



Doctor Who: Lucifer Rising

Andy Lane , Jim Mortimore , Lee Brimmicombe-Wood (Illustrator)

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This new series of original novels takes up where the TV series left off. Novels published in 1992 demonstrated the scope of this series, from all-action space adventure to psychological thriller to mythic fantasy. All stories feature the Seventh Doctor and his new companion Bernice Summerfield.

Doctor Who: Lucifer Rising Details

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From Reader Review Doctor Who: Lucifer Rising for online ebook

Leela42 says

New Adventure (NA) with Benny and Ace, and a powerful!Doctor (a bit too so, as he then has to make ridiculous mistakes). Well written at first, although all the gross stuff is laughably unresearched and unthought through. Unfortunately, after chapter 8 (presumably where the editor stopped) it's an unfocused, malicious, amateurish mess--pointlessly meandering, silly, non-sensical, and often stupid, like a movie made by a teenager. On a personal level--and typical for Doctor Who original novels--from the very beginning I saw every clue and spent the whole book going 'yep', 'nope', 'now that doesn't make sense', and 'but why BOTHER?'. It's also irritating that it mines classic Doctor Who for culture but not character intelligence, giving it a weird fakey feel.

Em says

Despite the constant scene-shifting and abundant action, it still managed to be kind of boring. There were a whole host of local characters that could've been interesting, but I think their initial introduction was too revealing and subsequently I felt like there wasn't much else to discover about them. They ended up feeling kind of pointless, which wasn't helped by the plethora of characters who showed up and were instantly killed off while the main set went about their business.

Ace's change of heart was an interesting story in itself, but I don't feel like it was addressed adequately. Bernice was disappointingly useless and her outfit was stupid. I know that's definitely just my opinion but I feel very strongly about it. Thank God the next book puts that to rights again. The Doctor is very flat in this book and when he finally does step in to save the day, you're left wondering what exactly he actually did anyway.

'Legion' was an interesting alien. He reminded me of the Naturalist from Doctor Who: Unnatural History. I'd love a story that bridged the gap between those two somehow. Creepy extra-dimensional aliens are my favorite kind.

Scurra says

This is either a very cleverly plotted story or a confused mess. I remember thinking that much the first time around; nothing has changed in the interim.

There are some seriously good plus points here:

- the concious nod to using time-travel to visit certain specific places, and then finding out that your actions are indeed responsible for things that happen later;
- the nods to hard SF like Rendezvous with Rama where the alien technology is properly alien and all the humans do is fail to understand it;
- the loving continuity worked in (IMC, the Adjudicators etc.) which are properly explained for new readers without making it sound like tedious exposition.

And there are some really bad points too:

- the pseudo-mystical AmerInd guff, which never goes anywhere and gets in the way;
- the deeply confused "murder mystery" in which you completely lose track of the mystery because too much else is going on;
- the bizarre mix of utterly convincing and completely stereotyped characters;
- the really bad attempt to explain the aliens at the end, thus undermining the whole set-up (cf. the Rama sequels for the same syndrome.)

The result is that it comes out as an honourable draw - the good and bad stuff almost exactly balance each other out.

The Ace, Benny and Doctor stuff is generally extraordinarily good though - all of them get proper character moments that surprise you, and one of the subplots is a real shocker. That's where this earns the extra star.

Next up: White Darkness(The New Doctor Who Adventures)

April Mccaffrey says

Holy shit, I'm so glad I picked this book back up. This book was iNTENSE.

James Bowman says

One of the better New Adventures, this was a welcome shift in tone after a number of overly dark and gritty installments in the series (*Transit*, *The Pit*, and *Deceit*) that I tried and skipped. *Lucifer Rising* starts off as a murder mystery, and gets intriguingly complicated from there, with enough solid twists to keep you guessing throughout. On the character front, the supporting cast is particularly well-developed, and there are also some interesting developments with the Doctor-Ace relationship. With a few exceptions, the science is much harder than usual (such that I didn't quite get a few bits, but no harm done) - there are some particularly interesting ideas here, such as Legion.

Mind, the novel wasn't perfect. A few chapters towards the middle dragged a little, and almost felt padded. Some plotlines, such as one character's mother issues, don't quite pay off. And one plot development near the end of the book, while very interesting, seems to come out of nowhere. But overall, I enjoyed this particular Seventh Doctor story, and would definitely recommend it. (B+)

SJ Fujimoto says

[grand manipulator is a great idea, but the Doctor lamenting how manipulating others has stained his soul was just silly, as is treating the Doctor personally killing an antagonist a big, shocking moment. This Doctor se

Christopher Buchanan says

I really enjoyed this one. It was conceptually really interesting with the gas giant and the Angels and the weird alien tech moon set up. Very imaginative world build. Very bizarre and thought provoking. The story itself was a lot of the little man versus the mega-corporation kind of thing that seems to be a theme in the Virgin New Adventures, especially the last couple. The author does an excellent job of drawing you into the characters lives. You get to know their motivations and foibles. He gives you reason to care about them. Unfortunately, he frequently pops them into the vacuum later but hey, thats the breaks. The big squiggling pancake hairy ball on spindly legs talking in choruses multi-dimentional baddie is a pretty cool bit of fun as well as the idea of Ace gone bad. Now there's a spine chilling thought. It was an engaging and very entertaining read that kept me turning pages. It does have a few problems though that kept me from giving it a five star, but mostly it's just small, weird things. Like Bernice suddenly becoming a dreadlocked fashion victim or the Doctor being just a bit too cartoonish at times. The Doctor was a bit too powerful as well, I think. Especially the bit where's he's floating. That was unnecessary. There were a couple of other scetchy bits but nothing that ruined the story for me. Oh, and fair warning, it's a blood bath. All in all, it's got a few problems but the book was such a fun read for me that it overcomes them. Very entertaining.

Peter says

From fans that killed the programme comes a load of unreadable dribble. Because nearly all of the people who were fans and now writers of this garbage are name checked with little sly jokes that you feel like an outsider. There is no originality here. Small bitesize paragraphs that jump from one event to the next that miss salient plot, in fact there are a number of missing plot elements as though they have failed to communicate when laying down the storyline

Avoid at all costs, fan written trash.

Chris says

I had only read this last 5 years ago but went in with no memory of any of the plot and surprised I had given the novel only a single star (apparently one of three people to do this).

Going through I think this is a bit of a mixed bag. Both reading in order and knowing what is coming allows me to appreciate a bit more as this is doing a lot of setup for what is coming. Also I found some of the language and stylistic techniques really fascinating.

However, I felt the characterisation of the regulars left a lot to be desired (The Doctor in particular seems to be acting like a cartoon version of Hartnell) and the murder mystery combined with ancient all-powerful space weapon is not the tropes I enjoy reading. Finally, I think it was just far too long.

I haven't given more than 2 stars to any book since Love and War so far. I know I have some favourites coming up in a little while but I am hoping White Darkness or Shadowmind will be nicer surprises along the way.

Anton says

Lucifer Rising is everything the previous book in the series (Deceit) was not -- exciting, interesting, coherent -- and it has a much better handle than that book did on the older version of Ace who returns to the TARDIS after three years of fighting in the Dalek Wars. One of the darker NA books I've read so far, it puts a nice twist on the well-worn 'The Doctor keeps his companions in the dark' thing that was so prominent during the Seventh Doctor era. I really enjoyed this one, and it's renewed my excitement for the Doctor/Ace/Benny line-up.

Nicholas Whyte says

<http://nwhyte.livejournal.com/1572064.html>

Rather a good Seventh Doctor story, with Ace returning to the Doctor/Benny setup, and mysterious and murderous goings-on in orbit around the planet Lucifer, but in a setting invoking many of the more space operatic Who stories - particular shout-outs to Colony in Space and Caves of Androzani, but various others are also referenced. Lots of incidental characters who almost all get decent treatment (in narrative terms). We also have the reunion of the Doctor and Benny with an older, hardened Ace. Both authors went on to greater things than this, but it is a good start.

James Barnard says

I'm glad I decided to re-read this one. It's an impressive debut from two writers who'd go on to stamp their mark on Doctor Who fiction, an impressive New Adventure and – most remarkably – an impressive sci-fi novel in its own right.

There's a real confidence about this one and, with hindsight, the markings of the tropes which made Mortimore and Lane such impressive writers of solo works. Here, we see Mortimore's ability to pack a real emotional punch within a genuinely epic story on (and I use the phrase advisedly) a biblical scale, combined with Lane's mastery of character, plot and structure. It's a winning combination, and stands up with the best of both writers' work.

The murder mystery is genuinely engrossing, too – and I won't say too much about it as that would be too much of a spoiler. Suffice to say, because of the first-rate characterisation on show here, Mortimore and Lane's cast of guest characters are very well defined, with realistic back-stories and motivations so that the reader genuinely cares about what happens to these people.

It also feels entirely appropriate that the real villain of the book is big business. That the faceless organisations are variants of the Interplanetary Mining Corporation (from the TV story 'Colony in Space') and the Grand Order of Oberon (from 'Revelation of the Daleks') is an added bonus and means this more than fulfils its place within the 'Future History' series of New Adventures. Without making a meal of it, the continuity really works, with disparate elements fitting together – and this isn't as easy a feat to pull off as it seems.

21 years on, I suggest anyone interested gives this another go. It stands up remarkably well, and it's nice to

trace Mortimore and Lane's successes back to this not-at-all humble beginning.

Alexandra says

Because the book doesn't come with a trigger warning, please note: it does contain a scene with an attempted rape, as well as a scene where a rape is vaguely described. It seems these were thrown in for the sole purpose of showing the readers how bad a particular character was. If that's the best a writer can do to bring across that a character is a shitty person, it's time for some writing workshops.

That said, here's my review:

Fantastic space thriller.

The cast, while very large, is nevertheless comprised of distinct individuals that are well developed. There's a good deal of diversity on every level, including age, including lots of action for the oldest characters, which you don't see a lot. The people act like people, and the aliens act like mysterious space beings whose motives are difficult for us to comprehend, because, you know, they're ALIENS.

And continuing a several-novel-streak, Lucifer Rising has queer characters presented compassionately, as complex human beings.

The story is packed with real tension and believable action. Things happen for good reasons.

Palindrome Mordnilap says

This is a solid New Adventures story, and a considerable improvement on some of the titles that preceded it. I particularly enjoyed how the story changed pace, switching from what appeared to be a Whodunit-in-space at first to a much more complex, hard sci-fi story as the novel progressed. The characterisations of the Doctor and Ace felt very believable, with both characters showing part of their on-screen persona coupled with the extra heft they have been given by the New Adventures in the series to date. Bernice also gets some decent moments, with the authors careful not to relegate her to 'secondary companion' status.

The narrative devices did feel a little too on the nose in places. The 'Adjudicator reviewing drone footage' was slightly tedious ((view spoiler)) not to mention the overuse of that rather clichéd 'something one character says is then repeated in a different context by another character in the next scene' motif. The prevalence of psychiatry-in-space, perhaps even exhibiting heretical Star Trek Next Generation influences, certainly highlights how this is definitely a 90s novel. The slightly clumsy tie-in of Native American beliefs also felt 'of its time', and somewhat jarring to a contemporary reader. These are, however, fairly minor crimes which do little to undermine the overall story.

In short, the plot is intriguing and it resists the temptation to resort to any kind of MacGuffin or deus ex machina style ending. The characters are all well fleshed out, and Ace in particular gets her best story since the excellent "Love and War" (which is referenced on several occasions). A very enjoyable read.

James Lark says

The internet tells me that we're in the middle of an arc known as 'the future history cycle', and although the reasons as to its being considered an arc remain vague, it throws some light on the reason why I'm getting so bored of this drab, dystopian future. (Granted, this book is meant to take place 300 years before 'Deceit'. But I challenge anyone to tell the difference.)

It's strange that a series springing from the most flexible television format ever created would restrict itself to being second rate Iain M. Banks, but once again I fear we're looking at the fruits of a fanbase desperate to be Grown Up. And this ever so serious attempt at futuristic science fiction brings a law of diminishing returns, insofar as the New Adventures future gets, if anything, **less** interesting. At this stage the style has become less steampunk and more 'Alien' without the tension. Or 'Red Dwarf' without the jokes.

Part of the problem is that where Iain M. Banks created a rich universe by building consistently on each carefully conceived novel, the New Adventures authors are trying to do the same using scraps picked out of 27 years of television. So we have to endure an exhausting stream of references (the Grand Order of Oberon, Ice warriors, Vega, Varos, the Hydrax, Rills, Rutans JUST MAKE IT STOP), alongside vocabulary and idioms dropped in from the McCoy years (multiple nods to polycarbide armour and special weapons Daleks make it clear that these writers have worshipped at the altar of 'Remembrance of the Daleks'). In fact, 'Remembrance' is almost certainly responsible for this litany of Wholore, but where Ben Aaronovitch successfully harnessed the Doctor's past to create a mythos, what we have here is just a random peppering of things-that-were-once-in-an-episode, like a 'Where's Wally?' of classic Doctor Who. It might not bother a regular reader (hah! the idea that this book would ever acquire a 'regular reader') but for someone whose misspent teens were steeped in Who it's an endless series of distractions, constantly hinting at significance where there is none.

All of which sits even more oddly in the background of a story informed largely by fantasy: even as we piece together the disparate elements we're given to make sense of this universe, we're asked to accept Angels, a magical bridge with a magical lift, magical landscapes with mysterious powers and a 200 year old dead religion whose artefacts retain an undefined power. Some of it is eventually explained with a page of technobabble, but that comes so late and is applied with so little logic that it might as well be supernatural, and it is the excuse for some pretty lazy storytelling - stuff happens because the magic allows it to happen, up to and including the denouement.

If it feels like I'm obsessing over tone and setting over story and characters, that's exactly what our authors appear to have done. The greedy exploration of style at the expense of substance seems to be endemic in this era of New Adventures, and although there are far more problematic examples, how much more satisfying a book this would be with more attention to structure. It starts off with the promising set-up of a murder mystery, the Doctor as Poirot and, at first, the individual bodies beginning to pile up. But a murder mystery needs a closed world populated by well-drawn, well developed characters, and motives need to be planted early on. It feels as though Lane and/or Mortimore got bored with the discipline required and abandoned this concept for the sprawling gory shooty fantasy mess we get instead - or did one of them start it off and the other take over and pull it in a completely new direction? Maybe somebody felt that an intimate murder mystery wasn't sufficiently 'too broad and deep for the small screen' (illustrating the limited ambition of such a brief). Either way, I don't suppose anyone has ever got to the reveal of the murderer with anything more than a shrug.

The cursory approach to storytelling extends to the regular characters, though perhaps we should be grateful

that the forced soap opera of the-Doctor-in-an-unhappy-triangle-with-his-companions is denied too much time. I am a fan of Ace in the two series she got on television, but she has proved a tricky character to develop, with various versions in various media failing to convince, and this slightly older macho vote is particularly odd to come back to. Now presumably no longer a teenager, sexually experienced and scarred from two years of fighting Daleks, she still has the exact same teenage hang-ups and sulky inability to cope with anything outside her comfort zone that she was displaying at 16 years old. 'Was Ace growing up just a little too fast?' muses the Doctor at one point. a) Mate, I think that ship has sailed, and b) I probably wouldn't worry, she demonstrably isn't growing up at all. Unless you count some completely inexplicable decisions and a degree of schizophrenia - Adric was given more plausible treatment.

Her presence does Bernice no favours either. We get the occasional glimmer of the brilliance she has previously displayed as a character, but for much of the story she is sidelined or bogged down with jealousy over the Doctor's relationship with Ace. What's to be jealous of, Benny? The fact that they argue constantly and view each other with crippling suspicion? Believe me, you're better off out of it. It's not clear why anyone would want to be friends with the Doctor. The New Adventures continues to offer a nightmare grotesque interpretation of McCoy's Doctor, an eccentric who we now learn collects pins and can hover, a playful side to his consistently psychopathic behaviour. Having said that, his dialogue is more or less on the money, and given some of the horrific attempts at eccentricity we've seen from other writers I suppose we should be grateful it's only pins he collects.

If I'm being unfairly critical it's not just because I didn't much enjoy it (I didn't), it's because there's so much potential here: the writing is often excellent and there is some brilliant and haunting imagery. A couple of cliffhanger moments really hit the target, thrilling edge-of-seat stuff. Oh, for a little more focus, and the emphasis on storytelling which has always been the staple of Doctor Who in its strongest form.

Anyway: the story resolves with Ace, Bernice and the Doctor happy again, all friends and stepping into the TARDIS for new adventures in time and space. Maybe we're in for a historical story next. A costume drama or a gothic horror. Maybe we'll get a frothy comedy to balance all that heavy sci-fi. After all, you can go anywhere in the TARDIS, can't you...?
