. Last night, I was looking out of the window. It was just after one o’clock, and there was a full moon with clouds scudding past. Then all of a sudden, the sky changed. There was a three-quarter moon and a clear sky full of stars. That was the moment.”

“Yes,” The Doctor agreed. “It must be. That’s one thing we know. The hysteresis lasts exactly one week, resetting, for want of a better word, early on Sunday morning.”

“So now we know that, is there anything we can do to stop it?” Turlough asked. “We can’t go on indefinitely stopping Morris from giving himself second degree acid burns.”

“And poor Vincent will never get his stitches out,” Tegan added. “At least Kenny gets to see his mum. He’s the only one getting anything good out of this week.”

“Yes,” The Doctor sighed, thinking of Harold Cooper again. That sort of anguish was bad enough experienced once in a lifetime. How many times would he have to go through it before they found the answer?

The only blessing was that the humans caught within the hysteresis were unaware of the time being lived over again. It was all new each time.

“We have to look for something that will break the loop,” he said to his companions. “It may not be a huge thing, just a small difference, like stopping Morris from his mischief, except obviously not that. Some small change could be all it takes.”

“So, we go through it all again and look for what could be changed,” Tegan confirmed. “And… we change it? Or should we ask you, first? I don’t want to break the universe or something.”

The Doctor laughed and assured her that the universe was a bit more robust than that. Time was fragile, though, and that was why the hysteresis had to be broken. The consequences if it went on could be very dangerous. As yet, it was confined to this one place, but if it expanded, the whole country, the whole planet, might be trapped in one week of bitter war for eternity.

“I’m baffled,” The Doctor admitted. “I really can’t think that anyone in this school has the advanced knowledge to create a stable and recurring hysteresis. But such a thing occurring naturally for more than a few minutes would be even more incredible.”

“So it IS more likely that somebody has done it deliberately?” Turlough suggested.

“But we just established that nobody in this school COULD do it,” Tegan reminded him. “It’s a… what do you call it… a Catch 22. Except that expression doesn’t exist, yet. It comes from a book written in the sixties.”

“Its all we can do,” The Doctor told them.

They walked back to the school, again meeting young Kenneth coming back from seeing his mother. Tegan thought he looked even more downhearted this time at coming back through the school gates, then dismissed that as her imagination.

The week continued with the same assemblies every morning, the same fight to impart some knowledge into reluctant young heads for The Doctor and Turlough, the same resort to castor oil for Tegan.

Just before stopping Morris’s escapade Turlough paused by Kenneth Price’s desk and noticed that he was reading a different advanced science book from his private collection.

The hysteresis must have some small element of randomness about it. Or perhaps the boy found more time for private study this time around.

Nothing else presented itself as a ‘small change’ to be made. Turlough watched carefully for the slightest thing, but was frustrated.

Tegan didn’t have much luck, either, until Friday when Kenneth reported to her with stomach ache.

“Is stomach ache really the trouble?” she asked him, a thought occurring to her as she reached for the liver salts. “Or is there something else?”

Kenneth looked suddenly worried, as if he had been caught in the act of a major crime. His eyes went wide and glistened with held back tears.

“Oh!” Tegan groaned. “Oh… Mr Cooper this morning…. I forgot… You’re from Cardiff, too. Is… Your mother…. Is she….”

Kenneth was still holding back the tears. He shook his head and insisted that he had just eaten too many sweets. Tegan gave him the glass of liver salts and he thanked her and left the sick bay.

Tegan waited a whole thirty seconds before following him back to his classroom. As luck would have it, he went directly to Turlough’s science tutorial and sat with a book. Tegan waved at the glass window in the door until Turlough came to her in the corridor.

“Its Kenny,” she said to him.

“What is?” he replied, not grasping her meaning at all.

“Kenny caused the hysteresis. I don’t know how… but it’s to do with his mum. He did it to spend the Sunday afternoon with her over again.”

Turlough looked at her in disbelief. Then he thought about the physics books. They were way beyond the comprehension of anyone in the school. They probably didn’t give any instructions for manipulating time, but if his mind was really that sharp….

“Saturday night,” Tegan said. “Saturday night, Kenneth is going to be out of bed after ‘lights out’. We talk to him then. After that we decide whether to tell The Doctor or not.”

“He’s a child. The Doctor wouldn’t punish him.”

“Oh, I know that,” Tegan responded. “But if it IS what I think, I’mnot so sure what he’ll say about it, and I’m not so sure what I’ll say back to him, and I don’t want a row with him. And there might be a way that saves the school and makes Kenny happy as well.”

Turlough had no idea what she was talking about, but he agreed to wait until Saturday night.

Both of them were ready at just after midnight, technically Sunday morning, when Kenneth Price broke school rules by leaving his dormitory after ‘lights out’. They followed him in the dark. The boy seemed to know where he was going instinctively. Tegan and Turlough used the little moonlight through corridor windows to follow him.

“The west solar,” Turlough murmured as the boy slipped through a rarely used door. Two rooms at opposite ends of the building were always out of bounds to students and therefore absolutely fascinating to them. Turlough himself had occasionally hidden in the east solar to avoid lessons he hated or boys he hated even more.

A solar was a quaint idea of an airy, well lit room at the top of the house with views all around. The ladies of the house were meant to do their needlepoint or possibly watercolour painting up there away from manly distractions.

Mostly these rooms were used for unwanted furniture and general junk, another attraction for curious boys. It was probably a wonder neither had been set alight by the illicit smoking fraternity.

The west solar, at this time, had been cleared of rubbish. In the middle of the bare wooden floor was something completely unexpected. From the door left slightly ajar Tegan and Turlough looked at a machine built from bits and pieces from the science room, the garage and possibly the kitchen. It had several moving parts that whirled around and hummed. The air around it had a curious yellow glow by which they could see Kenneth sitting with his knees hunched and his head down, crying. Tegan noticed a brown-yellow telegram envelope loosely held in his hand.

They crept into the solar quietly. Kenneth only noticed when Tegan reached out a comforting hand on his shoulder. Turlough took advantage of his shock to take the envelope from his hand. He noted that there were half a dozen similar ones scattered on the floor. It was addressed to the headmaster, but it was about Kenneth’s mother who had been killed in the Cardiff bombings in the early hours of Friday morning.

All the telegrams were about that.

“I’m sorry, Kenny,” Turlough said with feeling.

The boy responded with a sob.

“You built this… to turn back time and spend a day with your mother again?” Tegan asked him.

Kenneth shook his head. He choked back his tears and spoke surprisingly clearly.

“I built it ages ago, so I could study all night and then turn back time and go to sleep. But when I got the telegram… when I knew…. I made it more powerful, so I could have… have that day with mum…. But the one good day… is still followed by the bad one. I still get the news on Saturday morning. I started trying… I wrote letters to Cardiff council, to the police, to the War Office, even Winston Churchill. I told them the bombs were coming and they had to do something. But they haven’t listened.”

“I don’t think it would make any difference even if you wrote to Adolf Hitler,” Turlough admitted. “The bombs are still going to happen.”

“He’s right,” Tegan admitted. “But I have an idea that could work. It means going through this one more time… at least up to Thursday. Can you bear it?”

“If I can bear one more week of teaching general science and stopping Morris’s stink bomb experiment, Kenny can bear it, too,” Turlough said. “Besides, you get tomorrow with your mum, again.”

Kenny nodded. He didn’t know why these two adults were prepared to help him, but he trusted them.

They waited with him to watch the hysteresis swing back to the week before. In the solar with windows all around the effect on the sky was truly spectacular. Afterwards they saw Kenny back to bed safely and returned to their own rooms.

Both of them thought a lot about what to tell The Doctor. They didn’t actually discuss their decision, but when he asked them if they had found anything both of them said ‘no’ convincingly enough to satisfy him.

“We just have to try again,” Tegan added.

“Yes,” The Doctor agreed. “We must keep trying.”

But this time there was a plan. For the first few days it involved carrying on as usual. The only departure was on Monday afternoon. Turlough decided enough was enough. He went into the senior room earlier than before. He found Morris gathering the chemicals for his horrible experiment and warned him not to think about it, then he went to the teacher’s desk and shook Mr Burnham awake.

“These boys are going to be taking examinations, soon. Then they’ll be leaving school and going on to careers, some of them in science. Morris certainly has talent for chemistry. They deserve a teacher who pays attention to them. If you can’t do that, then you should retire and let the school get somebody new.”

Mr Burnham looked affronted and astonished at the same time. Turlough didn’t wait to hear what he had to say in reply. He turned and walked back to his own classroom. He noticed that several of the boys, Morris included, were nodding in silent agreement. They WANTED a good teacher who would help them make a future career in science.

He wasn’t sure if his intercession would help with that, but he had been burning to say something to Mr Burnham, no pun intended, ever since this endless week began.

On Thursday things happened differently, too. Straight after lunch, as instructed by Tegan, Kenneth Price presented himself with unspecified stomach pains. Tegan put him to the bed next to Vincent and made sure both boys were comfortable before popping out for an hour. She had a telegram to send.

She had never sent a telegram in her life. She had never received one. But she knew the trick was to get the maximum information in the minimum number of words.

So her message to Mrs Price in Cardiff was to the point.

“Kenneth very ill. Asking for you. Please come by earliest train possible.”

The earliest trains from Cardiff to Trowbridge were by no means express services and there were two changes involved. It was evening by the time Mrs Price arrived at the school, tired from travelling and anxious about her son.

Turlough brought her up to the sick bay, where Kenneth was sitting up in bed eating rice pudding. Tegan was apologetic.

“I’m afraid we brought you here under false pretences. Kenneth made up his symptoms because he was missing you. I didn’t find out until after I’d sent the telegram, and by then it was too late to get in contact with you.”

“Oh!” Mrs Price was too relieved to know that her son was not dangerously ill to be angry about coming halfway across the country for nothing. She hugged him fondly.

“I miss you, too,” she told him. “But your father wanted you to have the best education, and its good for you to mix with other boys. You have friends here, don’t you?”

“Yes,” he said. “Yes, I do. But I was just….”

He couldn’t explain himself, of course. How could he? It wasn’t homesickness, after all, that had made him want his mother to come to the school. It was to get her out of Cardiff.

“It’s going to be too late for you to go back, now,” Tegan said to her. “I can make you up a bed in the side room. I’ll order up an extra supper. You and Kenny can talk things over.”

She brought Mrs Price a cup of tea in the meantime and she talked quietly with Kenneth. Despite spending the day with him only four days ago he seemed to have a lot to say. She didn’t know, would never know, that it was all the things he had wanted to say when he thought he never could talk to her again.

In the other bed Vincent read his book again. Tegan tidied up the medicine cupboard and all the other little jobs that she did in the evening. She wouldn’t be doing it for much longer, now, of course. Now that the hysteresis could be cancelled there was no need for them to stay.

She found herself feeling a little sad about that. She had settled into the job and the school life. She had got to know some of the boys and the staff and found herself caring about their lives. She would miss them when it was time to go.

The next morning, Friday, came the distressing news of the bombing of Cardiff. Mrs Price was shocked to realise her lucky escape.

“If Kenny hadn’t been upset and got me to come here… our house is gone. I’d have been in it.”

Kenneth said nothing, but he was smiling. His face was brighter than it had been all week. He had beaten fate, after all.

Mrs Price booked into a guest house in Trowbridge for a few days. There was, after all, nothing to go back to Cardiff for. Kenneth spent all of his free time with her and was a happier boy for it.

On Saturday night, Tegan sat up watching the clouds scudding across the full moon. As she hoped, they kept on doing so long after the time when the hysteresis had reset itself each weekend. She went to sleep certain that everything was all right.

By Sunday morning the clouds had drawn in and there was a light rain falling on Wiltshire. Even so, The Doctor met Tegan and Turlough on the hill by the TARDIS. They told him what they had done.

“We didn’t want to tell you,” Tegan said. “In case you said we couldn’t do it.”

“By rights, it was wrong,” The Doctor answered her. “People are meant to die at their appointed times. But a middle aged widow who isn’t likely to have any more children… causality can probably find room for her without ripping the fabric of time too badly. It was better than Kenny’s attempt to stop the bombing. That’s a fixed point in time. It couldn’t be changed. He’s a smart boy, though. He designed a machine to create hysteresis. No human scientist should have worked that out for at least another five centuries. I should have a look at his machine, and have a long chat with him about using his talents wisely.”

“That’s a good idea,” Turlough agreed. “And now you have time to do that properly… Tegan and I were thinking… we should stay on here till the end of term. Its only another three weeks. I can help the seniors prepare for their exams much better than old Burnham, and Tegan wants to make sure Vincent’s stitches come out all right and….”

“Mrs Price is staying around until the end of term, and then she’s going to the farm in Powys with Kenny. She’s going to live there with her sister. He’ll have the whole summer holidays with her.”

“A happy ending for the Price family, anyway,” The Doctor noted. “That’s a better result than we usually get. Yes, we can stay a few more weeks. Why not? I don’t often get to live my life one week after another.”

“It’ll make a change for all of us, lately,” Turlough noted, dryly.