

ADVENTURES WITH THE **WIFE AND BLAKE**

NEIL AND SUE PERRYMAN

VOLUME ONE:
THE BLAKE YEARS



FOREWORD BY
GARETH ROBERTS

Adventures with the Wife and Blake

Volume 1: The Blake Years

Neil and Sue Perryman

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Thank you so much.

Foreword

Over the school holidays at Christmas 1977 the BBC screened the whole run of Universal's first *Flash Gordon* cinema serial, merely forty-one years from its debut. To the sophisticated mind of a 9 year old it seemed laughably creaky and jejune. Orangopoids; Shark Men; sparking rocket ship models with visible wires that landed in dried-out fish tanks next to clearly normally-sized, and very boring looking, savage colossal reptiles; an acting style one might kindly call 'urgent'.

Mere days after Flash had successfully saved Earth and deposed the villainous Emperor Ming the BBC debuted its own new and frightfully up-to-date science-fiction adventure serial. I remember watching those first few episodes of *Blake's 7*, gawking at the sunset over Cygnus Alpha and gawping at the *Liberator/London* link-up, and wondering 'One day, will even this seem tacky and dated? Will people look back at *Blake's 7* and giggle ironically at what seems today so thrillingly modern?'

As it turned out, the answer was no. They never, ever did. Thirty-six years on and not one person in the world has, even once, got an unintentional laugh out of *Blake's 7*. So I am quite certain there are none to be found in this book.

Blake's 7 is of course mainly set in space. But let us talk about a different kind of space for a moment - the space between us. Best friends, lovers, families, husbands and wives, in whatever permutation, no matter how perfectly matched, there must remain private enthusiasms, hobbies and unshared interests, a hinterland away from the togetherness. My best friend nods and smiles graciously like the Queen as I, very occasionally, try to open his mind to the music of Peter Hammill and Van Der Graaf Generator. In return, he has led me to an appreciation of rarely seen films such as *Back To The Future* and *Ghostbusters*, which I missed at the time of release as I was listening to the music of Peter Hammill and Van Der Graaf Generator.

But surely it would be a foolish person who attempted to crack open their hobby to a significant other in full public view, with copious notes? This is what Neil Perryman has done, exposing his patient wife Sue not only to *Doctor Who* but now to its lesser known but no less loved BBC stablemate *Blake's 7*. Sue's reactions enable us, the devotees of these shows, to see them in a wholly different light through her eyes. She has very little prior knowledge and no conception of the received wisdom of our fandoms. Hers are the kind of eyes through which *Blake's 7* (and most other tv shows) were meant to be seen - casually interested, not manically popping. Her observations are often startlingly fresh and strikingly accurate - no matter how many times you've seen *Blake's 7* I guarantee there'll be more than a few moments in this book when apropos of Sue you'll think 'Why on earth have I never seen that before?'

And there are more moments when Sue appreciates a performance, or a design or even an entire episode, when the space between herself and the husband is bridged. 'I get why you like that,' she might tell him. What that really means is 'I get you'.

And that's really what any of us wants to hear, isn't it?

Gareth Roberts

September 2014

Introduction

If you're reading this ebook then it means you must have backed us on Kickstarter, so I'd like to begin by saying thank you. We really couldn't have done this without you. (And if you're reading this ebook and you didn't back us on Kickstarter, YOU HAVE... BETRAYED... ME!)

This book collates the first four months of the *Adventures with the Wife and Blake* blog ('The Wife and Blake' to 'Star One') into one handy volume, but it isn't a simple cut-and-paste job. I've tried to improve the text by removing typos and errors, I've clarified some plot points that I may have skirted over in the original posts, I've made some minor alterations in the absence of screen grabs and audio/video clips, and I've even added the occasional note. Quotations from the television series have also been pared back, and are only included when Sue comments on a specific line of dialogue. The book also adopts the alphabetical system when it comes to cataloguing the episodes, which the blog failed to do because I relied on the official DVD box sets. Because I'm an idiot. In any event, this is the authors' preferred version of the text.

So why did I decide to put my wife through *Blake's 7*? Hadn't she suffered enough? (Well, obviously not, or you wouldn't have backed us on Kickstarter.)

I chose *Blake's 7* for two very important reasons, the second of which I have decided to save for the introduction to the next volume, in an attempt to generate some suspense. The first reason was relatively simple: Sue was a *Blake's 7* virgin.

Having said that, she could list all the main characters off the top of her head without breaking in a sweat. This is because we adopted a stray cat in 2013, which I named Jenna, and we also cared for three wildcats, which I christened Blake, Avon and Cally; Sue built a wooden cat hotel for them to sleep in when it gets cold. And then, just as I was preparing to launch the Wife and Blake blog, five more kittens turned up on our doorstep. This is because Blake and Avon can't stop shagging. Yes, we thought Avon was a boy, right up until the moment she gave birth. Oh, and we also take care of two hedgehogs (Zen and Orac), and Sue's brother owns a dog named Travis, which is my fault, too.

But aside from all the pets (domestic and otherwise), Sue was a blank slate when it came to *Blake's 7*. She had no preconceptions about the series at all (unless you count the fact that she expected Avon to be a girl), she didn't harbour any warm, nostalgic feelings towards it, and she didn't have any axe to grind, either. In other words, *Blake's 7* couldn't have been more perfect.

I, on the other hand, adored *Blake's 7* when I was a kid. Probably because, unless you count the time I accidentally walked in on my parents when they were watching *The Sweeney*, *Blake's 7* was the most adult programme I'd seen on television up to that point. Roj Blake was the Doctor's harder, more dangerous brother, and the terrorist's adventures were just as exciting and unmissable as the Tim Lord's. Sometimes even more so. I even pretended to be a Space Rat as I rode my Raleigh Griffith home from school one day. That's how much I loved *Blake's 7*.

And then it was over. Finished. Complete. All wrapped up in a neat, bloodstained bow. *Doctor Who* always managed to survive – even when it was dead – but *Blake's 7* didn't have the luxury of regeneration, which probably explains why it didn't follow me into adulthood like its more flexible stablemate did, and why, for more years than I care to remember, I didn't give the programme a second thought.

In fact, if there were a scale that measured how much of a Blakeian you are (I think that's what they're called), I would have been a 6, maybe a 6.5, when we began this blog back in January. Yes, I bought all the DVD box sets the day they were released (at the full recommended retail price),

dipped into the UK Gold repeats in the 1990s (Hi, Glen!), and I could list all the major characters without any help from my pets. I'd even delivered academic lectures about the programme to hundreds of disinterested undergraduates. But the sad truth is, for a variety of different reasons, there were still a handful of episodes I'd never actually seen (despite buying all the DVDs at the full RRP).

So when we approached the end of the *Wife in Space* blog, and we decided that a sequel was both inevitable and a possible solution to our spiralling vet bills, there was only ever one contender. Unless you count *Moonbase 3* and *Star Cops*, of course, but those blogs would have been very short and very very niche. And have you seen how much *Star Cops* is going for on eBay these days?

So put away your Sopron, pour yourself a nice glass of green, and try not to have a coronary when you reach episode B6. As with the blog, it will help if you possess a cursory knowledge of the episodes that are about to fall under Sue's beady eye, and in an ideal world you'll only read her commentary once you've sat down and watched the episode yourself (or yourselves, if you can convince your significant other to join you).

Go on. You know you want to. It's only 52 episodes. How hard could it be?

Neil Perryman

October 2014

Please note: This is the uncensored edition of the ebook, which leaves nothing to the imagination. If you'd prefer a copy with all the fucks taken out, please contact me for a replacement.

SERIES A

*A smuggler, a thief, a computer expert, a strong man and a convicted kiddie fiddler -
what could possibly go wrong?*

A1: The Way Back

Writer: Terry Nation

Director: Michael E. Briant

Broadcast: 2 January 1978

Blogged: 3 January 2014

First things first...

Me: What can you tell me about *Blake's 7*, Sue?

Sue: Well, I can name all the characters for a start. There's Blake, Avon, Jenna, Cally –

Me: Forget the cats. What else can you tell me about it?

Sue: I think it's set in space, with a bunch of people on a spaceship. Or maybe it's a space station. I bet it's like *Red Dwarf*, only not as funny.

I don't have the heart to tell her that it's funnier.

Me: Why didn't you watch *Blake's 7* when it was on television?

Sue: I would have been 17 in 1978, and I played badminton on Monday evenings. Not that I would have watched it, anyway. Spacey stuff wasn't really my cup of tea.

Me: What do you expect *Blake's 7* to be like, Sue?

Sue: I want it to be like *Firefly*, with fit blokes and a decent plot. Actually, just the fit blokes will do.

Me: Shall we begin?

Sue: Have any of the cast been interviewed by Operation Yewtree?

Me: No.

Sue: OK, let's do this!

I press Play.

Sue: Der-der-DEERRR-DE-DEERRR!

Me: That doesn't sound anything like the theme to *Blake's 7*, but nice try, Susan.

Sue: It sounds like the sort of thing Michael Bubl  would walk out on stage to. It also reminds me of the theme to *Dynasty*.

Me: Do you notice anything strange about the logo?

Sue: Yes, they've stolen the triangle from *Star Trek*. Even I know that.

I pause the DVD.

Me: Anything else?

She stares at the screen for ages.

Sue: The apostrophe is missing!

She can scarcely believe her eyes.

Sue: The apostrophe is missing! How shit is that!

I press Play again.

Sue: Oh no. Terry fucking Nation! This is not a good start, Neil.

Me: The programme's official title was *Terry Nation's Blake's 7*.

When Sue reaches for a cushion, I gently remind her that she's promised not to attack me with any so furnishings for the duration of this blog.

Sue: You'll pay for that later. And it won't involve a cushion, either.

Blake's 7 begins in a futuristic city.

Sue: This man walking down the corridor reminds me of Martin Shaw from *The Professionals*. I used to have a crush on Martin Shaw.

This man is Roj Blake.

Sue: I didn't know that Blake's first name was Roger. You kept that quiet, Neil.

My wife tries to work out where she is.

Sue: Are we on a space station?

Me: No.

Sue: An alien planet?

Me: No.

Sue: A really big spaceship?

Me: No, Sue. It's Earth.

Sue: How am I supposed to know that? They should put a caption on the screen. What year is this?

Me: I don't know.

Sue: What do you mean you don't know? Why are you here, then? For God's sake, Neil.

A couple named Ravella and Dal escort Blake through a hatchway that leads to the outside world.

Sue: They must be rebelling against something. Maybe they don't like living like the Amish.

Me: The what?

Sue: The Amish. They look Amish to me. Spacey Amish.

Blake is guided through an underground complex.

Sue: It looks like the basement at the university where I work. You know, the place where they keep all the bins.

When Blake reaches the planet's surface, he looks back at the domed city he's leaving behind.

Me: This is the only scene I can remember watching when this episode first went out - that big dome in the background. The rest is just a blur.

Sue: It's pretty good, actually. No wonder you remember it. I've got to say, this isn't what I was expecting at all. This is more like *Edge of Darkness* than *Doctor Who*. Were you excited when *Blake's 7* came along, Neil?

Me: Big time. I didn't sleep the night before.

Sue: You didn't sleep last night either.

Me: That's completely different.

Sue: So what brought *Blake's 7* on, then? Was the BBC trying to capitalise on *Doctor Who's* success? Or was it *Star Wars*?

Me: *Star Wars* hadn't been released in the UK when they started work on *Blake's 7*. You'll know when the production team saw *Star Wars* when we get there. You can't miss it.

Blake discovers that he was a notorious rebel in a previous life.

Sue: Flappy hands!

Me: What?

Sue: Rewind that bit where Blake is running down the tunnel. Look at his hands!

She's right. They do flap a bit.

Sue: I'm enjoying this. It reminds me of *The Prisoner*. I thought this programme was going to be lots of people shooting laser beams at each other in corridors, but it's very psychological. The direction is interesting, too. Extreme close-ups!

The rebels' leader, Bran Foster, gathers his people together for a quick pep talk.

Sue: Look at these losers. I'd have second thoughts about joining this shower if I were Blake. Their leader is rubbish. I wouldn't follow him to the shops.

When Blake wanders off to digest the revelation that he used to be Che Guevara, he almost bumps into a platoon of Federation troopers coming the other way. And then he watches helplessly from the sidelines as the rebel army are murdered in cold blood.

Sue: Their guns are pathetic. They look like dud fireworks. You know, the ones that don't go off properly when you light them. What rubbish!

Rubbish guns or not, it's a massacre.

Sue: It would have been so much better if we'd just heard them being killed off-screen. We didn't need to see it. What time did *Blake's 7* go out? Was it after *The Nine O'Clock News*?

Me: The first episode went out at 6pm. The rest went out at 7:15pm.

Sue: You are having a laugh! That was horrific! No wonder you're damaged and depraved, Neil.

A stunned Blake returns to the dome, but the Federation are already waiting for him.

Sue: At least the actor who plays Blake is pretty good. That's a relief. This is nothing like *Doctor Who*, though. It's a lot grittier than I expected. It's like *Torchwood*, but quite good. Hey, was that a hand-held camera? I'm impressed.

A cabal of Federation administrators meet to decide Blake's fate.

Sue: I recognise that sofa. That sofa was in *Doctor Who*.

Me: Really? I don't remember.

Sue: First you tell me that you don't know when this programme is set, and now you tell me that you don't know whether that sofa has been in *Doctor Who* or not. Can I watch this with somebody who knows something about *Blake's 7*, please? What's John Williams doing for the next six months?

At least she appreciates the programme's minimalist aesthetics.

Sue: I'm glad they didn't go overboard trying to make it look all weird and spacey. If anything, they've toned it down a bit. Even the make-up looks relatively normal. It's aged quite well, this.

She really likes the soundscape, too.

Sue: It's very peaceful in the future. I wouldn't mind living there. You know, this doesn't even sound like *Doctor Who*.

Me: That's odd because Dudley Simpson composed the incidental music.

Sue: Yes, but you can barely hear it. It's as if he couldn't be arsed.

Blake's lawyer, Varon, visits him in prison to discuss the state's case against him.

Sue: That table could do with a beer mat under its leg. Look at the wobble on that!

Blake wants to plead guilty, but he hasn't heard the charges yet. They include: assault on a minor, attempting to corrupt minors...

Sue: Not the miners again! It's always the fucking miners.

Me: Not miners – minors. Kids!

Sue: FUCKING HELL. This is unbelievable. It's Operation Yewtree. In space!

Blake can't believe it either.

Sue: He's giving Tom Baker a run for his money, here. He isn't afraid to go for it when he has to. That's good.

Blake is placed on trial.

Sue: You can tell that the courtroom is a TV studio. The cyc curtain is casting shadows across the back of the set.

Blake's shady past (the one he can't remember) is dredged up once again.

Sue: It's very convoluted, this. They should have started with Blake in charge of the rebels. All this 'he can't remember he was a rebel' nonsense is a bit long-winded. Is he a good guy or isn't he? Stop pissing about! And the guards must be sweating buckets in those helmets. Does the green Perspex actually do something, or is it just for show?

The courtroom is presided over by a woman.

Sue: Is that Servalan?

There's a cat that I failed to mention in the introduction: an aging ball of scruffy white fluff who belonged to a local farmer and which I called Servalan. But she died (the cat, not the farmer). At least we think she died.

Me: No, that isn't Servalan. In fact, she's probably as far removed from Servalan as it's possible to get.

In the future, justice is served in a Perspex box.

Sue: It's *Deal or No Deal* meets *Judge Judy*. Any minute now, the banker will offer Blake five years in prison, with time off for good behaviour. Deal, you fool! Deal!

It's left to a pair of flickering balls to determine Blake's fate.

Sue: A Tom Baker *Doctor Who* did exactly the same thing as this. Don't ask me what it was called, but it was *exactly* the same.

Blake is found guilty.

Sue: The computer says, 'No'.

Blake's crimes are displayed on the courtroom's cyc curtain for everyone to see.

Sue: I can't make out what they've listed at Number One. I bet it's something really horrible, like rape. I can't believe they got away with this, Neil.

Blake is transferred to a transit cell. In the cell next to his, a woman is being brutally tortured.

Sue: This is cheerful. Where's K9 when you need him? Or a razor?

Blake finds himself surrounded by notorious criminals.

Sue: Is that Samantha Fox?

Another convict - the thief Vila Restal - steals Blake's digital watch from under his nose.

Sue: It's the vicar from *EastEnders*!

Blimey, that was quick, even for Sue.

Sue: Right, so one of our heroes is a raving klepto, and Blake is a convicted child molester. That's lovely.

Vila introduces Blake to the renowned smuggler Jenna Stannis.

Sue: The cats are coming thick and fast, now. She's very pretty, just like our cat. Did you fancy Jenna when you were a boy, Neil?

Me: I don't think so. I was only 9 years old.

Sue: Do you fancy her now? I bet you wouldn't turn her down if she offered to smuggle -

Me: OK, let's leave it there, thanks.

It's at this point that Sue decides to keep score.

Sue: This is basically *Blake's 2*, now. He'll have to get his skates on if he's going to get his numbers up before the episode ends.

Varon takes his mind off losing Blake's trial by sleeping with his wife.

Sue: I find it hard to believe that Terry Nation wrote this. It's proper adult drama. No one ever shagged in *Doctor Who*. Well, not on-screen, anyway.

A post-coital Varon decides to examine the state's evidence against Blake.

Sue: Does he always wait until his clients are sent to prison before he starts doing his bloody job?

Varon visits the man who controls the Federation's computer records. He looks like a moody Eric Bristow, at least according to Sue, and he's waving an enormous Sony Walkman in the air.

Sue: That Walkman was years ahead of its time in 1978. They actually got that bit right.

Me: And yet so horribly wrong.

Varon suspects that the Federation planted memories of sexual abuse in the minds of Blake's victims.

Sue: Why didn't they just put the memory in Blake's head? Then he'd think he was guilty and he wouldn't put up a fight. That would have saved them a lot of time and energy, and they could have spared the kids as well. This is just *wrong*.

Varon has uncovered enough evidence to bring the Federation to its knees.

Sue: I like how Varon wasn't part of the conspiracy. He was just doing his job - very badly, I might add. At least he's making up for it now. Why haven't we got a cat called Varon? I like Varon.

Varon and his wife discover the remains of the murdered rebels in the underground car park.

Sue: The bad guys didn't even bother to bury them. They should have cremated them at the very least. That's lazy *and* horrible.

Blake boards a ship bound for the penal colony Cygnus Alpha. According to Sue (and only Sue), the ship is under the thrall of a young Dennis Waterman.

Sue: *(singing)* 'I could be so good for you. Treat you like you want me to...'

Dennis teaches Blake a lesson by confining him to his seat.

Sue: What if Blake needs to go for a wee during the flight?

It turns out that a creepy blonde man named Dev Tarrant set the whole thing up. Tragically, he has Varon and his wife killed before Blake can be set free.

Sue: We'll never call one of our cats Tarrant. What a massive twat! I hope he gets his comeuppance soon. There was no need for that.

The prison ship blasts off for Cygnus Alpha. As Blake leaves the planet in disgrace, he's adamant that he'll find a way back.

Cue credits.

Sue: DER-DER-DER-DEERRRRR-DER-DEERRR.

Me: That's better.

Sue: That's the best thing Terry Nation has ever written. Which isn't saying much, but still.

And then my wife stuns me:

Sue: I find it interesting that Blake is banished from his home planet, just like the Doctor was banished from his home planet. And the Doctor said he would get back one day, too. Yes, one day. One day.

Good Lord, what have I done?

The Score

Me: So what are you going to give that out of ten?

Sue: ~~Oh no. Do I have to mark the episodes as well? I hate marking the episodes; I get enough of that at work. Why don't we do it differently this time - why don't you score the episodes instead?~~

Me: Nobody cares what I think. Come on, Sue. Think of the graphs.

Sue: Can I mark the episodes out of seven?

Me: No.

Sue: What do you want me to compare it to - *Breaking Bad* or 1970s *Doctor Who*? Because it isn't as good as *Breaking Bad*.

Me: Let's go with the latter.

Sue: It was all right, I suppose. I enjoyed it. It was very bleak, and definitely not for kids, and even though it took a while to get going, I liked the premise. The acting was all right, and the direction wasn't bad, either. As long as Blake returns to Earth and clears his name, I'll be happy.

7/10

Me: You did that on purpose, didn't you?

Sue: Yes.

BLOG TAGLINE: Underground car parks, child abuse and torture. It must be *Blake's 7*... (I hadn't got the hang of these yet.)

NOTES: We watched 'The Way Back' exactly 36 years after it was first broadcast on British television. I'd never felt so apprehensive about sitting down to watch something with my wife before even *Salò* was a doddle compared to this. Why? Because if Sue didn't enjoy this episode (one of the highpoints of the series), the next eight months would have been torture.

The sofa appeared in two *Doctor Who* stories: 'The Robots of Death' and 'Timelash'. It will turn up in *Blake's 7* again in due course. The Tom Baker story which features flickering justice balls is, of course, the shits bits of 'The Stones of Blood'.

What my friend John Williams doesn't know about *Blake's 7* isn't worth knowing. Actually, what John Williams knows about *Blake's 7* isn't worth knowing, either, but I digress. I also hold him partially responsible for both this blog and the last one. I just hope he doesn't make me do *Star Maidens* next.

Michael Keating was Walford's vicar in *EastEnders* for ages (he buried Pauline 'Dimensions in Time' Fowler).

The programme's official title isn't really *Terry Nation's Blake's 7*. I was winding Sue up. However, thanks for all the emails that pointed this 'error' out to me. I've framed them all.

Do you remember the five kittens I mentioned in the book's introduction? (There is a test at the end.)
Well, one of them is all grown up now and called... Tarrant.

Oh, and if it had been up to me, I would have given 'The Way Back' 9/10. Easy.

COMMENT: *I wanted to name our dog after a Doctor Who character, but the wife vetoed it and I had to make do with calling the car Romana.* – Mycroft Badger

A2: Space Fall

Writer: Terry Nation

Director: Pennant Roberts

Broadcast: 9 January 1978

Blogged: 7 January 2014

You'll be pleased to know that Sue can almost sing the theme tune now, although she still struggles with the ending. You'll be less pleased to know that she's come to the conclusion that the programme title sequence looks a bit, well, cheap.

Sue: Does Terry Nation write every episode?

Me: No.

Sue: So this is the second part of a two-part story, is that it?

The London leaves a thick plume of smoke in its wake when it engages its hyperdrive engines.

Sue: Its rear end has gone. They should pull into a space garage before it's too late.

I remind her that Blake's 7 didn't have an enormous budget.

Sue: You don't say.

I tell her that Blake's 7 had the same budget as an average episode of Softly, Softly, a programme she remembers fondly, although it wasn't as good as Z-Cars.

Sue: The BBC can be its own worst enemy, sometimes.

The London switches to autopilot so the crew can turn their attention to more important matters.

Sue: This guy is playing Sudoku while he trims his ear hair. Nice.

There then follows an exchange of dialogue that almost makes Sue spill her tea: the ship's captain, Leylan, tells his first officer, Raiker, to be 'discreet' when it comes to handling their one and only female prisoner.

Sue: Bloody hell! In other words, when you rape her, don't make a big song and dance about it. That unbelievable!

The London's journey to Cygnus Alpha will take eight months to complete.

Sue: The prisoners will get piles if they have to sit like that for eight months. That's a bit grim.

To Sue's relief – and theirs – the prisoners are shown to their living quarters. All except Blake, that is.

Sue: How is facing the wrong way on a spaceship supposed to punish him? Is it because he can't watch the in-flight movie?

Blake is reminded that he's a convicted child molester.

Sue: So they're keeping the child abuse subplot going, then? Now I know why *Blake's 7* was broadcast in January. This is so depressing.

Sue somehow manages to convince herself that Raiker is actually flirting with Blake.

Sue: I think Blake's in more danger of something discreet happening to him than Jenna is.

Speaking of Jenna, Raiker can't wait to tell the smuggler that the prison ship isn't designed to cater for female prisoners.

Sue: Why? Don't women commit crimes in the future? I'm mildly annoyed by that.

When Raiker tries it on with Jenna, she raises his hopes and then quickly dashes them again.

Sue: For a moment there, I thought Jenna was a bit of a floozy. You know, just like our cat. I hope she gets to kick him where it hurts later.

Vila introduces Blake to Avon.

Sue: I know him. That's Paul Darrow. Ooh, I'm looking forward to this.

Paul doesn't disappoint.

Sue: Paul Darrow would have been a great Doctor Who - scary, but great.

Blake hopes to unite the prisoners in a daring escape attempt.

Sue: Isn't anyone bothered that the bloke who's offering to lead them is a convicted kiddie fiddler?

On the London's bridge, a man named Artix – who Sue describes as a cross between Eric Idle and Richard O'Sullivan – notices something strange on the ship's scanner. The crew have never seen anything like it before.

Sue: I have. When we had a Binatone game system. It was nothing like real badminton.

Blake convinces Avon to join forces with him.

Sue: They look like they're sitting in a barbershop, waiting to get their hair cut.

Avon rallies to Blake's cause, mainly because he's had four months to work out that the crew will probably throw the prisoners out of the airlock long before they reach Cygnus Alpha.

Sue: Hang on a minute. They've been living on this prison ship for *four months*? In the same clothes? That ship must stink to high heaven! And I wonder how many of them have copped off with each other at this point.

The London is buffeted by debris from a nearby space battle. Blake uses this distraction to cobble together a small army.

Sue: Blake's 5. Right, now we're getting somewhere. What are the names of the two new members?

Me: Gan and Nova.

Sue: That sounds Geordie to me: 'I'm Gan and Nova the toon, pet.'

Blake's gang seem to have all the bases covered.

Sue: There's a smuggler, a thief, a computer expert, a strong man and a convicted kiddie fiddler - what could possibly go wrong?

Avon breaks into the ship's computer room.

Sue: Paul Darrow is very easy on the eye. There's something about him - I can't quite put my finger on it. I can't take my eyes off him.

Me: Please stop drooling, love. Thanks.

Sue: Hang on ... Where's Dennis Waterman? He couldn't stop shouting his mouth off in the last episode, so where is he now?

When Vila refuses to help Blake, Nova volunteers to take his place.

Sue: I really like Nova. Vila is a bit of a dick.

Nova is killed shortly thereafter.

Sue: *What?* They can't do that! Now we're back to *Blake's 4* again. Bloody hell, Neil!

Me: I'm relieved. Nova cried like a baby.

Sue: I'd like to see how you'd react if you were drowning in shaving foam. And it could easily be arranged. Poor Nova. I'll miss him.

Avon begins to dismantle the ship's computer.

Sue: Look at the size of his sonic, Neil.

Gan persuades a guard to open the doors to the prisoners' quarters.

Sue: Gan is basically Big John, isn't he? (*She means Little John.*) If Robin Hood was a convicted paedophile, I mean.

A technician discovers Avon in the computer room, and an extremely vicious fight ensues.

Sue: He just stuck his finger in Avon's mouth! Who fights like that? What kind of sick future is this?

Blake fires at Raiker before diving into the computer room with Jenna.

Sue: Should he be firing a gun in a spaceship? It's already got holes in it.

And then Gan mispronounces Vila's name.

Sue: He's had four months to get that right. They obviously haven't copped off with each other in the shower yet. Is there a shower? Please tell me there's a shower, Neil.

Gan and Vila head for the armoury, but then, in an act of unbelievable stupidity, Vila drops his gun when Gan instructs the guards to drop theirs. It's a mess, frankly.

Sue: Oh, come off it! I told you Vila was a dick.

The rebellion is quashed, leaving Blake, Jenna and Avon locked in the computer room, their options rapidly running out. Raiker executes a prisoner in an attempt to force Blake's hand.

Sue: What an absolute twat! I'm really shocked by that.

Avon would rather sacrifice the prisoners and save his own skin.

Sue: I'm even more shocked by that. I didn't know that Avon was such a git. I still like him, though. But I like Blake, too. It's complicated. Which one does Jenna go for? Does it turn into a messy love triangle?

Blake ignores Avon's advice and surrenders. Raiker is given the good news.

Sue: I bet he shoots another prisoner anyway. He's that kind of cunt.

Raiker shoots another prisoner anyway.

Sue: I told you! What did I tell you? If you want to guess what's going to happen in *Blake's 7*, just think of the bleakest thing imaginable. It's as simple as that.

When the prisoners are eventually rounded up, Raiker gives Jenna one of his looks.

Sue: This is relentless. After all that murdering, there's still enough time for a quick rape before dinner.

Avon taunts Blake for failing to see their hijack through to the bitter end.

Sue: I think I'm going to enjoy *Blake's 7* a lot. I love Avon already. He's very funny.

But it isn't over yet: the London's scanners have detected a derelict ship floating in space.

Sue: This ship must be important because it's in the title sequence. I'm guessing that Blake and his gang will run away in it. That makes sense, because, let's face it, the ship they're on now is rubbish.

Leylan wants to salvage the alien ship so he can pocket the reward.

Sue: Rapists, murderers, and now scrap dealers. Is there anything these people won't do to avoid their real jobs?

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