

THE WAX MUSEUM

Written by: Jez Strickley

Season 36 - Story 10W

Reviewed by Steve Tomporowski

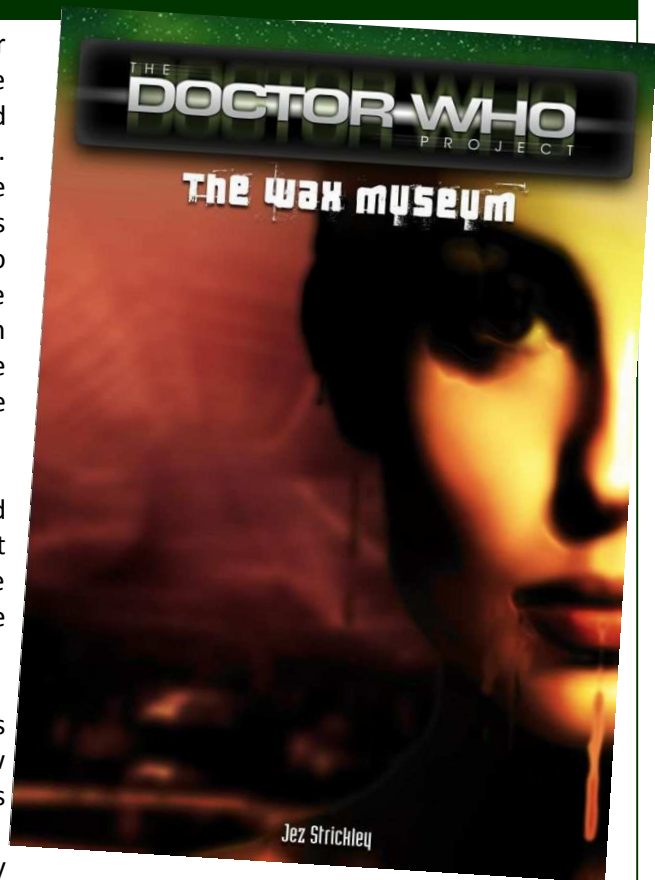
“The Wax Museum” by Jez Strickley is a Doctor Who romp in the traditional sense. Although the characters are not as clearly defined as one would like, they are enough to get you into the action. The most clearly defined is Nanos Mortich. There is no doubt here as to who is the villain, it is Mortich. He is evil, portrayed as evil with no redeeming qualities. Given the fact that he routinely takes living people and transforms them into wax works—taking especial care to enhance the contortions of fear—it would be hard to give him any qualities other than evil.

The Doctor has always had his artistic leanings and here the action is centered on the ‘Twenty-first Celestial Exhibition’. This means art and we already know something is wrong and that the Doctor will interfere.

Here the Doctor is on his own again, which means this is a perfect opportunity to pick up a new companion. Although there are several characters that could be developed as such, we have an extra bonus here, snuck in so that we hardly notice. The author places herself directly in the path of the Doctor and examines her reactions to our favorite traveling alien.

These musings won’t hit you in the face, but as the action commences, some of Istria’s thoughts slip through. Istria Hum is merely an attendant at the Celestial Exhibition but in the right place and the right time to be dragged into an adventure with the Doctor. It is certainly hoped, however, that the author has better taste than to dress all in orange as the exhibition attendants!

Istria progresses from the dull-eyed routine of ‘attending’ another participant in the exhibition—who just happens to be the Doctor—through the bland following the Doctor, through terror until



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the Doctor saves the day. Finally the Doctor ‘pops the question’, the one that Doctor Who fans are familiar with, and Istria (and the author) makes her decision. You’ll have to read the story to find out.

Istria is a more mature and conservative version of Rose. Whereas Rose panicked when confronted with the alienness of the Doctor, Istria has experienced a lot of aliens, but of the ‘arty’ type.

Heading off into a typical Doctor adventure does not evoke panic, but the mild confusion that would be typical of the more cosmopolitan person. Her reaction is more of, 'What am I doing', than fright. However, when the moment comes, she can run and dodge with the best of them.

For the technology freak, there is something new here, in the wax transformation process, for the Doctor to explain. That explanation, dotted through the story, also forms the basis of the Doctor's ultimate solution. Again the Doctor cannot save everybody, but he does his best.

The wax-works making process that Mortich has created and uses is juxtaposed against the rather pompous pronouncements, excerpted from his 'Principa Aesthetica' that head each chapter. Here we have a man who creates his art with a push of a button, but has 'deep and meaningful'

exhortations about the function of the artist. It gives us the conclusion that we've always believed, that, to a large extent, artists are hypocrites.

In conclusion, although 'The Wax Museum', on the surface, would seem to be just another example of the better quality fan fiction, there is much more beneath the surface. The characters could have had more development and drawn to be less one dimensional. However, many of the supporting characters are stereotypes, which is almost a Doctor Who tradition.

The story is a bit inverted in structure as we know from the beginning who is evil without any doubt. While the build-up seems a little slow, the finale is a scherzo with enough twists and turns to keep any Doctor Who fan happy.

Just keep your eyes on Istria.