

OUSFG PUNT PARTY PANTO 2011

Dramatis Personae:

Steven Moffat, a writer (SM)

Baroness Von Mift, the very model of an evildoing baroness (BVM)

OUSFG Council, a council (really?)

- **President, a tyrannical despot (Pres)**
- **Secretary, a treacherous weasel (Secr)**
- **Treasurer, a miser (Tres)**
- **Librarian, a number between four and six (Libr)**
- **Chorus of other councillors, a chorus (CC)**
- **OUSFG Minion, a one-man entourage (Etr)**

Indiana Jones, a terrible archaeologist (IJ)

Londo Mollari, an ambassador (LM)

Vir Cotto, an aide (VC)

OUSFG ex-President - president from 2006 [Louise] (XP)

Stratton (ST)

Henchmen, some henchentities

- **HM1, a deathtrap-cleaner**
- **HM2, a zeppelin pilot**
- **HM3, a torturer**
- **HM4, a part-time accountant**
- **Igor, an Igor**
- **And others**

Minion Corps, interchangeable cannon fodder, with one spokesperson

OUSFG Grunts – if it weren't logically implausible, you'd swear they were the same as the Baroness' minions

Cthulhu, a Great Old One, ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu RI'yeh wgah'nagl fhtagn! (Cth)

Artemis, a Goddess [actually Cthulhu in drag] (Art)

Zombie Elephant, a pachydermal revenant (ZE)

Inexplicable Tara, a backup singer who managed to survive the purging of the original context

Scene 1 – 2006 - Prologue

THE NIGHT BEFORE, OUSFG PARTY PANTO WRITING

PRESIDENT: Mr. Stratton?

STRATTON [Narration]: I recognised immediately the identity of the one who addressed me; who wouldn't? President of OUSFG, high-up as they went. "At your service," I told her immediately. "How may I be of assistance?"

PRESIDENT: I've been following some of your work. Some of it's quite impressive.

STRATTON: I nodded graciously at the compliment.

"I hadn't realised it was so well known"

PRESIDENT: It's my job to know these things. Would you happen to be free for a moment?

STRATTON: I nodded my affirmative, and without a word she led me down a flight of stairs to a door whose existence I'd never

noticed. And it was my staircase! She held it open for me and I stepped through. Upon the wall was a sequence of scripts, black lettering upon white paper. "What are they?" I asked of her, though I had a suspicion welling in the pit of my stomach.

PRESIDENT: OUSFG Punt Party Panto scripts. You're familiar with the work of Dan Brown, I trust?

[Stratton looks embarrassed, but nods]

Then you're aware of the technique by which one looks at prior works and can extrapolate the full content of future ones?

Again, Stratton nods

We've had to update the technique somewhat - we're dealing with far more advance material, of course, but we've done it. And this is what we see.

STRATTON: She raised her hand towards the far end of the room, where the scripts grew smaller and finally vanished. I looked at the top of the page, reading the title. 'OUSFG PUNT PARTY PANTO, 2011'. I turned back to the president. "Where's it gone?" I asked her.

PRESIDENT: It never existed. We've rerun this experiment hundreds of times, even worked out the entire deduction basis from scratch. After 2010, there is no OUSFG panto. There's just not enough material to work with... even with the books in the library, there are only a finite number of spec. fic. concepts that can be filked to put into a panto. We're within 5 years of the final generation.

STRATTON: My mind reeled desperately. "But there'll be more things written, surely? We can buy more books..."

PRESIDENT: Perhaps. But how long can that go on, how long until the library will no longer fit in Tim's car? Until all the useful ideas have been used up?

Scene 2 – Hall of Baroness Von Mift

The grand and sinister Throne Hall of BVM. Torches burn in wall brackets and malevolence pervades the air. It's the last turn of a Seven Wonders game. Baroness is Pyramids, stewing over how to avert the ending of the annual panto writing and with it secure, at least temporarily, the fragile continuity of her existence.

BVM: I'm building the Arsenal.

HM1: I'm building the last stage of my wonder (Mausoleum) I'll look through the spares to choose a card to play.

Starts looking through.

HM2: I'll build the laboratory.

HM3: I'll build the Philosopher's Guild.

HM1 starts to turn over his chosen card.

HM2: You'll never turn a card to beat me.

HM1: Actually a Sacrificial Alter.

HM3 tots up scores as BVM speaks.

BVM: There must be a way to save the Panto, there has to be. I must live, I must control the fate of all.

HM3: Scores are in – BVM scores 18, Hanz scores 59. Goebels scores 58. And I score... 7 carry the 0.

BVM: Igor,

Igor: Yeth Mithreth. *Appears right behind her.*

BVM: Hans and Goebels are on Dragon Feeding Duty today.

Igor: I'm not thure the dragon will eat that much, Mithtreth.

BVM: Just Throne Room dinnertime. [to the two victims-to-be] Don't worry, it's easy once you get down to the bones of it. Don't just stand there chewing the fat, get on with it.

Exeunt HM1, HM2, Igor.

Offscreen screams, including 'Mummy'.

Igor reappearth.

Igor: Freshly baked pieth, mithreth, courtethy of Hanth and Goebbelth. Excuthe me, I need to give Thcotty a hand to ready your zeppelin.

Exeunt Igor, as HM4 enters, reading Pyramids.

BVM: That's it! Pyramids! Have the academicals concocted a better scheme yet?

HM3: They've not been seen since dragon feeding duty, ma'am.

BVM: Then we shall use my plan, operation Jellybaby! Pyramids can control time, but alone they are insignificant to change dramatic events. I need more power, I must combine the power of all 8 ancient wonders...

HM4: There's only 7...

BVM: Igor! Dragon feeding duty! But leave the book.

Igor: Yeth mithreth. *Leaveth yet again.*

BVM: Ahem. Once they are together, I will have the capability to change anything I will, and I will be the most powerful being in history.

HM3: How will we "collect" them?

BVM: We need only the pyramids and then it is elementary, dear Watson!

HM3: Egad!

BVM: And we must complete this task tonight, before the sun rises. To the zeppelin!

[sung] I am the one who collects all the blocks
That are linked in my secret villain's base
Eras collide as they sit side by side
Generating a rift in time and space

Zeppelin and dragon on high
Pick me up and onwards we will fly!

Scene 3 – OUSFG Council Room

In a grand hall under the centre of Oxford (possibly within a college hidden in non-Euclidian space) the High Council of OUSFG are in emergency session. The President enters the council chamber, keeping a watchful eye on his loyal (?) Secretary, and seats himself on the Iron Throne at the head of the council all of whom are in full ceremonial dress.

Council [sung]: We are the ones who arrange all the plots
That were used in the plays of yesteryear
Now a cruel fate has presented the date
When the end of ideas draweth near

Can we solve this problem, please?
Pref'rably over various teas?

Pres: Thank you all for attending at such short notice. I'm sure you realise how grave the situation is – treasurer?

Tres: Without urgent action, our current forecasts show we will be unable to present an OUSFG punt party panto this year. We cannot allow such a travesty to occur!

Libr: Thin end of the wedge dear chap!

Pres: Beginning of the end of civilisation

Tres: Which version? IV or V?

[others look condescendingly]

Pres: Action must be taken. What alternatives do we have?

Libr: We could look in L-space

Pres: Thank you, Number 5.

Libr: I am not a number! I am a free man!

Tres: The accounts might stretch to approximately 37 typewriters and attendant monkeys for a few years...

Pres: That hardly seems sustainable. Would freshers be cheaper – we could pay them in cheap pizza?

Secr: A leadership contest might result in some stronger leadership

Pres: You would prefer stronger leadership?

[Discreetly presses button under council table]

Grunt over the PA system: Piranha tank trap-doors offline for maintenance. Please try again later.

Pres: Um...that was just to, er, remind me that we must discuss maintenance issues after the more pressing ones...

Secr: Maybe we could enlist the help of dark eldritch denominations...

Pres: Such as?

Secr: I thought you might like to suggest some? [crocodile smile]

Pres: [narrows eyes at Secr] [To the council at large] No it seems to me that what we need is someone who is suited to solving complex timey-wimey problems with the maximum internal consistency and the minimum angst. [sudden realisation] There's only one man for the job...

Scene 4 – The Great Pyramid of Giza

The Baroness' dragon-propelled war-zeppelin flies into view, containing the Baroness, Igor, and henchmen/minions. Its sinister silhouette flies low over the dawn which is just beginning to break over the cold desert sands.

BVM: [sung] There is no time to rest

Now I go on my quest

I'll be purloining wonders from the past

OUSFG won't know

It'll be on with the show

As I purloin the wonders from the past

No need for my zeppelin

I've moved on to pyramids

With the whole of the timeline at my feet there is no lid

On what I can change

There's nothing out of range

When I'm purloining wonders from the past

What a sight, the pyramids at night
Silhouetted in all their might
Rising above the dunes, I think I shall sing a song
I do
Don't you?
Course you do!
So I think I'll elucidate my cunning plan
In verse and in rhyme so you'll understand

[spoken] And now to the pyramid. Pilot! Get the dragon to land us.
[She disembarks from the zeppelin. Inside the pyramid is a dark tunnel with a sloped floor]

BVM: A truly magnificent spot for evildoing, don't you think, Igor? Igor?

[Igor appears behind her]

Igor: Yeth, Mithtreth?

BVM: Stop that immediately! I'm sure you don't want to donate any more body parts.

[To minions] Now remember your roles in this operation, minions. Any curses, any giant blades of death, nay reanimated kings with a penchant for bandages, YOU will be in their path, not me. Or you'll –

[Indiana Jones appears, running out of the pyramid. Suitable music plays]

IJ: Make way, heroic archaeologist coming through!.. also, giant boulder.

[Boulder comes rolling out, squashing one minion]

BVM: Why are the rest of you so three-dimensional? Was I not clear enough earlier?

IJ: So... I have two minutes to disarm that trap...

BVM: And I have n-1 minions and a rather large dragon, so I suggest you leave the tomb-robbing to me and get lost!

Minion: [quietly] I have a tech card

IJ: Ah, I see – a rival. Indiana Jones. And you are?

BVM: You haven't heard of me?

IJ: [thinks] You're HER? I have heard much of you Lady Croft. [Reaches out to shake hands]

BVM: What?

[The rumbling noise has increased markedly in volume. The boulder crushes IJ]

BVM: And still not one of you is crushed! You! Go and brush the dragon's teeth!

Minion: But ma'am, it ate the toothbrush last time

BVM: You, go with him and be the toothbrush

[Exit two minions]

BVM: Finally, no more interruptions. Who has the map?

Minion: [sung] I am the man who arranges the maps, [spoken] ma'am. The chamber is this way.

[Exeunt omnes. There is a distant scream as someone triggers a trap. Outside, the pyramid begins to glow, brighter and brighter until a beam of octarine light shoots from the peak. Rumbling grows louder, and then suddenly all is dark and silent]

BVM: Damn it! Stalled it!

Scene 5 – The British Museum

Entrance Hall: Night

The Entrance Hall is deserted; enter Treasurer followed by Entourage, Librarian and Grunts

Tres: You know the drill; the artifacts are on Basement 6, now step to.

The Treasurer walks towards stairs

Etr: You heard him men. TEN HUT! And MARCH!

They follow. As they leave, enter the President with an open umbrella, he walks to the other side. When he is about halfway, enter Secretary with gun. He shoots but it bounces harmlessly off the umbrella. The president doesn't notice but the Secretary quickly discards his gun and follows him off. As he leaves he curses in muffled tone.

Sect: Shoot!

Basement 6:

Enter Treasurer, Entourage, Librarian and Troops. Zombie elephant waits quietly in the corner.

Tres: OK, split into pairs and take your assigned artefact, the security system should be down now.

Etr: Aye, Aye. We must stop the Baroness, so hop to!

Troops start to retrieve the artefacts, enter President and Secretary. They walk to the Treasurer.

Pres: How goes the operation?

Tres: Well, but some of the pieces are unaccounted for.

Pres: Just make sure we get everything we can.

Tres: Yes president.

Secretary sneaks away towards a precarious statue. Two of the grunts start to talk.

G1: Couldn't they have hired some pros to do this? It's not what I signed up for.

G2: Pipe down, don't complain; remember what happens.

Secretary pushes the statue and as it starts to fall G2 hears it and looks, seeing the Zombie Elephant coincidentally about to charge, they shout.

G2: RUN!!!

Everyone scrambles and the Zombie Elephant gets crushed by the statue. The two grunts walk up to it.

G1: It's a Zombie Elephant.

G2: You could have fooled me; I thought it was an undead Pachyderm.

Tres: I swear that piles shrinking.

G1: Maybe it's just getting further away?

Libr: Of Course, the Baroness is taking it in the Past. This is no use.

Tres: There's no point in us remaining here. Let's head back. Everyone! Abandon your cargo and prepare to move out!

All Exit, Secretary kicks the Zombie Elephant in Anger as he passes.

Scene 6 – Temple of Artemis

Enter Baroness Von Mift, at great speed, with minions in tow - they proceed to set up equipment.

BVM: At last, I've managed to give Ms. Croft the slip, and that Mr. Drake was surprisingly persistent.

The Baroness regains her breath; C'thulu appears as Artemis (CAA)

BVM: No Fanfare?

CAA: It's... It's their day off. But that is unimportant - the ground behind you matters little in a chase. I have been observing your chase - You hunt your goal with a swiftness and directness almost worthy of me.

Appropriate warming up sounds from minion equipment.

BVM: Come, Igor. Igor? Where is that foul man Artemis? Oh, that's right, it's his day off.

CAA: Go! Thy quarry is within reach; finish this.

The Baroness leaves.

CAA: Thank me, she's gone. Those heels were agonizing. For the love of Lovecraft, who talked me into this? When I get my tentacles on him I'll...

Fade To Black to preserve audience sanity. [If they are sane why are they watching this? Ed.]

Scene 7 – Moffat's Anti-Spoiler-Taskforce Bunker (somewhere in South Wales)

Within the cold, sterile and concrete-walled confines of Steven Moffat's AST bunker. Subtle humming of air-con as Moffat sits tweeting at the world.

SM: [sung] I am the one who arranges the plots
That are used in my precious Doctor Who
Daleks will fly and poor Rory will die
And will die and will die, long as he's in view

I am better than you by far
Setting ever higher the bar!

[Double doors are blasted inwards. OUSFG council sweeps in flanked by heavily-armed minions and henchman (Etr)]

[shouting] Etr: Drop the keyboard and step away from the tweet thread!

Pres: Hello Moffat

SM: Who are you? Did RTD send you?

Pres: Do I look like a henchman?

Secr: Do you want the honest answer to that?

[Pres throws glare over shoulder]

Pres: We are OUSFG. We are the world's secret shadow government.

SM: I've never heard of you...

Pres: The clue's in the description. Anyway, it appears that we may need your help...

SM: You charge in here guns blazing and think that I am going to help you just like that?

[shouting to surrounding area through cupped hands] Pres: Guess what happens in the second half of season 6!]

SM: You wouldn't!

[Pres smiles/grins menacingly]

SM: I won't work for you, you fiend!

[shouts] Pres: Episode 8 - Rory dies!

SM: NO!

Pres: Episode 9 and 10 – RORY DIES!

SM: Stop! STOP! I'll do it! I'll do it!

Scene 8 – Babylon Project Station

[Present are Londo Mollari, Vir Cotto, and assorted other regulars. Enter the Baroness and several minions with dramatic flourishes]

BVM: At last! The Hanging Gardens of Babylon are in my grasp! Minions! Prepare the machines!

LM: [aside] If she remains, she could overact more than me! She has to go! [to the Baroness] Human! What are you doing on Babylon [the minions do something noisy that drowns out whatever number he says]?

BVM: Why, I am saving my universe from destruction! Step aside, Mesopotamian peasant! [To minions] Who knew ancient Babylonians were dressed for Versailles?

Londo: This one is worse than Kosh! What is she talking about?

Minion: [slightly sing-song voice] Finished!

BVM: Excellent! Now, prepare for the greatest triumph of the family Von Mift! At my command... ACTIVATE!

[The machine activates. Shot of the Time Vortex (effects by the Mill). Suddenly, Artemis appears]

BVM: Artemis? What are you doing here?

Art: Aha! You, like your ancestors, were fooled by my impenetrable disguise and my cute and cuddly nature!

VC: You are very adorable!

[Londo smacks him]

Art: But behold!

[She removes her disguise, revealing the terrifying form of Cthulhu! Minions go mad and are eaten]

Cthulhu: OM NOM NOM

BVM: No! Has fortune failed me so that OUSFG may be my only hope now!

[She runs to the machine and teleports out. Londo, never missing an opportunity for cowardice, follows her]

Scene 9 – OUSFG Council Room

Pres: Entourage, I need an update from our Cardiff operations centre ASAP

[Entourage enters with two grunts in tow brandishing papers and (subtly) an ACME briefcase]

Pres: Ah, good

[Enter the Baroness (and, discreetly, Londo Mollari) in a storm of special effects courtesy of the Mill. Council and grunts brandish weapons, Pres brandishes umbrella]

BVM: Hold your fire! I am no threat to you – but the Great Old One following me is!
Time is short – given the severity of the situation, I feel I must suggest we agree to a temporary alliance

Pres: You think that we would stoop to allying ourselves with the likes of such an amateur? [Looks at Secretary] Well, the majority of us...

[Cthulhu appears, accompanied by the now-empty Babylon station]

BVM: (singing) I woke the beast and it chases me
I thought my goal was in the bag
But now I've lost
I'm scared to count the cost
At least it's not in drag!

From Babylon, I've come to you
Suggesting we're on the same side
Great Cthulhu
Will kill me and you too
And there's nowhere to hide

So we will fight off the Old One
'Cause what else can we do?
We will fight off the Old One,
Great Cthu-

Pres: The words you sing have frightened me
The Elder Sign's shape is in doubt
Is it a tree?
Or star – what could it be?
We just can't sort it out

Cth: See, you can't
Cth/Pres: Fight off an Old One
That's something you/we can't do
You/we can't fight off an Old One
Like Cthu-

Secr: Will this let me kill our leader?
Cthulhu's a tough old bleeder
Can I hope to sit this battle out?

Libr: Tentacles are coming nearer!
Tres: Thoughts of death are getting clearer!
Now my future starts to seem in doubt

Council: We're gonna die
And we really don't know why
We should fight off the Old One

BVM: So one by one, you flee from him
I guess we're gonna die today

(Inexplicable Tara: What can't we face?)

BVM: But will I stand,

(Inexplicable Tara: If we're together?)

BVM: A weapon in my hand?

Hell, no, I'll run away!

Secr: I need to outrun my master!

Pres: I need to run ever faster!

Tres How can I fight someone I can't bribe?

(Inexplicable Tara: Going through the motions)

Pres: What will happen to the timestream?

Libr: Some attempt to fit the rhyme scheme

Secr: Someday I will rule the OUSFG tribe!

(At the same time) Cth: So one by one, they run from me

I see them try to run and hide

But they can't flee

An Old One such as me

I'll feast on their insides

All (except Tara): All OUSFG's days are fin'ly ending in a blaze

Thanks to the wrath of an Old One

There's nothing they can do

It's the wrath of an Old One

Great Cthulhu! Cthulhu! Cthulhu! Cthulhu!

Cth: [spoken] Lunchtime!

LM: So... I am Londo Mollari, Ambassador of the Centauri – perhaps we could walk together, Mr Cthulhu? Mmm?

[Autofating program initiates smiting protocols – Cthulhu is struck down due to an error]

Pres: Well, that was... novel. It looks like you've lost your alliance terms, von Mift.

Grunts – take her away – put her somewhere...dragon-proof...

BVM: [to grunts, as she is dragged out] So how much exactly do they pay you? I need a new dragon-keeper you know...

[They exit. The President follows. Entourage glares at case, picks it up, and storms out. An explosion is heard offstage]

[Secretary goes to scene of explosion]

Sect: Wretched ACME bombs, they never work, but we get plenty of exploding bins, that's the second this week. The standards are slipping, I must write a strongly worded letter to our suppliers. No, two strongly worded letters.

[Leaves while composing out loud]

Sect: Dear Sir/Madam... I don't like the "dear." Sounds a bit too much like, "Will you go to bed with me?"

No, no, no, no, no, not "Sir/Madam" it's far too sycophantic. Tell it like it is.

OK, "Darling Fascist Bullyboy..."

Scene 10 – OUSFG HQ corridor

[Enter Steven Moffat carrying a metre-high stack of scripts]

SM: I have it! A neat solution which solves the entire problem consistently in only 21,000 pages! We must restart OUSFG from the beginning in a grand deus ex machina!

[Enter the President and Treasurer – they exchange a look]

Pres: Do you intend to write such convoluted plots for the rest of your career?

SM: Well, if you aren't up to understanding it, though it is hardly –

Pres: I think we have a simpler solution. To the Babylon/Wonder time machine.

[The President and Treasurer grab a Moffatian arm each and drag him offstage – he drops his script tower clumsily in the process. The Secretary and two grunts enter and block their path. The President coldly flourishes a 'Moat' card and the grunts step back glowering to let them pass. The Treasurer nabs the Secretary's NERF gun on the way bodily shoving the secretary back a pace or two to fall in line with his grunts]

Pres: Just a quick stop off at the Flesh vats so his ganger can be used to write the rest of Doctor Who... I'm glad we subcontracted the Tleilaxu

Scene 11 - 2006

[The President and Treasurer appear, still holding Moffat, in a blaze of special effects in Stratton's office. Stratton looks up in surprise. Treasurer shoots him. Steven Moffat is installed in his place and the body is hauled off.]

Pres: Mr Moffat, sorry Stratton, I do believe you'll be receiving a call from one of my predecessors very soon. [He smiles]. Must be off now. See you in a few years time.

[Treasurer and President disappear in the previous special effect]

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PRESIDENT: Perhaps. But how long can that go on, how long until the library will no longer fit in Tim's car? Until all the useful ideas have been used up?

STRATTON: So what do you suggest?

PRESIDENT: We've been working on ways of distilling the essence out of Pantos, finding common elements that we can permute to generate new ideas. So far, we're not having much success. I'd hoped you could help us out.

STRATTON: Over the next few hours, I worked with the President and some other members, trying to come up with some method by which we could circumvent the perceived end of OUSFG Pantos. We managed to isolate the bad attempts at humour, the faux-intellectualism, but none of it seemed to help. It occurred to me that if we were successful, OUSFG would be able to create new pantos without the limitations imposed by working from material that was actually published. Would the world be enriched by the resulting works, or would the society destroy itself in the pathological ramblings of its members? There was no way to tell.

OUSFG PUNT PARTY WRITING SESSION, A FEW HOURS LATER

STRATTON: I thought I had it. I was playing with source material of the texts, and various means of incorporating them into the panto. I turned to the president, showing her my results. I'd taken last year's panto and plugged it into itself, getting a whole new play by recycling both theme and structure from last year's. 'So what do you think we get out of this?'

PRESIDENT: I think you're writing it.