

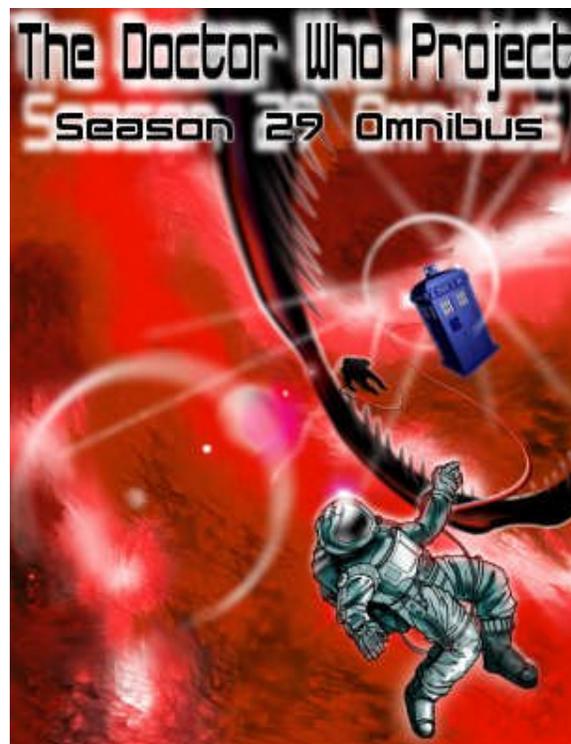
As someone who is relatively new to the exploits of the 8th Doctor and his latest traveling companion Tamara Scott, I first off have to say that I find the whole approach of **THE DOCTOR WHO PROJECT** to be a refreshing breath of air in the realm of DOCTOR WHO fiction. I recently purchased a copy of the **SEASON 29 OMNIBUS**, and I have to say I enjoyed all of it, in particular **BLOSSOM CORE**, which was one of my favourites in that publication.

Author Kyle Bastian has penned a very interesting story that features an array of some nice continuity touches to the original 1963-89 television series. The story starts off with companion Tamara Scott suddenly awoken when something has gone wrong with the TARDIS. She awakes to find the Doctor calling out her name in a desperate bid for assistance. You see he's been fiddling with the TARDIS, yet again, and something has gone horribly wrong. Because the Doctor's been fiddling around installing some new equipment in the TARDIS, it's caused the old craft to reject the new technology, finding itself, and its occupants, falling into a quantum singularity. The story progresses to the point where the Time Lord CIA (Celestial Intervention Agency) must get involved to help save the Doctor, Tamara and the TARDIS.

Kyle begins the story with much menace and urgency as companion Tamara rushes to assist the Doctor. And right away the author has injected a very humorous and cute scene with this new Doctor calling his latest companion by the names of some of his former companions.

Grae, who looks very much like she will either be a recurring character, or a new companion, is introduced with a nice touch. She is a female Time Lord, who is very young and is anxious to leave Gallifrey. She is not in any way like former Time Lord companion Romana. Grae seems to be very inquisitive and interested in traveling the universe, something that Time Lords are not usually known to be keen to do. I quite liked this character as she brought back memories of Rodan from "*Invasion Of Time*", and I found her inquisitive nature to be a nice change.

This new Doctor is very interesting too. He has a penchant for sunglasses and he seems to be



an amalgamation of his previous seven incarnations. He seems to have a unique wit and generally cares for his companions and those individuals who he meets on his journeys. There is very good rapport between him, Tamara and Grae, and the author has written them in such a way that they are all very believable characters.

The author has appeared to do his homework as he has made very good use of DW continuity, history and mythology. There is very much a feel to this story as if it were actually a script from a new season of the television series. The characters are all very well written - whether it is the main characters or those playing a smaller part in the events of the story. I was most impressed by the story's climax - it hints that something big is beginning to happen in the universe, and the Doctor has just got wind of this. I wondering if he will be able to learn what's going on, or will he be lead on a merry goose chase?

Overall, **BLOSSOM CORE**, is an excellent story and one that I thoroughly enjoyed. I hear that Mr. Bastian is penning another story for season 30, and I for one await this with much eagerness. I'd rate this story approximately **8 out of 10**.

Reviewed by Wayne Peterson