

GRIEF

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Life has a way of springing nasty surprises on you just when you thought things were going to turn out fine. David Campbell could have told you that, but he wasn't in the mood for conversation. After years of careful toil and pain, David and Susan Campbell, nee Foreman, had begun to turn what was once just one big mine and slave quarters back into a prosperous free island, a truly Great Britain.

David Campbell, strong leader and loving husband, who hours earlier had whistled cheerfully on his way to a rehousing meeting, now skulked home in the back streets of London.

Life had sprung a surprise and now his wife was dead.

She had been part of the highly successful rehousing scheme. Within ten years of the end of the Daleks' reign of terror nearly one quarter of

London's population were back living in sturdy brick houses, thanks to David and the Committee. And plans were afoot to get the rest of them into warm houses before the end of the decade. Of course, not all of the houses in London were in the best condition, many were badly repaired and falling down, too dangerous to live in, and a sub-committee of the Committee had been set up to find these houses and mark them for demolition. Susan had started doing that two years ago, and had done it for the rest of her life.

The witnesses had told him how it had happened. One moment the



house had been there, standing as still and as steady as one of the Old Timers in David's faded photographs, the next it had crumbled to the ground like the proverbial drunken sailor. With Susan inside. They had found her after frantic hours of scrabbling through the rubble, pinned to

the ground by a large timber beam across her chest. When he had been told, David's first reaction was to cry, but he was the leader, he couldn't be seen crying in public. So he ran, back to their home.

He reached the shack that they had both left that morning, he with his plea of 'Don't go,' and her with her stubborn 'Don't be silly, what can possibly go wrong?'

His parents had once told him a proverb about tempting fate, but in his grief he couldn't remember it. It didn't seem important. She had been stubborn. When it came to stubbornness, she had had a good teacher. He pushed the door open and went inside.

His body went through its entrance routine of lighting the candle and sitting in his chair, whilst his mind was elsewhere.

David put his head on the wooden table and cried his heart out. He cried so much that it took him at least five minutes before he realised that he wasn't alone.

She sat in Susan's chair, with Susan's mannerisms and the small shack seemed to be full of David's wife. The candle could not pick out her face, but he did not need it to know that his wife was in the room with him.

'Susan!' the silhouette nodded and David's heart jumped, 'they told me you were dead!'

David was across the room in a second, but the woman stood up before he got there. The light from the candle now showed her face clearly: the deep blue eyes, the prominent nose and the long red hair. It wasn't the face that Susan had left the shack with that morning, and the body was new and unfamiliar to David.

'David, there's something we need to talk about,' said Susan weakly, and fainted.