



# Doctor Who: Timewyrm-Genesys

*John Peel*

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Mesopotamia -- the cradle of civilization. In the fertile crescent of land on the banks of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, mankind is turning from hunter gatherer into farmer, and from farmer into city-dweller.

Gilgamesh, the first hero-king, rules the city of Uruk. An equally legendary figure arrives, in a police telephone box: the TARDIS has brought the Doctor and his companion Ace to witness the first steps of mankind's long progress to the stars.

And from somewhere amid those distant points of light an evil sentience has tumbled. To her followers in the city of Kish she is known as Ishtar the goddess; to the Doctor's forebears on ancient Gallifrey she was a mythical terror -- the Timewyrm.

## Doctor Who: Timewyrm-Genesys Details

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# From Reader Review Doctor Who: Timewyrm-Genesys for online ebook

## Tom Jones says

Well, that was shit.

I could rate it zero if that was an option.

I was expecting very little from this book and It seems I was correct with my fears. I know this book is highly disliked and it's one of the worst Doctor Who books. I said to myself "Once this is finished, I can move on to Exodus" Exodus on the over hand I knew I would love (I do!) but this was crap.

The plot is okay with Ishtar (The Timewyrm) crash landing at the age of civilisation. Mesopotamia. She later is face to face with Gilgamesh. He rejects her offer "Her touch" and Ishtar get's all annoyed and wants revenge for denying her touch or gift. The city of Urak and Kish are at difference with each other and are at war. Ishtar wishes to exploit that and create more chaos.

The supporting characters are boring 2D characters. Some are introduced and don't get a single form of development. Only used as a plot device to grow Ishtar's character by stating they fear her. When there is character development. It's shit. Gilgamesh. This is how his character works. If he sees a man he will want to fight him and kill him! If he sees a women he wants to seduce her or rape her! If he is in his own world he wants to get drunk.

The main characters The Doctor and Ace is done with no care! Why is this? Because John Peel wrote for a tardis team he hates. Wait, what! Why? He did this because he wanted to be known as the one to do the first original book that's why. A more satisfaction thing. John Peel can write well. Power and Evil Novelisation. But this failed simply because of incompetence. Everything is off. Pacing, writing, the stupid sexual references, characters and continuity. Ace references Paradise Towers.

Ummm, Ace wasn't in Paradise Towers. She wouldn't know.

There is an awful contradiction the book makes here.

So the Doctor discusses the plan of the attack with Ishtar. The Doctor Insists Ace to go with Gilgamesh. The Doctor knows he is unpredictable and dangerous and Ace hates the fact of going with him because she is nervous to be around him. Who wouldn't. The Doctor says to Ace to grow up. Are you serious right now?

At a point of the book the Doctor is reflecting about the bad things he's done and that he doesn't want to put Ace in danger and doesn't want to lose her. Then why the fuck would he send Ace with Gilgamesh who can put Ace's life inc danger! That makes zero sense and just turns out as a massive stupid contradiction.

How was this book published? It's got so many issues and has a clear and obvious sign it was rushed just to be the first original book. if I was head of the Virgin books. I would decline this book to be published because I would know this book had zero care and was a rushed attempt to be number 01. Some little bits here and there but it's just a rushed mess.

Overall, just a load of crap.

2/10

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## Leo H says

A pretty good start for the New Adventures, hampered by the fact that there are several typos and also the glaring (well, to a Dr Who fan, and who else would be reading this book) error of inferring that Ace went to Paradise Towers with The Doctor. She didn't. It was Mel.

The structure of the narrative feels like a televised Who story (a conflict is set up and the enemy is revealed, Ace and The Doctor arrive, meet up with 'The Goodies', split up, one is captured, the other rescues him/her, some technical wizardry occurs and the baddie is defeated (expect with this being a 4 book series she isn't quite killed, obviously)); you can almost see where the episodes would be divided by cliffhangers, and the novel itself reads like an extended Target Novelisation. The appearances of the 4th Doctor early on and the 3rd Doctor towards the end were well implemented, but I was a little confused as to when the 7th Doctor re-emerged. Did the 2nd Doctor briefly appear? Perhaps this was the point, that he was confused as well. Never mind.

In summary then, not quite as good as the excellent job Peel did of novelising (is that a verb? It is now) The Power of the Daleks, but not a complete disaster. Unlike, if the internet is to be believed, the 8th Doctor vs. The Daleks books he wrote a few years later.

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## Natalie says

I had a really hard time reading this book. Peel has a way of objectifying women in his books that celebrates the inherent sexism of sci-fi. From the molestation of Ace being passed off as a cultural thing (victim blaming much?) to the general pervy descriptions of women's bodies. Simply saying that a woman is attractive and fit would suffice, but there's an icky creep vibe to it that you just can't shake. I wondered if he ever expected a girl to read this book. I've read other Who books of his and it seems to be a pattern.

I will say however that Peel is not a bad writer. His structure is clean and his wording vivid. He just needs to take a women's studies course or two. Maybe check out some Angela Davis.

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## Nicholas Whyte says

<http://nhw.livejournal.com/666835.html>[return][return]The first ever of the New Adventures of Doctor Who published by Virgin between 1991 and 1997. Actually rather good stuff as the Seventh Doctor and Ace find themselves in ancient Babylon battling an alien force, mixing it up with Gilgamesh. If I'd picked this up back in 1991 I would certainly have ended up buying many more. Biggest flaw - the silly title. Why the "y" in "Genesys"?

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## Andrew Loader says

Recently, I have reviewed the first Big Finish audio, and wasn't overly impressed. I found it confusing and it seemed to be trying too hard. To be honest I was expecting the same from this novel, particularly as I had

heard relatively unflattering comments about John Peel's Dalek novels.

I have to say that reading this novel has been a very pleasant surprise. I found that it was quite entertaining and, as an adult, I was pleased that it was written at a language-level that I could enjoy and relate to.

However there weren't any adult-for-the-sake-of-being-adult sections. Yes, Ace had clearly grown up and thinks like a woman, but she's not jumping into bed with every good-looking man she meets. There is a womanising king, who clearly thinks he can have his way with any woman he meets (Ace has very different views on that) and there are topless girls who "pleasure" important people to appease the gods. However, nothing is explicit; nothing is there to make the teen boys happy.

It was very easy to imagine Sylvester McCoy and Sophie Aldred playing their parts, as portrayed in this book. Both characters are realistically written, particularly Ace's feisty side.

Of course, this is simply the first part of a Quadrilogy. There is still much to learn about The Timewyrm. I continue onto the next novel, with much anticipation.

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## Wendy says

Like most series of *Doctor Who* original novels, the New Adventures gets off to a slightly lacklustre start. The fusion of ancient Mesopotamian legend with aliens ought to make for a really classic pseudo-historical. However, the story takes an awfully long time to get going - halfway through the book, the Doctor and Ace are just starting to twig that something funny is going on in Kish. Gilgamesh is an incredibly annoying character, and Ace isn't much better. I know that my conception of Ace as a character has had over a decade of spin-off novels and audios since *Timewyrm: Genesis* in which to evolve, but even at this early stage of the game, Ace ought to be a seasoned enough time traveller to not insist on judging everything and everyone by the standards of Perivale in the 1980s. Add in a number of gratuitous continuity references and two cameo appearances by the 3rd and 4th Doctors, and you just have a bit of a mess.

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## Alex says

John Peel gets a lot right and a lot wrong in this first entry in the Dr. Who new Adventures line. As a tentative step into the world of original Dr. Who novels I'd say that it's something of a success. An enjoyable, mostly rip-roaring adventure that pits the Dr and Ace against a superpowered being masquerading as a God in Ancient Mesopotamia, that also serves as the setting up of a larger narrative arc. I've longed to see some Dr. Who stories that cater for an adult audience and, whilst you could easily argue that Peel's throwing in a little sexual description isn't all that "adult", it's pretty inoffensive and sets a nicely different tone from what we'd seen on TV up to that point (and still). There's a lot of good humour in the book too (alongside a lot of very bad humour, admittedly) and a particularly nice running gag that sees Ace tiring of the continual sexual advances of the great warrior King Gilgamesh himself.

Unfortunately, whilst the setup and main plotline are pretty fun, Peel is a lot better at writing full blooded adventure than he is contemplative or character scenes. The middle of the novel wanders quite hopelessly as characters partake in bad dialogue that goes nowhere and discuss plans that they don't really need to. Peel knew where he wanted this book to go but didn't have a strong enough vision of how to get there. This also leads to a large cast of fun historical characters (yeah, there's a bare breasted teenage prostitute ... take that, errr, someone) remaining a little underdeveloped and the character of Gilgamesh ultimately looking a little one-note. The Doctor and Ace don't necessarily come out a lot better, having a tendency to repeatedly talk to

historical characters using modern colloquialisms that they're never going to understand. It's not particularly funny and doesn't help the characters relate to one another. All-in-all it's as if John Peel is a little uncertain if he wants to take Dr. Who in a radical new direction or safely tread old ground.

This is a fun book, though and a very positive start to the series that makes me eager to read more and to find out what original Dr. Who fiction is really capable of.

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## **Mike McNamara says**

Like all things Doctor Who, it's hard for me to separate the Timewyrm series from their place in the show's history, its narrative, and my own personal history as well. Though I was lucky enough to discover the show when I lived in an area where I was able to eventually view all of the show's history (thanks Iowa Public Television), I still discovered most of the show through the written word. This meant the Target novels for the most part. But then, after the show was cancelled in 1989 and the show's 'official history' continued in the Virgin New Adventures, these more adult books, though perfect for my age at the time (16) were also, in a pre-Internet age living in the Midwest, outside of my grasp, as having the cash to order them seemed like a huge investment, especially for a kid who was trying to ignorantly distance himself from his more nerdy pursuits. So I never got around to reading these books, even though I longed to, and only picked up on these adventures when I'd find the occasional book at bookstores - new and used - over the next 20 years.

So now I'm on the path to reading them all in order, but doing so, I can't help but place them in their proper context, even though I know what's to come.

And reading the first two books in the series, I can't help but think how perfect they are at both being a continuation of the show that had been recently left behind but also imagining what the show would be in 2005.

Timewyrm: Genesis brings the Doctor and Ace in Perivale we left on screen in 1989 and re-introduces the characters with a literal blank slate, while showing the imperfect relationship Ace and the Doctor had, when the Doctor's memory experiments end up wiping Ace's memory completely. So not only are we introduced to the character, we're re-introduced in a way that sets up the relationship perfectly.

The novel, unlike later books (both in the Virgin New Adventures and the BBC Books series as well) still feels very much like a classic episode in its structure. I can't tell you exactly if it breaks down into a four-episode cliffhanger, but it does seem to have a lot of similarities in pacing -- though it builds to the end, it very much has ebbs and flows, and the pacing works well. Likewise, the secondary characters work well. Embarrassingly, I wasn't that familiar with the story of Gilgamesh, so part of the concept was lost on me (though it wasn't the first - or probably last - time Doctor Who has been used to teach me something I should have learned in school)

I'm not sure how well the Timewyrm works as a story arc (will probably write more about that after I finish up the fourth book) but there's something about it, again, that feels both like what the production team had tried to do on screen - as far back as the 8th (All-Master-All-the-Time) season, the 16th (Key-To-Time) season, and other shorter arcs. But likewise, it also feels very New Who -- with individual stories tied back to the arc (view spoiler)

As for the "adult themes" particularly added that supposedly stand out according to other reviews -- where

are they? I mean, I see them -- bare breasts and characters who are prostitutes. But where's the smut that had everybody up in arms? There's a bit of sniggering (from Ace, which seems in character) but the rest is handled very matter of factually and not gratuitous at all.

In fact, just like you wouldn't ever be able to show bare breasts on TV, you'd never be able to realistically depict the world of ancient Mesopotamia with early 90s BBC budget. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't try. For at least this first go around (and the next), the author takes the best of Doctor Who and uses the medium to continue the story.

So, it's obvious I can't really separate my love of Doctor Who from my review of this book. But I do think it was a fun read and worth the twenty year wait.

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## **David Sarkies says**

### **Doctor Who's new beginnings**

25 January 2012

This is the first of the New Doctor Who Adventures, a series of books published by Virgin Publishing which continues the adventures of the Doctor and Ace after the series was cancelled. This book is also the first of the four part story arc about the Timewyrm and chronicles the beginnings of the Timewyrm.

At the beginning of the book the Doctor is warned by a past incarnation of himself about the legendary Timewyrm, and then travels to Ancient Mesopotamia where he meets up with a number of personages that appear in The Epic of Gilgamesh (namely Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and Utnapishtim). I am not sure if this book is supposed to be a retelling of the epic (it is not), but events, such as travelling to Utnapishtim, are taken from the epic.

The basic premise of the Epic is that Gilgamesh's best friend, Enkidu, dies and Gilgamesh goes on a quest to find a way to bring him back to life (he fails), but in the process he meets up with Utnapishtim who tells him about how he survived a great flood that was sent onto the Earth. As I said this book is not the Epic of Gilgamesh, it is a Doctor Who story that borrows from the epic.

Basically an intergalactic criminal crash lands on Earth in Ancient Mesopotamia and disguises herself as the god Ishtar and attempts to then use her advanced knowledge to take over the world. She is a cyborg (a cybernetic organism, namely a living being enhanced with electronics) and is immensely powerful. It turns out that Utnapishtim is also an alien, whose ship crashed to Earth in pursuit of Ishtar. As can be expected they all team up and defeat Ishtar. However she is not quite destroyed because she is downloaded into the Tardis' computer and then ejected into the time stream. She then returns from the time stream as a new enemy of the Doctor: the Timewyrm.

This was an okay start to the new series and it still tries to capture the old episodes. However Doctor Who was originally designed to be a show to help children learn history, though this quickly changed to become the longest running Sci-fi TV show in history (and it is still going).

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## **F.R. says**

Reading the very first of the Virgin New Adventures, I was immediately struck by how adult things are already. Nowadays it would probably fall into the bracket of young adult, but even then we're still a long way from the TV show. There's nudity, fornication, prostitution and a whole load of violence. Of course, this series of books became much darker and weird, but this is a definite statement of intent.

And it's not a bad tale to kick off with. The Doctor and Ace arriving in ancient Mesopotamia to deal with all kinds of other worldly goings-on in what feels like a cross-over with some lost Robert E. Howard tale. Peel is definitely making the most of his canvas, giving us a tale that is magnificently epic and packed with vibrant characters. Probably it's not the most memorable story, but it's a rip-roaring adventure there to be enjoyed – and that's not something to bemoan.

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## **Amanda says**

In general, the New Virgin line of Doctor Who books are satisfying not because they're precisely wonderful, amazing literature, but because they're in the spirit of Dr. Who.

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## **Chris says**

I have always been of the opinion that even bad Doctor Who is better than most other entertainment. However, for me this book is a failure as it fails on the promise it gives. In the preface it gives a statement of intent and on almost every point it misses:

*to continue the Doctor Who traditions of humour:*

The few examples of humour are mostly centred around the return of the 7th Doctor's spoonerism or fan service. It is hard to find these funny in the middle of so much unpleasantness.

*drama:*

The drama mostly is confined to angst. People mistrusting and being mean-spirited about each other. This was not the tradition of drama in Doctor Who.

*and terror:*

There is very little that is actually terrifying as such in this (apart from a trick in the latter part which would be used in *The Doctor's Wife* to greater effect). I felt too detached from it to be terrified, it was more sickening than terrifying.

*and to continue the trend of recent television stories towards complex, challenging plots with serious themes:*

Well what were the acclaimed TV series of the time?



BAFTA Awards TV Drama Series or Serial 1991:

Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit

Agatha Christie's Poirot

House of Cards

Inspector Morse

Emmy Awards TV Drama 1990:

L.A Law

China Beach

Quantum Leap

thirtysomething

Twin Peaks

These have very little in the way of pushing taboos around nudity or violence nor was it a tendency towards anti-heroes. What they were doing was dealing with social concerns and really investing in deep character explorations. Interestingly the two science fictional works among these (Quantum Leap and Twin Peaks) were actually quite close to Doctor Who in the genuinely good outsider coming in to try to resolve problems outside the realm of the locals.

And many of the ideas they would want to take were already in existence in later Doctor Who. Ace and the 7th Doctor both go through distinct character arcs. They deal with social issues such as racism, family relationships and the politics of the time. They even did arcs like Timewyrm with long villains like Trial of A Timelord or The Black Guardian trilogy.

What this ends up doing is the poor HBO rip-offs we see nowadays, where some shows think blood and nudity are what made True Blood or Game of Thrones a success.

*to take full advantage of the scope offered by the medium of the novel:*

It does do this to some extent, by having it set in areas that the television series at the time would not have been able to afford and by giving us some internal monologues but these are poorly used. The Sumerian era is well researched but it is used more to do a poor Conan style story rather actually something that reflects carefully on the real epics. The internal monologues do not reflect the characters as we know them, instead makes them decidedly unpleasant. I will only assume the bizarre mindwipes at the beginning resulted in everyone changing personalities (and not just used as an excuse for Ace to stare at herself naked for several pages)

*a two-fisted, sword-breaking, sword wielding, action-packed adventure which doesn't pause for breath between the first and last pages:*

One of the worst crimes the book commits is how tedious it is. A good way to show this is the chapter ends near 1/4, 1/2, 3/4 and the end of the novel, essentially being the cliffhangers if this was a Doctor Who episode:

End of chapter 6: *'Spying tonight!' he announced, and led the way towards the gate*

End of chapter 11: *Silence fell over the hall as Avram spun his song for them*

End of chapter 17: *She could only pray that the Doctor would have some idea what they could do with the [spoiler]...*

End of epilogue: *'We are in London, then. It looks as though I'll need a brolly out there.'*

There is a bit of an action scene at the climax but the majority is sitting around talking or disturbing sex scenes. If this was more like 1930s pulp or like an epic I might have approved but this is just dull.

I am willing to give it one extra Star as it manages to at least be reasonably coherent, unlike other spin-off media, and it was the start of what would turn into a very interesting run of stories that would eventually

come closer to the concept.

EDIT: On a reread removing that extra star for being even more dreadful than I recalled.

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## **Brendon Schrodinger says**

The New Adventures hold a special place in my personal history as they represent the time in my life when I came to be a Doctor Who fan rather than a viewer. I had grown up watching Doctor Who on TV, a staple of ABC dinnertime programming during the eighties. I had read a few of the target novelisations borrowed from the local library.

But in 1993, at the age of 13 I discovered the New Adventures in a bookshop. Flush with funds (probably after my birthday) I purchased *The Left-Handed Hummingbird*, *Conundrum* and *No Future*. I devoured them quickly and fell in love with Doctor Who.

The New Adventures represents my heyday of Doctor Who consumption. A fans favourite Doctor tends to be the current Doctor for when they fall in love with the program. Therefore the Doctor to me is the Seventh Doctor, joined by Ace and Bernice.

There are books that I have read in the range several times over the years, books that I have read only once and some in the range that I haven't read at all. Why not start from the beginning and relive them all for the 50th anniversary?

So we start with the original 4 part series, *Timewyrm*. In selecting the authors for these novels the publisher chose old stalwarts of the Doctor Who range, apart from the last, *Revelation*, penned by some unknown fan Paul Cornell.

Rereading *Genesys* gave no surprises. From memory it was dull and forgettable and I tend to agree. I remember reading about the controversy when it first came out about the graphic sexual references. And they do tend to stick out a bit. I think John Peel took the whole pitching it to a more grown up audience the wrong way. But reading it as a teenager I really didn't mind, nor was it a stretch to imagine female characters traipsing around Mesopotamia bare-chested.

What struck me this time around was how Doctor Who-by-numbers the story is. It certainly is predictable, but in all the wrong ways. It will be interesting to contrast this with the next novel, *Exodus* by Terrance Dicks, which from memory is another Doctor Who-by-numbers that is great fun and works well.

So a really dull start to what is to be a great series of books. I guess this is what happens when the publishers play it too safe in selecting known authors for the new range.

Looking forward to *Exodus*, the next in the range and part two of the Timewyrm sequence. Timewyrm:  
Exodus

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## **Em says**

Okay, it was definitely better than I expected. I expected a solid block of cheesy 80's scifi, and instead I got a somewhat intriguing look at early human history. It was actually a lot like the Eighth Doctor Adventures, though the dynamic between Ace and Seven is very different.

Ace was annoying, though in a way that suited her character. I don't know the seventh Doctor very well, so I can't judge how accurately he was portrayed. I was disappointed with how he treated Ace, but that seems intentional.

I did feel like the whole story was a bit over-sexualized. Yes, we're dealing with primitive human civilizations--I get it. I really only needed one creepy scene to get the point that Gilgamesh is a sexist pig, not fifty. Eventually it just started to sound like some nerdy pre-teen writing fanfiction and going "look how grown up I am!" Clearly this was some kind of immature bid to snatch up the interest of adult fans after the TV show's cancellation.

Even after all that, I wouldn't give it one of my 'R' ratings. There was nothing graphic, though plenty was implied.

Overall the story was good enough to keep me reading 'till the end and right on through to the next book. I don't really like the seventh Doctor or Ace much right now, but I have a feeling I might like them somewhere down the road.

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## **Jennifer Tull says**

Here is my review of Timewyrm: Genesys.

Before i begin the review i originally i going to read Exodus but then i found out that in order to understand the plot you have to read Genesys first. So i decided to begin reading it on Friday. And i finished it today. Anyway this is what i think of Timewyrm: Genesys....(I start banging my head against a wall) Well this was...interesting so say the least. This. Is an abomination of a book. This is horrible. First of all the prologue made no sense to the rest of the story. And the first 2 chapters are very draggy. The 3rd chapter is more boring than draggy. And then the 4th, 5th and 6th chapter are not bad. But then it goes downhill quickly. And it turns into a real mess. And the ending is'nt good. Even though i did not spend any money on this book(I have a free PDF download from a site) It was not worth it. Not even a free download of it is worth it. This is horrible. But some people might disagree but i don't like this book. Plus this is my first original Doctor Who book. Before this i had only read a few target novels of stories. But anyway this is not a good book. The only good part is the first scenes in the TARDIS and the scene where they land

I give it a 1.5/10

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