

Donna adjusted the red and green yarn hat that had fallen from her head. Breathing in the cool air as she and the Doctor headed down one street.

"Peppermint" she commented, taking another breath. "It smells like peppermint here. All right, that's pretty cool."

The Doctor grinned. "See? What did I say, this planet goes all out for Christmas. Everything here " He bent down to pluck a blade of grass. "Is themed around Christmas." He licked the grass.

Donna rolled her eyes. "Are you just gonna do that? Wherever we are, see something new and think 'oh I wonder if this is okay to lick'?"

The Doctor put the grass in his suit pocket. "Spiced cider. Quite nice, actually. Try one."

"Taking your word on that, Spaceman" Donna walked a bit ahead, taking note of all the houses they passed. Each one had a tiny blanket of snow lining the rooftop, doors painted a beautiful shade of red, and sprigs of green and white on each window. Thoughts of Christmas cards or small ceramic villages raced through her mind with each step.

The Doctor's mind; however, already focused on something. "Oh, look!" He exclaimed. "They've got little shops. I love little shops. Shall we go on?"

Nodding, Donna ran to catch up with him. "Maybe they'll have something for Mum there. Ever since I was a kid, I could never get her the right thing for Christmas- paint a star ornament in primary school, it'd be the wrong colour for the tree. Find a new handbag, already got one. Just once, I'd like to get her something nice."

The Doctor wanted to comment something about how that made entirely too much sense for Sylvia, but thought better of it. Instead, he handed Donna a small red and white bag. "Here" he said, opening it and taking out a tiny candy-striped coin, "Should be enough. Meet you in an hour at the cafe. Christmas cake and warm cider?"

"Yeah, okay" said Donna, being careful to not drop the bag as she headed for the little shop.

Wonder if I should get the Doctor anything, she thought as she scanned the shelves, What do you get a bloke who's got

everything or can get it? Besides, some days he's earned a spot on the Naughty list.

" May I help you? " a rather bubbly voice interrupted Donna's browsing. A small, plump woman with grey hair had appeared next to her.

Donna couldn't help but stare- the woman wore a green velvet jumper and matching pants, silver pointed shoes, and if Donna wasn't mistaken, her ears came to little points.

Donna blinked. "Yeah, sorry. Just looking for a last minute gift for someone. Well, a couple of people: my mum and my" She frowned. " Well, it's hard to explain. He's a pretty great blike , but sometimes I wonder how we can stand each other."

The woman gave a nod of understanding. "Your husband?" she asked.

"No! " Donna replied quickly, "I mean, we're not... like that. He's just a mate."

Shrugging, the woman gestured around the various shelves. " Well, we've got a bit of everything here. Feel free to look

around . Let me know if you need any help. I'm Cristal , the store owner."

Donna went back to her browsing. " Thanks."

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As Donna leafed through the various items, she couldn't help notice something odd: everything had been already wrapped in paper and bows. Figuring out each item took forever ; especially if one tried to re-wrap everything. There must have been a million tiny boxes she sifted through: candy cane mugs, festive blankets- regular and those sort with sleeves, every kind of ornament one could dream up.

Finally, Donna settled on a china teapot with a Christmas tree on it for her mum. If she didn't like it, one more thing for the charity shop.

The Doctor's gift, though, still eluded her.

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"How do I look?" The Doctor asked, wrapping a long scarf around himself; his spiked hair now covered by a massive red Santa hat.

Donna stifled a laugh. " Just tell me where we're going."

"Deneb-8" The Doctor pronounced it dramatically. " I figured you deserved a holiday. After, well, the Library and what happened with—" He trailed off.

Donna frowned. " You're allowed to say it, you know. My husband and children who weren't even real?" Her voice almost breaking at the words.

Putting a comforting hand on Donna's shoulder, the Doctor nodded. " And your Prince. A holiday could do us both a world of good. And" He grabbed a different scarf, this one several miles long and practically every colour of yarn imaginable. " If I'm right, and I am oh... about ninety-nine point nine percent of the time, it's getting near Christmas back on Earth. "

Donna pulled off the gloves she'd tried on. " I thought I told you, I hate Christmas. Never have, and after you've seen giant spiders and robotic Santas , I don't think you'd be that keen on it either, sunshine."

The Doctor was too busy wrapping the scarf around himself, and lost in his own thoughts to catch her last words. " Right!"

He said. " But still, trying to do something nice. Just a bit of a holiday. I think you'll like this place. They do Christmas right. And no robot Santas . Well, at least the last time I was there."

" And when was that?"

" A few decades? Maybe more? Think they still had edible snow and living snow globes then."

Donna sighed; sometimes he could be the most bonkers man she'd ever met. " All right. But you owe me- one bad thing happens and you're on my Naughty list."

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Donna searched through a few more shelves; there had to be something . Something nice , but with just that right... Doctor-y edge to it. Tea? No, he had a drink machine in the TARDIS. It made something not entirely unlike English Breakfast most days. Chocolate liqueurs? He's the last person who needs any more sweets. But then, after more unwrapping, examining, and re-wrapping, Donna found something. Something that would be perfect for them both.

" Oi, Cristal?" Donna called, the flat box wrapped in shiny blue paper in her hands; along with the square box for her Mum. " Where do I pay for these? I'm ready."

Cristal took both boxes, examining them a little. " Oh these are lovely" she crooned. " Someone is going to be rather surprised on Christmas Day." Counting on her tiny fingers, Cistal nodded to Donna. " Twenty-five, please."

"These things, you mean?" Doona asked, reaching into the bag and counting out twenty-five of the candy-striped coins. " There some kind of guarantee? Like bring it back after five hundred years if it's not satisfactory or something?"

Scooping the coins into a red box, Cristal frowned, face scrunched in confusion. " Sorry?"

"Neve mind. Thanks, and Happy Christmas, I guess."

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Balancing her shopping carefully, Donna trekked through the snowy roads to the cafe. The place looked like a gigantic gingerbread house: dark wood on the outside , red and green roof like the rest of the buildings, but distinct little sprinklings of color on each window and something on the door that felt sticky: like a big lemon drop.

" Hello, Donna!" called a familiar voice as she entered the cafe. " So , how was your exploring?"

She nodded. " Yeah, it was fine. What'd you do? Or do I want to know?"

The Doctor sipped at his cup of hot cider. " Oh, you know me. Went for a little walk; helped two little girls build a snowman, sang some carols. The snowman does a nice version of Joy to the World."

Donna took a cursory sip of her own drink, savouring the taste of warm cider. " A talking snowman?"

"I've met weirder. Find anything for Sylvia yet?"

Donna placed the square box wrapped in green paper on the table. " China tea pot. Better than nothing. Oh! And..." She sat the blue package in front of him. " For you. Just- a thing."

The Doctor excitedly opened the wrapping paper, tearing into it like a kid. His expression changed to one of amazement . " An album?" He asked, holding out the blank blue book.



"Mhm, you can use it for keeping track of all the weird stuff you come across. Like talking snowmen. Or, maybe a friend you don't want to forget about?" She suggested.

The Doctor smiled. " You are brilliant, have I mentioned that? The brilliant Donna Noble!" He raised his drink to his lips. " Happy Christmas."

"Happy Christmas, Spaceman."