



## Doctor Who: The Mutation of Time

*John Peel*

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The Daleks' Masterplan is well under way. With the Time Destroyer, the most deadly machine ever devised, they will conquer the Universe. Only one person stands in their way - the First Doctor. For he has stolen the precious Taranium core which is vital to activate the machine.

Travelling through Time and Space, the Doctor and his companions are forever on the move in case the Daleks track them down.

But after several months, to their horror, the TARDIS indicates that they are being followed...

## Doctor Who: The Mutation of Time Details

Date : Published December 15th 1989 by Virgin Books (first published December 1989)

ISBN : 9780426203445

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Format : Paperback 157 pages

Genre : Media Tie In, Doctor Who, Science Fiction, Fiction, Audiobook

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## Nicholas Whyte says

[http://nhw.livejournal.com/1026018.html?#cutid3\[return\]\[return\]](http://nhw.livejournal.com/1026018.html?#cutid3[return][return])The Daleks' Master Plan is simply too long to constrain inside a single pair of covers (at least at Target length), so Peel wrote it up as two separate novels, though you would be well advised to read Doctor Who - Mission to the Unknown first. Here again we have a grand panorama of Stuff Going On: the Doctor's compatriot, the Meddling Monk, reappears; Mavic Chen passes from hubris to nemesis; the Doctor must accept another death among his closest circle. Peel's treatment of the second half of the story takes slightly more liberties with the version as broadcast, mostly for good reason: the breach of the Fourth Wall at the end of episode 7 is removed, we get a bit more information as to what happens to everyone else after the Doctor leaves, and we get a Steven/Sara spark that will gladden the hearts of Hartnell-era shippers (including the assertion that they spent months together in the Tardis). He does the complex narrative more than justice.

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## Shannon Appelcline says

A bit better than its predecessor, because the epic scope comes across, particularly toward the end of the book. On the other hand you get an atrocious Christmas episode. I suspect the Egyptian bit with the Meddling Monk came across better on the screen, but even in the book I wanted to see more of the fellow.

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## Jennifer says

I wasn't familiar with the first part of the story, but that didn't seem to be much of a problem. I am never very keen on first Doctor stories... he's so grumpy ("endearingly grumpy" says my fellow listener), however this one wasn't bad. He has companions with gumption - a special agent from the future and an astronaut, and the plot cracks along at a good pace, helped by alternating narration by Jean Marsh and Peter Purves. Lots of changes of scenery and time too, although some of that (eg gatecrashing the film set) seemed a little too trivial.

I was impressed that it isn't a cosy ending, and that time travelling monk was quite a rascal.

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## Min says

After a delightful Part I, Part II leads into a landing in 60s England for a Christmas special, than a trip to Hollywood. That is a 90 minute interlude that throws off the trail of the story that left on such a wonderful cliffhanger, with the Daleks in pursuit of their lost weapon, now in the hands of the Doctor.

Once they resume the story line, they time hop to ancient Egypt and the Pyramids of Cheops. They encounter the Meddling Monk, and after a fracas, truly enter the story with the Daleks, the Time Destructor, and the planet Kembel, where the whole adventure began.

Ignoring the early digression, the plot reaches a crescendo of suspense and a bit more intrigue as the allies of the Daleks, work to assist them in their invasion.  
More losses for the Doctor, and he returns to traveling the Universe in, inevitable, victory.

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### **Scott James says**

I've seen the surviving episodes of this serial, and found this novelization to be fully in the spirit of the original. This is Hartnell's Doctor at his best, and the opening moves in the Time War. I recommend picking up both this (and its companion volume, Mission to the Unknown), and also the "lost Years" DVDS for the full experience.

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### **Steve says**

A really good conclusion to the Dalek Master Plan story. Yeah it was a bit convoluted, with the Feast of Steven stuff and the Monk, but that was the original story's fault, not this adaptation's. Sara Kingdom's death seemed a bit tacked on as well but it was given an appropriate amount of heroic gravitas by Peel.

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### **Arrun says**

The second part of the novelisation to the Daleks Master Plan, and I really thought it was a good conclusion. Still written (like the first book) very faithfully to the script of the original serial. It adds to the enjoyment of the read if you happen to have listened to the original soundtrack or watched the reconstruction, but even so its a great and interesting story, which ill probably read again at some point. Its one of the next best things to actually seeing the lost episodes. Hopefully they'll re-release both books to allow many more people to enjoy them.

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### **stormhawk says**

The Daleks' Masterplan rushes it's way to an exciting conclusion, with all of time and space at stake, with all of the intrigues and counterplots that a masterplan requires.

It's not great literature, but it's a rollicking good time.

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### **Erichyde says**

Liked it better than the first part. The Monk added a lot to the story. Not the best First Doctor/Daleks story by a long shot.

The Monk was good in this but not as good as he was in his (only) other appearance.

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## **Iain Hamilton says**

Slightly disappointing even though I enjoyed it greatly. The disappointment coming from what feels at times like a rehash of *The Chase* and some bizarre tangential plot development. Anyone wanting a good analysis of why this is the case should read the essay on the Dalek's Masterplan from Philip Sandifer's excellent *Tardis Eruditorium*. Won't say more. As *River Song* might say: "Spoilers!"

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## **Rich Meyer says**

The second part of the adaptation of the longest Doctor Who serial ever broadcast is even better than the first! Besides being very well-written, the story takes the First Doctor and his two companions all over the place: Earth in the 1960's, the Dalek planet of Kembel, a nearly-uninhabitable volcano planet, and the time of the Pharaohs. There's even a Christmas interlude mixed into the tale.

One thing I have to say about this storyline (considering both books, since I've never seen it) is that the First Doctor's adventures can be far more action-packed than a lot of folks would believe, considering the few, more popular ones (*An Unearthly Child* and the first Dalek serial) that most people have seen. William Hartnell's Doctor had some get-up-and-go when he needed it.

This one should be required reading for the Doctor Who fan, and the two parts would make a good read for ANY sci-fi fan.

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## **Michael says**

Clocking it at 13 episodes, "The Dalek Masterplan" is one of the longest stories from the classic series and one that, for a long time, I had next to no exposure to. I'd read the synopsis of it in my well-worn and much-loved copy of *The Doctor Who Program Guide* but beyond that I had little or no awareness of how the story unfolded episode to episode until the early 90's when Target finally worked out a contract with Terry Nation to adapt several of the Dalek stories from the 60's.

And given the long running time for the story, Target wisely decided to split the story into two halves, thus insuring that the story was done justice and that fans could purchase two books instead of one to complete their collection. The author chosen for this undertaking was John Peel, who had earlier had success adapting "The Chase" for the printed page. At the time, I recall thinking Peel was an ideal choice for the role and eagerly reading both installments.

Now close to twenty years later, I have revisited Peel's two part adaptation of the saga again and found that it doesn't quite stand up to the test of time or my memory. Part of this could be that the BBC released narrated soundtracks of the episodes years ago, thus allowing me to get as close as possible to experiencing the lost story as we're ever likely to get (assuming they don't turn up tomorrow and I have to buy the story on DVD). There is also the DVD release of the three orphaned episodes from this story that exist in the archives which serve only to whet the appetite for more (it's probably for the best that the seventh installment which serves as the series first Christmas special isn't one of them. I think the three episodes we have do a nice job of

giving us a taste without necessarily overstaying their welcome).

All that is to say that listening to the audio reading of the two books that make up the Target adaptation of "The Dalek Masterplan" wasn't nearly as entertaining or exciting this time around. And a lot of that I have to put firmly at the feet of John Peel. It's not that he does a terrible job adapting the stories -- he gives a fine effort. It's just that his stories lack any shadings or dramatic tension. The big moments in the story don't seem any more big than any other moments or carry any type of emotional weight for the characters. For example, it feels like the death of a companion (even one as short-lived as Katarina) should carry more weight to it than Peel gives it here. (This is my biggest criticism of his two Troughton Dalek adaptations as well -- he doesn't give certain events that should be pivotal any more weight than others). I also feel like the return of the Meddling Monk should be given more weight than it does here, if only because this is only the second foe the Doctor has ever faced to return at this point in the series.

Instead of what should be a celebration of everything that is good and bad about 60's Doctor Who in one, extra-long story, we get an adaptation that is more workman-like than anything else. Looking back over Peel's offerings to classic Who Target novels, I can't help but think he really peaked with "The Chase" simply because that story was a bit more fun and less loaded with emotional moments than other stories (well, beyond Ian and Barbara leaving, but he manages to get that right (for the most part)).

Even his adapting of the seventh episode that is a Christmas special and relatively Dalek-free isn't nearly as much fun or a romp as it should be.

I will, however, give Peel some credit for making the story seem a bit more epic than it is and introducing some room to insert lost stories in the middle. There's a gap between books one and two where the Doctor, Stephen and Sara Kingdom could have had other adventures before turning their attention back to the matter at hand of defeating the Daleks and avoiding giving them the core of the Time Destructor. It also allows for a bit of breathing room and bringing readers back up to speed in case it had been a while since you read part one or you hadn't pick up part one at all.

The audio performances by Jean Marsh and Peter Purvis work well, re-affirming my belief that some of the best Target audio adaptations have come from the first Doctor era. Of course, part of that is you could have William Russell read the call sheets from that era and he'd manage to make it sound dignified and fun. I argue also that this was an era when writers were allowed to add a bit more a flourish to the Target novels. Instead of slavishly adapting the scripts, the writers were allowed to expand the stories and worlds a bit and the novels benefited greatly from it.

Alas, this isn't one of what I'd call the better examples of that freedom. It's good and I can certainly recall being glad to see it on my shelf all those years ago. But listening again, I can't help but feel that this story could and should have deserved better. And still wondering if someday, hopefully we might all be watching it again on DVD.

On a side note, I have to say that the covers for these books were among my favorites of the range, especially the one for the second novel "The Mutation of Time."

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**Sara Habin says**

A good conclusion to an erratic but fun storyline.

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### **The Master says**

Epic.

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### **Jim says**

a great advantage to the radio plays over the tv series is being able to give the daleks rankings by color, something unable to do in the b&w tv series, and having more than four daleks in an episode. there is also a wonderful Christmas special episode on here.

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