



## Doctor Who: The Pirate Planet

*James Goss , Douglas Adams (original script writer)*

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The hugely powerful Key to Time has been split into six segments, all of which have been disguised and hidden throughout time and space. Now the even more powerful White Guardian wants the Doctor to find the pieces.

With the first segment successfully retrieved, the Doctor, Romana and K-9 trace the second segment of the Key to the planet Calufrax. But when they arrive at exactly the right point in space, they find themselves on exactly the wrong planet – Zanak.

Ruled by the mysterious ‘Captain’, Zanak is a happy and prosperous planet. Mostly. If the mines run out of valuable minerals and gems then the Captain merely announces a New Golden Age and they fill up again. It’s an economic miracle – so obviously something’s very wrong...

### Doctor Who: The Pirate Planet Details

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## From Reader Review Doctor Who: The Pirate Planet for online ebook

❄️ **Pixelflocke** ❄️ says

3,5 ?

Nachdem vor kurzem der große Classic-Who-Stream auf Twitch stattfand, hatte ich wieder Lust auf ein Doctor-Who-Roman.

"Der Piratenplanet" ist die Buchadaption von mehreren zusammenhängenden Folgen der Serie. Der vierte Doktor und seine Begleiterin Romana sind auf der Suche nach den Segmenten des Schlüssels der Zeit und landen dafür auf dem Planeten Calufrax, mit dem aber irgendwas nicht stimmt. Natürlich.

In diesem Buch treffen der typische klamaukartige Humor von Doctor Who auf rasante Actionszenen. Der Roman deckt zeitlich nur knapp einen Tag ab, indem allerdings jede Menge passiert. Ruhepausen gibt es keine für den Leser, was ich als sehr gut empfand. Die Geschichte kommt dadurch zackig voran und es kommt rein handlungstechnisch keine Langweile auf.

Wie auch schon bei "Die Stadt des Todes" gefiel mir der Schreibstil von Goss nicht. Ich werde einfach nicht warm mit seiner Art zu schreiben. Manche Szenen hat er schön herausgearbeitet und andere wirken einfach nur schnell dahingeschludert. Auch bedient er sich teilweise sehr ungelentk wirkender Phrasen und Redewendungen. Manchmal kam es mir wie schlechte Fan-Fiction vor. Das hat das Lesevergnügen für mich leider ein gutes Stück getrübt.

Für Doctor-Who-Fans, die keine große Einführung mehr in das Who-Universum benötigen, ist der Roman eine schöne Sache, der einige nostalgische Gefühl weckt (K9!!). Für Einsteiger finde ich das Buch eher ungeeignet, da gibt es definitiv bessere Doctor-Who-Bücher.

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**Bryan Mitchell says**

Jon Culshaw does a flawless Tom Baker impression in *Dead Ringers*. It's still on full-form in the audiobook adaptation of *The Pirate Planet*, first written for television by Douglas Adams then novelized by James Goss.

The book itself is worth it. While it differs significantly from the televised serial, the result derives from Douglas's old notes and drafts Goss had access to while writing this book. I would say this is the closest thing to an author's preferred text that we will get and it's just *that* good. Culshaw's impersonations make it even better.

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**Jed says**

Jolly good fun! Full of light hearted witty laughs in true Adams fashion and a brilliant much desired 'Doctor-Whoness' about it, this book leaves you with a smile every time you put it down... something I found myself doing a bit too often.

Having never read *Hitchhikers* or seen any old Doctor Who, this book instantly succeeds in making you fall in love with Tom Baker's Doctor. Romana; the strong and intelligent female lead, is excellent too. I struggled, however, to care about any other characters (including the villain). As the writer admits, when not reading about Romana or the Doctor, you're "twiddling your thumbs". And in a book where all the dramatic scenes about people you don't care about are undermined by prevailing humour, you really are.

If you've ever wondered what the raggedy man in his magic box is like in the heart of the guy who gave us the Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster then the the answer is 42... and this book.

If you think the Doctor should start carrying around a towel on this adventures you'll soon discover that a mice long scarf does the trick just fine!

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### **Rob Adey says**

It's an odd experience, reading a *Who* book now. The characters are such a fundamental part of my imagination (shots from the Tom Baker period, including the reveal shot of the Captain's face from this story, are some of my earliest memories; and I'm never likely to read more books by a single author than I have those by Terrence Dicks) that it's hard to distinguish the effect the words I'm reading are having from those generated by the bits of my brain that deal with what K9 saying "Master?" sounds like.

This effect caused some problems here: Adams' story is epic and audacious SF, but even though I don't remember more than a few seconds of the TV broadcast I couldn't help but mentally translate it into BBC production values circa 1978. Maybe if Adams had actually written this novelisation his prose could have lifted it out of that particular hole (my mind assigns itself a bigger budget when reading *Hitchhikers*).

That said, James Goss has a good stab at moving in the right direction. He gets the tone right, and from the notes it sounds like he's made good choices in including material from other drafts that didn't make it to the television. Plus there's some excellent Adams dialogue – it's easy to imagine Tom Baker delivering it with relish.

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### **Taksya says**

Questa volta non ho riguardato il video prima di leggere la trasposizione, quindi il ricordo dell'episodio non ha interferito con la versione scritta. Prossimamente recupererò l'avventura per capire quali parti sono state ampliate o approfondite e quali smussate.

Presa senza paragoni, la novellizzazione è buona. Pur essendo la seconda avventura di una serie di sei non risulta confusa. I personaggi sono ben presentati e tutto si segue senza problemi.

James Goss riprende la sceneggiatura di Douglas Adams e la rende ancora migliore.

L'interpretazione di Jon Culshaw è ottima. I personaggi sono ben caratterizzati e, quando parla il Dottore, sembra di ascoltare Tom Baker.

Nel complesso un ottimo prodotto, si spera non l'ultimo dall'era Adams della serie.

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### **Tony says**

James Goss fills Douglas Adams boots pretty well here with a warm and witty novelisation of Douglas

Adams TV 4 parter expanded to a novel.

In a way i really wish I hadn't known the source TV story as with the expanded elements the story throws of its low budget TV offering and ploughs its own furrow.

Enjoyable hokum in the extreme.

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## **HSoG Mr Muir says**

The last Doctor Who novel I read was extremely disappointing (Doctor Who: The Coming of the Terraphiles). I was worried that someone creating a novel from a TV story by Douglas Adams would fall short and disappoint me again. I could not have been more wrong. Where the Michael Moorcock story completely fails to capture the character of the Doctor, James Goss nails it. Of course, it helps that he had access to early drafts, full scripts and a bucket load of other stuff from the Adams Archive. It is difficult to see where Adams ends and Goss begins; an astonishing achievement. I will be looking for more James Goss soon to see what else he can do.

I'll finish with a couple of (non-spoiler) quotes that to me say Douglas Adams but could be James Goss. What do you think? Can you see the join?

### **Quote 1:**

*Romana still had a lot to learn about the universe. How could a planet have a soul? Well, she had yet to see an English country garden on a summer's day.*

### **Quote 2:**

*'Doesn't matter. We'll never get in!' Last time, she'd had the element of surprise on her side. And had landed an air-car on them. This time, they were pinned down.*

*'Never?' The Doctor looked hurt. 'Never say that to a Time Lord.'*

*'Never say what?'*

*'Never.'*

*'Never what?' asked Romana.*

*'Mind,' the Doctor sighed.*

*'What mind?'*

*'Never mind.'*

*'Never mind what?'*

*'What?' Now the Doctor was thoroughly confused.*

*'What?'* Romana heartily hoped someone would shoot them. The Doctor first, though.

*'Doesn't matter,'* the Doctor said. *'We'll get in somehow.'*

*'We can't!'*

*'Never say that to a Time Lord,'* the Doctor beamed.

*'Oh, you're impossible.'*

*'No, just very, very improbable.'*

## Update

Famously, Adams was writing *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* while working on Doctor Who. The links between the two are clear in this book (for example, the "very improbable" quote above) but it is particularly clear in the section at the end where James describes some of the material he had access to from the Adams archive. My favourite from the archive is in the appendices where James reproduces Adams' thoughts on who might be behind the Key To Time. There, at the end of a list of possible villains, Adams had handwritten a single word: "Mice"!

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## Peter says

This interpretation of this Douglas Adams story is OK but sadly Mr Goss is no Douglas Adams. The sad thingos there are moments when this book shines and he gets it spot on otherwise it grates.

The three stars are for the 20+ pages about the research that went into writing this book, this could have gone on at least another 40 or more.

Not too bad.

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## Beth says

I will raise my hands and admit this wholeheartedly, I picked up this book because Douglas Adams' name was on the front cover (I am a HUGE fan of Douglas Adams and will read anything that has his name on it). I am happy to report that this book did not disappoint and it thoroughly reminded me of why I love Doctor Who. James Goss has done an excellent job of bringing Douglas Adams' vision into a fantastic story. Full of tension with the right amount of humour and wit, this book quickly became one of my favourite books.

The plot was easy to follow and did not require an avid knowledge of any of the Classic Who episodes, especially those regarding the Fourth Doctor. Prior to reading the *Pirate Planet*, the only Classic Who I had encountered was Gareth Roberts' *Shada* which was also adapted from a Douglas Adams script (You might be noticing a pattern here) but I still enjoyed the story. The characters are fantastic and thoroughly complex with brilliant character developments. There were strong female characters which really pleased me. I really enjoyed the relationship which developed between the fourth Doctor and Romana. At first, they found each other somewhat frustrating but by the end, they had become friends. It was really interesting to see develop.

Also, I really enjoyed the extra material at the back. It showed extracts from Douglas Adams' original notes and scripts and it was really interesting to see how Goss had adapted it to make *The Pirate Planet* and how Adams' ideas evolved.

Thoroughly enjoyed the *Pirate Planet* and would recommend to anyone who loves *Doctor Who*.

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### **Michael says**

With his adaptation of "The Pirate Planet," James Goss has done what multiple authors have tried but rarely succeeded in doing -- recreating the spirit of Douglas Adams on the printed page.

Goss takes the original shooting script as well as notes kept during the development of the second installment of the *Key to Time* season to produce one of the more entertaining, fun and delightful novel adaptations of the Tom Baker era. Searching for the second segment of the *Key to Time*, the Doctor and Romana arrive on what should be the planet Calufrax. But instead of finding an icy, desolate world, they discover a planet that regularly declares new ages of prosperity under the rule of the tyrannical Captain.

Something doesn't quite add up -- and it's not just that the Doctor and Romana can't easily locate the second segment of the *Key*. As with many classic *Doctor Who* serials, there are plucky rebels, a nefarious leader who stands in the way of our heroes and has to be overthrown by story's end and hints of something bigger going on here. Goss expands the original television story for the printed page, adding some depth to characters, changing the name of the Mentiads to the Mourners and including some scenes that would never have made it to the screen given the budget limitations of classic *Doctor Who*. But he never loses sight of the charms of the original story, even as he expands the scope a bit to hint that other cosmic forces are helping the rulers of Xanxia stay in power and wait for the Doctor to arrive to thwart his quest for the second segment.

If Goss were able to do all that, it might be enough. But where the novel excels is the way Goss seems to be channeling Douglas Adams in this adaptation. Of the many laugh-out-loud funny asides in the story is one in which the Doctor imagines the glee the Supreme Dalek will have in sending a telegram to the Cyberleader detailing the Doctor falling victim to the Polytrase Avatron (the half-mechanical Captain's mechanical parrot).

Clocking it at close to eleven hours, the audio version of this story never wears out its welcome, thanks in large part to another superb performance by John Culshaw. Not only does he sound eerily like Tom Baker in bringing the fourth Doctor to life, but he does a great imitation of actor Bruce Purchase as the Captain. He even brings a bit of depth to the poor, put-upon Mr. Fibuli.

It all adds up to a *Doctor Who* novel that absolutely delights. And like any good adaptation, it left me wanting to visit my DVD version of this story again.

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### **Tony Laplume says**

Gosh, so I've never been a dedicated fan of *Doctor Who*, as I've stated with the two previous posthumous adaptations of Douglas Adams material from it (*Shada*, which to that point had been famously incomplete, but has now been more or less completed; and *City of Death*, which was also adapted by James Goss, though less deftly than *Pirate Planet*). Reading a third book still hasn't done the trick, but I don't mind getting

around that.

But I can't help thinking about what exactly the Doctor represents. If you analyze him from the perspective of this kind of story, you might think of him, much like Godzilla and the Japanese, as a trip through a nation's post-WWII psyche. The Doctor miraculously prevents disaster after disaster, a sci-fi superhero, a futuristic wizard, all while representing England as depicted by the alien world of Gallifrey. Am I overthinking it? I mean, Captain Kirk was basically the supersize western explorer type for Americans; why can't the British get in on that kind of action? And where's the harm in seeing the Doctor in that light?

Because the main draw in these stories is the nearly unflappable, incorrigible, irreverent Doctor, who somehow has answers to everything, even while his latest assistant, the Time Lady Romana, wonders how he achieves anything at all given his apparent lack of discipline. Toss in robot canine...K-9, and of course the TARDIS, and you have protagonists capable of confronting any challenge, no matter how improbable they appear to be, *especially* asked to work as a team.

The story behind *Pirate Planet* is, even as it finally unfolds all its secrets, fairly preposterous, with paper-thin logic and enough gonzo science and silly names for technological wonders, you wonder how *anyone* could get into this stuff without somehow being, I dunno, *born* into it. But that's what people who love this sort of thing love best, the truly absurd bits of pop culture, and *Doctor Who* seems to have been *designed* to occupy exactly that space (/time).

*Pirate Planet* seems in some respects to be a response to Star Wars. The character of the Captain, at least as depicted in Goss's vision, reads like a pastiche of Darth Vader, and there's enough that *reads* like it's inspired by the Vader of all three original Star Wars movies, it's either something Goss took and ran with or was at least there in some small kernel in Adams's original version(s). Anyway, I'm a Star Wars guy, so maybe it's just easy to see it even if it's not even there.

By the time you reach the bonus material wherein Goss explains how he cobbled his version together, I think Adams and his creative process begins to feel recognizable, for anyone who's ever developed stories, and that's pretty interesting, and perhaps the most valuable thing about this novelization (in his lifetime Adams actually forbade his *Doctor Who* scripts from being adapted), while the adaptation itself also helps the story feel more approachable than a 1978 TV episode will seem to the mostly uninitiated (production values aging poorly and all, much like Queen Xanxia).

Of course, the reason I read these books at all is because of Adams, his trademark writing style so key to the appeal of the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* trilogy(ish). Goss still seems totally disinterested, for the most part, in trying to match that style. He assumes, I guess, that readers of these things are more interested in *Doctor Who* than Adams, although he has flashes of the Adams spark, but mostly by including snippets of elements from *Hitchhiker*.

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## Alejandro says

### **Don't panic, the Doctor is here!**

*This is a novelization of the classic TV serial, "The Pirate Planet", which was the second sub-arc inside of the major arc titled "The Key to Time" which comprised the Season 16 in the classic era of "Doctor Who".*

## **WHO**

The Doctor:

The Fourth Doctor

Companions:

Romana I & K-9 (Mark II)

## **WHERE & WHEN**

Planet Zanak (more or less). Non-disclosure date.

## **WHAT**

The Doctor is on quest around time and space, to search for the six missing parts that when together they can form a cube known as the powerful Key to Time, with the capability of putting the universe on equilibrium. Locating the fragments isn't easy since those six parts can take any shape or size. (So, you may think like the seven Horcruxes from *Harry Potter* shaping the Tesseract of *The Avengers*, but conceived in 1978).

The mysterious White Guardian is the one who calls the Doctor to engage into this quest, which is assisted by K-9 (Mark II), a robot dog, and Romana I (first regeneration of the Time Lady, played by Mary Tamm), and they must find all the six fragments before that the even more mysterious Black Guardian would be able to collect them for himself, for not good intentions.

The merry band of the Doctor, Romana I & K-9 had been already able to secure the first part of the Key to Time, and now they have a lead to the second fragment, and they need to set the TARDIS to go to the planet Calufrax, but while it's supposed to arrive to the right coordinates, they found themselves in the wrong planet...

...a Pirate Planet!!!

This wacky tale was the first contribution for a screenplay by the iconic Douglas Adams, who was part of the *Doctor Who* production crew at the time, and he was already working to develop his famous trilogy of five parts (yes, you read right) of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, so it's no a surprise that you can find in this *Doctor Who*'s story, some little things here and there, that Adams eventually incorporated at some level in his own books.

Why a novelization of this 1978's serial until now? Easy. Douglas Adams never allow novelization of his *Doctor Who* scripts, until briefly before his death that he signed a permission to BBC (while he said that he was fooled and he didn't recognized what he was signing) but the important thing is that that enable BBC to release the long waited novelizations: *Shada*, *City of Death* and now finally *The Pirate Planet*...

...which is brilliantly adapted into this novelization, obviously giving deeper detail to the narrative, and with some small changes here and there, like with the Mentiads (a group with psychic powers) that in the book are known as the Mourners.

The Doctor & Company soon enough find out that they are in the planet Zanak, which is a world where they

enjoy golden ages of prosperity, since the population there, have full access to absurdly vast amounts of richness, to the point that there are diamonds and rubies (just for mentioning some examples) lying everywhere in the streets of their cities.

Equal wealth for everybody?

Mmh...

The Doctor knows that something very wrong is happening in Zanak since the natural order of the universe is against of true equality, especially if it's about money.

For not saying that the planet Calufrax should be where now Zanak is.

I'm sure that the Doctor can't decide which scenario is weirder between the two.

And since any pirate thing, not matter if a ship or a planet, must have a captain, you can bet all your Oolion reserves that here there is a captain...

...The Captain!

Fearsome cyborg pirate with his own robot parrot!

Oddbal doctor with his own robot dog!

Bring it on!

So, what are you waiting for? Go and join the Fourth Doctor, Romana I & K-9 in their insanely funny quest for the second fragment of the Key to Time along with solving the mystery behind Zanak, the Pirate Planet!!!

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## **Ben Reed says**

This book perfectly novelizes one of the best Doctor Who stories. It fleshes out the story I loved on tv beautifully. The bonus materials at the end of the book provide an amazing wealth of knowledge into both the story and Adams' thoughts on the story. If there was a sixth star to give this one would've earned it, and more.

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## **Daniel Kukwa says**

I was confident that, as a novelization, Gareth Roberts' adaptation of the unfinished Douglas Adams story "Shada" would remain unsurpassed. However, James Goss -- with a combination of his own writing talents, access to an untapped archive of earlier drafts & script treatments, and much wit -- has produced an adaptation of Douglas Adams' first "Doctor Who" story that rivals and even surpasses the genius that Roberts mines in his "Shada" adaptation. To a newcomer to the story, this will read as pure, joyous, zany adventure. To old school fans, who can recite lines from "The Pirate Planet's" television episodes verbatim, this is a

surprising breath of fresh air; a new window into a story we all thought we knew. Now we get to know it and love it a second time. A surprising triumph that I don't believe anyone was expecting...but we should all be grateful for the end result. A work of art.

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### **Jonathan says**

I really didn't enjoy this, which is why it took so long for me to finish - nowhere near as good as The City of Death, it tries to hard to be funny and falls far short. The last quarter of the book is better than the rest, but it's a low bar.

The end of the book contains some interesting information about the Douglas Adams archive in Cambridge, though, and the bits that weren't in the TV version show Adams's creative process in an interesting light.

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