

It is a little ironic that for a series hoping to blaze new and alternate trails over the crowded horizons of Doctor Who fiction, the opening adventure in **THE DOCTOR WHO PROJECT** canon is heavy with continuity. This is particularly odd when season 27 begins with Ace having already left, her departure being the one bit of continuity I would have expected. Instead, we are presented with a returning monster, a returning villain, a returning companion and UNIT. UNIT, at least, is given a new spin simply by being UNIT Canada and far from the cosiness of the mid-Pertwee era, we have a dedicated team of military professionals akin to the UNIT UK of season 7. In fact, *THE FINAL SUNSET* could easily be described as season 7 in Canada, as the returning companion is none other the Liz Shaw, brought in by UNIT Canada for her prior experience of the Silurians, a colony of which have been accidentally uncovered by an earthquake. A mysterious stranger awaits their awakening and later visits a nearby archaeological dig, which is dangerously close to the Silurian base.

The archaeological team is a carefully drawn collection of characters and the level of detail maintained throughout their appearances impressed me. A similar level of detail is present in the initial appearances of the UNIT characters, but as you just know that they are there to get shot at and otherwise killed off to underline the danger of the story, they make little impact. When a similar fate befalls all but one of the archaeologists, immediately following the villain's visit, it does make quite an impact - a testament to the level of characterization.

Liz serves mainly as a viewpoint character to give the reader an impression of the UNIT soldiers and to summon the Doctor with a gadget he left her, just as soon as she has confirmed the presence of Silurians. I was surprised to discover that she leaves with the Doctor in the next story, as the surviving archaeologist, who's immediate suspicion of the villain earns our respect, seemed to be such an obvious choice for companion material.

Vancouver makes an effective locale, benefiting enormously from the authors living there to the extent that I could imagine several of the scenes with almost photographic clarity.

If there is a downside to *THE FINAL SUNSET*, it is that the plot is far from original and the early Doctor-less chapters drag a little. *THE FINAL SUNSET* is a reasonable opening to the series, but plainly, originality is going to be the key requirement for the success of *THE DOCTOR WHO PROJECT*. 7/10

Reviewed by Timothy Farr