



Doctor Who: The Highlanders

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History books don't always tell the whole story. Certainly there is no record of an episode that occurred when the Scots, led by Bonnie Prince Charlie, were defeated by the English at the Battle of Culloden in 1746...

And the presence at the time of a blue police box on the Scottish moors seems to have escaped the notice of most eye-witnesses....

THE HIGHLANDERS sets the record straight. And while the incidents described may not be of great interest to historians, for Jamie McCrimmon they mark the beginning of a series of extraordinary adventures.

Doctor Who: The Highlanders Details

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Mary Jo says

One of my favorite classic Doctor Who novelizations! The Highlanders was the story that introduced Second Doctor companion Jamie MacCrimmon. Unfortunately this is one of the serials that is still missing, so the novelization is the closest we'll come to being able to see this story. It's a shame, reading this entertaining book makes me want to see it on screen even more! A must read for any Jamie fan!!

Leo H says

The trouble with being a fan of black and white Doctor Who, the Patrick Troughton era in particular, is that there's none of it left! Of 21 serials starring Pat, 6 are complete, leaving avid Dr Who nuts scrabbling around to find any way of experiencing these lost stories. The BBC have released audio versions of all of the missing stories, but these are now out of print and very expensive. Another option is the Target books, a series of novelising every classic Dr Who story (barring anything written by Douglas Adams and either of Eric S.'s Dalek stories, due to legal complications). These were massive in their day, and have sold millions of copies meaning they are readily available on ebay/in charity shops for very little money.

The one problem with the Target books unfortunately is their somewhat... inconsistent quality. Some are brilliant, (Fury From the Deep and The Power of the Daleks springing to mind here) but many more are instantly forgettable. The degree to which this can be blamed on a poor script or a weak story overall can be argued indefinitely, but with The Highlanders the degree to which Gerry Davis sometimes struggles to string a coherent sentence together makes you wonder what the copy editors at W.H Allen were doing the day he sent the manuscript in. The story is gripping and most of the time you can tell what's going on, but some passages are so clunkily written they stop you in your tracks and force you out of the world of the novel. Dialogue in particular is not a strong point here. You wonder if Davis has ever heard people speak. Surely he had a copy of the script in front of him, and surely the dialogue for the show as broadcast is not as bad as this. Puzzling.

The story itself is great, and makes me wonder how a 1966 Dr Who production would have managed a mutiny of Scottish soliders on a slave ship (too many 'S's? Possibly). Pity the actual writing is so bad.

Nicholas Whyte says

[http://nhw.livejournal.com/1028417.html#cutid1\[return\]\[return\]](http://nhw.livejournal.com/1028417.html#cutid1[return][return]) The best Davis novel I've read so far, though this is not especially high praise. It's one of Polly's better stories, and of course introduces Jamie as a regular; a couple of odd changes of detail from the TV version, but this is basically a narrative that hangs together on its own merits. Unfortunately there is still something of a sense of the author writing down what appears on the screen.

stormhawk says

As straightforward an adventure as any of the Doctor Who stories. With its unerring sense of interesting times, the TARDIS lands in Scotland at the conclusion of a battle attempting to secure the English Throne for the Stuart Kings. The Doctor, Ben, and Polly meet up with Scots fleeing the battle and become embroiled in a plot to transport prisoners to the West Indies to profit an English Aristocrat.

The question of what a Scotsman wears under his kilt is not resolved.

Ron says

A steady, interesting, tense read. Somehow, it manages to have a more dangerous tone than Doctor Who with a sci-fi basis. Everywhere you look, the threat of being shot, hanged, drowned, bayoneted, stabbed, or quartered. It's also refreshing to have a Doctor Who book with the English as the irrational heartless bloodthirsty monsters (seriously, a completely fair description for this and other periods of history). The images in my mind during this read were far more vivid than I imagine the film version was - but I will probably never know for sure, it being one of the many missing stories of the time.

Polly, for the second story in a row, is based on sexuality and attraction being a motivating factor. I can't entirely discredit this as invalid in the series - it's not like social norms are somehow exempt from historical depiction, but the *way* it tends to go with Polly is a little cringe-worthy, and something I don't look forward to my daughters to reading. In the end, it saved everyone's lives... so, urgh, even more complicated. Happy to have Jamie's introduction settled. He'll have a lot of character growth to go through to become the staid second Doctor companion he's remembered as. I'm hoping that the inclusion is treated honestly, and that he and Ben end up fighting. That Ben groaning at the suggestion of Jamie's inclusion (based largely on his being a source of competition over Polly... yes, this is a soap opera at heart) was a good character moment.

It was also nice to have the strong suggestion that the second Doctor, Ben, and Polly did quite a bit of traveling between Power of the Daleks and Highlanders - - I'm not used to that treatment of time in the early stories. Maybe I'd overlooked it before. Maybe it was added by Gerry Davis. Whatever the case - Enjoyable read!

Travis says

One of the best of the straight historical Doctor Who adventures and the one that introduces Jamie, one of the best companions.

Set during the highland uprising, this story gives a bit of history on an event a lot of kids in the USA wouldn't have known much about as well as presenting a nice adventure.

Some nice characterization, as this is early in the second Doctor's regeneration, so there is some tension still between him and Ben and Polly.

Anne says

Considering the fact that I'm only reading this because I can't watch the original episodes, I found it fairly amusing. While there wasn't any real character development, I enjoyed getting to know them better especially tidbits like the Ben and Polly dynamic as well as the Doctor's quirks. I mean, now I know where all that stuff about the Doctor napping at a moment's notice (that I first encountered in the Wheel of Ice) came from.

I do feel pretty fortunate to be completely ignorant of the historical setting because I get the nagging sense things may not have occurred as portrayed here (yeah, just a wee suspicion). That plus heinous lines such as, "Kirsty, used to the more passive ways of the 18th century women, shook her head in resigned sorrow. 'We can but mourn.' She started to weep." [p. 31] made ME want to weep. So typical of the writing of Doctor Who to remind us of the widely held prejudices of people in our recent past.

Shaun Collins says

As with most of the Doctor Who novelizations, there is very little difference between what was on screen and what is presented here. But considering what was on screen for the Highlanders amounts to somewhere between jack and squat, it's nice to have this book to "set the record straight". For a more detailed review, visit www.travelingthevortex.com (episode #375)

Noah Spore says

I found this book at a convention for, well, an obvious Science-Fiction Television Show, and I absolutely loved the novel. Don't get me wrong, it is no masterpiece, but I find this is one of the better attempts in Doctor Who history to create a slightly humourous novel that brings the episode back to life in ways it never has been, nor ever will be again. This book does have some rather dull bits, but, rather than tell you them, I think you should pick them out on your own.

Jody says

I feel the need to explain as this is out of place of my typical reading choices. I read that Diana Gabaldon was inspired to write Outlander by an episode of Doctor Who. As someone who loves both stories, I spent a fair amount of time looking for the Doctor Who episode. Only recently did I find out it is one of the episodes that was recorded over they say within months of it airing. What are the odds that Ms. Gabaldon saw it on that original airing?! Well, barring some miracle, it isn't likely I'll be able to watch it. Fortunately, the internet search turned up a book based on the episode written by the screenwriter of the episode. I couldn't resist. It was actually really interesting to read the book but more in comparison to the Outlander show than the books. I could see how the story generated the thought for the books, but some of the language in this book seemed like it was almost identical to what is in the Outlander show. On the Doctor front, it was clearly a previous regeneration, because his behavior wasn't like the modern day peaceful (to humans at least) doctors. It is a quick read, and fun for me due to my membership in both fandoms. I shared this book with my other Outlander friends in the office.

Sean Chick says

I wish we had at least one episode of this serial preserved. Fun little story, although the writing was more compelling in the opening chapters. I like Doctor Who when "the fate of the universe" is not on the line. It seems not so much more real (the premise is goofy at heart) but if you keep saving "the universe" I have to wonder what keeps it ticking.

Mel says

I started listening to this a week ago when I was very sick. It was lovely to have Anneke reading the story. She did a wonderful job doing all the voices. I wasn't familiar with the storyline at all I just knew this was the last of the historical adventures. As someone who loves history I thoroughly enjoyed this. There were also lots of little amusing moments. I loved how Polly was a forward thinking woman of the 60s teaching independence by action to the Scottish lass. I giggled when they made fun of someone being terribly short at 5'3 which I think was quite average for Pat's time in the Tardis when everyone was tiny! Listening to the book really gave a nice feel for the story. Definitely one I will listen to again.

Jeff Correll says

It's a 3.5 star read. A solid story but nothing spectacular. Two claims to fame, #1 it's the last of Doctor Who's historical stories and #2 it's the first appearance of the Second Doctor's companion Jamie McCrimmon.

Brad says

There's something nice about reading a book that's just 126 pages, which you can finish in two days or less, and which doesn't have to waste time introducing the main characters or spending a lot of time on character development, because you already know them.

Not the best book or doctor who serial I've encountered lately, but not bad for a \$3 used bookstore find.

Steve says

A missing story that I didn't know much about other than being the first to feature Jamie. Not sure what it was like on screen, but here it's hilarious. The Second Doctor is finding his feet, so feels unfamiliar. Surprisingly for a 60s story, it's great for Polly, who gets plenty of action and comedy moments with the foppish Algernon Ffinch.

A pleasant surprise. Welcome aboard, Jamie!

