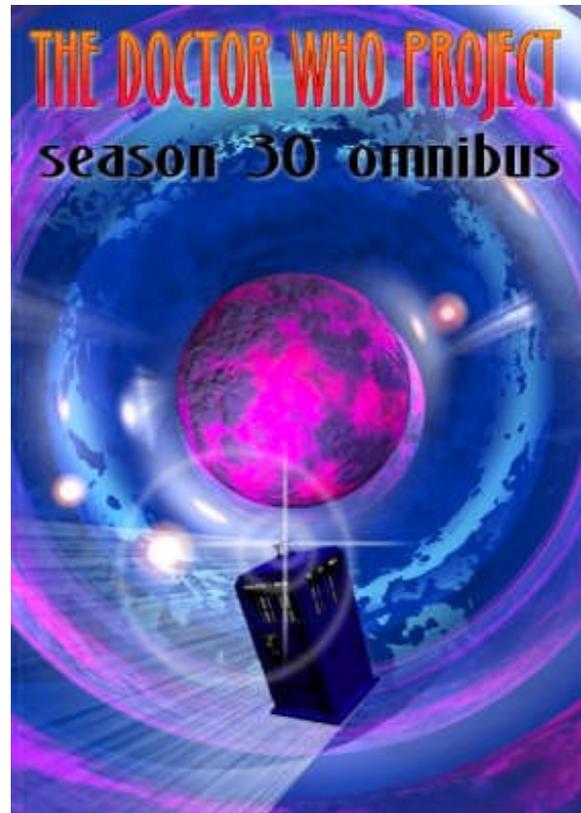


Many believe that the only way to get their proper 'fix' of Doctor Who fiction is to read something official... a BBC novel, a Telos novella, and the like. That means one misses virtually hundreds of other avenues including the best of fan fiction throughout the world. **The Doctor Who Project** is one such fan fiction anthology, certainly worth finding the time to pick up a copy.

The Doctor Who Project is a Canadian fanzine out of Vancouver, edited by Tim Jones and Bob Furnell. It is apparently one of a series of publications featuring further 'seasons' of Doctor Who stories, had the show continued on television. Stories are told in roughly the same manner as that of televised episodes, bearing a story "production code" and new characters and situations. Tamara Scott is a new companion featured in the serials, and toward the end we're given a second new character, Grae, a Gallifreyan Level 3 operative. I won't give away any of the reasons behind Tamara's appearance with the Doctor (frankly, coming in as I did during this 'thirtieth season,' I really don't know how she managed to get aboard the TARDIS, but it doesn't much matter) but the introduction of Grae is rather obvious... that's not necessarily a bad thing, though.

The sheer number of returning characters in these stories strikes me immediately; however, I think that can be comfortably explained. Were we to have been given a season 30, it's rather a given that we'd have been treated to a celebration of the series' past (even more so by the production team that we last had in charge, John Nathan-Turner and his penchant for revisiting old ground.) This isn't a bad thing, per se; I'll be disappointed if, for example, the BBC novels and Big Finish don't revisit the old legends in our 40th anniversary year. Yet it does tend to get things muddled up, especially with a fanzine; you're looking for new and interesting storytelling, and sometimes rehash can be the clearest example of "been there, done that". It's the old Mary Sue adage: you don't want to retread in fan fiction, else be forever branded with tired fanwank.

Thankfully, the **Season 30 Omnibus**, which collects the entire 'season' of stories, manages to avoid many of the clichés except once, in Bob Furnell's "Death of a Brigadier" where the



storyline concerns the assassination (or rather, attempted assassination) of Lethbridge-Stewart by none other than Mike Yates. For an anniversary celebration, I think this brings the volume down; it's nicely written but not exactly the story I wanted told (especially considering how much Yates has been through in fiction since the end of the series.) Far more apt to the celebratory tone is Kyle Bastian's "Tears of Rassilon," which revisits Gallifrey, a place far different than we've come to expect in the continuing post-series saga.

Two stories in the book stood out to me: John-Gordon Swogger's "Tomb of Shadows," a time-travel odyssey that starts in Thebes and ends up in the heart of Nazi Germany, and my favourite of the bunch, Elizabeth Gold's "Nadir" which is a beautifully crafted character study that really defines this new Doctor and Tamara as colleagues.

While there are a few hiccups along the way, *The Doctor Who Project: Season 30 Omnibus* is far from being a tired retread of the past and your typical fanwank story collection. Although it possesses a truly horrific cover (the result of Photoshop Gone Wrong, I'm afraid to say), the content inside is well worth a peek; ranging the

gamut from merely mediocre to (in the case of "Tomb of Shadows" and "Nadir") superb, the collection excels over more pedestrian works I've seen in recent months. It's thoroughly recommended as a visit inside a Doctor Who that could have been... at least from a fan's point of view.

Reviewed by Shaun Lyon
*Review also appears on the
Outpost Gallifrey site
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