



Doctor Who: The Fires of Vulcan

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Two thousand years ago, a volcanic eruption wiped the Roman city of Pompeii from the face of the Earth. It also buried the Doctor's TARDIS...

Arriving in Pompeii one day before the disaster, the Doctor and Mel find themselves separated from their ship and entangled in local politics. As time runs out, they fight to escape from the shadow of Mount Vesuvius. But how can they succeed when history itself is working against them?

Chronological Placement

This story takes place between the television adventures, *Delta and the Bannermen* and *Dragonfire*.

Doctor Who: The Fires of Vulcan Details

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From Reader Review Doctor Who: The Fires of Vulcan for online ebook

Noetic_Hatter says

This story and Doctor Who: The One Doctor made me a Mel fan for life.

Gabriel Mero says

I love Pompeii, love the 7th Doctor, and like Mel -- who got to be a bit of a hero this time.

Patty says

An excellent way to pass time on a long road trip.

Kaesa says

It wasn't a bad story, and I liked that this Pompeii was more historically accurate than the version of the city in "The Fires of Pompeii," but the TV version had a lot more emotional resonance for me.

Jayaprakash Satyamurthy says

This might actually be superior to the other Doctor Who story set in Pompeii, although that one gets at least equal marks from me because Donna!!! Anyway, this one has Sly Seven and Mel caught on the horns of a feisty time paradox, with only hours to spare before Vesuvius blows. I love how this story really takes us into streets, taverns, temples and mansions of Pompeii, introducing us to a cross section of people and building up a great sense of place. The Doctor is suitably scheming, but he's also willing to sacrifice himself while ensuring Mel's safety. A lovely, well-balanced historical excursion with lots of thought provoking stuff going on and a satisfying emotional aspect.

Kelly McCubbin says

Perfectly passable in every way.

To answer your first question, no, Mel doesn't suck. If we've learned anything about the Big Finish line by now, it's that actors who were previously given short shrift during their television broadcast era can be redeemed when given more sober material. Bonnie Langford's Mel is a smart, capable, even heroic companion through this story and it's refreshing. Sylvester McCoy, as well, takes a lot of the goofiness out of this (continuity-wise) period of his run and infuses The Doctor with some of the mystery of his last season

and some of the danger of the character that evolved in the Virgin New Adventures books. (See the next story, "The Shadow of the Scourge" for more on that!)

So that's nice.

The Doctor is back in Pompeii. (What is it with him and that volcano?) There's a little light-weight philosophical talk about religion and caste systems, some running about and a strange bookend paradox (sorta) about the Doctor's potential demise. Nothing serious, but a reasonable romp given a slight boost by The Doctor's seeming refusal to save himself or Mel for a lot of the story from that, you know, volcano thing. (I will admit to still being a little bit baffled as to what turned him around on this point, but, hey, I hadn't invested a lot here and kind of stopped worrying about it.)

Fun enough.

Nicholas Whyte says

brings the Seventh Doctor and Mel to Pompeii the day before the eruption of AD 79. I have managed to miss Bonnie Langford's presence on TV completely, so this was actually the first story of hers I have experienced. McCoy is utterly splendid as bleak! Doctor, convinced that he has brought himself and his companion to their doom. Langford is not especially remarkable, doing standard female companion role, but not especially annoying either. Unfortunately much of the plot makes very little sense (too much running around in order to get stuck in dramatically dangerous situations), and my reaction to the Doctor's eventual escape was *D'oh, why didn't he think of that in the first place???*

Matt says

Steve Lyons strikes again! Bonnie Langford as Mel is among the most irritating companions in all of classic Who, but with great dialogue written by Lyons and some actual importance to the plot, Langford is actually quite good in this. McCoy definitely plays the Doctor closer to his last season dark & broodiness, but I don't really mind because the first season of McCoy's run was just so godawful.

Steve Lyons has never written anything in Doctor Who that I have disliked so far. This is a lot like the Fourth Series episode "The Fires of Pompeii," featuring the Tenth Doctor and Donna, but whereas that episode felt cheesy and frankly pretty bad, this is a great straight historical that reminds one of the early days of Who when there wasn't always an alien behind it all. Highly recommended audio play.

Jennifer Tull says

So after listening the part 1 i stopped. Then came back to it 2 days later. And was it good?. Was it bad? It's bloody fantastic!. This is a very well written story written by Steve Lyons. And he does a good job at the storyline's basis. But i think i know why i took 2 days to come back to it. Maybe because part 1 is kinda boring. But after part 2 it gets really good. And now i understand part 1 and don't think it's boring anymore. But anyway this is an all-time classic now and i love it. Highly recommended.

I give it a 10/10

Dan says

Probably one of my favorite audio dramas so far. Interesting in comparison to how Pompeii was handled in the TV series. A well fleshed out villain, great character interactions, and a superbly written story.

Sammy says

It's far from the best use of either Mel or Seven, but "The Fires of Vulcan" is a welcome return to the historical. (Oh, Steven Moffat, can't we just do one episode every now and then that doesn't feel the need to shoehorn in some monsters for the kiddies!?) There's a fun range of supporting characters, who get to have their own stories in this four-episode format. (Oh, Steven Moffat, can't we just do a few serial episodes that have room to breathe?) And there's a nice sense of the time and place. Things resolve themselves in a way that feels a bit too amused at its own cleverness, but so far I'm really enjoying this audio series.

Angela says

The Doctor and Mel arrive in Pompeii a day before the eruption. Only problem is that in the 80s the TARDIS was excavated in Pompeii, and the Doctor knows this. This is a great historical, with both Mel and the Doctor upsetting people in the town. And a priestess is someone you do not want to upset. This is more about escaping your fate than changing the history of Pompeii, and it is all the more interesting for that. A very good listen that shows that the Doctor and Mel can do serious stories with real danger.

Benamon Tame says

Strong story that pitches the Doctor and Mel in a fight for survival against Vesuvius. This story shows the darker more brooding side of Sylvester's Doctor and a much more mature Mel, with more to work with. Bonnie Langford shows a far more rounded character and the two of them work well though out. Strong supporting cast adds even more depth. Quality addition to the Series.

Yosef Shapiro says

This is an early entry in the Big Finish audio series. It features a very introspective 7th Doctor. This story is set in Pompeii right before the eruption. This story predates the more recent televised episode set in the same time period. It features a classic time paradox relating to the tardis. But, it is solved in a way that does not make your head spin. Overall, a very enjoyable story.

Debra Cook says

An interesting historical story. A slower story of Pompeii than the adventure with David Tennent in season 4 but its still a good adventure. Not sure Mel is a good companion for radio but Sylvester McCoy is great in this with his pesamistic attitude and then deciding to fight to live.

Jadetyger Sevea says

I started listening to this long ago, but was not impressed with it, so I stopped partway through. I started from the beginning again, and had a much better reception to the story this time.

The plot: The 7th Doctor and Mel arrive in Pompeii, and the Doctor grows alarmed. It seems his Fifth incarnation had discovered (via UNIT, in 1980) the TARDIS buried in the ruins of the city. With the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius just a day away, the Doctor and Mel must escape the disaster--without creating a time paradox.

The plot itself was all right. It wasn't particularly novel, though it was well told. The actual end of Pompeii was well done--nice acting, great sound effects. The only plotline that didn't seem necessary was one in which the Doctor accidentally creates a feud with a gladiator. It was there just to add an extra complication.

The characters: A lot of great acting, especially on the part of several of the guest actors. McCoy was very steady as the Doctor. Nothing new in his performance, though he was good, as always. Bonnie Langford was quite good as well, although I admit that I am not fond of Mel as a companion. Still, she showed surprising compassion and intelligence here.

Christopher Buchanan says

Not a whole lot going on in this one except that Pompeii seems to be a popular spot for the Doctor. What's up with that? What's the count now, something like 3 Doctors and 3 companions have been there right when everything went boom? Anyways, it's basically just a Tardis McGuffin story set in Pompeii with Mel. Along the way, the Doctor gets separated from Mel and falls into a painfully obvious trap. (Hint: if the bartender at a bar where you just pissed off a bunch of regulars happens to be named after a root that is renowned for making you sleep and she keeps insisting you have on on the house...don't friggin' drink it!) Pretty dissapointing. Also, the Doctor seems to have slipped into the more maudlin 7th Doctor that he wouldn't become until later when he was with Ace. They can't help tossing a little fuel on the old UNIT dating controversy either. I won't bag it for the potential continuity whatever involved with 'Fires of Pompeii' and the Doctor almost blowing himself up in an earlier incarnation that for some reason he didn't know was there because this actually came first and it would be a really pedantic and annoying thing for me to do. So I won't do that.

I didn't give it a lower rating for two reasons. The production it's self was pretty good and Mel didn't suck. For some reason, in the novels and Big Finish, Mel frequently comes out as an actually pleasant and/or interesting companion. Weird. Maybe it's because in these she doesn't seem to scream (not that I've heard anyway) and in the novels you can't hear it if she does. If you've ever watched 'Time and the Rani', you know exactly what I'm talking about. (shudder) Anyway, not very good, but hey, it's two bucks and it's not like I had anything better to do. Okay? So back off!

Taksya says

Pompei, il Dottore e una companion dai capelli rossi e che non fa mai quello che le si dice sono un mix pericoloso... anche se non sono la coppia che la maggior parte dei fan si sta immaginando.

Il settimo Dottore e Mel si trovano a Pompei il giorno prima dell'eruzione e, per i soliti problemi di fatti futuri già osservati e quindi immutabili, sembra certo che non potranno andarsene prima che sia troppo tardi.

Conosco la coppia Mel/Settimo Dottore solo molto superficialmente (devo studiare), ma l'interazione è buona e Bonnie non ha urlato così tanto come sembra aver fatto in video.

La trama è abbastanza prevedibile, è comunque il Vulcano Day, e la risoluzione del problema troppo rapida e vista solo in prospettiva, raccontata dai due alla fine della vicenda.

Per ora buona parte delle prime storie dimostra il costante miglioramento delle produzioni Big Finish.

Linnea Gelland says

The return of Mel and the melting of Pompeii. Possibly the last journey they'll ever make. Well, of course it isn't - but the fact that the Doctor thinks so for a while is what makes the story interesting.

Sarah says

The Seventh Doctor and Mel run around in Pompeii... on volcano day... Where the Doctor has been trying to avoid as he states that one of his former selves saw a wrecked version of the TARDIS.

Pompeii is getting to be a weak point in time; We've had Peter Capaldi running around it (supposedly human at that point), David Tennant and Donna Noble, along with Sylvester McCoy and Mel along with a former self (unnamed but I think it would have been either Three or Five) being aware of a wrecked TARDIS recovered from that area.

Why does it have to be Volcano Day again?
