

FLAT PACK

Written by: Graham Bell

Season 32/Story 9J

Reviewed by: Claire Chaplin

The beginning is interesting, if a little odd, but the format of this story could do with some improvement as people may be put off by the large chunks of text. It is very hard to read text on a small computer page when there are no spaces between paragraphs.

Things really become odd when the narrative moves to inside the TARDIS. Not quite on a level of Paul Magrs' mad - the weirdest official Doctor Who writer I've come across - but nearly.

A very different and unusual story, this certainly has some brilliantly unique ideas. The TARDIS' role in this story is used perfectly and, although some aspects are complex, they are explained enough to be of an advantage to the reader but not so much so that they cannot find a story amongst the explanations.

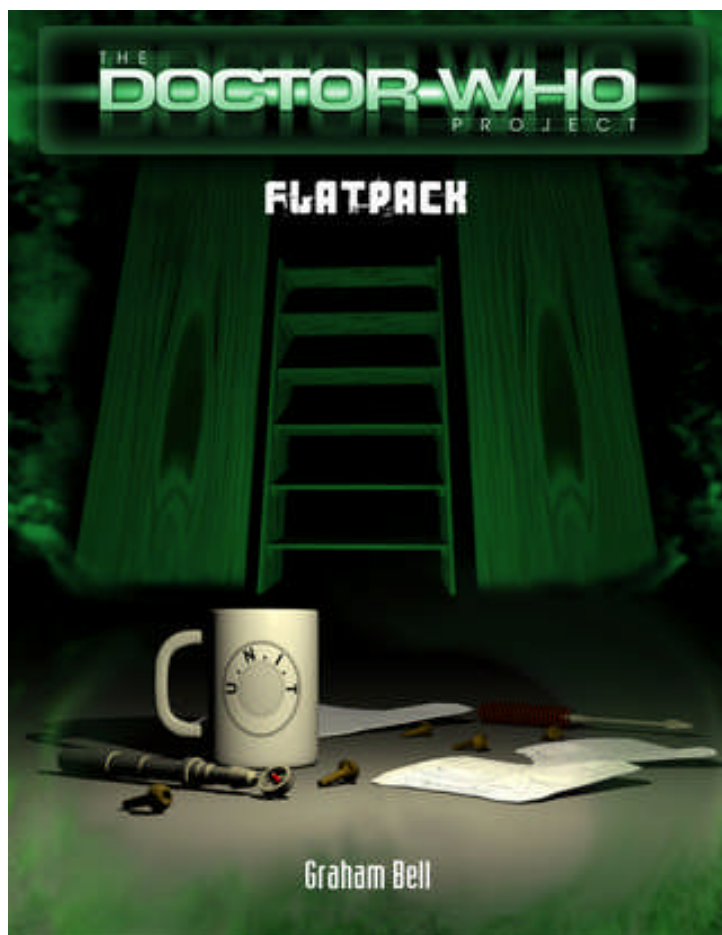
Several of the scenes in this make me think that it would not work as well on TV, but I could certainly see it working in the official books range or even as an audio. Books would probably be the best medium for this type of story as it enables explanations to be added when considered necessary.

This story had a very fast pace to it, especially the scenes in which Grae and the Doctor were not in the TARDIS for. However it fits in well with the style of the new TV series in that respect, and though a couple of scenes could have done with a bit more description the balance of speech and descriptive lines a very well balanced here.

With some humorous moments, the writer manages to encompass the usual Doctor/companion relationship perfectly. The scene about Sainsbury's, Rich Tea, and Drinks is just so typical of the Doctor, as is a sudden obsession for flat-pack furniture. Grae comes across as a very resourceful companion, which is no bad thing, the days of stereotypical companions are gone.

The writing style fits well with the strange story, and the writer seems to know how to get the right balance of speech, description and humour, making this a very easy read. The kind of weird and wonderful story you may like to read just before you go to bed.

With perfect characterisations and a very original idea for an alien race, overall this story is a very engaging tale, if a little strange, that may not be to everyone's taste, but for those who like more surreal stories a must read. **9/10**



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