



Doctor Who: City at World's End

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The Doctor and his companions land in the city of Arkhaven, the last bastion of civilisation in a doomed world.

The inhabitants of the city are pinning all their hopes on a final desperate gamble for survival. Behind the scenes there are jealous factions at work, secretly contesting for the chance to shape the destiny of a new world. Beneath its ordered surface, Arkhaven is a city of secrets and mysteries where outward appearances can be deceptive.

Is the thing they call the 'Creeper' really at large in Arkhaven's eerie outer zone - and is it beast or machine? What is the hidden force at work that has acted so strangely upon Susan?

With Barbara lost and the countdown to doomsday drawing to a climax, the Doctor must discover the true nature of the final enemy - or is that enemy simply fear itself?

Featuring the First Doctor, Ian, Barbara and Susan, this adventure takes place between the TV stories THE REIGN OF TERROR and PLANET OF GIANTS.

Doctor Who: City at World's End Details

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Author : Christopher Bulis

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From Reader Review Doctor Who: City at World's End for online ebook

Angela says

The Doctor, Ian, Barbara and Susan land in an abandoned futuristic city. The world is due to end and the population only have one hope, a rocket. This is a fast moving plot with great characterisation. I could imagine it as a Big Finish audio. Barbara and Susan are put through the ringer again. It has a real feeling of the era. I really liked it. A very good read.

Travis says

Good characterization can't save the fact that while this book has a good sci-fi concept it doesn't quite work as a Doctor Who story, so the Tardis crew feels shoe horned in.

The story feels more like an Asimov book or an episode of the 'Outer Limits' TV show.

Bit clunky and you walk away with the vague feeling the story might have ended the same way if the Tardis had never landed there.

Bulis writes the characters well and comes up with interesting ideas but can rarely make them mesh.

Kate Sherrod says

As with a lot of Doctor Who stories (but especially the modern ones), there might be one too many adversaries/complications to what wanted to be a truly classic science fiction story, but the characterizations were good (and yes, Ian redeemed himself a little) and a mystery beyond the central mystery kept my interest when the main plot dragged. A worthy effort.

Nicholas Whyte says

<http://nhw.livejournal.com/900116.html>[return][return]I thought Bulis had done very well in portraying the setting, a rain-drenched planet which is doomed to destruction in the near future, and the populace hoping to escape rather as in Utopia. But the various human (and AI) factions were rather confusingly portrayed as to their means and motivation. There's a nice nod to Planet of Giants at the end (the novel is set before that and immediately after The Reign of Terror).

John Chronakis says

The colonized world is a very lonely one, focusing on a single advanced city-state as it struggles against planetwide destruction. A caste system of technocrats, nobles and religious fanatics and a backdrop of a desolate post-apocalyptic landscape round out this classic sci-fi backdrop. The TARDIS is promptly lost at the beginning of the adventures, leaving our heroes to fend for themselves against the local citizens and hostile environment alike.

Each character forges their own path in this foreboding city. Barbara gets the short end of the stick, largely sidelined into a labyrinth of collapsed sewers. I like Barbara very much, but she needs other persons nearby to talk with, and voice her thoughts. In isolation, she is reduced to yet another damsel in distress putting on a brave face. Ian gets to play cop, escorting and even heading a team of city guards as they investigate crimes, fight rebels, and generally save the day. Susan is injured very early, and spends most of the story comatose or running out of breath. And the Doctor seems to stay uncharacteristically calm in the face of the planet crumbling away around his lost indestructible Ship. The characterizations are passable, but not very intriguing; all four of our heroes muck around with mostly unimpressive plot twists, and rarely have the time to meaningfully interact with one other or with other characters.

And there is no attempt to streamline this premise at the latter half of the book. Quite the reverse, we are peppered with every sci-fi trope which had previously been left out: ominous AIs and brainwashed robots and humanoids bred for war, oh my! The story seemed to spiral out of control instead of reaching a premeditated climax.

In whole, *City at World's End* is a story focused on action, not character development. The writing is respectively terse and the scenes fast-paced. But even so, the impending doom fails to engage the reader, as all characters follow their own plots, many of them very small-scale in comparison with worldwide annihilation. The base of the story is fine, and with tighter writing and fewer meandering subplots it could have been a real pageturner.

Ken says

An enjoyable First Doctor adventure that reminded me of *Utopia* but with more 'Twists'.

Jay says

I applaud Christopher Bulis for giving us another great science fiction story here. This is truly the story of a dystopian future hiding under the guise of a utopia. The people of the city of Arkhaven have built a huge deceit to save themselves from the end of their world. Of course, the Doctor and his companions land right in the middle of it and end up exposing it piece by piece.

Bulis gives readers a thrilling story of a world on the edge with so many twists, turns and reveals that you can't possibly be bored with this book. While some moves are easily foreseen, other are hidden deftly in the narrative. I would recommend this novel to ANY science fiction fan, not just fans of Doctor Who.

Simon Curtis says

Excellent. Bulis can divide opinion, and his different books divide mine, but this one is excellent.

Don says

I love the First Doctor. I love the first TARDIS crew of the Doctor, Ian, Barbara & Susan. I love these characters so much that I figured their inclusion as main characters could make even the most lackluster of stories enjoyable.

Sadly, this is the novel that proved me wrong.

To be fair, many other readers seemed to have enjoyed this outing, and I am coming at it with my own bias: My least favorite use of Who is placing it in a firmly sci-fi setting, with alien worlds and alien peoples. I vastly prefer the historicals (or, failing that, contemporary settings with fantastical elements). So a setting like this one, with a bog-standard sci-fi future world, does nothing for me simply on principle alone. Worse, it just seemed like a copy of a copy: Due to an impending apocalyptic event, this society has built an ark/shuttle to take them from their world before disaster strikes. Fine - except for the fact that Classic Who already had two stories on that very idea: "The Ark", and "The Ark in Space". And "The Ark" was a First Doctor story, to boot!

(Even the title of this book is shamefully stolen from a 1950s SF novel.)

On top of that, the story has far too many twists and revelations that stretch credibility past the breaking point and beyond - like the fact that no one in the inner city has ever noticed that the outer sections are completely vacant and abandoned, because no one goes there. What, *never*? Seriously? (Oddly enough, the largest coincidence is not even brought up: The fact that the city's name of Arkhaven predates the oncoming disaster, and therefore predates their need for a Haven in which to build their Ark.)

I wouldn't say that it's a terrible book, per se. There are certainly worse.

But it bored me from nearly the start.

Avarill says

I've read the two Christopher Bulis First Doctor novels, and there's a lot to like here. *City at World's End* is a great sci-fi concept that's well-executed. The characterization of the Doctor, Ian, Barbara and Susan is spot-on. But the thing Bulis doesn't do well seriously drags down this book: he doesn't know what to do with Barbara. My criticism here is identical to my main problem with *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Barbara spends the entire story a ping-pong ball, getting swatted from one horrendous experience to another. Granted, Barbara's characterization is done well, and the reader senses her innate dignity. But still... give the woman a break! Susan doesn't fare too much better, but at least she's spunky. *The Bottom Line*: Enjoyable for an intriguing plot and solid characterization. Those looking forward to great Babs scenes should steer clear.

David Layton says

Bulis has a well-worn methodology of taking some subgenre of science fiction and making Doctor Who out of it. Sometimes it works, but more often it does not. In this one it works reasonably well. In fact, this is one of his best. The subgenre is the end of the world by natural disaster story. However, since, for various reasons, in the Who universe the Earth did not end by natural disaster, Bulis has set the book on a colony world. Typical of Bulis, he has split the story into different plot streams converging upon a single location. What works in this novel is that Bulis does not overplay the genre aspects as he is wont to do. Instead, he focuses on the story itself given the initial premises. The disaster is impending, the escape is improbable, and something seriously wrong with the whole plan means that many many people will die. Bulis has created a kind of David Whitaker or Malcolm Hulke plot in which there are no "bad guys" as such, just people deluded, and therefore following a disastrous course of action that they think is right. There are some confusing bits involving Susan's plot that never get satisfactorily worked out (just which parts was she dreaming and why was she dreaming them?). Recommended with reservations.

Denis Southall says

Really good, complex, multi - layered story with themes around class or caste, science v faith and the perceptions around the morality of decisions those in power take on our behalf.
