

WHO NAMED YOU?

WHEN IT COMES TO HER NAME, TEGAN FORDER HAS A STORY TO TELL.

I OWE MY name to *Doctor Who*. In fact, all Tegans of a certain vintage do.

More specifically, we owe our name to Tegan Jovanka, the longest-serving continuous companion (three years, one month) of the Fourth and Fifth Doctors.

Legend has it that the show's producer was going to name the Doctor's new companion either Tegan, after his partner's niece in Australia, or Jovanka, after the widow of a Yugoslavian president. He wrote both options down on a piece of paper, but the script editor, thinking it was the character's full name, christened her with both.

Sitting on the couch back in 1981, my parents got their first glimpse of Tegan – an Australian air hostess, played by British actress Janet Fielding. Wearing a fetching lilac ensemble, she walks into the TARDIS looking for help after her car breaks down on the way to Heathrow. There she meets the Fourth Doctor, Tom Baker (you know, the one with the scarf), and sticks around to fight the Master after he kills her aunt.

She stays on when the Doctor has his fifth incarnation, Peter Davison (the cricket lover), but decides to leave in 1984 (the year of my birth) after getting tired of the carnage she witnesses in the *Resurrection of the Daleks*.

I first discovered that I wasn't alone in being named after *Doctor Who*'s companion when, at the age of eight, I met a fellow Tegan in a playground in Ballarat, Victoria. We bonded over our uncommon name and the fact our parents had an unhealthy attachment to a show specialising in quirky British humour and sets made out of styrofoam.

It's a scenario that has often been repeated whenever I've met a new

Tegan. Yes, they'd confirm, their parents were also *Doctor Who* geeks. We'd roll our eyes and wish our parents had just called us Megan instead. Apart from being an arguably prettier name, 'Meg' is also a better shortened version than 'Teg'. Instead Tegans have to endure nicknames such as 'Tegatron', 'Teegy-weegy', 'Tegasaurus', or more unfortunately, 'Tegan the Vegan'.

But having grown up on a steady diet

As time went on, Tegan became one of the TARDIS mainstays and took on a mother-hen role, inducting the new recruits and keeping the Doctor focused.

Doctor Who's Tegan spoke an Aboriginal language fluently and was never shy around a firearm. While I'd guess most Tegans don't share these traits, we do share many things.

All Tegans will have at some point lamented the fact our parents saddled

us with a name that would forever be spelt incorrectly or mispronounced. We've all had to repeat our name to the local barista: "No, Tee-gan, like Megan but with a T." This happens a lot in America, where they don't believe it's even a real name.

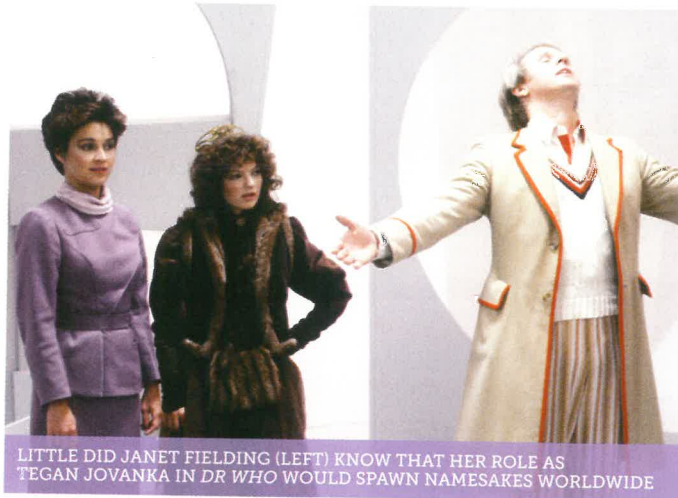
While we can understand why an 'a' might be added for a more Aussiefied take, there's no excuse for adding an 'i', an 'h' or a double 'e'. There is a special code among Tegans. Those with the traditional (correct)

spelling will try to suss out whether a newly encountered Tegan is one of us, and if so, acknowledge her with a knowing smile.

But 'Tegan' has roots deeper than *Who* – deriving from Welsh, its pronunciation is more "Te-gan" than "Tee-gan". A diminutive of the Welsh word *teg* ('fair'), it means 'darling', 'loved one', 'favourite' or 'pet'. Or 'young doe' in Irish Gaelic.

Whatever the meaning of my name, I will now always share a common bond with a group of people out there. Thank you, Tegan Jovanka.

» *Tegan Forder is a Melbourne writer and former editor of the Katherine Times. She blogs about travel, culture, op-shopping and finance at wordsbytegan.com.*



LITTLE DID JANET FIELDING (LEFT) KNOW THAT HER ROLE AS TEGAN JOVANKA IN *DR WHO* WOULD SPAWN NAMESAKES WORLDWIDE

of *Doctor Who* repeats, I can see why our parents were taken with the feisty, no-nonsense character. While hot-headed and stubborn at times, she was a crucial part of the TARDIS family.

I like to believe Tegan's traits are mirrored in her namesakes – she shows strength of character and bravery in the face of adversity when fighting enemies like the Daleks or Cybermen. Ever reliant on his companion, the Fifth Doctor would often say "Brave heart, Tegan" ahead of a looming battle.

We Tegans also have a direct – some may say bossy – manner and we aren't afraid to speak our minds. Good coordinators and quick to make decisions, we are adept at leading and giving orders when the need arises.

We do have a softer side, though.