



Doctor Who: Shakedown

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This novel is an extension of the story first told in the successful video production. The story follows on from events described in this month's Missing Adventure Lords of The Storm, as the war between the Sontarans and the Rutans nears its end. '

Doctor Who: Shakedown Details

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From Reader Review Doctor Who: Shakedown for online ebook

Dave says

Structurally, "Shakedown" is a rather odd book, though the introduction by author Terrance Dicks at least offers insight as to why this is the case. Divided into three sections, the Doctor and his companions are pushed to the side for the entire middle section of the novel in favour of a group of stock characters who never become compelling. This might not have been as much of an issue if the actual plot of the novel were interesting, but Dick's plotting is so straightforward that every "twist" and "turn" is utterly predictable. Dick does know the character of the Doctor well though, and it shines through in the writing. However, this strength it isn't enough to keep the book afloat. For hard core Who fans only.

Jono McDermott says

I haven't yet seen the movie, although I do intend to, but this book is clearly a rewrite. For the most part, the writing has the static feeling of a transcript, and even the sections with the Doctor feel somewhat forced.

However it has its moments of glory! after all, the story itself is fantastic, the creatures and worlds are wonderful and the characters are fully-formed. Equally, Dicks does throw in the occasional insightful, witty or otherwise memorable narrative sections.

In all, it's something to read when you're lacking other reading material but want something good to dig your teeth into.

John Smith says

I think that Shakedown was not a good book. The story takes place on a spaceship and foreign planets. The plot brings the characters on the spaceship to the characters on the planet for the climax. The characters on the spaceship are Kurt, the first mate, Zorelle, Nikos, and Mari, who are passengers, and Lisa, the captain. The crew handle being attacked by warriors from a foreign planet very well. The theme of the book feels like fear/suspense. I know that many books share this theme, but I feel that fear defines this one. The only reason that I did not abandon this book halfway through is because I am a Large fan of Matt Smith and David Tennant's work. I understand that this book was written a few years ago, so its style might not appeal to the more modern youth of 2014. Anyone who is a fan of the Doctor Who series should not read this book. It is a bad strike on the books of the internationally famous TV show.

Adam Highway says

Oh, well.

Look, Shakedown was a brilliant thing to happen and probably helped with things like Big Finish, and it's not a *bad* story; but

This feels so much more like a Target novelisation than a Virgin NA, and it's just a little bit too much Uncle Terrance. The Doctor feels completely off, and that probably spoils the novel. But, on the other hand, it is still fun.

John Mcpheat says

I quite liked this. I saw bits and pieces of the video at a recent Doctor Who convention and wanted to find out the whole story. But the book is much more than a novelisation of the video. It is much expanded to add the Doctor and his companions to the story and is, I think, a much better story for it.

Glenn says

An interesting way to build around the film released in the early 90's called 'Shakedown: The Return of the Sontrons', also written by Terrance Dicks. Dicks expanded the story for Virgin's "New Adventures" series. This novel sets the movie part right in the center, and then bookends the story with a set up and conclusion which includes the Seventh Doctor, Roz, Chris, and Bernice Summerfield. I had started the "New Adventures" from the first book, and am about 5 stories into the range, but I wanted to skip ahead and read this because I presently will be revisiting the film. I felt that I didn't need to know much about the peripheral characters, and this book fills in the gap quite nicely. A new reader to the series could pick this one up and get to know the characters well enough. It also shows of the talent and knowledge of Dicks' writing of Doctor Who. I quite enjoyed this story and would recommend it to any fan of DW.

Shannon Appelcline says

Dicks' writing style is terse & plain, and he doesn't do anything particularly innovative here. Nonetheless, this a fun action-adventure that reads quickly and makes good use of the Sontarans and Rutans (and slightly less good use of the Doctor and his companions, as Dicks only really seems to "get" Benny).

Christopher Buchanan says

World hoping, alien name dropping and simple prose. It's definitely an Uncle Terry. More like a classic episode of Who than the usual dark and gritty VNA but it makes for a welcome break from it. A good, well-rounded story featuring the rarely seen war between the Rutans and the Sontarans. Fun stuff.

Travis says

I love the idea of the Sontarion/Rutan war and always felt Doctor Who dropped the ball by not using it more in stories.

Here it is a big deal and can be done as a big space opera of a story.

The Doctor and his companions are scattered across the galaxy, because both the Sontarions and Rutans are

after ... something. Our heroes are scrambling to find what that 'something' is, why it's so important and is it a good thing that it can shift the balance of the war.

The middle part of this book is an adaption of a one episode spin off from Doctor Who, produced when the TV show was in limbo. I've never been able to track down the show, so it was nice to read the adaption (both show and book were written by Terrance Dicks, which I thought was nice)

Shakedown is also a sort of sequel to the fifth Doctor book, 'Lords of the Storm', but you don't need to read one to enjoy the other. They do have some overlap but both stand on their own.

Nicholas Whyte says

<http://nwhyte.livejournal.com/2156176.html> [return][return] This New Adventure is an expanded novelisation of a 55-minute video made in 1994 and starring Jan Chappell (Cally from Blake's 7) as the captain of a space yacht whose crew includes Carole Ann Ford (Susan, the Doctor's granddaughter), Sophie Aldred (Ace), Brian Croucher (the second Travis from Blake's 7) and Michael Wisher (the original Davros) as well as a guy who can't act. The setting of the video is HMS Belfast which actually does rather a good job of conveying the cramped quarters of a small spaceship; the Sontarans and Rutans are (apparently for licensing reasons) a bit different to what we saw on the screen in Old Who, but well enough realised for a low-budget production; the worst bit about it is the guy who can't act trying to be Sophie Aldred's lover, and the second worst is the somewhat stereotypical roles given to her and Ford, but these are survivable flaws.[return][return] The novel compresses this to 60 pages in the second half of a 270-page book, apparently a partial sequel to David A. McIntee's Lords of the Storm which I read and enjoyed three years ago but now cannot remember much about. As usual, when Dicks lets himself run with an idea, he is a competent and solid writer, giving Benny some time alone in a murderous cult-ruled university, while the Doctor (with Roz and Chris, who get a bit marginalised) gets to grips with the Sontarans/Rutans problem with Jan Chappell and Brian Croucher's characters. It's a bit of a change of pace from the last two very colourful volumes in the New Adventures series, but it also ties the post-1989 Seventh Doctor a bit more firmly into the overall continuity.

Daniel Kukwa says

I've never seen the fan video on which the middle third of this book is based...but as a separate story woven into a proper Doctor Who tale, it's not half bad. Straightforward space opera, with a bit of a sidelined Doctor...but everyone else gets a nice bit of characterization, and the Sontarans are handled well.

Jeremy Cartner says

This was one of my favourite novels in the New Adventures range and I think the reason for this you don't just get the novelization of the video of the same name, that due to licensing didn't actually feature the Doctor, but you also get a prelude and an epilogue as well. So it makes for a rewarding reading experience. I've also got a soft spot for anything written by Terrance Dicks. Very enjoyable.

Jemma says

An entertaining combination of a classic Who writer, Sontarans and some interesting new insectoid aliens. All played out across three worlds and in various space ships and stations. A good slice of Who, much better than much of the recently televised Who.

Mel says

This was another of the 50p Doctor who books I found at the local Oxfam last year. I was quite impressed. I'm used to reading Terrance Dicks' Target novelisations and this one was like an actual book! The added first and third section read like a proper science fiction novel. This was the first one I'd read that had Roz and Chris in and they seemed very nice and competent companions. Likewise it was good to see Benny being the academic archeologist. It was interesting to see the Rutans and the Sontarans interact, though also it made it obvious which of the two species had been much more developed on the show! Not a bad novelisation at all.

Richard Barnes says

5 stars? Ridiculous. Is this really as good as "1984" or "Lord of the Rings"? Of course not.

BUT - is it a cracking piece of Dicksian Who - pulp thrills and spills full of devious monsters and their evil plots, foiled by plucky heroes, who find their heroism in the most unlikely places - all coordinated by the Machiavellian form of the Seventh Doctor? It sure is.

Dicks doesn't muck about - the Strunk and White rule about avoiding unnecessary words is followed to the letter; this writing is lean as and the pacing is furious. Each chapter is a lesson in episode building, each one hangs off the edge of a cliff and Dicks keeps multiple characters and locations all in fine, thrilling order.

This is not Iain M Banks-style alien design - our bug-eyed monsters are more simple but, like I say, Dicks is sleek, refined pulp so our aliens do what they're supposed to do.

The native Who creatures (Rutans and Sontarans) come off particularly well - Sontarans have been reduced to comedy sidekicks in Nu-Who but Dicks makes this bunch far more calculating and ruthless, not just brainless thugs. The Rutans are a chilling, well-thought-out collective mind-entity and perhaps come off even better - well, Uncle Terrance created them so he has every right to give them a sparkling outing.

A ripping yarn - yes, it does deserve 5 stars.
