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To lose your memory once may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose it twice looks like carelessness. The Doctor's not himself. He's not quite sure who he is, but he's definitely not himself. It doesn't help that he's forgotten quite why he came to the colony world of Espero in the first place, but he's sure it was something important. Whatever the reason, he's not the planet's only visitor. Before long, he's engaged in the search for a time-bomb - a time-bomb that could have consequences not only for Espero, but for the Doctor himself - and his missing past.

Doctor Who: Halflife Details

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From Reader Review Doctor Who: Halflife for online ebook

Michael Battaglia says

Sometimes you read these novels and you can sense where the authors are just coasting along, maybe not doing it just for the paycheck but they aren't especially out to write The Great Doctor Who Novel Of All Time. And that's okay. Not everyone wants to bring their A-game to the licensed TV property spinoff. But then you get those authors who you can tell have all kinds of ideas on what to do with the character, and are simply being held back by the people in charge, leaving the impression of a book straining at the reins to break free and do what the author actually wants to do.

Here, it seems like the author really wants to deal with the Doctor's memory problems. Way back in what seems like ninety books again, after the Doctor caused Gallifrey to be whatever happened to it, it was implied that the trauma of it caused him to forget about who he was and where he came from. On some level this was useful because it freed the Doctor from over thirty years of continuity and allowed him to approach everything fresh. On the downside, it was clear it was the most convenient amnesia ever, as it didn't harm any of his cognitive abilities and it seemed like he still knew just about everything, we just didn't get references to Time Lords and whatnot every ten pages. But he lived with it and we lived with and like all those people who are born with four fingers on each hand, eventually you just kind of get used to it.

In this case, we dance around the idea of messing with it at several points but always pull back at the last second thanks to the magic of rationalized plot contrivance. As much as this Doctor seems to be cut from a slightly different mold than the others, you're going to have to work fairly hard to make me buy that the endlessly curious Doctor, one so curious that on no less than two occasions it got him killed (we hardly knew ye, Third and Fifth Doctors) isn't the least bit interested in what his missing memories could tell him about himself? Not even a little?

Meanwhile the rest of the plot happens. Team TARDIS follows the usual mysterious distress signal (and you'd think for once he would learn to ignore those as it never turns out to be people he wants to rescue and it's never simple) to find a world that is caught between two forces that are seeking to overcome the other, and are not shy about grinding up whoever is in the way to pull ahead. Fitz and the Doctor almost immediately lose parts of their memories, while Trix learns the peril of coveting pretty objects. Eventually a royal family gets involved, the Doctor and Fitz each get their own groupie and everyone does a lot of running around.

And you know what? Pardon the pun, but it's not half bad. The author has a way of writing that makes this go down easy and while the secondary characters do recede more in the background as the story chugs along, they do add nice local color and give the story a lightness that makes it easier to swallow. After coming off all the stories with parallel universes or whatever the heck was going on, this one comes across as a romp and while there's danger it doesn't seem quite as Serious as recent stories have been. The tradeoff is that the depth suffers so that while it's all fun and games, there's no real exploration of the characters beyond what we already know about them.

Actually, I lie. There's one exception: Trix. More than her five or so appearances have done so far, this one does make an attempt to see what makes the character tick beyond her desire to steal everything in sight. Unfortunately we don't get much of this because not only is she separated from the Doctor and Fitz for much of the book, she's sidelined as well thanks to circumstances. It seems to me that the writers either weren't given as much background detail on her to work with, or they just don't know what to do with her in the

standalone stories. What it means is that one of the aspects I liked about the old Doctor/Anji/Fitz team, i.e. the interplay, is almost completely lost here. The author does manage to convey the bond that the Doctor and Fitz have after all this time (and since the new series tends to treat each new companion as the Be All and End All of not romance it's nice to see the Doctor actually be best friends with someone, especially a guy) and the sense of Trix as odd girl out in these weird transdimensional locker room, but it's too fleeting to really sink into the book.

For once, though, we get a villain that isn't entirely bad and actually sympathetic, with a lot of elements in play all vying for the upper hand, even if they don't understand what they're vying for. The scenes leading up to the climax are in a more classic mold, with the Doctor trying to understand and bring about a nonviolent solution and while the actual resolution isn't a hundred percent coherent, it's more like ninety-five which is a darn sight better than we've done in recent books. For once the climax feels both clever and earned, without only minor levels of tragedies and less than massive amounts of bloodshed. It's nice.

But for what it could aspire to be, it stops just short of the line that separate "very good" from "great". The instances of memory could have a true exploration of the notion that a man is the sum of his memories (and while Fitz undergoes a minor change, let's see what different it makes) and perhaps an elegaic goodbye to what this Doctor used to be, as he finally accepts that whatever those memories were, they're not coming back. Instead we get some light entertainment that succeeds in being entertaining so while we may shed a slight tear of all that might have been (or maybe never could have been) for a standalone done-in-one tale, it does the job.

Daniel Kukwa says

It's not quite the story I was expecting, but it was certainly entertaining, and it builds a rather interesting colony world in Espero. However, I was looking forward to a bit more story surrounding the issue of the 8th Doctor's memory loss, and I found the climax to be a bit too cluttered & drawn out for my taste. That said, "Halflife" made for a pleasant upturning of my overall expectations.

Allen says

So for the start this book does touch upon this common trope which Immediately you should know if you read the books or listened to the Audios of the Eighth Doctor. It mess around with the Amnesia thing.

The Doctor, Fitz and Trix lands in a Human colony planet Espero and immediately this book does this other trope where everybody get split off. The Doctor and Fitz went out to explore and Trix remained in the TARDIS doing something in which Trix doesn't even know that they left. But something out there caused Fitz and the Doctor to lose the memories about half of their life. This really does sounds like this should be part of the Earth Arc does it?

When Trix realized that the Two are not in the TARDIS she went out to look for them, which she only manage to find Fitz but the Doctor is no where to be found.

All the rest is just royal stuff somewhat like Kingdom of Lies

Ok I'm going to Jump right to the point. This is pretty a weak story truly forgetful. The only thing I remember reading this is somewhat the beginning, where Trix gets possessed, and Fitz has this Fanserving Fever Dream, I'm not kidding about the Fanservice thing.

So in all, It's not a Bad book, it's quite entertaining but overall it's forgetful.

James Bowman says

[This also pretty solidly establishes that the Doctor chooses not to remember his past (elaborated upon further in The Gallifrey Chronicles, see below). I did like seeing the Doctor with a bit of Fitz in him, and Fitz with a bit of the Doctor in him. I wonder who the memory-restoring woman was? (Best speculation I've heard was Compassion.) I wonder what the long-term effect
