

Proposal for a Doctor Who novel  
featuring the eighth Doctor

“KURSAAL”

by Peter Anghelides

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Peter Anghelides  
<address>  
<phone>  
<e-mail>

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(3,800 words)

## Part One

THE PLANET SATURNIA REGNA orbits the Cronus system, and the **Gray Corporation** owns it. Gray Corp is a development conglomerate on a galactic scale, and in a series of massive building projects is turning the planet into **Kursaal**, a leisure world. Imagine “Disneyland meets Babylon 5” - the planet has part-completed facilities all over it for transport, accommodation, residential, infrastructure, entertainment, and the usual paraphernalia of a theme park writ large. The construction work is also more radical than a Barratt Homes site: the diggers are the size of office buildings, the cranes are like rocket gantries, and the blasting equipment is on an H-bomb scale.

Saturnia Regna is also supposed to be the last part of the Cronus system inhabited by the **Jax**, a humanoid race which died out thousands of years ago. So the planet is considered to be a kind of “heritage site” by **HALF** (Helping All Life Forms), an ecological pressure group rumoured to be funded by a shadowy billionaire and led by the charismatic **Bernard Cockaigne**. HALF has run a Greenpeace-style direct action campaign against Gray Corp, and successfully disrupted work all over the planet so that the project is running well behind. This is a bit awkward, since the financial backers are pressuring Gray Corp to complete ahead of schedule.

IN THE NOVEL'S OPENING scene, **Amy Saraband** and **Maximilian Gray** are being recovered from an archaeological dig on Saturnia Regna. They are the only survivors of their eight-strong team, which seems to have been the victim of a savage attack by wild animals. The dig is closed, and they are taken to hospital.

Amy had been brought in to the Kursaal project by Maximilian Gray, Chief Executive Officer of Gray Corporation. This is one of two ways that the wily Gray approached the HALF problem: in a PR scoop, he's employing the famous xenobiologist Amy Saraband to research the Jax, and to devise ways of incorporating them into the finished Kursaal project - and he's accompanied her on this dig for PR reasons too. Secondly, however, Gray has beefed up his on-site Security Team, including Commander **Paul Kadijk**. Since his arrival, Kadijk has been having much more success halting the HALF activity.

But recently a number of small bombs have destroyed key Gray locations on the planet - the communications network, the spaceport, several gigantic earth movers. Then things turn particularly ugly when a visiting media crew is killed in a suspicious accident. And this, of course, is when the Doctor turns up and gets implicated. He has no identification, and so opportunistically pretends to be the crime-scene pathologist, and goes back to the hospital with the corpses.

Kadijk wants to link everything to HALF - and when the real pathologist turns up, Kadijk suspects that the Doctor is an eco-terrorist responsible for the media crew's deaths.

The Doctor meets Amy in the hospital morgue. She survived the attack on the dig team unscathed, but has come to the morgue to identify the bodies of her colleagues. The Doctor is intrigued by the deaths, and wants to know how they happened. Amy is baffled that there are only five bodies: Olivier, the first man killed in the attack, is not there. Then the *real* pathologist turns up, the Doctor's cover story is rumbled, and he and Amy have to escape from the hospital.

Elsewhere in the hospital, Gray is being treated for wounds he sustained during the attack - he has not come round since the attack, and vital signs are fading. Kadijk learns that two of the six bodies have now been stolen from the morgue - Olivier and Sharstone.

Amy and the Doctor flee to one of the completed areas of Kursaal, a group of areas each a dozen acres across and themed on different cultures from the Cronus system: an ice world, a technological city block, a desert world full of nomadic dwellings, a sea world, etc. Amy leads the Doctor through the underground service system, explaining as they go that she wants to preserve the *true* archaeological sites, not just document them before they are redeveloped, and certainly not to redevelop them as these fakes. They reach a cramped set of real offices hidden among the fake technological city block: HALF are hidden here, and Amy introduces the Doctor to Bernard Cockaigne - and confesses that she has actually been working for HALF all along.

Back in the hospital, Kadijk is talking to Gray who is making a completely unexpected recovery. Gray is reluctant to explain too much about the archaeological dig. Kadijk talks to a subordinate: redevelopment of the dig site has been happening since the attack, and if anything untoward is happening there, he must know soon. A search of Gray's belongings reveals a tracking device, which he presumes must be tuned to a bug placed by Gray.

The Doctor is discussing the history of Saturnia Regna with Cockaigne and his HALF supporters, including an activist called Claire Johnson. They show the Doctor records and artefacts they have discovered about the Jax, a vulpine, perhaps lupine race which appears to have died out on the planet a thousand years ago. As the Doctor examines them, he becomes very worried.

Amy, meanwhile, has been checking some HALF records of her own, and is furious with what she's found. The Doctor plans to go to the archaeological dig, but needs someone to go back to the hospital and ensure no-one gets access to the bodies in the morgue. Since they were part of Amy's

team, and since she is the only person in their present group who is a Gray Corp employee, he suggests her. Amy agrees, but it is apparent to us that she has other reasons for returning.

Just as they are planning their move, the Gray Corp security forces, led by Kadijk, attack the HALF base. The security team has located HALF using Gray's tracker (Gray placed a bug when he was spying on Amy during the dig), and now start to break up the base, brutally subduing the activists. In the confusion, the Doctor, Cockaigne and Johnson flee in a security vehicle. They are pursued in an exciting chase through the neighbouring fake areas, eventually escaping by hiding out in the planet's partially-built zoo.

Amy has been taken for interrogation. During this, Kadijk learns that Gray has discharged himself from hospital. Amy warns Kadijk not to let anyone near the corpses in the morgue. Kadijk is incredulous - he thinks that Amy and her colleagues have been stealing the corpses, since two are missing. He takes her off to the hospital morgue to show her.

The Doctor, Cockaigne and Johnson have reached the archaeological dig, which is strangely deserted - though there has been extensive new excavation nearby. This isn't the painstaking archaeological excavation of the original team, though, but the crude earth-moving of the huge development diggers. Cockaigne is appalled - the site is being destroyed forever.

Near the site of the attack on Amy's team, they find the husk of a wolf-like humanoid. This was the creature which attacked the archaeology party. They find a deep narrow industrial excavation, like a bore hole in the rock, which has accidentally connected via a crack in the side to an enormous buried chamber. Here they find the origin of the wolf-like creature in the remnants of the Jax vulpine culture, a cavernous underground palace abandoned a thousand years ago. It seems that at least one of the wolf creatures survived, and attacked the archaeology team. The Doctor investigates further to see if there are more survivors.

When Amy and Kadijk reach the morgue, they find that the security guards posted there have been brutally murdered. They go in to the morgue to see the four corpses - which alarmingly come to life and move to attack them.

The Doctor continues to search the site, and discovers from that the Jax were a race like werewolves which went up an evolutionary dead-end and could only reproduce by infecting other humanoid life forms. When they ran out of the limited number of humanoids a thousand years ago, they died out and this is their last memorial.

Cockaigne makes a worrying discovery further down the bore hole - it seems to be wired with explosives - he recognises the type, because HALF stole similar equipment from Gray Corp to use for their campaigns. He and the Doctor start to make their way out of the palace, but when they reach the exit they discover Johnson is dead, and there are two animated corpses standing over her body - Olivier and Sharstone. The crazed corpses try to kill them in a frenzied attack, so the Doctor and Cockaigne have to retreat into the palace.

Kadijk's security staff help Amy and Kadijk fight off the animated corpses in the morgue. Amy explains the Doctor's warning, and that there may be similar dangers at the excavation site where they were originally attacked. Kadijk says that the original attack site will not be a problem much longer, as Gray Corp plans to build a huge recycling plant on the archaeological site, which has therefore been evacuated for an enormous explosive excavation. Amy is appalled, and explains that the Doctor and Cockaigne planned to go there. Kadijk immediately sets off with his security team. Amy stays behind, insisting that she must go to Gray Corp HQ in search of Gray.

In the Jax palace, the Doctor is explaining to Cockaigne that the two corpses have been reanimated by the Jax infection. They are only mindless Jax drones, since the infection was only able to reanimate a dead body - they are operating solely on instinct to return to their palace and defend

it. The Jax could only reproduce as intelligent life by infecting live hosts. The Doctor is hunting through all the Jax technology in the palace to see what he can use for an escape - there seems to be an extensive amount of Jax technology deeper underground.

Meanwhile, Cockaigne is making an attempt to defuse the bomb. He is a bit put out to discover that the culture he wanted to preserve wants to destroy him - either the Jax drones will break in and kill him, or they'll trap him in the palace until the excavation bomb goes off.

Kadijk's group arrive and rescue the Doctor and Cockaigne from the Jax drones, and drag Cockaigne away from his defusing work. They flee the site in a security shuttle, the bombs go off and they see the site collapse into the ground from a distance. Cockaigne says what a pity about the dead archaeologists who became drones. Kadijk says that Gray was lucky - if his wounds had been any worse, he'd have gone the same way. The Doctor is appalled, as he thought that Gray, like Amy, had not been injured during the original attack. The Doctor and Cockaigne race back towards Gray Corp HQ.

Gray Corp HQ: Amy confronts Gray in his office. She accuses him of betrayal: he hired her for purely political reasons, but what she has just worked out for herself at HALF is that HALF receive their funding from the same bank route - in other words, Gray is also funding HALF to work against him. It seems that Gray wanted to destroy the Kursaal project from within. It's a financial scam to bankrupt the project; it can then be picked up at a bargain price by another of Gray's companies which would complete the work and make a huge profit unencumbered by its crippling previous debts. What's more, he seems to know more about these dangerous werewolves than he's letting on. Amy senses a chance to make some money out of these discoveries - share options in the purchasing company, perhaps?

Gray is surprisingly open, talking at some length, spinning things out while waiting for something.

Amy is about to leave, but he keeps her there by asking whether she'd like to hear why he arranged the deaths of the media crew: they were getting too interested in both his financial arrangements in Kursaal and the Jax excavations. What's more, he personally killed the security guards who had carried out that contract - they were the same ones guarding the hospital morgue.

Amy is baffled: weren't the guards killed by the Jax, by those drones? Yes and no, says Gray, and the plan for Kursaal has changed. Amy is planning to leave, but Gray indicates that the lower floors are now protected by Jax drones - her former dig team members, plus the dead security guards - she can see them on Gray's security monitors. Then the full moon finally appears from behind a cloud, visible through Gray's fiftieth floor office window. This is the moment for which Gray has been delaying her: before Amy's eyes, Gray metamorphoses into a full Jax wolf. Because his human body survived the original Jax attack, the infection has metamorphosed him into a rational, thinking Jax creature and not just a drone. Gray has provided a strong new body for the Jax pack leader instead of the thousand-year-old one which it shrugged off as a husk-like cast at the dig site.

As the Gray/werewolf transformation completes, Amy mortally wounds him. He howls and flings himself at her. Deep in the building, the Jax drones howl back and start to make their way up to the fiftieth floor.

The Doctor, Kadijk, and Cockaigne arrive at the Gray HQ in time to see a body hurled through a fiftieth floor window. They rush up to the office to find Amy in the room, with the Jax drones cowering in a corner. (They are still infectious, but no longer seem motivated.) Cockaigne and Kadijk call for zoo staff to come and take the drones into captivity.

The Doctor takes Amy aside, and explains about the destruction of the Jax palace which is now buried again. Amy howls tearfully for the archaeological loss. The Doctor offers to take her aboard

the Tardis and show her around - any time, any place? She wants to go back and prevent the destruction of the palace. The Doctor says he can't take her to her own past, or save her dig team from the original attack. She asks whether he can take her to her future instead.

Outside the Gray HQ, the pathologist (from the beginning of the novel) is examining the broken body on the street. He is surprised to find that it is the husk of a man-sized wolf, just like the one found at the archaeological dig site.

### **End of Part One**

## **Part Two**

THE COMPLETED KURSAAL STRUGGLES through its first few years encumbered with huge development debts. Nevertheless, its spectacular combination of white-knuckle spacerides, themed leisure holidays and fake exotic locations slowly established it as the major attraction for Cronus and surrounding systems. Staff are kept on the dark side of the planet's moon in crummy conditions, and have to travel huge distances in antiquated short-range shuttles to get to work. The communications systems are run on a shoestring, and suffer from the sorts of planning and design deficiencies that (for example) characterised the Hubble telescope.

Gray Corp is under new management, headed by a group of hoodlum businessmen who want to make Kursaal the centre of a drugs processing and distribution network - the privately-owned planet is ideal, since it has financial and transport links to all parts of the Cronus system. The criminals who made money while the complex was being built are now integrated into the planet's society as an informal parts of the various security forces, and although Kursaal is the drugs centre

of Cronus, it is apparently untouchable because several planetary governments have invested too much in the project to risk doing anything which might cause it to fail. Unfortunately, the planet has been infested by the Jax drones, several of which escaped from captivity into the wild, though this fact is kept secret from the tourists.

IN THE OPENING SCENE, the Doctor and Amy are travelling in a packed short-range space shuttle. An unexpected power fault kills the shuttle pilot, and the Doctor and Amy rush forward to take the controls in an effort to save themselves and their fellow passengers from a fiery death on planetary reentry. Despite their best efforts, the shuttle burns up explosively in the planet's atmosphere.

They're OK, of course, because actually they're participants in a theme park ride. (The Doctor is very cross, because he thinks the ride is rigged to fail no matter what you do - why isn't there an escape pod, for example? Because you couldn't fit all forty people on the ride into it, points out Amy reasonably.)

For this second part of the novel, Amy has persuaded the Doctor to take them fifteen years ahead to see the finished Kursaal and to sample some of the fun.

Shortly after this opening scene, Amy is badly injured in a terrorist incident and hospitalised on the planet's moon. A terror group working for a drugs cartel is responsible, but the Doctor is recognised by security as one of HALF's former "eco-warriors", and he is hauled off to jail on suspicion. There, he is surprised to find Commander Kadijk still in charge of Kursaal's security company, fifteen years more cynical than when they last met.

The Doctor escapes before Kadijk talks to him, convinced that Amy is in danger. But now there has been another bomb outrage, this time at the hospital on Kursaal's moon - and Amy has

gone missing. The Doctor wangles his way to the hospital moon to investigate, but it seems that most of the other patients have been found, but that Amy is unaccounted for.

The Doctor hacks into the security systems, and learns that Kadijk is now secretly working with Cockaigne (of HALF) to hunt down the Jax drones. (Kadijk got Cockaigne's cooperation by offering him remission on his prison sentence after the end of part one.) The Doctor tracks down Cockaigne to the staff quarters on the dark side of the moon, and goes to Cockaigne's new hideout there to see if he can locate Amy. However, Amy has herself been secretly tracking the Doctor since he arrived on the moon, and so is able to reach Cockaigne first. She gets the two pieces of information she wants from him: that the Jax Palace was incorporated into a tacky Jax theme ride; and that the Jax which HALF have recaptured are in a holding pen back on Kursaal. By the time the Doctor reaches him, Cockaigne is dead. Rather than explain being caught with a corpse, the Doctor flees in pursuit of Amy. He chases her from the moon in a rickety old short-range shuttle, which the Doctor has to pilot it safely through the Kursaal atmosphere (a bit like the opening scene to part two).

As the Doctor hunts for Amy, Kadijk hunts for the Doctor. He almost catches the Doctor, but the Doctor eludes him in a big carnival parade. During this sequence, we learn that Kadijk knows a lot about the Jax, and he knows that Amy is infected - he and the pathologist recognised the husk of Gray's body on the pavement outside Gray HQ, and so checked the security camera in Gray's office - only to discover that Amy had *not* defeated Gray, she had been injured and possessed by him! So ironically, Kadijk is actually trying to capture the Doctor to save him from Amy.

The Doctor pieces together clues about where Amy is going, follows her in the shuttle, and catches up with her at the Jax theme ride. He is about to embrace her, but Kadijk reaches them just in time to save the Doctor's life as Amy lashes out. She then vanishes into the depths of the ride.

Kadijk explains to the Doctor what has happened - and confesses that he and Cockaigne had been unable to contain the Jax drones left behind after Gray's death and Amy's disappearance with the Doctor fifteen years ago. The Doctor speculates that some of the Jax drones infected visitors to Kursaal, spreading their infection in a limited, mindless way around the galaxy - and perhaps this is where the werewolf legends of so many worlds arise. Now however there is a more profound danger: Amy is metamorphosing into the Jax leader, and may unleash a more dangerous, sentient Jax lifeform on the Cronus system.

The comms satellite has gone offline again, so Kadijk cannot call for reinforcements. He and the Doctor go further into the Jax ride, a spooky sequence in which they never quite know which are models/actors in the ride, and which are the real Jax drones. At the heart of the ride, Amy is surrounded by Jax drones. She has already freed the ones that HALF captured, and others are slowly making their way towards her as the full moon approaches this evening. She is about to be reborn as the Jax leader, and has brought them to the Jax Palace where she will also release all the dormant last-generation Jax. For the Jax are not dead, they have merely been hibernating for over a thousand years. Kursaal will provide new hosts and drones, visitors from all over the Cronus system - instead of travelling all over the system themselves, people from all over Cronus will come to them!

The moon comes up, shining through the fakery of the Jax ride, and Amy metamorphoses into a fully-fledged Jax. The drones start to revive the dormant Jax. While this is happening, Amy is at her most vulnerable and the Doctor and Kadijk are able to escape and temporarily block the Jax in.

Kadijk reactivates the huge, long-buried excavation bomb still in the underground bore hole. Meanwhile, the Doctor lashes up a communications channel by cannibalising the available Jax hardware, and patches a warning message to the Kursaal emergency services; he pretends to be his

notorious alter ego, the HALF eco-terrorist, threatening to bomb the Jax ride - and so the emergency services immediately evacuate the public and staff from the vicinity. The Doctor and Kadijk flee the palace as the excavation bomb ticks down to detonation.

The Doctor is piloting the shuttle back towards the Tardis, but Amy has managed to evade the lock-in and has stowed away on board. Worse still, she managed to disconnect the trigger mechanism, so the bomb will not detonate - and now she will kill them before returning to the palace. She attacks the Doctor and Kadijk. In the ensuing fight, Kadijk is killed, the controls are damaged, and the shuttle races up into the lower atmosphere. In a scene reminiscent of the fairground ride at the start of part two, the Doctor has to struggle to control the ship's reentry. At the last minute, he locks the controls and abandons ship via the escape pod - the ship and Amy go down in a fiery ball into the remains of the Jax Palace ride, setting off the excavation bomb which wipes out the entire Jax underground complex.

The Doctor takes a final ride on a Kursaal event, a more relaxing and leisurely river cruise. Then as night starts to fall, he enters the Tardis and leaves. (The queue which had formed around it disperses, disgruntled.) From the darkness, a Jax drone follows one of the visitors. The drone is Cockaigne!

## **The End**

### **NOTE:**

This outline is written for the eighth Doctor, who arrives and leaves alone. However, it lends itself also to any-Doctor-plus-single companion. Excluding the periods when the Doctor is always accompanied by two or more fellow travellers, the options for this seem to be:

- First Doctor plus Dodo
- Second Doctor plus Jamie
- Third Doctor plus Jo or Sarah
- Fourth Doctor plus Sarah, Leela, Romana or Adric
- Fifth Doctor plus Nyssa or Peri
- Sixth Doctor plus Peri or Mel
- Seventh Doctor plus Mel or Ace
- Eighth Doctor plus any new BBC books companion.

In this case, many of Amy's scenes would be taken on by the Doctor's current companion - who in the climax to part one would accompany Amy to Gray HQ and become infected by the Gray-Jax, and then leave with the Doctor in the Tardis as usual. (The companion would need to survive the shuttle crash at the end of part two, of course - perhaps s/he doesn't completely metamorphose, and the destruction of the Jax palace releases her/him from the infection's thrall?)

For an extra twist, the narrative gap between the first and second parts could be extended by using one companion with two different Doctors. For example, the fifth Doctor and Peri appear in the first half, but the infection doesn't take full grip on Peri until several adventures later, when she is travelling with the sixth Doctor and steers the Tardis back to Kursaal. (The other chances for this variant are Sarah with the third and fourth Doctors, Mel with the sixth and seventh Doctors, or a staged reunion of *any* previous companion with the eighth Doctor. In this last case, we could cruelly choose to bump the companion off at the end of part two anyway!)

**End of proposal.**