

Room for Love: Stephen Cardew

Steve is 64 and sitting in a comfortable armchair. *Stephen*, 15, is sitting across from him on a settee.

The room is warm, light and full of objects gathered over a lifetime. It is January 1972. Stephen glances between Steve and the objects. They appear to have a fascination for him.

Steve: 'Thanks for seeing me.'

Stephen eyes him suspiciously and cocks his head on one side. 'I'm sorry. Who did you say you were?'

'You.'

'What?'

'You. I'm you, but 50 years older'.

Steve looks him straight in the left eye, noting the vivacity of colour and the lack of crow's feet. He raises an eyebrow.

'What do you mean? - you're me from the future? When in the future? What year is it where you're from?'

'2021.'

Stephen looks down and his eyes flick. 'So 49 years in the future, then? Not 50. That'd be an exaggeration, wouldn't it?'

Steve maintains a steady gaze. '**Look, we can dick about here all morning with you pretending you know everything. Or you can suspend your disbelief and possibly learn something. Up to you.**'

Stephen looks across at **Steve**, seeing some features he recognises and some that look somehow less well-drawn.

'So, let's say I buy into this and accept that you've become the Doctor's new companion and hopped back here to 1972 to give me an important message, what is it?'

'That you can feel better than you do now and live better than you will.'

Stephen looks straight at **Steve**, frowning. His cheeks start to colour and he looks away.

'How do you know I'm not happy already?'

'Well, I'm from your future, so I know the whole back story. I've lived it and I know all the mistakes you're going to make, and I know where it all started.'

'Where did it all start?'

'Thirteen days ago, Christmas Eve, twenty-five past four in the morning, phone call from the hospital. Your mum - our mum - had died.'

Stephen looks away. His breath catches in his throat, his cheeks flush crimson and his eyes well with tears. He inhales deeply and clamps his lips firm shut. He trembles as he strives to maintain control.

'And that is the first mistake you're going to make.'

Stephen flashes a look at **Steve**, glaring.

'If you keep all that inside, where's the room for love?'