

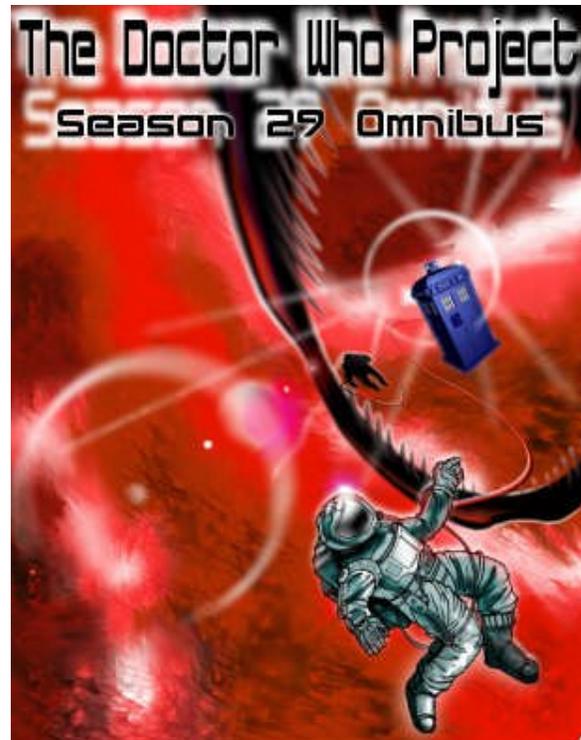
BLOWN OUT OF THE SKY, written by Misha Lauenstein, appeared in The Doctor Who Project, *Season 29 Omnibus*. It is written in episodic style, consisting of four episodes, with the first three instalments ending on cliff-hangers reminiscent of the television series.

The ambition of The Doctor Who Project, is to present stories that can be considered a continuation of the television series. The Group has created its own persona of the eighth Doctor, representing the rejuvenation of Sylvester McCoy's seventh doctor. The Doctor Who Project introduced the ex-British secret agent, Tamara Scott, as the Doctor's human companion in Season 28. The eighth Doctor and Tamara appear throughout season 29, and are together in *Blown Out of The Sky*.

Misha Lauenstein has been participating in The Doctor Who Project since season 27, and is quite familiar with writing the Doctor and Tamara. This experience shows in the strong characterisations of the Doctor and Tamara in 'Blown Out of the Sky'. I particularly felt that Tamara's personality came across with depth and emotion, but sometimes felt the Doctor's character was slightly staid.

Blown Out of The Sky opens with the Doctor attending the funeral of a man he had been seeking. Unable to speak to Johann Bezel in August 2001, the Doctor and Tamara travel back in time to Hanover, Germany 1936, where the Doctor expects he can encounter Mr. Bezel. On tracking down Mr. Bezel in pre-war Germany, the Doctor questions the man concerning the tattoo on his arm. The Doctor had spied a photograph of Mr. Bezel sporting the tattoo in 2001 and this was what had sparked the Doctor's interest in Bezel.

Johann advises that the tattoo is the sign of a secret organisation known as The Thirteen. The Thirteen had contacted Bezel to form an alliance with another group that Bezel belongs to, the Apocrypha. It is later revealed that the Apocrypha are holding an alien, a member of the V'au, prisoner. The Apocrypha were unaware that the creature, they took to be some mutant form of dog, was a sentient life form. The Doctor allows the Apocrypha and the V'au to communicate with each other, and deduces that The Thirteen are probably seeking



interaction with the alien. The Doctor agrees to meet The Thirteen representative on behalf of Bezel. However, when boarding the airship, on which the meeting will take place, the Nazi's show up. The Doctor leads them away from the airship while sending Tamara on alone to make the contact.

The Doctor seeks out Bezel, and together they return to the Apocrypha headquarters. The Apocrypha headquarters is also under siege by the Nazi's and on escaping, a traitor amid the Apocrypha is revealed. This traitor is a Canon plant (the Canon being a third secret society of which the Apocrypha are a breakaway group). The Canon wish to wipe out the Apocrypha because they believe the Apocrypha is too weak to withstand Nazi infiltration and in turn will bring about the ruin of the Canon. The V'au kills the traitor, allowing the Apocrypha members and the Doctor to escape.

On board the airship, Tamara makes contact with the representative of The Thirteen.

In my opinion, the plot of 'Blown Out of the Sky' is the weakest element in the writing. There is never any explanation as to why the Doctor was seeking Bezel, although in the short on the website there is mention of a Section 13, but this reference never made it into the

story. Herta Martens encounters the Doctor and Tamara sixty years after their initial meeting, but she shows no obvious surprise that they haven't aged. Herta having a fifty-year-old business card in her purse at the funeral felt like plot contrivance - setting things up so that the Doctor could find the address in 1936. There is some ambiguity as to whether The Thirteen is just a front for the Canon or if it is a separate organisation seeking contact with the V'au. The role of Klonsch seems to suggest The Thirteen is legitimate, but the Doctor's conversation with Esdras (It's the V'au you're after isn't it?) muddies things a little.

The writing style is generally good. Some trimming of the qualifications around parts of the dialogue would make a smoother read, and there are some instances of telling rather than showing.

All in all, *Blown Out of The Sky* is a good effort to tell a fast moving Doctor Who adventure and the author and The Doctor Who Project should be commended for their efforts to keep the Doctor Who phenomena alive. The negatives raised here could have been addressed during the reviewing and rewriting phases of the manuscript. My score would be 7/10.

Reviewed by Lesleigh Force