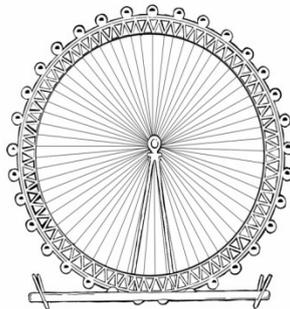


# The Black Archive #1

# ROSE SAMPLER



**By Jon Arnold**

The other element which feeds into the season's arc story is the reality television genre which became popular in the early 21st century. Davies is a vociferous advocate for reality TV – he has defended it as storytelling and even described an incident from the first series of **Big Brother** (2000-) as 'the best bit of drama transmitted' in the previous five or six years<sup>1</sup>. His fondness for the genre,

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<sup>1</sup> O'Brien, Steve and Nick Setchfield, 'Russell Spouts', *SFX Collection Doctor Who Past! Present! Future!*, Future Publishing, 2005, p39. The incident involved contestant Nick Bateman attempting to manipulate eviction nominations from fellow housemates, against the series rules, and being confronted about it by other housemates led by Craig Phillips. The incident is available to view on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ri01fflx>.

along with his affection for makeover shows and game shows, is most overtly evident in the macabre parodies of them presented in *Bad Wolf*. However, the structure of Rose's arc is drawn from the talent show subgenre, particularly series such as **The X Factor** (2004-). These shows begin with audition weeks, where the general public turn up to a series of events across the country to get on the show. The hopeful contestants who pass the auditions then sing each week, with the public's two least favourite performances being forced to sing against each other and the contestant judged the worst being voted off the show. The format lends itself to repeated moments of high drama with the moment of voting-off, previously favoured contestants dropping into the bottom two and judges who express negative critical opinions becoming pantomime villains. The story of winning contestants is packaged in the final episode as a series of highlights to represent the trials they've survived and their progress through the series (often described as a 'journey').

Rose's 'journey' roughly follows this model, *Rose* itself being the audition phase of the show, with Rose's morals and willingness to hold the Doctor to account meaning she passes the companion audition, and the climactic moment of drama being her acceptance onto the show.<sup>2</sup> The first season proceeds to broadly follow the model of the reality show storyline – *The End of the World*, *The Unquiet Dead* and *Aliens of London / World War Three* show her being taught about the wider universe and what the role of companion might entail. It can even be said that these stories involve 'celebrity' tutors to aid the process; the 'last human' Cassandra, Charles Dickens and future Prime Minister Harriet Jones. *Dalek* and *The Long Game* serve to contrast her with someone far less suitable to being the Doctor's companion; Adam's flaws serving to underline Rose's contrasting virtues and why she's so suitable to continue travelling with the Doctor. *The Long Game* itself can be seen as a failed audition; what might have happened to Rose if she had not proven so suitable. *Father's Day* serves as the equivalent of Rose's trial; her falling into the bottom two, with the serious misstep of altering time by saving her father from death almost seeing her leave the show. *Boom Town* underlines how much the process has changed her character; with Mickey, who has remained behind, clearly somewhat alienated by how her travels with the Doctor have changed her. Her ascendancy to effective godhood in *The Parting of the Ways* is the equivalent to becoming the victorious contestant; her potential being realised in the way **The X Factor** sees a number one hit as potential being realised.

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<sup>2</sup> The idea of the Doctor auditioning his companions through a similar process to that used in talent shows was explicitly parodied in the Big Finish audio drama *Situation Vacant* (2010).