Amanda Potter, "Entry on: The Sarah Jane Adventures (Series, S01E03–04): The Eye of the Gorgon by Russell T. Davies, Phil Ford, Alice Troughton", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/151. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

Russell T. Davies , Phil Ford , Alice Troughton

The Sarah Jane Adventures (Series, S01E03–04): The Eye of the Gorgon

United Kingdom (2007)

TAGS: Gorgon(s) Medusa Perseus





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	The Sarah Jane Adventures (Series, S01E03–04): The Eye of the Gorgon
Studio/Production Company	BBC Wales
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2007
First Edition Details	*The Sarah Jane Adventures* (Series, S01E03–04): *The Eye of the Gorgon*, directed by Alice Troughton, written by Phil Ford, produced by Russell T. Davies, BBC Wales, 2007, 1 and 8 October.
Running time	All episodes are available in a DVD box set with a total running time of 1483 minutes. Individual episodes are 23 minutes in length.
Date of the First DVD or VHS	10 November 2008 (Season 1, DVD); 6 February 2012 (The full box set of all seasons, DVD)
Official Website	bbc.co.uk (accessed: August 17, 2018)
Genre	Action and adventure fiction, Alternative histories (Fiction), Mythological fiction, Science fiction, Television series
Target Audience	Children (First aired on Children's BBC)
Author of the Entry	Amanda Potter, Open University, amanda.potter@caramanda.co.uk

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com

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Creators



Russell T. Davies , b. 1963
(Producer)

Russell T. Davies is a British "showrunner", television writer and creator of the new *Doctor Who* in 2005 (revived on the BBC after a hiatus of sixteen years), *The Sarah Jane Adventures* (*Doctor Who* spin off series aimed at children) and *Torchwood* (*Doctor Who* spin off series aimed at adults).

Davies was born in Swansea, Wales in 1963. In interviews he describes how his parents were classics teachers and he grew up “in a house full of books” with “stories of Greek mythology” and Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (see here, accessed: June 3, 2018) and *Welsh Economic Review* 19.1 (2007): 24–25.

Davies’ career in television writing and production started in children’s television at the BBC in the late 1980s, before working on adult drama for ITV, including soap opera *Coronation Street* and period drama *The Grand*. From the late 1990s he has created a number of series featuring gay characters including *Queer As Folk*, *Bob & Rose, Cucumber* and *Banana*. He was awarded the OBE in 2008 for services to drama.

Bio prepared by Amanda Potter, Open University,
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Phil Ford , b. 1950
(Author, Scriptwriter)

Phil Ford is a British television writer who has written episodes for a number of series for adults and children. From 1997 he worked on a number of series aimed at adults for ITV including soap opera *Coronation Street* and drama series *The Bill* and *Bad Girls*. His first

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work on science fiction for children was the animated ITV series *Gerry Anderson's New Captain Scarlett* in 2005, prior to working on *Doctor Who*, *The Sarah Jane Adventures* and *Wizards vs Aliens* for the BBC, alongside Russell T. Davies. He has written novelizations of three of his *Sarah Jane* television episodes, *Eye of the Gorgon*, *Day of the Clown* and *The Lost Boy*, and *The Sarah Jane Adventures Quiz Book* – all published by Penguin for BBC Children's Books – and an original *Torchwood* book, *Skypoint*. He also created the *Doctor Who Adventure Games*, computer games linked to the series. Ford describes himself on Twitter as "Screenwriter. A lot of sci-fi and fantasy. I admit it, I like to scare people and make them cry" (accessed: July 3, 2018).

Bio prepared by Amanda Potter, Open University, amanda.potter@caramanda.co.uk



Alice Troughton , b. 1970
(Director)

Alice Troughton is a British television director who has worked on series in the UK and the US. She has directed episodes for a range of UK and US television series from the early 2000s, including UK soap operas and medical drama series *Doctors*, *Holby City*, *Eastenders* for the BBC and *No Angels* for Channel Four. She has directed episodes for BBC science fiction and fantasy series *Doctor Who*, *The Sarah Jane Adventures*, *Torchwood*, *Merlin* and *Atlantis.* From 2016 she has directed episodes for US science fiction and fantasy series *The Flash*, *The Living and the Dead* and *Legends of Tomorrow.*

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Additional information

Casting	Elisabeth Sladen – Sarah Jane Smith, Yasmin Paige – Maria Jackson, Tommy Knight – Luke Smith, Daniel Anthony – Clyde Langer, Joseph Millson – Alan Jackson, Juliet Cowan – Chrissie Jackson, Phyllida Law – Bea Nelson-Stanley, Beth Goddard – Sister Helena.
Adaptations	Novelization: Tie-in children's novel: Ford, Phil, *The Sarah Jane Adventures: The Eye of the Gorgon*, BBC Children's Books, London: Penguin, 2007.
Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs	It is spin off of *Doctor Who.*
Summary	**Part One** The adult protagonist of the series, and previous companion of Doctor Who, the journalist Sarah Jane Smith, is investigating the story that a ghostly nun has been sighted at an old people's home. Accompanied by her adopted son Luke and his friend Clyde, she interviews residents and staff about the sighting. Bea, an elderly resident and Alzheimer sufferer, gives Luke a piece of jewellery she calls a "talisman" and asks him to keep it safe. This is found to be an alien artefact by Sarah Jane's super computer, Mr Smith, and we later learn that this artefact, discovered by Bea's archaeologist husband, can

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open a portal to another world, inhabited by a race of aliens, known as Gorgons. Nuns are protecting an aging Gorgon, who has taken the Abbess as a human host. Sarah Jane reads the story of Perseus and Medusa from an illustrated book of Greek myths to her young neighbour Maria, explaining that Greek myths have a basis in fact. The text as read by Sarah Jane draws on the story of Medusa from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as "Poseidon fell in love with her and jealous Athena turned her into a Gorgon."

Sarah Jane believes that the Gorgons are aliens. When we later see the Gorgon the snakes upon her head are made of energy rather than actual serpents, which further modernises the image of the monster. On discovering from Clyde that Luke has been kidnapped by the nuns, Sarah Jane drives to the abbey, and gives a false name as she enters, leaving the children in the car. The nuns lock Sarah Jane in a room, and she is reunited with Luke, and with Maria and Clyde, who have also been found by the nuns. Sister Helena explains that the three alien Gorgons have been protected by nuns for centuries and only one remains, and the talisman is the key for her to return to her home planet to die. Sarah Jane agrees to bring back the talisman, leaving Luke and Clyde with the nuns. Sarah Jane returns home, accompanied by the nuns and the veiled Gorgon, and gets out the talisman but threatens to destroy it. The Gorgon's veil is raised by the nuns, and Maria's father Alan is turned to stone.

Part Two

Sister Helena takes the talisman and reveals that this will open a portal between worlds, and so the Gorgons can come to Earth. Back at the abbey Clyde and Luke find a secret passage, and escape to a garden filled with "statues"; victims of the Gorgon. Mr Smith, the computer, reveals that Sarah Jane and Maria have around ninety minutes to save Maria's father before he is permanently turned to stone. Bea reveals that the talisman can be used to save Maria's father, and gives Maria a mirror to use against the Gorgon. Sarah Jane returns to the abbey, where the boys have snatched back the talisman from the nuns, who have started a ritual to open the portal. Sarah Jane is taken prisoner by Sister Helena, and it is revealed that the Gorgon needs a new human host as she is dying, and the host of choice is Sarah Jane. As the Gorgon is unveiled, Maria, having learned from the story of Perseus, points the mirror at the Gorgon's own face. The Gorgon is turned to stone, and the nuns are all released from the spell that made them serve the Gorgon. Sarah Jane and the children

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return home and use the talisman to return Maria's father to his human state.

Analysis

These two episodes of a children's television series bring the mythological creatures (the Gorgons) into the modern world, explaining that they are actually aliens from another planet. This treatment of Greek mythology is used in a number of episodes of *Doctor Who*, where Minotaurs are aliens and a Siren is a holographic Doctor, in "The Horns of Nimon" (1979–1980), "The God Complex" (2011) and "The Curse of the Black Spot" (2011). This rationalises the Greek mythic monsters and integrates them into the alien-filled world of *Doctor Who*.

The episodes do not draw on any ancient sources, and do not require any knowledge of Greek mythology, as the story of Perseus and Medusa is explained within the episodes. However, viewers who already know the story, potentially from a storybook featuring Greek myths similar to the one Sarah Jane uses, are able to benefit from their existing knowledge in being able to enjoy the twists in the plot where the story has been modernised and subverted.

The episodes also encourage viewers that reading stories from Greek mythology can have a practical benefit; so having read about Perseus and Medusa in a book of Greek mythology the young protagonist Maria is able to defeat the Gorgon by using the mirror to deflect the Gorgon's gaze, and save her mentor Sarah Jane Smith. Young viewers and readers can find out more about Perseus and Medusa if they read the tie in novel.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Gorgon(s) Medusa Perseus

Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth

Child, children Family Friendship Knowledge Learning Parents (and children)

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Culture

Further Reading

Burge, Anthony Jessica Burke and Kristine Larsen, eds., *The Mythical Dimensions of Doctor Who*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2010.

Butler, David, ed., *Time and Relative Dissertations in Space: Critical Perspectives on Doctor Who*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007.

Garner, Ross P., Melissa Beattie and Una McCormack, eds., *Impossible Worlds, Impossible Things: Cultural Perspectives on 'Doctor Who', 'Torchwood', and 'The Sarah Jane Adventures'*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010.

Hills, Matt, ed., *New Dimensions of Doctor Who: Adventures in Space, Time and Television*, London and New York: IB Tauris, 2013.

Keen, A. G., "It's about Tempus: Greece and Rome in 'classic' *Doctor Who*" in David C. Wright, Jr. and Allan W. Austin, eds., *Space and Time: Essays on Visions of History in Science Fiction and Fantasy Television*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2010, 100–115.

Potter, Amanda, "Greek Myth in the Whoniverse" in Amanda Wrigley and Fiona Hobden, eds., *Broadcasting Greece: Engagements with Ancient Greece on British Radio and Television*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018, 168–186.

Useful fan sites:

tardis.wikia.com (accessed: August 17, 2018).

thedoctorwhosite.co.uk (accessed: August 17, 2018).

Addenda

Executive Producers: Russell T. Davies (1963–), Phil Collinson (1970–), Julie Gardner (1969–).

Broadcast Dates:

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The Sarah Jane Adventures was broadcast from 1 January 2007 to 18 October 2011 on BBC1 as follows:

1 January 2007 Pilot episode "Invasion of the Bane"

21 September 2017 – 19 November 2017 Season 1 (10 episodes, including the 2 part episode "The Eye of the Gorgon" broadcast on 1 October 2007 and 8 October 2007)

29 September 2008 – 8 December 2008 Season 2 (12 episodes)

13 March 2009 Comic Relief Special "From Raxacoricofallapatorius with Love"

15 October 2009 – 20 November 2009 Season 3 (12 episodes)

11 October 2010 – 16 November 2010 Season 4 (12 episodes)

3 October 2011 – 18 October 2011 Season 5 Season 5 (6 episodes)

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