



Doctor Who: Lights Out

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A Doctor Who short story featuring the Twelfth Doctor. It follows in the tradition of the series of short stories published last year by Puffin featuring each Doctor.

Doctor Who: Lights Out Details

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From Reader Review Doctor Who: Lights Out for online ebook

Kribu says

My only real complaint about this short story is that it was, well, short. :D

I enjoyed *Lights Out* a lot - it's a really nice little self-contained story which fits right into the "three missing weeks" between *Deep Breath* and *Into the Dalek* in Series 8.

In other words, this is the story that shows us what happened after Clara sent the Doctor off to get coffee, in Glasgow, in the end of *Deep Breath*, and why and how the Doctor got so distracted he only turned up (with the coffee) three weeks later in London in the beginning of *Into the Dalek*.

Anyway. Yes. This is a story of the Doctor going to buy Clara her coffee (third best coffee in the universe, on some little space station famous for its coffee, because, well, it's Clara, and let's be honest, Twelve would do pretty much anything for Clara), but obviously he - as usual - also has an ulterior reason for choosing to visit that particular space station. A murder mystery gets solved, the Doctor gets to be the Doctor, and that's pretty much it.

I often have problems with the pacing in short stories, but with this one, I felt that was pretty much spot on - the introduction wasn't overly long, and the resolution wasn't crammed into a very short, rushed bit in the end. Also, even though it would appear this is the Doctor nearly immediately after his regeneration, he actually came across quite properly like the Twelfth Doctor we've come to know during S8 on the TV show, especially when the story briefly touched on issues of fear and morality, not just a generic Doctor with fierce grey eyebrows and a billowing coat.

Zerah says

Excellent little story!

Michael says

For the fiftieth anniversary of *Doctor Who*, Puffin gave readers a series of novellas by popular young adult authors, each one focusing on a different incarnation of our favorite Time Lord. With the dawn of the Peter Capaldi era, Puffin has given fans a complete set of Doctors with Holly Black's "Lights Out" story.

And yet as I read the novella, I couldn't help but feel this was less a *Doctor Who* story than one that Holly Black might tell with the Doctor inserted into it.

In many ways, this story reminded me of stories from the (then) annual *Strange New Worlds* collection that were written by fans about just one installment of *Enterprise* aired. Black's story feels like it was written right after "Deep Breath" aired with multiple references to the Capaldi Doctor's eye brows and his over more gruff demeanor. He comes across our first-person narrator on a future world where coffee is scarce and the two meet while waiting in line for some.

As a set-up, it's decent enough, but even as a novella it feels like the Doctor's involvement is tangential at best. Even given the more "at arm's length" approach to the companions that Capaldi's Doctor has taken, it still didn't quite feel right here.

The second half features a few attempted twists and turns that I'm not sure work as well as they could or should.

All in all, I came away from this entry feeling a bit disappointed. I wonder if I'd read it closer to the time that Black wrote it and instead of having a dozen episodes to get to know this new Doctor if my feelings might have been different. As it stands, I have to call this one of the lesser entries in Puffin's offerings.

I received a digital ARC of this novella from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Natalia says

"It's amazing how we hide from that, isn't it? How much of the violence of the universe comes from the unwillingness to say those two little words: 'I'm scared.'"

Branwen Sedai *of the White Ajah* says

"All around me, everything is light and bright. And, for the first time I can remember, no part of me is afraid."

First of all, I just want to start out by saying that I love the 12th Doctor. His grumpiness and sassiness knows no bounds!

That being said, I also love Holly Black. So what better combination than a Holly Black novella featuring the 12th Doctor?!?

I really loved this story! It was fast paced and interesting and unique and despite it's short length I felt like the story did a great job in keeping the Doctor in character.

I just wish it was longer, I hated to see it end!

Karl Orbell says

I read the first eleven of this series of Doctor Who shorts last year (2014), when they were released month by month in honour of the 50th anniversary year of the programme, one book per doctor. I thought they were done with, but unsurprisingly this last one has not long been released to go with this year's new doctor, Peter

Capaldi.

Alas, I've not really watched a great deal of Doctor Who since he started his run, not so much because of him, but more Clara that I can't abide. Fortunately in this novel, Clara only appears in reference, not as an actual character. He has a new companion who is much more directly part of this story, and the story is told, first person, from her perspective.

Not much can be said about the story without saying it all, as it is only very short. But it is set way in to the future on a coffee roasting station, somewhere in space; coffee is seemingly all important to people and all and sundry stop there to get a really good cup of the black stuff, straight from the roasters so to speak. Well, all is not well, which will be of deep surprise to any Whovians and the Doctor's suggestion that he has just popped out to get Clara a cup of something holds little water. No, the coffee is out of order, like the station and something nasty comes out for refreshment when the lights are off - and it's not drinking the coffee.

Not too bad, wasn't feeling it at first, but it was a fairly good twist, just not a lot of meat on the bones.

Vivienne says

Holly Black was asked to write this story of the Twelfth Doctor before Series Eight had started and had to rely upon scripts with some parts redacted. She chose to set this story in between Episodes One and Two of Season Eight and explains where the Doctor went for the coffee he presented to Clara. Far in the future coffee is roasted at the Intergalactic Coffee Roasting Station (ICRS, pronounced ICARUS). While there the Doctor turns detective when a series of murders occur.

This story did remind me of Charlie Higson's *The Beast of Babylon* and Holly herself said she had been inspired by that story. Again no spoilers but this relates to the nature of the temporary companion. The story is also dotted with alien species that have appeared throughout the classic and more recent series. At least those who would enjoy coffee.

Finding out in retrospect that Holly Black had written this story without seeing Peter Capaldi in the role did explain a lot as I did not feel that she portrayed the Twelfth Doctor well. On top of this I felt the story itself was rather lack-lustre. So while it was nice to have the collection rounded out this was disappointing.

F.R. says

It's a shame we don't have Clara, but we do have an elegantly captured Twelfth Doctor. Here he is on his own, investigating a series of murders in an intergalactic coffee house. This is a slight tale, but an undeniably entertaining one which fully understands its lead character, and for a story with no humans in it's a remarkably human tale.

I've enjoyed my little run of female authored ancillary Doctor Who fiction. In the books I've read there have been no wildly feminist takes on the series, although there have been books which have really pushed the female companion. I know the next series on TV will finally once again have a female writer, but it's a shame that the last few series have been so devoid. Let's have more female writers on the TV show; let's have black and Asian writers; let's make the show as diverse and welcoming as possible and truly show off the best of Britain in the Twenty-First century.

Brendon Schrodinger says

The 50th Anniversary of Doctor Who was widely celebrated last year and the Beeb teamed up with Penguin to release 11 short stories celebrating 11 Doctors. A year later and a Doctor later they have teamed up again to provide a new short story featuring the Twelfth Doctor.

22845900The authors of these stories were a selection of high profile childrens authors and the latest is written by Holly Black who has written The Spiderwick Chronicles which I hear is quite well-loved. To tell the truth I did have a mixed response to the previous stories ranging from the utter brilliance of Neil Gaiman's 'Nothing O'Clock' to the utter embarrassment that was 'A Big Hand For the Doctor'. While I do appreciate the Beeb trying something new with written Who, there are already plenty of tried and true Who writers out there who could have done a much better job of the whole enterprise.

So for completist sake, natural curiosity, hope and love for my Doctor I approached this new volume with some trepidation. How good could a writer capture the new Doctor when we have only just seen him unfold on-screen? And how would they go writing for one of the most complicated Doctors that we have met? There certainly no longer remains the facade of an upstanding moral fighter. There is a lot more ambiguity in the Doctors motivations these days.

Surprisingly 'Lights Out' is firmly set within the series with the Doctor travelling to a famous coffee-specialising planet in search for a couple of cups for himself and Clara after the events in Deep Breath. The Doctor soon finds himself a suspect in a hideous murder and meets a being called '78351' who was also witness to the murder. 78351 becomes his companion for the duration of the story.

While the plot itself is by no means new or original, Holly does manage to bring in some aspects of the Twelfth Doctor and more than just the physical eyebrows joke. The Doctor does seem morally ambiguous and does let events take a different course to what another Doctor may have done. He does seem nonplussed at the deaths themselves. There certainly is the Twelfth Doctor within these pages.

So while this is a light and unsurprising read, the surprise is in how the Twelfth Doctor comes across on paper - much like he does onscreen thankfully. While I have not had a chance to read the three full-sized novels recently released featuring the Twelfth Doctor, I can say to anyone looking for some Twelve in print that you have come to the right place.

Thanks to NetGalley and Penguin for an Advanced Reader Copy for review.

Dan says

An e-short was published last year, one for each Doctor so now that we have a Twelfth Doctor played by the wonderful Peter Capaldi there's an e-short for him too. This one is written by *Spiderwick Chronicles* author Holly Black.

The story is set between the first two episodes of Series 8, *Deep Breath* and *Into the Dalek* and sees the recently re-generated Twelfth Doctor go to an intergalactic coffee house to get some coffee for Clara. When bodies start appearing he grabs the story's narrator "Fifty-One" to help him investigate.

In my mind this is just as good as the best of the other e-shorts. It's very dark and manages to contain a real surprise in it. The tone fits in with that of Series 8 really well and Black manages to capture the Twelfth Doctor's character well too, which is impressive given how little of the incarnation she must have seen when she wrote the story.

As ever there are some continuity nods, mostly in the form of cameos and mentions from various Doctor Who races. I'm pretty sure Black must have set a record for number of Doctor Who alien species mentioned in a short story.

A short but fantastic story which fans of the new Doctor will love.

Marjolein says

Read all my reviews on <http://urlphantomhive.booklikes.com>

This short story featuring the twelfth Doctor has been added to the anniversary E-short collection that was published in 2013. And even though I still have to watch season 8 with the new Doctor, I've been enjoying the stories I've read so far with the 12th Doctor.

When the Doctor stops at a far-away planet notorious for its coffee to get himself and Clara a cup disaster strikes not once but twice. Not only does the coffee run out, every time the lights go out someone turns up dead.

While being extremely short just like the rest of the series, it was also very enjoyable. The Doctor and his temporary new companion get a very interesting murder mystery to solve, but not without some humor. The absence of Clara (whom I still dislike) might have helped, but this was one of my favorite Doctor Who stories.

Thanks to the publisher and Netgalley for providing me with a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review!

Alejandro says

Enjoyable short story

This is an additional short story to be part of the short stories written to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of "Doctor Who", where there were eleven stories then, but now it's published another one to include in the event to the current doctor, the Twelfth.

WHO

The Doctor:

The Twelfth Doctor

Companion:

78351 a.k.a. "Fifty-One"

WHERE & WHEN

ICRS station, deep space, somewhere in the far future.

WHAT

This is very likely a short story between Episode 1: "Deep Breath" and Episode 2: "Into the Dalek" from Series 8 of *Doctor Who*, since the Twelfth Doctor went to the far future, to a deep space station where it's processed the third best coffee in the universe, mentioning that he is buying a cup of coffee to Clara (something that it's mentioned at the end of the episode, "Deep Breath").

While there, several mysterious deaths begin to occur, always when the lights are out, so the Twelfth Doctor "recruits" a temporary companion to assist him in the investigation. (Actually, the Doctor even say the word "companion" that I honestly think must be a first in *Doctor Who's* history).

78351 a.k.a. "Fifty-One" is a companion created for this short story, but it's interesting that Holly Black, the author, established that this character is already acquaintance about The Doctor from a previous adventure, while in a previous regeneration.

That "previous adventure" is also created for this short story that I think it was an ingenious trick since it was useful to speed up the interactions between The Doctor and "Fifty-One" due the limitations of being a short story.

It's not clear which regeneration was the one which "Fifty-One" knew previously to The Doctor. If you are so kind to indulge me in the brief exposure of my own personal speculations, due a particular comment in an advanced part of the story, it could be easily the Third Doctor, but even it could be most likely the Tenth Doctor, but again, the comment which lead me to these hypothesis, they could be as well selected with double intention as "easter eggs" to imply some personal preference of the author for the Third Doctor and/or even a nod to refer from where (or most likely... who) the Twelfth Doctor "took" his current face.

The past is hard to outrun

The short story is quite enjoyable with a fast tempo, priceless humor, cool scenarios and good character development and interaction between the Twelfth Doctor and his temporary companion.

Kayla Eklund says

Out of all of the Doctors, I haven't got to watch that many episodes of Doctor Who that feature the twelfth doctor. It isn't on Netflix yet, and I don't have cable. I did watch five or six episodes of the twelfth doctor at my mother-in-law's house though. From what I've seen, I enjoy him, but not as much as the previous doctors. I did enjoy Lights Out.

I already knew that Holly Black is a fabulous storyteller from reading her other books, so my expectations were high. She definitely met them. There was so much that I enjoyed about her interpretation of the twelfth doctor that I'm not even really sure where to begin. First of all, I loved that the story was about a planet that basically worships coffee, and its citizens need coffee to function on a daily basis. As someone who needs at least one cup of coffee (some days it's more like four) to function in the morning, it made the characters more relatable to me.

I also loved that the plot centered around a minor character from a previous Doctor Who episode. It shows that Holly Black is a true Whovian, and does her research while writing a book. The subtle references to Ten throughout the book were greatly appreciated, although it made me miss him more. From the few episodes I've seen, I think Holly Black accurately portrayed Twelve. She stayed true to his more serious character.

All in all, I really enjoyed this. I hope Holly Black writes more Doctor Who stories in the future. I think it would be interesting to see her take on Four or Eleven, but I would read anything she wrote about any of the doctors.

Elsbeth says

I received this story from Netgalley for an honest review.

Black just didn't get twelve's feel right. I think could do ten or eleven better, they are more manic and she does manic well. The mystery wasn't much, and just not odd or creepy enough for it to mesh with the overall emotions of season eight.

I just expect more from Black, and have a high expectations for a Doctor Who story with the writers of the show doing it so well.

Robert Wright says

In some ways better than Capaldi's first season. Good story, capturing the tug your heartstrings tone of new Who. Really very good and worth reading.
