Dead in Time

By

Dr Who
INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A side-light shines on ELLIE MIET (95), a deeply wrinkled face, and long brown hair that still has a luster to it.

She turns her head...

MADDY
Wasn’t supposed to end like this, now was it?

...and looks at HOWARD LAVERT (35), Harvard good looks, and a shock of dark scraggly hair.

INT. LARGE OFFICE - DAY

COLIN VINCE (45), knocks, and timidly opens the door. He smiles gingerly at MORGAN PULSE (40). Pulse is sat behind a sleek modern desk. He gestures toward Colin.

MORGAN
Take a seat.

COLIN
We have, a problem.

MORGAN
Colin’s theme tune.

INT. SMALL OFFICE - NIGHT

ELLIE MIET (32), rifles manically through papers and documents, flinging them left and right.

ELLIE
What time do I die?

Howard moves forward, looking though the mess of papers.

HOWARD
Fourteen hundred, if my memory serves me right.

INT. LARGE OFFICE - DAY

Colin slides apologetically into a chair.

MORGAN
We’re moth-balling your operations.
COLIN
You’re--

MORGAN
It’s the costs. Don’t say--

COLIN
Do you understand the applications this has?

MORGAN
Without a doubt. We just didn’t guess that time-travel would cost more than putting a man on Mars.

COLIN
We’re half-way through.

MORGAN
Not to mention the man-power. We put NASA to shame, the amount of people we need.

INT. SMALL OFFICE – NIGHT
Ellie stops shuffling papers.

ELLIE
What am I going to do?

Ellie looks at one of her hands, and holds it toward the light, cocking her head toward it.

Howard places and arm on Ellie’s shoulder.

HOWARD
We’re going to find a solution.

INT. LARGE OFFICE – DAY
A KNOCK on the door, gets ignored.

MORGAN
What was the rough guide? Energy equivalent of ten nuclear heads, just to send--

The door opens and Howard walks in.
HOWARD
Colin?

MORGAN
Hey Howie. You good?

HOWARD
We have a problem.

MORGAN
You too? What, you guys getting a club together or something?

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY
Howard and Colin exit the office.

HOWARD
It’s Ellie. And it’s serious.

They begin to walk the corridor.

COLIN
They’re closing shop on us.

HOWARD
What? Now?

COLIN
Whole operation. Closing us down.

Howard looks away.

COLIN
What was it about Ellie?

INT. REST-ROOM - DAY
Ellie stares at her reflection in a mirror. Small wrinkles are now etched in her face, aging her.
She checks her hand, and begins to peel skin from it.

Behind her, Colin and Howard walk in. She checks them in the mirror.

ELLIE
Gals only guys.

She holds a strip of skin up in front of the mirror.
COLIN
What’s going on Ellie?

ELLIE
It went wrong. I’m dying.

EXT. DESERT - DAY
Miles of harsh, unforgiving sand stretch into the horizon, the view only broken by stark, rocky hills.

Off someway - a structure. Something like a extra-large space shuttle landing pod.

A PULSE of LIGHT for a fraction of a second lights it up from the inside.

INT. ALPHA-POD ZERO - DAY
Inside the pod, it’s like a NASA control center, except everything surrounds a central sphere-like structure.

OPERATIVES of all races and gender focus on computer screens, or scurry about.

Another pulse of LIGHT - this time clearly emanating from the central sphere.

OPERATIVE #1
We’re good, now let’s turn it up some, and get this going.

Another PULSE, coming in quicker and faster--

A cacophony of noise, as instructions are barked and excitement rises.

The PULSES quicken until they merge into one before one huge blinding bolt of light hits home.

Complete stillness.

The Operative raises his hand. Everyone focuses on the sphere, which now contains a SHAPE. The shape stands.

OPERATIVE #1
Let’s go people, we got a live one!

A small army of people scuttle into the sphere...
INT. ALPHA-POD ZERO SPHERE - DAY

The shape is now a CHRONONAUT, same get-up as a astronaut.

Operatives gather round the Chrononaut, and unscrew, unzip, and dismantle anything they can. A steel band on the helmet is uncoupled -- and a stream of steam is unleashed.

OPERATIVE #1  
Easy does it guys.

The helmet’s lifted off, revealing Ellie.

ELLIE  
Hey guys!

OPERATIVE #1  
Hey kid! Good trip?

ELLIE  
Acid sharp, my friend.

OPERATIVE #1  
You’re off to Med to get you checked up, okay?

INT. ALPHA-POD ZERO MED ROOM - DAY

Ellie’s sat on a medical bed, being checked over.

Howard enters. He’s wearing figure hugging clothing worn under a Chrononaut suit.

ELLIE  
Hey Howie.

HOWARD  
You good?

ELLIE  
Better when I’ve finished being a lab-rat. Your trip?

HOWARD  
Sailed it. Your ready for this?

ELLIE  
I’m as good as I’ll ever be.

HOWARD  
I can do it if you want?
ELLIE
It was my bag, Howard. I’m going to see it through.

HOWARD
You trust those boys?

ELLIE
I was one of them remember.

INT. ALPHA-POD ZERO INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY
A desk, two chairs, and Ellie on one of the chairs.

INT. ALPHA-POD ZERO CORRIDOR - DAY
Outside the interview room - there are two large one-way glass windows either side of the door.

Howard studies Ellie through the glass.

HOWARD
You still sure you want to do this?

ELLIE (O.S.)
Don’t worry. I know what I’m doing. And anyway. I trust the physics.

HOWARD
Read physics. Learn physics.

Howard opens the door to the interview room.

HOWARD
But never, ever, trust physics.

And steps aside, as he lets--- Ellie, walk into the room.

Ellie (Past) sits and studies Ellie (Future).

ELLIE PAST
Dr Miet. A pleasure to meet you.

ELLIE FUTURE
You’ve always wanted to say that.

ELLIE PAST
Please. Take a seat.

Ellie takes a seat.
ELLIE FUTURE
This is...

ELLIE PAST
Quintessentially odd.

ELLIE FUTURE
Now, I know you were going to say that.

ELLIE PAST
So in fact, I’m at a distinct disadvantage here.

ELLIE FUTURE
But of course you’ll have the advantage--

ELLIE PAST
--given time.

The two Ellie’s smile at each other, then look away.

ELLIE FUTURE
Strange thing is, I still want to ask so many questions.

ELLIE PAST
But you’ve been here before.

ELLIE FUTURE
But I was you then, not me.

ELLIE PAST
But I’m only me, so I should really be asking the questions.

ELLIE FUTURE
Good point. Fire away.

ELLIE PAST
Of course, you know what I’ll ask, won’t you?

ELLIE FUTURE
It’s the only question you could ask. The only one you should.

ELLIE PAST
Go on.
ELLIE FUTURE
Are you sure about this?

Ellie Past smiles, and nods her head.

ELLIE PAST
Yes. I am.

INT. CORRIDOR – DAY
Colin knocks firmly on a door, and pushes it open.

INT. APZ INTERVIEW ROOM – DAY
Three operatives enter the interview room.
The two Ellies stand.

Ellie Past moves her chair. One of the Operative is carrying
tarpaulin. He place it where Ellie’s chair was, and Ellie
Past put her chair back, onto the tarpaulin.

INT. LARGE OFFICE – DAY
Morgan’s at his desk, and Colin’s stood in front of him.

MORGAN
Have you any idea of the cost involved here?

COLIN
Morgan. She is going to die unless we do something.

MORGAN
And I have the greatest sympathy, but we’re not going to launch the
equivalent of a lunar mission to save one life.

COLIN
So you’re just going to stand by and let her--

MORGAN
If there was anything I could do within our cost parameters--
COLIN
Dam your costs!!! She’s one of the best and I--

Colin raised his fist ready to slam it on the desk.

Morgan looks impassioned.

MORGAN
What are you going to do?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Ellie stands by her bed, and looks into a mirror. Her face has deeper wrinkles now - her eye-lids are heavy.

She looks at her hands, and takes hold of a finger-nail, and pulls it off with ease.

ELLIE
Didn’t even hurt.

INT. ALPHA-POD ZERO INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

The two Ellie’s stand and face each other. The Operatives exit the room.

ELLIE FUTURE
You went and put the chair back where it was.

Ellie Past looks at the chair on the tarpaulin.

ELLIE PAST
Silly me.

She moves the chair aside.

Howard enters, and places something onto the table, and makes toward the exit.

He looks at his watch, studies it for a moment, and then looks at Ellie Future.

HOWARD
You go easy on her, okay?

Howard closes the door behind him.

Ellie Future looks down at the desk, and breathes in deeply.
ELLIE PAST
Let’s hope we got it right.

ELLIE FUTURE
Smile, kid.

Ellie Past smiles.

Ellie Future takes the object on the desk and raises the gun toward Ellie Past.

ELLIE PAST
I mean it’s got work right? You’re here, so that’s proof. Proof that it works.

ELLIE FUTURE
Right. Dead right.

They get the pun, and giggle. BAM! Ellie Past slumps backward, and lands with a thump.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Ellie lies prone in bed. Howard sits next to her.

ELLIE
Dam physicists. What did I ever listen to them for?

Ellie smiles to herself.

HOWARD
(hesitant)
We got the results from the other experiments.

ELLIE
Yeah? How’d they go?

HOWARD
All good, believe it or not.

ELLIE
So just this went wrong, huh? Cold comfort I guess.

HOWARD
I so wish--
ELLIE
Don’t.

Ellie looks at Howard.

ELLIE
You asked me, didn’t you? How many times was it? I think I lost count. "You sure?"

Howard nods.

ELLIE
Yeah. I said. I’m sure. Confident as ever. Don’t you blame yourself.

Ellie looks up to the ceiling.

A beat.

She looks back to Howard.

ELLIE
But don’t hold back on them dam physicists...

Howard smiles, and kisses her hand.

FADE OUT: