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# “Champions of Peace”

## Entry for the Paul Spragg Memorial Short Trip Competition

### Synopsis

The first Doctor and Vicki land on “Eutepra”, a planet he knows from earlier travels. The Doctor recalls the belligerent nature of the Euteprians, and notices that there seems to have been some changes: While swaths of land still change hands from one nation to another, there are no signs of armed conflict to be seen – Eutepra appears to be a perfectly peaceful world where cultured people highly revere arts and artists. Naturally, the Doctor wants to investigate.

They receive a friendly welcome by the Euteprians who seem to take a distinct liking to Vicki after she hums an innocent little ditty. When queried by the Doctor, the Euteprians reply that they’ve overcome their obsession with war and have turned into an art-loving race. Consequently, conflicts are settled now with artistic contests where the nations’ “champions” compete for victory – and spoils. The Doctor is surprised and simultaneously beguiled by the beauty and richness of the artwork created by the Euteprians. These in turn consider Vicki very talented and invite her to be trained to become a minor champion for their country. Vicki, who never fancied herself much of an artist, is flattered by the recognition and quickly accepts.

On the way back to the TARDIS the Doctor encounters “Terafan”, one of the local champions, who begs the Doctor for help. Terafan reveals that, to win their bloodless wars, the Euteprians don’t rely on talent and practice alone, but on the use of “Maroon”, a highly addictive drug which stimulates and enhances the artistic abilities of its users – at the cost of their health and their sanity. The Doctor realizes that Eutepra’s peace is bought with nothing but gladiatorial games, while sacrificing the champions. He and Terafan try to rescue Vicki before she’s completely controlled by Maroon.

The Euteprians would let Vicki go, but she is so enthralled by her new-found artistic capabilities that she refuses to leave. “For the first time, I feel I am *someone*,” she cries. Finally, it is Terafan who manages to break her from her spell: He improvises a hauntingly beautiful ode, warning Vicki of the danger of destroying herself with Maroon. The skill and depth of Terafan’s poem manage what the Doctor’s rational arguments couldn’t accomplish, and Vicki renounces the use of the drug. Immediately afterwards, Terafan collapses and dies: It was only by overdosing on Maroon that he was able to produce the poetry which so affected Vicki.

The Doctor and Vicki leave, reflecting on the value of artistry and the artist.

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## Intro

"*Eutepra*, that's what this planet is called?" Vicki asked thoughtfully. She observed the scanners which showed the world the TARDIS was orbiting.

"Correct, my dear," the Doctor answered, only briefly looking up from the TARDIS' consoles before turning back to them. Vicki never knew whether he handled the countless controls very skillfully or simply at random. But it seemed to bring them to their destination most of the time. Not today, though.

"Didn't you tell me the Euteprians were a race constantly at war with each other?" she inquired, her gaze still fixed on the scanner monitors.

"Indeed." The Doctor paused in his operation of the controls and began one of his usual short lectures for Vicki's benefit. "Nasty people, nasty indeed. I wouldn't have stopped here hadn't it been for the TARDIS' permutation converters. Imagine a breed of Ghengis Khans on the one hand, and Spartans on the other, with a number of Napoleons thrown in for good measure, that's the Euteprians." He scoffed. "The only time they're not at war seems to be when they need time to look for new reasons to kill each other."

"Now must be such a time," Vicki responded drily. This caught the attention of the Doctor. He had been about to turn back to the TARDIS controls, but now he followed his companion's example and watched the monitors which scanned the planet's news channels. "No tanks or burning cities. Not even a single uniform," the woman expounded, "If you ask me, this is as peaceful a planet as we ever have encountered."

The Doctor huffed, as usual when he was proven wrong, but he couldn't give an explanation. Sensing a rare small victory over the Time Lord's intellect, Vicki cheerfully continued to describe what she saw: "Look, they have plenty of concerts and stage plays and art galleries. This show is even called 'Artist Arcade'!"

"*Artist Arcade*?" the Doctor echoed incredulously, but if the scanners were to be trusted, that was exactly what went on on Eutepra's surface before their eyes: A number of ornately dressed Euteprians took turns stepping onto a stage, observed by a large crowd and some kind of jury. Each presented short pieces of poetry – an ode, or a ballad. At the end of each presentation, factions within the audience would cheer for their favourite, and the jury would hand out sizable awards.

"Quite a jolly array of Ghengis Khans we have here – reciting their sonnets!" Vicki giggled.

"Let's land, and have a closer look," the Doctor suggested. His voice betrayed that he still couldn't believe the turn the Euteprian affairs apparently had taken.

*For continuity reasons, Ian and Barbara are considered to be hibernating after an "extremely exhausting previous adventure".*