



# Doctor Who: Festival of Death

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## **Doctor Who: Festival of Death** Jonathan Morris

The Beautiful Death is the ultimate theme-park ride: a sightseeing tour of the afterlife. But something has gone wrong, and when the Fourth Doctor arrives in the aftermath of the disaster, he is congratulated for saving the population from destruction – something he hasn't actually done yet. He has no choice but to travel back in time and discover how he became a hero.

And then he finds out. He did it by sacrificing his life.

An adventure featuring the Fourth Doctor as played by Tom Baker and his companions Romana and K-9.

## **Doctor Who: Festival of Death Details**

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Author : Jonathan Morris

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# From Reader Review Doctor Who: Festival of Death for online ebook

**Chris says**

This Doctor Who story is an enjoyable read...once you get past the initial confusion of the book starting in the middle of the story. Don't worry, it's confusing for the Doctor and Romana too as they land on a former cruise ship that is now a theme park stuck in a wormhole in space for the first time only to find out everyone knows who they are. The adventure ensues and as the book gets closer to the end a lot of things fall into place and the story finally makes sense (well, sense for a time travelling story about Time Lords crossing into their own time stream, breaking the first law of time while doing so). This story is typical of pretty much all complex time travel stories.....huge plot holes, inconsistencies and things that just don't make sense but as a fan of the genre, you expect them going in. One of the important things for me when reading a Doctor Who book is if the author can capture the essence of the character from the tv screen and translate it to the book. I think Jonathan Morris did a wonderful job portraying both the Doctor and Romana. I could easily see Tom Baker and Lalla Ward in my mind as I was reading.

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**Branwen Sedai \*of the White Ajah\* says**

*"We all have our regrets, things in our past we wish we could change. But those regrets are part of what makes us who we are. If you could go back and rub things out and start again, life would no longer have any value, no meaning. It is the fact that you only get once chance that makes the small joys of life so precious. Live your life as though it's your last. Because it is. Well, probably."*

The Beautiful Death is a theme park ride where you can literally die and explore the afterlife and then 'wake up' safely when it is finished. But something has gone horribly wrong. When the Doctor and his companions Romana and K-9 arrive they discover that they have somewhere down the line actually prevented disaster from occurring. But there's just one catch...the Doctor saved everyone by sacrificing himself. Now the Doctor and his friends must transport back to the recent past and discover how this all occurred.

I know so many people who rank the fourth doctor as their favorite doctor and after reading this book it is easy to see why. He is so contradictory; at one moment jovial and teasing and then the next he is moody and secretive. His banter with his companions at times just makes you want to laugh out loud. It's utterly brilliant. But even aside from all that, this is just a very well-written time travel story. It's about choice and consequences. Fate and Destiny. Hope and Despair. If you enjoy Doctor Who, particularly the Fourth Doctor, you will be sure to enjoy this book!

*"Well," said Romana, "At some point in our future lives, we return here and get...involved."*

*The Doctor replied, "As usual."*

*"Get accused of things we haven't done."*

*"As usual."*

*"And then save everyone from certain death."*

*"As usual."*

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## **Jack says**

Time travel breaks my brain. Imagine multiple doctors. At one time. Never meeting (by design, of course)

This book features the fourth Doctor (my first Doctor), Romana, and everyone's favorite companion, K9. Coming upon a space port in distress (because the TARDIS has a mind of its own), the Doctor and companions try to figure out what happened, why, and how to stop it. Look, they have to go back in time!

Seriously, time travel in a narrow period of time (or at all) is difficult to handle well. The author succeeds admirably. In the preface/introduction, the author talks about how hard he worked and probably over-wrote the story. I say he filled it and gave us an extremely good story. Thoroughly entertaining, enjoyable, and true to the characters. I could see the story taking place in my brain screening room, and if possible, I would love to see it dramatized.

Five stars outright, no rounding.

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## **Jack Iles says**

Why do I always give Doctor Who books such high ratings? I promise I am not biased. This was genuinely a really good story. As the author states in his introduction, this Doctor Who tie-in has enough ideas for two books. He's wrong. This book has enough original ideas and such an interesting story to warrant an independent series. Yeah it was that good.

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## **Ivan says**

Doctor Who can be a tricky series to write for. The series frequently ignores its own continuity (and some of it changes anyway; such is the nature of time travel), and it has a vast history of characters to choose from.

Jonathan Morris tackles Doctor Who with such amazing ease that this book, Festival of Death, feels like it could have come directly from the TV series. Tom Baker's Doctor is well-represented here, acting and speaking exactly the way we would expect him to, and his companions Romana (Lalla Ward's Romana, specifically) and K9 also perfectly echo their TV incarnations.

The story is, at its core, an examination of an infinite time loop in which something has gone disastrously wrong with a special attraction called "The Beautiful Death", which allows its guests to actually briefly experience what it is like to be dead. When the TARDIS arrives on the ship that hosts the attraction, the Doctor is treated as a hero, only to discover that he died rescuing the ship. In traveling further back, the Doctor means to save the ship again -- and himself.

This is a somewhat dark story, with some unsettling visuals well-described by Morris. It's clear he was paying very close attention to how all of the events happened, as he leaves no holes in the plot or inconsistencies to derail the story. And the puzzle is by no means an easy one for the Doctor to solve, and he evidently spends quite a bit of time inside the loop...

Fortunately, this book is still available. Fans of Doctor Who (especially Tom Baker's Doctor), will find a very enjoyable read here.

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### **Richard Wright says**

Oh, thank goodness that's over. There's a lot to like about this book, but it feels like it goes on forever. Republished to represent the fourth Doctor in the anniversary year of the show, it presents the man of teeth and curls with his companion the Time Lady Romana, and both are on great form (with Romana being particularly well portrayed as an equal to the title character). The writing is strong, and although it's occasionally self-conscious in how much it wants to be like Douglas Adams that's no great sin, and the results are fun. The plot is inventive too. The current show has made stories that play with the order of time - events happening out of sequence - a regular feature, but it's something that's surprisingly recent given this is a premise all about time travel.

When Morris wrote Festival of Death, it was still something that had yet to be done much. That's the book's biggest problem. The plot is clever, with the Doctor turning up at the end of an adventure he's yet to have and discovering that he averted death and disaster only by sacrificing himself, then travelling further and further back into the story to do the things he's already learned that he's going to do. What makes the story drag in the second half is that it's all over-explained. We end up seeing the same events several times, from the viewpoints of several characters, often in detail, because the story isn't entirely confident that you're following along. By the end, the repetition is insanely tedious, which lets down a very promising first half.

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### **F.R. says**

What have we here? The Doctor, Romana and K9 arrive at a space station caught in a wormhole. The station is in disarray after a zombie attack which killed most of the passengers; however the survivors recognise our Time Lord travellers and thank them for the pivotal role they played in saving the station and all their lives. Although the station commander seems intent on having them arrested for sabotage. So The Doctor Romana and K9 have no choice but to go back in time to carry out in the past what their future selves have already done, all whilst not breaking the first (or is it the second?) rule of time.

The era of The Fourth Doctor, The Second Romana and K9 is the one most associated with Douglas Adams, the one writer of the classic show whose influence and fame far outstretches it. Jonathan Morris here gets on his knees and genuflects in the direction of Adams, trying to create an episode of the show Adams would not only have been proud of, but which channels Adams through every twist and turn down every corridor that looks just like any other corridor. Sometimes this naked worship tips far into outright homage/ripping off territory; for instance a computer that begins off chirpy in true Sirius Cybernetics Corporation style, before developing over hundreds of years into Marvin The Paranoid Android. Other times though the jokes stand in their own inventiveness, with a clever gag about the effects on the show and an excellent '2001' allusion.

However good a homage it manages to be though, the book always feels like it's standing on the shoulder of giants, leaning on Adams-isms (but never quite making them as pleasingly and surreally English as Adams himself) to get through its complex time travel plot. The confusion of time travel with layer upon twists and repetitions is of course a clever hook to hang a time travel/'Doctor Who' story on, but all the multiple Doctors/Romanas/K9s had worn this reader down a bit by the end. Yes it's smart and yes it's all intricately plotted, but by the fourteenth time something happens again albeit now from a different perspective, it does start to feel stale.

~~Reading this right about 'Love and War' feels like reading the spin-off fiction of a totally different television series, and that variety and diversity is part of what I love about Who. But the ambition of 'Love & War' does show this tale up for what it is—and really, what it only ever aims to be—an agreeable, incredibly clever romp.~~ It's incredibly nearly a year since I wrote that last paragraph, and do you know what? It's been niggling at me ever since. Reading it now it strikes me as me being grumpy and a killjoy. 'Love and War' as the latest chapter in an ongoing saga of course has more opportunity to mess around with the status quo and do something new and exciting. 'Festival of Death' because it's fitting in-between earlier chapters of the same saga, doesn't. But that doesn't mean one has more intrinsic value than the other, it's just that they're playing by different rules. Despite some reservations above, 'Festival of Death' is locked in my memory as great fun and I recommend you read it.

I apologise for the cantankerous version of me who existed in the summer of 2014.

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## **Lewis Cox says**

One of the best Tom Baker books that I have ever read. After being underwhelmed by *Corpse Marker*, an earlier Fourth Doctor novel. I was eager to read this after hearing it was a great book. It is a fantastic story by Jonathan Morris and glad I have read it

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## **Marlene says**

Originally published at Reading Reality

There are some serious “wibbly-wobbly timey-wimey” bits in this story. The Doctor, Romana and K-9 cross and recross their own time-streams multiple times on a derelict, or soon-to-be-derelict, or just-in-the-middle-of-becoming-derelict, spaceship cum theme-park where the interface between hyperspace and real-space is becoming unstable.

And Romana is threatening to withdraw the Doctor's TARDIS-driving privileges if he can't pass his time travel proficiency test.

Care for a jelly baby?

If you never forget your first Doctor, then the Fourth Doctor was my Doctor. All teeth and curls with his incredibly long scarf and floppy hat.

Before the Time War made even the thought of worrying about passing any exams back on Gallifrey

completely pointless--because Gallifrey is gone.

I've always wondered what happened to Romana.

Festival of Death is very much a Fourth Doctor story. The Doctor is always running into trouble, and expecting that Romana and/or K-9 will get him out of it. He generally thumbed his rather large nose at any authority, but he was usually right about questioning the rules. And he usually did get arrested very quickly upon arrival. If he didn't deserve it at the time, he generally did later.

In this story, there are a lot of points where the thing he's being arrested for is something that he hasn't done yet. At least from his perspective. Back to the timey-wimey stuff.

The story at heart is about the conundrum of "knowing then what you know now" and living life over. One alien race has that ability. One man has been systematically experimenting with those aliens in an attempt to re-live his life, in the hopes of erasing his past mistakes.

The First Law of Time Travel is not that forgiving.

Escape Rating B: Reading Festival of Death made me want to go and watch some of my favorite Fourth Doctor episodes like The Talons of Weng-Chiang or Pyramids of Mars.

I enjoyed the story, but it reminded me of a couple of things; one, that it's impossible to forget what came after: the Time War and the death of the Time Lords, and two, that books like this are for fans of the series. I can't imagine coming into this cold.

Also, Romana was not my favorite companion of this Doctor's, Give me Leela or Sarah Jane any day.

But it was great fun to go back and relive my Doctor's adventures. I'd forgotten just how much of a treat these books can be!

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### **Purpleallison Hoffman says**

Started off kind of slow as it jumped into the middle of an adventure. But being the Doctor and Romana, they hadn't yet gotten around to the beginning yet.

The end was good, but not quite as satisfying as other Doctor Who books.

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### **Jeffrey Henning says**

An excellent example of how a time travel story SHOULD be! Great story, Mr. Morris!

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### **Zain Hashmy says**

This book was my second Doctor Who Book, and the Fourth Doctor was easily the easiest Doctor to start with.

I love this book because of several reasons.

First, the writing. Jonathan Morris writes well, and pens down the Fourth Doctor just as Tom Baker plays him. Teeth, smiles, uppercuts, scarf, everything. The story flows consistently, and in some places its slightly over explained, but sometimes that isn't a bad thing.

Second, the science fiction. All the events of temporal physics described in this book except one are accurate and do not defy any known laws of physics as we understand them. I'm not sure if that appeals to many people, but in the words of Dan Brown(yes I apologise for quoting him) "Good science fiction has it's roots in good science."

I love it when a story holds up to extended and bitter scrutiny, and I grew up in a house of two physicists and few hundred physics students, and this book still survived the onslaught.

Third, the humor. Tom Baker always imbues the Doctor with a sense of wit and good spirit, and this book captures that perfectly.

Finally, the fact that you can give this book to ANY reader, even one who has no idea who the Doctor is, and expect them to love it.

The Doctor, Romana and K-9, fighting a battle they know is already lost. Doctor Who at its best.

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## **David Layton says**

"Festival of Death" could have been one of the best Doctor Who novels. However, Morris trips himself up by introducing some unnecessary components that are obviously unnecessary. First, the good. This is another "time turning round itself" story from the author of the CD audio drama "Flip Flop," which is equally convoluted in regard to characters running past each other at different points in their personal histories but at the same point in general history. For the first half of the book, the story is an example of the science-fiction "problem" story. This is the kind of story in which a disaster caused by a technical problem requires fixing in a desperate hurry. In this case, the problem involves two components. One is the demolition of several space ships, the result of a sudden collapse of a hyperspace tunnel. About 200 years in the future, the second problem emerges. The ships have now become a tourist attraction and the main feature of this is a new entertainment called The Beautiful Death, in which participants actually get to experience death for a brief, controlled period of time. Something has gone wrong, however, and in the latest and biggest of these events the dead tourists return as killer zombies. What is the connection between these two events separated by two centuries? It is an intriguing problem. Morris introduces the reader to it by having The Doctor, Romana, and K9 arrive after they have already solved this problem. So, they have to work out how they did it, and then go back in time to do it and thus prevent a catastrophic time quake. It's a clever set of problems. Morris handles it extremely well, so that all the various plot points past and present work out and everything falls into place. Some other good elements are the way that Morris handles The Doctor-Romana relationship, keeping it in line with 1979 and deepening just a little in the ways that a novel allows. Morris does not overdo Doctor 4's quirkiness, the great pitfall of most writers who try to write for him. There is still a joke bit (typical of 1979) in which The Doctor is apparently completely unaware of how the TARDIS works and is studying for a time travel exam with Romana as his tutor. It does not work for me, because The Doctor is obviously capable of controlling the TARDIS when he wants, and so the whole thing seems a throw-away bit of humor (also typical of 1979). Still, it does fit with the era Morris emulates.

Things go wrong, though, with the entry of two unnecessary baddies. One is the Arachnopods, robotic spider warriors who want only "eats." They seem to be there mainly as a plot complication to keep the story moving



along. They are easily dealt with, and both their presence and their demise contribute nothing of note to the plot as a whole. They could be easily removed and the story would not suffer in the slightest. Another is The Repulsion. We know we are in for a needless and boring baddie when we get a powerful being from another dimension with an abstract name that has "The" in front of it. These are almost universally dull as villains go. The Repulsion has no personality as such, just a desire to enter our universe and destroy all life. Why? Revenge of a sort? It is never quite clear what motivates The Repulsion. All it amounts to clichés - I am evil, I will take over your mind, the universe is mine, and all that sort of thing. The story could proceed much better without it. We already have badguy enough in Paddox, the scientist who created The Beautiful Death. He is far more interesting, having a clear and rational motivation, even if it is wholly unethical.

So, count "Festival of Death" as a flawed gem. Had it been left with the fundamental problems, it probably would be a 9 or even a 10 out of 10 in my estimation. The addition of too many badguys drags it down.

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## Alejandro says

### Absolutely great!

### WHO

The Doctor: The Fourth Doctor

Companions: Romana II & K-9

### WHERE & WHEN

"The Beautiful Death" theme park, outer space, year: 3012

### WHAT

The Doctor and companions arrived to a strange theme park made by several space ships stuck in a kinda of "traffic jam" in the middle of hyperspace. The theme park's main attraction is called "The Beautiful Death" where it's offered to "feel" how is like to die.

### MY FIRST DOCTOR WHO'S NOVEL

I was eager to read *Doctor Who* novels forever but until now (back then in 2013) I had the chance.

I have to admit that my knowledge about *Doctor Who* wasn't as vast (back in 2013, but I have improved a lot about that since then) as many other fans of the series but I have read a lot of info about the series and I was lucky to find good people here on Goodreads who took their time to advice me about which novels to read first.

My first experience with *Doctor Who* was with the Fourth Doctor that I was lucky to watch some of his

episodes when I was a child. And I got hooked with what I watched.

I am not unfamiliarized with British Sci-Fi Tv series related with time travel, since I am huge fan of *Sapphire and Steel*, I watched most of the episodes when I was a kid, they terrified me to the bones and years later, I was lucky to get the whole DVD Box with the entire series.

With *Doctor Who* I wasn't so lucky, but between the info that I read and my plans to read novels, I am confident to become a fair *Doctor Who* fan. (Which modesty apart, I think that I can call a "Whovian", of course, I still have to learn a lot more, but I think that I already reached a fair level of knowledge about the franchise)

### **THAT WONDERFUL HEADACHE CALLED TIME TRAVEL**

About this novel, *Festival of Death* is a great book.

It's with the Fourth Doctor and his companions on this story are of my favorites: Romana II (a Time Lady...how cool is that?!) and the robot dog K-9 (that he can set his nose to stun...priceless!). Definitely they are my favorite combination of Doctor and companions.

They arrived to a strange place made with derelict space ships and now turned to an amusement park with a main attraction known as "The Beautiful Death".

Since the beginning, they notice that they have a huge mystery in their hands.

Now, I don't want to get more into the story since there is real cool twist in this story but the best part is that you'd discover in the same way that I am.

Only I can say that this book is a great option for *Doctor Who* fans but also to any time travel fan in general.

The story is very self-contained so you don't need to be an expert on *Doctor Who* to really enjoy the book. So, also it's a wonderful choice to any reader wanting to read something about this Sci-Fi franchise but that they weren't certain to engage into something with already 50 years of existence.

Trust me, if you don't anything about *Doctor Who*, except the very basics that he is an adventurer alien with a time travel machine in the shape of a 60's British police box, you can read this novel and enjoy it quite a bit.

I loved the book, since I laughed a lot with it! And it a good smart way!

For fans of the works by Douglas Adams and/or John Scalzi, I am certain that you be able to enjoy as much the work of Jonathan Morris in this book.

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## Elizabeth (Miss Eliza) says

\*Special Content only on my blog, Strange and Random Happenstance during I ♥ ♥ The Doctor (October-December 2013)

The Doctor has arrived at the G-Lock, a space station that is the result of a massive pile up two hundred years ago. The G-Lock has become a place of pilgrimage for those wishing to experience *The Beautiful Death*. The attraction doesn't just simulate what death and the veil beyond is like, but it quite literally kills you and then a short time later brings you back, that's if you're wanting to come back. Though the most recent death has gone horribly wrong turning almost all 218 participants into zombies controlled by some unknown force.

The Doctor and Romana arrive in the aftermath to find that everyone knows them and are heralding The Doctor as their saviour. Problem is, The Doctor's never been here before. Which means only one answer remains, in his future, the G-Lock's past, he comes here and saves everyone. Romana warns The Doctor that crossing their own time streams is very dangerous and they have to be careful not to change anything. If they are fated to die, well, they must face this fact, they can not mess about with time, something a time lord should know. Yet each journey into their past proves that they are inextricably linked to the G-Lock, and it's more than a little frustrating trying to find a time when they were unknown. If they are careful, then the G-Lock will be saved, but their own fates, well, that's another thing.

I'm sure every one of you has had a book that you just can't be bothered to pick up. You know that you just need to bite the bullet and power through, but somehow, you just can't. The longer you avoid the book, the easier it is to accept that you will never finish it. If you are like me, and reading is an integral part of your life, this one book then throws everything in your life out of whack. My moods and emotions are usually keyed into what I'm reading at the moment, if I like the book, life seems easier, if I don't... well, I'm a bit of a grump. This inability to finish yet unwillingness to pick up anything else is the worst situation a reader can face. It doesn't happen to me often. The worst case I suffered was back in August of 2008, the book was *Breaking Dawn*. While I'm not going to comment on this book by Stephenie Meyer here, that would require far more time and energy than I'm willing to spend on this book review, I will say that it took me an entire month to get through that book. Think of all the other books I could have been reading? While I never allowed *Festival of Death* to hold on my time, I will say that I begrudge it everything else I could have been reading and will forever hold it against it. Though, in the final analysis, this was the least of this book's sins.

My issues with this book started on page one. I am never one to skip the intro, even if it might contain spoilers. I have attempted in recent years to read the intro after the book's conclusion, but, well, the majority of these new *Doctor Who* intros are, how shall I put it, just reveling in the fact that their book was chosen. The first three books had something to offer, a little bit about their love of The Doctor and in particular, why they loved THIS Doctor... not so with Jonathan Morris. Jonathan Morris's intro seems more along the lines of us mere mortals should be privileged to read this glorious book he has written. While until this book he was a humble Eraser fan running the fan club (seriously, dude you really think this is an accomplishment?) then this glorious piece of writing was birthed by him, and, while he won't take all the credit for bringing the wibbly wobbly timey wimey to the Whoverse... oh, who am I kidding, he will take all the credit. He will view the complex time lines and the ability to loop back on your own life as his own amazing creation, forgetting, oh, almost a century's worth of work that came before him. That *Red Dwarf* episode, "Future Echoes," the one from 1988, more than a decade before this book, well, forget that, this book totally didn't just rip it off, because, well, Jonathan Morris CREATED timey wimey! In fact, if we take his introduction to

heart, using his own timey wimey, he must have created *Doctor Who* himself and every other time travelling show, literature, what have you, ever. *Quantum Leap*, totally his. Gaw, this author is so full of himself.

And here is the real snag in the book. Ego aside, the book is just a pastiche of all these other shows and books, that couldn't possibly be as original as *Festival of Death* because the author says so. I can't tell if it's his naivete as a new writer, or his immense ego that let's him just rip off other writers without a care in the world. These are not nods, these are blatant rip offs. The "reference" to Douglas Adams, ie, the depressed computer ERIC, well, let's just call him MARVIN and move on. I mean, seriously dude, this isn't cool. If you watch *Doctor Who*, you've read Adams at some point, and well, readers aren't going to let this slide. Adams was a genius, YOU ARE A HACK. The reason I mentioned *Red Dwarf* above, well, it's because one scene was almost lifted fully from that previously mentioned episode. A good author is able to incorporate other ideas and references into a solid narrative that is original while yet being referential... Jonathan Morris, the author I shall never read again, doesn't do this. The book isn't a cohesive whole, just a bunch of jokes and scenes lifted from other sources and precariously strung together. Here's all the "references" I was able to ferret out, and I'm sure it's by no means exhaustive: *The Shining*, *Alien*, *Titanic*, *Lord of the Rings* (in particular Gollum), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (and yes, I did check release dates so that I am not wrong), and in the end, *Being John Malkovich*, in the weirdest "nod" yet. Seriously, couldn't the author try anything original? All he did was point out how bad his book was by "referencing" books/movies/whatever that I enjoyed far far more.

In the few rare instances that he tries to show some originality, it comes across as bad jokes or goes against the cannon of the show. The alien races that he encounters, I'm not talking about those little lizard people who are obviously out of the canon of Adams, but the Arboretans... could you think of a lamer name? I'm sorry, but plant based life that is kind of *Fern Gully* meets *Doctor Who* and you named them Arboretans? Do they live in the Arboretum near my house? Could you try to think of a non cringe worthy name? Like you're deja vu jokes that made me groan. Preja vu? The stupid running joke about The Doctor not having passed his test to fly the TARDIS. Or the fact that you actually killed The Doctor for thirty minutes and therefore destroyed some of the cannon, because, if he died, he would have regenerated, and well... HE DIDN'T! That is one of the glaring problems of this book. Because we know The Doctor saves the G-Lock, but in doing so he supposedly dies... well, we know he can't die, neither can Romana, because, well, that's not what happens to them, so there is no peril, no impetus to keep reading because we know what happens. I can say I finished the book, but I will never read this author again, I would rather have my brains smashed out by a slice of lemon, wrapped 'round a large gold brick.

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