Like Father, Like Daughter

by Domina Temporis

Summary

Kate Stewart has two role models in her life. One is her father. The other is a nameless alien she's never met. Now she's working at UNIT, where both are legends and she's about to come face to face with the Doctor at last. At least, that's what she thinks. A short journey through Kate Stewart's UNIT career.
Chapter 1

London, 1997

“I see you have a very impressive resume, Ms. Stewart,” the UNIT recruiter said. “Professor of astronomy and astrophysics since you graduated. At Oxford, no less.”

Kate nodded, trying not to let her eagerness show. Stiff upper lip professionalism, that’s what UNIT wanted to see. Or so she had heard.

“And some very impressive publications,” the recruiter continued. “Although some of the subject matter is a little...theoretical.” He sounded slightly disapproving, and Kate wondered why.

Still, she wouldn’t let it get to her. She smiled and said, “There are always possibilities, aren’t there, sir?” That was what UNIT was for, wasn’t it?

“Yes, I suppose there are,” he said. “I must admit, we like to see a little imagination in our recruits. We deal with, well it’s safe to say, things that are sometimes out of this world.”

“I know, sir,” Kate said.

“So what made you want to join UNIT?” the recruiter asked suddenly. “You’re on track to be a highly respected tenured professor, and usually academics aren’t so keen on our way of doing things. Why are you here?”

“My father,” Kate said instantly. She didn’t have to let on who her father was, although she knew she would be offered a command position on the spot if she did. “He’s a soldier, retired now, but he learned a lot about practical applications of science during his time. I’d like to see my knowledge get used for something good.”

“Your father? Someone I know?” the recruiter asked.

Kate shook her head quickly. “No, sir, I doubt it. He was just doing his job.” She sighed in relief as he dropped that line of questioning. There was a reason she’d dropped the Lethbridge from her name. She wanted no favors, no perks of being the daughter of the famous Sir Alistair. He quite agreed with her on that count.

“Well, I don’t think there’s anything else to discuss, Ms. Stewart,” the recruiter said. “Welcome aboard.” He shook her hand and Kate resisted the urge to grin in delight. “Let me show you around. We don’t use this base much anymore; just for some scientific research. I expect you’ll be spending a lot of time here, at least at first.”

Kate looked around, recognizing the mix of stately mansion and state of the art equipment from her father’s stories. “Why is that, sir?”

“Well, UNIT’s a bit more military now, isn’t it? Times have changed, Ms. Stewart. We can no longer afford to hide away while the world is in peril,” the recruiter said grandly. Kate frowned. She noticed for the first time that his badge said “Brigadier.”

“Shouldn’t the science lead, though, sir? There are a lot of excellent applications we can use,” she said.

The new Brigadier smiled, “Ah, you’re an idealist. You should have been here in the days Sir
Alistair ran the place. You would have been right at home, new inventions and ideas coming out of here left and right. No one ever had any idea how he did it.” Kate smirked. She knew, of course. She supposed none of the more recent commanders had enjoyed the advantage of a scientific advisor like her father had.

“In fact, that’s the lab they used back then.” Her father’s replacement opened a door off to the side, and Kate found herself in a room that looked like a storage room for all manner of early seventies scientific instruments.

“It was the last order he gave before retiring, that this be maintained. We use it to store anything, just in case we need it again.” Kate stepped inside, picturing a younger version of her father arguing with a tall figure in a velvet dinner jacket and a frilled collar. Moving forward a few years, she saw a taller figure in a long scarf asleep on the table. She noticed now that the corner where the TARDIS should have been was conspicuously empty.

“Anyway, you’ll want something a little more up to date,” the new Brigadier continued, leading her to a new, state-of-the-art lab. She smiled. This would do. Until she could make this organization more like what it used to be.

Later that day, she called her father. “Dad? I got it. I got the job!”

“Knew you could do it,” her father answered. “I expect you’ll be running around saving the world from all manner of monsters and horrible insects like I used to.”

Kate laughed, knowing exactly what her father meant. “I doubt it. He hasn’t been seen in years, you know.” There was no need to explain who she was talking about. Neither of them had ever been able to imagine a crisis without the Doctor turning up to save the day.

“I think my retirement threw him off.”

“I saw the lab. They’re using it for storage now.”

“Are they really?” The Brigadier asked. “They’d better hope he never comes around again, then. He won’t be too happy with that.”

“Do you think he’ll ever come again?” Kate asked. She had grown up on stories of the Doctor, in all his faces, at least, all the ones her father had known, which was almost all of them. Between the two of them, she was never sure who exactly had been her inspiration for joining UNIT. In any case, the last time the Doctor had appeared on record, it was in a fight with Morgana, and he had prevented a nuclear war. That had been almost a decade ago.

Of course, Kate remembered last Christmas, when her dad had suddenly jumped up from the table to talk to a young man at the door who looked like he'd stepped out of a Bronte novel. There was only one person that could be. But officially, the Doctor hadn't been a presence on Earth in years.

"Oh, I don't know. I stopped trying to predict him years ago. Just when I think I know what's he's up to, he goes and does something entirely unexpected." She could almost hear her father's fond smile.

"I know, splendid chaps, all of them," Kate said, having heard the same phrase multiple times throughout her childhood.

"If you ever do see him again, send him around," her dad answered. "Tell him it's been too long."
"I will," Kate promised. She wondered if she would ever see the famed Doctor. But even if she did, she knew she couldn't depend on him. That was the other thing she'd taken from her father's stories.
Chapter 2

London 2006

"I don't know what they're making so much fuss about," Brigadier Cottell said as Kate followed him through the impromptu base they'd set up, her arms full of old files they'd pulled in an attempt to make some sense of this mess. "It's not like no one's ever seen an alien before."

"No, but none of that is common knowledge," Kate said. "Even among UNIT it's not all well known." There were things even she hadn't known until reaching her current security level. It amazed her how close some of the calls had been; without the Doctor she suspected the human race wouldn't have survived.

This looked like the sort of situation they could use the Doctor for, she thought. An alien spaceship crashing into Big Ben, everyone knowing that aliens existed? Kate wondered, not for the first time, where it was the Doctor had been all these years.

"I suppose not," her commander answered absentmindedly. "Take those and bring them to Dr. Sato over in the morgue, she'll need them."

Kate turned and left, eying the heavily armed soldiers with distaste. It had never occurred to anyone that aliens could be greeted in any other way but violence. Oh, be ready, absolutely. But always make sure first. Do the research. In the middle of her thought process, a door down the hall opened and a group of people came through, looking determined. Kate stepped aside to let them pass, but one of them stopped her.

"Let me see those," a man in a leather jacket leading a group of soldiers through the halls said, not even waiting for Kate to stop before he started taking the files out of her arms.

"Those are classified, sir, you can't-" Kate spluttered.

"Believe me, I'm more classified than these files. Right then, let's go." Having found what he was looking for, the man handed the files back to her and abruptly walked off, the soldiers following him, looking sort of confused as to why they were following his orders, but doing it anyway.

Kate wasn't sure, but she thought she might have just had her first glimpse of the Doctor. She had expected them to call on him, if they could. What she hadn't expected was that he would answer.

"No, he wasn't," Kate said for the hundredth time. "He wasn't wearing anything that marked him out. Just a leather jacket. He looked just like anyone else."

"No vegetables? No ridiculous hat? No scarf?" Her father asked, pacing up and down. "Doesn't sound like the man I knew at all."

"He was, though. I'm sure of it," Kate said. "He had the air of authority about him, like you said. Like he knew exactly what he was doing in the face of utter chaos. And his eyes...it was like you could see the whole universe reflected in them."

"Hmm," her dad settled himself in his favorite armchair. "That sounds more like him." He picked up a framed photo from the early days. A UNIT Christmas party. Kate could see it in front of her eyes. Her dad, Sergeant Benton next to him, the Doctor on the other side with his arm around Jo
Grant. It was, she believed, the only posed photo of the Doctor in existence.

"Still, now everyone knows about aliens," he continued. "At least I don't have to go around pretending most of my career didn't happen."

"And next time I see him, I'll tell him to drop by," Kate said.

April 2009

Kate ran through the makeshift base, trying to find Dr. Jones. She knew Martha would listen to her, and she'd been trying to find someone who would listen to her talk about ATMOS for months. How ironic, now that there was really something wrong, she couldn't find anyone.

"Have you seen Dr. Jones?" She asked a passing soldier.

"No, ma'am," he said. "But I heard they were calling in some kind of expert, she might be with him."

Kate took off running before he could finish. There was only one expert Martha Jones would have called in. But when she got to the main research area, all she found was a red-haired woman surrounded by office files and looking disgruntled. Kate stopped, confused, then smiled to herself. Of course. The Doctor always traveled with someone. She had even, as a child, imagined herself in that position one day, until she realized that her place, like her father's, was on Earth.

"And don't you dare let any of your men shoot at them," a loud, high voice yelled, watching a group of soldiers go outside. He turned to the red-haired woman, "Donna, I'm just going to grab a coffee, do you want one?"

She shook her head, just as Kate realized she was standing near the coffee, and quickly moved over as he came over.

He grinned at her, a magnetic, sunny smile that could have lit up the entire base. "Hello, I'm the Doctor. You look a bit lost."

"Oh, no, I'm fine," Kate said, smiling slowly. "It's just a bit... military here for me. I'm in the research division, the science department."

"Oh, are you scientific advisor?" He asked, his face lighting up even more, if possible.

"No, not exactly, just a researcher. Astrophysics."

"Oh, a woman after my own hearts," the Doctor said. He lowered his voice. "To tell the truth, it's a bit military in here for me too. I used to work with UNIT a lot, decades ago. It was much smaller then."

Kate smiled, "I know. My father used to work for UNIT."

"Oh, really?" The Doctor asked. "What was his name? I probably knew him."

"Yes, you did. He was-" Kate started, and just then, someone yelled across the room.

"Doctor!" The Doctor looked up, waved and turned back to Kate.

"Sorry, I've got to run. Tell your dad I said hi, though."
"I will," Kate said quietly as he left.

“Converses?” The Brigadier asked incredulously as Kate described the new version of the Doctor. “Are you sure?”

“And a trench coat,” she affirmed. “He was nice, I liked him.”

“Well, that can’t possibly be him then,” her dad said, making her laugh aloud. “The Doctor is many things, but very rarely nice.”

“Oh, come on, Dad, what about the one with the celery? You always said he was nice,” Kate said.

“Yes, that's true. Too nice for what the Doctor gets up to,” her dad said. “You didn’t get a chance to tell him to drop by, did you?”

“No, he was too busy,” Kate said. “Next time, I swear.”
Chapter 3

September 2012

She played it professional the next time. She was the head of the science and research division now, and if she met the Doctor it would be in the line of duty. Besides, now that her father was gone, there wasn't much reason to do anything else. Kate missed him every day, and she didn't want to be the one to tell the Doctor that his oldest friend was gone. It was still too soon for her.

When she saw him though, the young man with the bow tie in that completely ordinary house, she had to pull herself together. It was actually him. She was finally fulfilling her oldest childhood dream of meeting the Doctor.

Still, she only made a quip about his dress sense when she met him; made it seem as if she'd only read the file. She introduced herself as Kate Stewart, and gave no hint of anything else. It was time to do their jobs and save the world, not reminisce about old times. She just wished her dad could have seen the two of them working together.

It shouldn't have surprised her when he figured it out. "Don't despair, Kate. Your dad never did."

Kate looked at him in surprise, "How did you know?"

He smiled, said something about how she was changing UNIT from the inside, so how could she not be? Then he looked her right in the eyes and said, "We don't let him down. We don't let this planet down." He knew, then, that her father was gone. She glanced down.

“Doctor?” she said a few minutes later. “When this is over, go see him? Travel back, I know you can. It’d mean a lot to him.” She waited until the Time Lord nodded seriously, and then went back to work. They had a crisis to avert.

Kate watched him take the situation in hand, not in awe but in appreciation. Dad, I get it now, she thought. Why people always stepped back and let the Doctor work. Why he seemed so reassuring. Why people needed to be reminded that he wasn't always right. It was true, he did things that day, and figured things out that she never could have, but he also dove into hypotheses and made mistakes. He really was, as her father had always said, just a visiting alien who happened to be cleverer than anyone else (“not a god, however much he may think he is!” her father had said).

Still, he was a useful ally, and mesmerizing to be around. Even this version, that was toting around such sadness even she could see it. For a moment, Kate wished she could have known the younger versions her father had, before pulling herself together. Those were his Doctors. This one, and the ones after him, would be hers.

November 2013

This was bad, any mention of Gallifrey was always bad. Kate had to take extra precautions, airlifting the TARDIS straight to London. The Doctor, the same one she had met before with the bow tie and the floppy hair, leapt out, yelling about how she should look in the TARDIS before she started moving it.

Kate apologized for that, but only that. One had to stand their ground with him. Not let him get away with everything on your planet.

Of course, she didn't count on having three of them to contend with. She knew the files, and better than that, she knew the stories. When Doctors got together, it was only for the most dire of
emergencies. She was, of course, a little distracted, since her memory had been wiped and she had to negotiate with the Zygons, but she pushed that aside. She couldn’t even be angry with him for the memory wipe; he’d come up with a solution, and a better one than she had. It had worked. She watched the three of them together, aware that she was witnessing history.

She stood there in the Under Gallery, watching them, when the one she didn't know, the oldest looking of the three, came over to her.

"Doctor," Kate said in greeting.

He smiled and shook his head, "No, not me. They're the Doctor. I'm the one who isn't." He looked so sad as he said it that Kate frowned. No one had actually explained most of what had gone on today, aside from the Zygon situation. She knew there was something else on the Doctors’ mind. Seeing her confused look, he continued. "I fought the Time War, you see. I was born to fight the Time War. Can't be a Doctor if you're too busy being a warrior."

Kate scoffed, "Seems to me you're plenty good at both." She knew of the Time War, thanks to the records kept by Torchwood's Captain Jack Harkness. It perfectly explained why the Doctor had disappeared for all those years.

"No, not me" this new version of the man she knew as the Doctor, the one who refused the name, said. He nodded toward the other two. "Them. They're better than that. They find new ways to win, better ways. I fought to make it possible for them to survive."

Kate smiled. Spoken like a true soldier. "You remind me of my dad," she said. He'd often said that his military career was the reason he was so proud of her for going into science, for making new discoveries and moving humanity forward. She hadn't realized what she'd said until she saw the Doctor's (for that was what he always would be, no matter what he said) face. Eyes wide in awed surprise and gratitude.

"That is, I think, the highest compliment I've ever been given," he finally said quietly. "Thank you, my dear."

She accepted the "my dear" from him when from either of the others it would have felt wrong. She understood, again, that the regard her father had had for the Doctor hadn't been one sided at all. Judging from this, there wasn't a man in all time and space that the Time Lord respected more.

That, she realized, was a better tribute than any awards any government could have given her father.

November 2014

This was truly a dark hour. And there was a dark Doctor to go with it. Kate was secretly unsure of this new version of the Doctor. He was... short tempered, to say the least. Callous to say the worst. He even seemed unsure of himself, at times. Kate didn't let it on, she explained the situation and quipped with him and talked about Dad the same way she would with any of them. The Doctor was the Doctor, after all.

When it was all over, Kate sat on the base next to him, because for some reason he wouldn't leave until he made sure she was all right. She was still reeling. Osgood's death, followed by her rescue by what she suspected was her father but could never be sure, had strained her nerves to their breaking point.

"I'm not very good at this," the Doctor said by way of apology.
"I know," Kate said, laughing shakily.

"You did...good today," he acknowledged. Kate took it for what it was, a compliment from a man who didn't give them lightly.

"So did you," she said. "I'm sorry we had to handcuff you. If I'd known it was the Master, I'd've known we wouldn't have to."

The Doctor shook his head, "Don't worry about it. I haven't always been cooperative, especially not now." He looked down, perhaps in acknowledgment of his current self's difficulty. "Now, if that one with the spiky hair and glasses turned up, or the one with the bow tie, then maybe you wouldn't have had to."

Kate smiled and shook her head, "Doesn't matter in the end. Splendid fellows, all of you, isn't that how it went?" It was the only remark her father ever made about which of the many Doctors he'd encountered was his favorite. And Kate understood that now, too. How each one, however outwardly different they might seem, were truly the same man.

He looked surprised, before nodding. "You'll do, Kate Stewart."

She smiled exasperatedly. "I wasn't asking for your approval, Doctor."

"But you have it anyway," The Doctor said brusquely, standing up. "Anyway, time to be off. A whole universe out there to see." A glow entered his eyes and he whirled around and left. Kate watched him go. She would see him again. She was sure about it.

The Doctor always needed a Lethbridge-Stewart to look after him, after all.

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