**The Scientists of Denton Hall**

“On Ilkla Mooar baht 'at… On Ilkla Mooar baht 'at... On Ilkla…. Moo…ar ba….ht…. 'at…”

Sara-Jane Smith came to the end of her song with a flourish. The Doctor smiled, not because he was glad she was finished, but because he was impressed by her mimicry of a Yorkshire dialect and her ability to hold a tune while using it.

“Very appropriate, my dear girl,” he said aa he slowed his quirky little open-topped car, Bessie, to a speed suitable for narrow country roads. “We are, indeed, upon Ilkley Moor, and, as it happens, neither of us are wearing hats.”

“The last two times I wore a hat in this car they got left miles behind when you accelerated,” Sarah-Jane responded archly. “Are we there, yet?”

They had just passed a pretty white stone church and graveyard as well as a row of cottages built from the more common millstone grit of the Yorkshire moors. The Doctor slowed Bessie to a stop as they reached a wrought iron gate across what was, from here on, a private road leading, after approximately two more miles, to Denton Hall, their destination after a long drive north from London.

A speaker phone was attached to the right hand gate pillar. The Doctor reached to operate it and, having satisfied somebody inside of his identity the gate swung open electronically.

“A lot of security,” Sarah-Jane observed. “But no official signs designating this MOD property… you know, like we have at UNIT headquarters.”

The Doctor said nothing.

“This is one of those SECRET facilities for developing projects the general public wouldn’t like – biological warfare, nuclear bombs… that sort of thing.”

“Unless the Brigadier has lied to me, it is neither of those despicable things,” The Doctor answered. “But it IS a secret scientific think tank for developing new technology that the ‘general public’ as you call them would think of as expensive pipe dreams with no practical applications. The sort of things some people would like shut down in order to fund schools and hospitals and new housing estates.”

“All of which are important,” Sarah-Jane pointed out.

“Indeed, they are. But so is scientific research. And speaking as a scientist, I must say I agree with the idea of places like Denton Hall and the secrecy around them - in principle, at least. It is so tedious having to justify ones work to committees just to acquire a bit of peace and quiet to get on with things.”

“Speaking as an investigative journalist, this is the sort of story my editor would drool over, even without the mystery of four missing people and another turning up dead in his own laboratory.”

“I’m not interested in editorial drool,” The Doctor assured her. “And I’m trusting you to put aside your journalistic tendencies and remember that you ARE here under your UNIT credentials. Though I must say you would be better finding something else to do while I attend to this autopsy business. It’s not for your eyes, really.”

“My journalistic eyes, my UNIT assistant eyes… or my fragile female eyes?”

The Doctor didn’t answer, which confirmed her suspicions.

“They don’t have a concept of Women’s Lib on Gallifrey, do they?”

“They have a concept of what is appropriate,” The Doctor answered her, now. “And a body covered in suppurating blisters – which is what I understand I am here to see - is not something any untrained person needs to witness.”

“Yuk,” Sarah-Jane admitted. “All right, I’ll take a wander around the unclassified bits of Denton Hall while you get on with the icky stuff. Apparently, most of the furniture is Chippendale. He comes from around here, and the original owner of the eighteenth-century hall bought a lot of stuff from him.”

“I hope he paid the bill,” The Doctor remarked. “Poor old Thomas had a lot of trouble with ‘Gentlemen’ who were slow at paying for their cabinets. He was often complaining about it when I dropped into his workshop for coffee and a bun.”

Sarah-Jane laughed softly at that exercise in historical name-dropping. She looked around at the gently sloping meadows leading down to the river Wharfe. These ‘natural’ grasslands dating from the eighteenth century when ‘unspoiled’ beauty was fashionable gave way to more formal gardens with topiary and well cut lawns and a magnificent house in the ‘classical’ style. Only the presence of three modern land rovers and a rather nice Bentley on the driveway dispelled the thought of ladies in Empire dresses and men in tight trousers that a romantic side of Sarah-Jane conjured up.

Instead, Sergeant Benton came down the neo-classical sweep of steps from the collonaded front door and greeted them both with a wide smile and a quick, almost cheeky, salute.

“Good to see you, both,” he said. “The Brigadier is busy just now, but he said I was to take you to the morgue, right away. Miss Smith….”

“I’m going to admire the Chippendale,” she assured him. “Don’t worry about me.”

“There’s loads of that stuff in the old smoking room,” Benton told her. “I’ll get somebody to bring in tea for you.”

That was an agreeable compromise, Sarah-Jane admitted. They had lunched on the drive up from London, somewhere just north of Leicester in one of the motorway service stations, but that felt like ages ago and the promise of tea was satisfying.

There was just one question her journalistic mind had to ask as they walked up the steps into the lovely hallway of the mansion.

“A morgue, in an eighteenth century stately home?”

“Temporary morgue,” Benton corrected himself. “It used to be the wine cellar. Coolest place in the house. Couldn’t send the poor bloke to the hospital, not with the work here being hush-hush and his death rather… unusual.”

“Yes, quite right,” The Doctor agreed. “Let’s get on, then.”

The smoking room did, indeed, contain many very fine pieces of Chippendale furniture. One particular piece was a very nice glass fronted cabinet containing a collection of silver cigarette cases. Most of them were in disarray as the cabinet had been moved away from that wall. An odd scratching sound was coming from behind it.

“Professor, I’ll get you another blackboard after I’ve arranged the tea,” called out a young soldier who followed her into the room. “Stop using the priceless furniture.”

Sarah-Jane peeped around the cabinet to see a wild-haired man in tweeds and a white lab coat who had already covered two blackboards with scientific symbols and was continuing on the back of the Chippendale.

“ProfessorJosephRubeish!” she exclaimed. “How lovely to see you, here.”

“Miss Sarah-Jane Smith!” the Professor answered almost immediately. “Are you SUPPOSED to be here? This IS a secret scientific facility. Journalists are not usually admitted.”

“I’m here in my UNIT capacity. I see you’ve got contact lenses, now. They suit you.”

“Practical. I was always losing my glasses, and it makes the work so much harder. These are a prototype, designed by one of the chaps who work here with me. At the touch of this little gadget in my pocket I can see in infra-red and other light spectrums as well as heat-sensing. The latter is quite fascinating. I can see spiders in the corner of my bedroom by the heat of their bodies.”

“Two questions, just curiosity,” Sarah-Jane said to him before he launched into technical details of his lenses. “What is all this you’re vandalising the Chippendale for and… why aren’t you in a laboratory or something? You don’t HAVE to answer the first question if you feel I’m too much of a security risk.”

The soldier returned with a tea tray and a colleague lugging a blackboard and easel in. Rubeish left his work and came to sit with Sarah-Jane. The rate he went through the cucumber sandwiches he had obviously forgotten to eat while the scientific muse was upon him.

“The formula… it’s for better nourishment value in the re-hydrated food eaten by astronauts,” he explained. “Those chaps are spending more and more time in space lately. We need to improve the way they live.”

“As somebody who has been in space a couple of times I quite agree with that,” Sarah-Jane told him, recalling a restaurant on a space station The Doctor had brought her to, once. Its separate section for species that ate ‘live’ food was eye-popping, as was the fact that it was owned by the twenty-fifth century descendants of the motorway services company that owned the Leicester Forest East restaurant where she had lunch.

“I’m having to make do with this room because my laboratory is off limits,” Rubeish added. “Plummer’s body was found there… poor chap. There’s all this fuss about what might have killed him. I keep telling them his experiments were not dangerous in that way, but they don’t want to listen. Your Brigadier chap is convinced there’s a biological hazard. He has everyone wearing face masks and rubber gloves if they even go up to the second floor landing. But Plummer wasn’t working on….”

Rubeish stopped abruptly and gave an apologetic smile.

“I really can’t say. Not won’t… though there is a question of security, of course. I simply can’t. He worked alone most of the time. Even though we shared laboratory facilities he told me absolutely nothing about his work. All I know is he had actually built something. As you can gather, I’m still very much at the theoretical stage of my project, but he was forever requisitioning parts, some of them very precise, hand tooled, one-off pieces. But whatever he was up to it was nothing to do with diseases or anything of that sort, I can assure you… or anyone else who actually bothers to ask me.”

“But your colleague IS dead, and in an unpleasant way, so The Doctor says.”

“Yes, I’m afraid so,” Rubeish acknowledged sadly. “A great loss to the scientific community.”

The Doctor didn’t exactly enjoy messy autopsies, but he approached the job with scientific detachment, determined to get to the bottom of the mystery that had brought him all the way up here, away from his own work.

“The subject is a male human,” The Doctor said, speaking into a slim microphone that recorded his findings as he worked. “He was aged about thirty-five, weighing twelve stone five pounds. He appeared to be in good health before the trauma which killed him.”

The Doctor paused before continuing his report.

“Although at first glance the subject appears to be in the advanced stages of haemorrhagic fever, I have found no viral infection in the blood. However, there are large quantities of naturally occurring histamines, peptides, amino acids and pheromones. The peptides correspond to those found in bee venom, but the quantities of the substances found in the blood are far in excess of any ordinary bee sting. A swarm of highly volatile African bees stinging a grown man hundreds of times could cause such levels of venom in the blood and result in cardiac arrest, but the subject does not appear to have suffered that many stings.”

He paused again and picked up a pair of tweezers. He carefully extracted something from beneath the dead man’s skin. He examined it closely, then placed it into a tray. He was surprised by the object, but having found it he was able to say with certainty what had killed the man.

Whether anyone else would believe him was another matter.

“So you’re absolutely sure the missing men weren’t snatched out of time like when Lynx was targeting all of you?” Sarah-Jane asked Professor Rubeish as they drank tea and she casually teased the details out of him.

“Quite sure,” the Professor answered. “Only two of them, including poor old Plummer, were actually scientists. The others were a cleaner, a security guard and Plummer’s brother who was visiting him. The man is a dentist. Hardly of use to a Sontaran… though those fourteenth century chaps could have benefitted from his services.”

That was a joke only a handful of people, Sarah-Jane included, could have understood. She laughed and began to ask Rubeish another question when the smoking room door opened abruptly and The Doctor stalked in carrying a specimen dish. He placed it in front of the Professor.

“Do you know what this is?” he asked tersely, almost accusatorily.

“Well….” Rubeish peered at the object some three inches in length, dark brown, tapering to a sharp point at one end and raggedly broken at the other. “Well… if it didn’t sound preposterous I would say it is a huge bee stinger.”

“Goodness, yes,” Sarah-Jane agreed. “It DOES look like one of those. But that’s quite impossible. For the stinger to be that big, the bee would have to be…”

She stopped talking, partly because the sentence sounded terrible with all those ‘be’s’ in it and partly because she was trying to imagine the size of the bee with a stinger that size.

“An ordinary bumble bee, as found in any English country garden, is approximately one to one and a half centimetres in length,” The Doctor said helpfully. “The stinger is around two millimetres – very small, like the nib of a pen. This one is ten centimetres – fifty times the normal sized sting - making the bee….”

“Huge,” Sarah-Jane remarked. She wasn’t ready for that sort of maths in her head.

“Seventy five centimetres,” Rubeish said at the same time. “Good gracious!”

“Which of your scientific colleagues has been experimenting with growth hormones on bees?” The Doctor asked in a thoroughly accusatory tone. “And what in Creation did he think he was doing?”

“There were no such experiments going on at Denton Hall, I assure you, Doctor,” Professor Rubeish answered. “The only bees around are either in the apiary beyond the kitchen garden by the greenhouses or… the wild swarm that nested just under the window of the laboratory I shared with Plummer. They were a bit of a nuisance all summer. We kept complaining. Dying off now that autumn is upon us, though we still get the odd one coming in through the ventilation system… but only ordinary sized ones… the one and a half centimetres you mentioned. There are no giant bees here.”

“Are you absolutely sure?” The Doctor asked, softening his tone. Rubeish wasn’t a man who could easily dissemble. If he hadn’t seen a giant bee, then either there wasn’t one or the experiments were extremely secret.

“I am absolutely sure,” Rubeish assured him.

“But THAT is a giant bee stinger,” Sarah-Jane pointed out. “Which means there MUST be one somewhere, doesn’t it?”

“It does,” The Doctor said. “And it is what killed Plummer. The amount of venom a creature of that size could inject into his bloodstream would cause immediate cardiac arrest. He just about had time to have the severe allergic reaction that caused the blisters all over his body before his whole system shut down.”

“Rotten way to die,” Sarah-Jane commented.

“But… all evidence to the contrary… there IS no giant bee,” Rubeish reminded them.

“It wouldn’t be buzzing around,” Sarah-Jane pointed out to the two scientists in her presence. “Obvious fact number one about bees… if they sting even once, the stinger rips out into the victim… and they die... the bees, not the people. We’re looking for a DEAD giant bee.”

The Doctor and Rubeish looked at Sarah-Jane with expressions that gave her a moment of smugness. For all their intelligence, both men had forgotten that.

“The laboratory hasn’t been touched since the body was found?” The Doctor asked.

“No,” Rubeish assured him. “I was told it had to be preserved until the proper investigative authorities arrived. That’s why they installed me in here.”

“Well, we ARE the ‘proper investigative authorities’, aren’t we?” Sarah-Jane asked. “Why else did we drive up from London?”

“We most certainly ARE,” The Doctor replied. “Now’s your chance to do something other than admire the Chippendale. Professor… you should come along, too. You’re the man who would know if anything was out of place.”

Rubeish agreed with that. He put down his teacup and prepared to follow The Doctor and Sarah-Jane. As they made their way up the fine, wide staircase from the hallway, ignoring the bio-hazard signs taped to the mahogany banister rail, Sergeant Benton slipped beside them.

“The Brigadier is still busy, and I am sick to death of the stuck-up Rupert they sent to replace Captain Yates. If it’s all the same, I’ll make myself useful to you, Doctor.”

“You’re welcome, Sergeant,” The Doctor answered. “As long as you can manage not to break anything important.”

The fellowship continued upstairs to rooms that had once been master bedrooms when this was the home of Sir James Ibbetson – the baronet who patronised Thomas Chippendale and may or may not have paid the bill on time.

Two such bedrooms had been knocked together into one big laboratory but a folding partition had been added in case an experiment was dangerous or possibly secret. One side of the half-closed partition was a jumble of alembics and test tubes full of strangely coloured chemicals as well as a dozen blackboards covered in formulas for goodness knows what. Even the floor, covered with non-slip linoleum, had symbols scrawled on it as Rubeish’s imagination outstripped the designated writing surfaces.

The other side was very neat and tidy. Formulae were written in neat penmanship on pages kept in loose leaf binders on a bookshelf, the counters clean, everything in its place.

In the middle of the clean linoleum floor was a machine which looked like a cross between a new piece of artillery and a giant microscope. While The Doctor examined it carefully and Rubeish studied his dead colleague’s notes, Sarah-Jane and Sergeant Benton looked around for… well, a giant bee, though it was obvious there was nothing of the sort in the room.

“There’s an ordinary sized dead bee here on the windowsill,” Benton called out. Sarah-Jane bent to examine it with a hand held magnifying glass she had picked up from the far messier table in the other side of the room. She noted that the bee’s sting was missing, explaining why it was dead. At the very same moment, Professor Rubeish called out in excitement and The Doctor gave a loud ‘aha’ of triumphant discovery.

Another moment later, there was a strange crackle of electricity and a blue light surrounded Benton and Sarah-Jane.

A further moment after that, Benton and Sarah-Jane had vanished.

“Of course,” Rubeish cried out. “Now it all makes sense.”

“Not quite all,” The Doctor contradicted him. “This machine is faulty. The residual energy is still earthing itself randomly in any organic being in its path… in this case, Benton and Sarah-Jane, but now that I know what happened, we can begin to repair the damage.”

Benton and Sarah-Jane looked around at their new environment as their heads cleared.

“Plummer invented some sort of transmat device,” Sarah-Jane concluded as studied the hard, unyielding surface beneath her feet. It looked like marble or some sort of quartz stone.

Right in front of them was a high wall of very solid dark wood, and above that, a high, white cliff.

“No… I’m afraid it’s worse than that,” Benton told her. “Look up… all the way up.”

Sarah-Jane looked. The cliff was topped by an outcrop and above that was a glare of strong sunlight that made it difficult to see anything else.

She turned slowly and then gasped out loud as she realised that nothing was strange at all. She was just seeing it from a very odd perspective.

“Doctor, Professor,” she called out as loudly as she could manage.

“They won’t be able to hear us,” Benton said as he pressed himself against the original eighteenth century mahogany skirting board to avoid the boat sized foot that came down close to where he had been standing. Sarah-Jane emulated him fearfully.

“It wasn’t a transmat…” she gasped. “It was a shrink ray.”

“We’ve been miniaturised.”

“Yes.”

“Professor Plummer… wasn’t killed by a giant bee. He was killed by a normal size bee while he was really small. The sting enlarged with his body… after he was dead.”

“I think that must be what happened,” Benton admitted. Science was most certainly not one of his strong points, but after knowing The Doctor for several years, now, he was not going to query a theory that made perfect sense.

“Hey… this way,” a voice called out. “Quickly before you get stepped on.”

“Professor, come back over this side of the machine before you either get miniaturised or you step on one of those who were already caught in an energy spike.”

“Oh, dear, I never even thought of that,” Rubeish admitted before gingerly picking his way back towards The Doctor. “Do you think the others are alive, still? They must be very small… maybe two centimetres. I might be able to see them with my heat sensing contact lenses. I can see spiders in my bedroom at night with them, you know.”

“Not until I say it’s safe,” The Doctor answered.

 “Plummer must have found a way to get around tissue compression,” Rubeish went on, his scientific curiosity temporarily overtaking his human compassion. “That has been the main stumbling block to live miniaturisation all along, of course. The organs of the body can’t take the strain of being reduced in that way.”

The Doctor thought about the TCE, the Tissue Compression Eliminator. Its inventors hadn’t cared about getting around the problem. The brief but brutal pain and suffering of the victim was a bonus feature for the sort of man who would use that weapon on a living being - his arch enemy The Master, for example.

“Yes… here it is in Plummer’s notes,” The Doctor confirmed. “As well as his feelings of distress over the deaths of several test rabbits before he got it right. My dear friend Jo Grant would have something to say about that. She hates the very idea of animal testing.”

“Difficult to see how he could have done this work without such a necessary evil,” Rubeish acknowledged. “People who don’t work in experimental science never really understand these things.”

“WHY was Professor Plummer experimenting with this sort of thing at all?” Sarah-Jane asked as she ate a chunk of hard-boiled egg and a crumb from a biscuit. Both came from a room-sized lunch box inside a filing cabinet drawer where the missing men were all hiding. The giant food had been sustaining them for more than a day, now. “It’s very dangerous and quite pointless. What benefit to Mankind could it possibly be?”

“Experimental science doesn’t always need a point, or an obvious benefit to Mankind,” answered Professor Anthony Faulkner, one of the first victims of the rogue miniaturisation ray. He had a pair of white rabbits tucked inside his lab coat and had been feeding them chunks of celery from the lunch box. “The discovery of penicillin was an accidental by-product of experiments with moulds with no clear outcome other than an understanding of how moulds grew. Tying science to its beneficial outcomes would be akin to a ball and chain on us all.”

Brian Parkes, the laboratory cleaner, clinging to with his miniaturised mop as a symbol of the normality he had been snatched away from and David Nolan, the security guard with a two-way radio that was ineffective in its micro state both shrugged at the philosophical argument. Gregory Plummer DDS sighed deeply. He was coming to terms with never having that discussion with his brother ever again.

“Besides,” Faulkner continued. “There are huge benefits to mankind in a reliable miniaturisation method. Imagine if the huge containers shipped across our oceans were a quarter of the size and weight. Four times as much food, steel, coal could be taken where it is needed for the same amount of fuel.”

“Yes… I suppose that’s true,” Sarah-Jane conceded. “Though I suppose a re-enlarging machine would have to be installed at the other end of the journey.”

“Yes, it would,” said Gregory Plummer. “But my brother didn’t build one of those, yet.”

There was a bitter note in his voice. Perhaps he had been a victim of the Professor’s experiments before.

“They’ll TRY to help us, won’t they?” asked Parkes. To him, the scientists were all a separate caste of humanity he called ‘they’ – people who had mysterious things going on in their laboratories, none of which he needed to know about unless anti-corrosive gloves or a face mask were needed for cleaning up after ‘them’.

“Well of course, they will,” Sarah-Jane insisted. “The Doctor won’t leave us like this. We’ll be back to normal in a jiffy.”

A jiffy was a vague timespan at the best, though, and The Doctor was struggling to live up to Sarah-Jane’s confidence in him.

“I don’t like to speak ill of the dead,” he said after going through almost three quarters of the late Professor’s notes on his project. “I really don’t, and I am sure he was a good friend as well as a respected colleague. But to build this prototype without building a machine to reverse the effects was irresponsible of him.”

Rubeish felt the censure personally as a colleague of the dead scientist, but he couldn’t argue against it. That had certainly been a major flaw in the project.

“There’s nothing in any of his written notes,” Rubeish concluded. “Have you looked at his voice recorder? He often used that when he was working. There might be something….”

“Why the bunnies?” Sarah-Jane asked. She felt like she had run out of sensible questions.

“They were Plummer’s first successful subjects,” Faulkner answered. “The trouble was, he couldn’t find them after he had miniaturised them. I stupidly volunteered to look for them. I was wearing my own infra-red contact lenses…”

“Oh, you mean like the ones Professer Rubeish is wearing?” Sarah-Jane interrupted.

“I made a pair for him, too. He’s a much better scientist now he can see what he’s doing. But as I was saying, the lenses meant that I could see these poor little fellows. I was bending down with a tray to scoop them into when… zap.”

“Oops.”

“To say the least. I was just coming to terms with life at insect level when the Professor and his brother both wound up down here with me… then those two got mixed up in it as well.”

“Then we had the bee,” Gregory added unhappily. “Gerard… well, he saved the rest of us. But the size of the thing… he died quickly. That’s the one saving grace. And then his body enlarged again. I don’t know why that happened. Something about ‘living tissue’, possibly. I don’t know. I do teeth.”

Listening to the dead Professor’s voice on a solid state voice recorder invented by another of the scientists here at Denton Hall and at least thirty years ahead of its time, was an unsettling experience. Rubeish was visibly upset. Even The Doctor, who had taken Emotional Detachment as an undergraduate subject at his Time Lord Academy, couldn’t help thinking sadly of the distressed body in the makeshift morgue.

What the dead man was saying, though, was quite crucial. He admitted his fault in not building a re-enlarger at the same time as his shrink ray, but went on to suggest a very easy solution to the problem.

“Could it really be THAT simple?” The Doctor asked as he began to unscrew the side of the machine. “Just reversing the polarity on the transponder….”

“Yes, of course. It COULD work,” Rubeish agreed. “I mean… should work. But we have to find the missing people, first.”

“You work that out,” The Doctor answered him. “But don’t make a move until I’ve finished the reversal. That ought to dissipate the rest of the miniaturising energy. You’ll be safe to move around the room.”

He worked quickly. There were six lives at risk, including Sarah-Jane who was only here because he had brought her.

Rubeish waited until The Doctor told him it was all right, then he moved forward, carefully. He clicked the button in his pocket that changed his vision to heat sensing. He scanned the floor inch by inch.

Then he knelt and looked at an open filing cabinet door.

“Oh…” he said. “I think… they have a bit of a problem.”

The problem had eight hairy legs and a spine chilling chattering noise as it crawled over the edge of the lunch box. Sarah-Jane was not the only one cringing away as the spider closed in on them. Gregory Plummer and David Nolan were both petrified.

Two people acted. Brian Parkes was no fan of giant spiders, but he had swept up plenty of regular sized ones. He stood his ground, waving his mop threateningly. Sergeant Benton, meanwhile, pulled his side arm and shot at the creature’s eyes. He emptied the clip of his Browning automatic into the spider’s head, but the bullets were tiny in proportion and caused only minor damage.

The spider kept coming.

“Now what?” Sarah-Jane cried out as the lunch box, spider, hard-boiled egg and all, suddenly rocked. She tried to find a handhold, but lunchboxes tended to be smooth on their insides. She slid across the floor towards the spider legs.

“Wait… everyone keep still,” Faulkner called out. “I think we’re being rescued.”

The lunch box was still again, but they were no longer in the filing cabinet. The white walls of the laboratory and the diffused sunlight from the windows showed that they were now in the open, set down on the floor.

Then a blue light surrounded them. They all felt a strange tugging in their stomachs, not painful, but very peculiar.

Then it was over. They climbed out of the huge plastic lunch box, inching past a dead spider, impaled through the abdomen by a mop.

The spider was at least nine foot high, but it was dead and the only problem now was how to dispose of a nine foot high dead spider.

“Doctor!” Sarah-Jane ran to hug The Doctor. Benton grinned widely and holstered his gun. He didn’t need a hug, but he was very glad to see everyone and everything back to normal.

“I’m going to get these fellows into a safe cage,” said Faulkner about the two normal sized rabbits gnawing on giant pieces of celery. “After all they’ve been through, I’m checking them out of this place. My sister’s kids will look after them.”

As he left the room, Brigadier Lethbridge Stewart stepped in. He looked around at the collection of people all shaking hands and congratulating each other, a half-eaten giant lunch inside a giant lunch box and the giant spider impaled on a mop.

“What on Earth has been going on in here, Doctor?” he asked. “And how did a dead giant insect get here?”

“Arachnid,” Sarah-Jane told him. “Spiders are arachnids, not insects. In a house full of scientists you will have to get things like that right, Brigadier.”

“Be that as it may, I would certainly like to know how it fits into your report about missing people, Doctor.”

“You’ll have a full report in due time, old chap,” The Doctor replied. “I think we’d all like a good cup of tea, first. Perhaps you could organise it.”

“Me… organise tea…. Sergeant Benton what are you grinning about?”

“Nothing, sir,” Benton answered. “I’ll go organise the tea… it would be my pleasure.”

Everything was very definitely back to normal!