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Kiss Of Death (Doctor Who)



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Synopsis

The TARDIS travellers take a break on the beach world of Vektris. Hot sun, cold drinks and all the time in the worlds. What could possibly go wrong? A kidnapping, a spaceship heist and a desperate chase to a distant galaxy later, Turlough finds himself in a strange winter palace - along with a face from his past.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Audio drama sequel to Heroes of Sontar, set between the TV episodes Enlightenment (Doctor Who: The Black Guardian Trilogy (Mawdryn Undead / Terminus / Enlightenment) (Stories 126-28)) and The King’s Demons (Doctor Who: The King’s Demons (Story 129)).Following the events of Heroes of Sontar, the TARDIS crew are relaxing on Vectris. The Doctor and Turlough are carrying out repairs on the TARDIS, while Tegan and Nyssa are kicking back in a villa soaking up rays and drinking cocktails. But when a face from his past reappears, Turlough is abducted and the others set out in hot pursuit. Turlough apparently holds the key to a great treasure, but between crashes, mercenaries, skulduggery and the weird things in the basement, who will survive and at what cost?Godawful.I know, I know, that doesn’t cut it as a review. I’ll try to explain why I found Kiss of Death so terrible. With one exception - the voice of the Morass, which I found virtually incomprehensible, a genuine problem when trying to follow what’s happening - this is as competently produced as one has come to expect from Big Finish. The problems here are with the concept, script and acting. Spoilerish discussion follows.First, the concept. If you’re going to

augment Turlough's backstory, why would you come up with this? We get no illumination of the civil war on his homeworld, no explanation of what's happening there now or whether it might be possible for him to go home, so there's no conflict for him over those issues in this story at all. Similarly, we don't get a sense that Turlough's experiences of war or exile have had any effect on his personality, since according to Deela he's pretty much the same as he always was. What little background was provided on the character through the TV stories is effectively wasted, then, with nothing meaningful offered in its place.If no good use was to be made of Turlough's history, we could instead have been offered an exploration of the Turlough we're already familiar with. We know he can be smart and ruthless. Why not a story where Turlough realises he's being played right from the start and picks his moment to turn the tables? We know he can be cowardly and erratic. Why not a story where he faces the revelation that Deela never cared for him and ingratiated herself to manipulate him at her father's direction? As it is, Kiss of Death offers nothing but a retread of soppy adolescence that could have belonged to anyone, with Turlough reacting in such a stereotypical way that there's no character exploration at all.It's worth noting, too, that this story leaves Turlough with precisely nothing. By the time it finishes he's lost even more than he had when he enters the series, yet Tegan shows no sympathy for him, Nyssa offers nothing but blandly generic advice about moving on, and the Doctor is clueless about what he's just been through (is he really that dumb?). No respect for Turlough, then, in story or out.Second, the script. This was the real killer for me. There's no originality here, no surprise; just one clichÃƒÂ© after another, from the skintight-black-leather-wearing mercenaries through the utterly predictable doublecrosses to the treasure that isn't a treasure and the "tragic" ending. They couldn't even come up with an original name for the palace. Dodgy science and technobabble abound, and so do hideously clunky expository dialogue, unexplained rich-kid angst and plot holes. All the trappings of the palace setting and history are generically aristocratic, with no effort made to come up with something alien or interesting.Third, the acting. The main cast are good, as we've come to expect, for what they're asked to do. Mark Strickson is excellent, in fact, as he has been since his first appearance inÃ Â Phantasmagoria (Dr Who Big Finish). But the guest cast ... John Banks plays Kanch with a strong regional British accent (I don't know which one, sorry, something northern). I don't usually mind regional accents, but this one is so strong that Kanch is hard to understand at points. Combine that with the lack of subtlety in his performance, and I found myself thinking of Kanch as a thick, violent British provincial rather than a thick, violent space-going mercenary, which undermined my capacity to get immersed in the story. Lizzie Roper as Hoss (Hoss? Seriously?) must have developed a sore throat from all the hissing and snarling she does here. There are other ways to

sound hard and tough, surely. Meanwhile, Lucy Adams' performance as Deela and Michael Maloney's as Rennol simply lacked conviction. Perhaps they're not used to the audio drama format, but the script certainly didn't help.As withÃ Â Cradle of the Snake (Dr Who Big Finish), good production values can't compensate for serious flaws in concept and plot. One star. Because I truly did hate this.

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