



Doctor Who: Shadowmind

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Arden. A planet of hills and streams and forests. Peaceful. Friendly.

'There is no indigenous intelligent life there.'

'What is there then?' the Doctor said.

'It's a new colony world, Doctor. We started developing it three years ago.'

But there is something on Arden. Something that steals minds and memories. Something that is growing stronger. Something that can reach out to the regional stellar capital, Tairngaire -- where the newest exhibit in the sculpture park is a blue box surmounted by a flashing light.

Doctor Who: Shadowmind Details

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From Reader Review Doctor Who: Shadowmind for online ebook

Christopher Buchanan says

A really fun book and a great story. It's a first outing so there are a few occasional awkward sentences and spelling/punctuation errors. (In the case of the eBook version, the later errors are probably due to the fan that lovingly transcribed the book for free.) Naturally, this is going to lead to some folks trying to display how clever they are by showing off their mastery of 4th grade grammar. It's a lot simpler than actually formulating and justifying an objective critique. However, if you can get past being an unimaginative twat, you're in for a banging great Doctor Who story.

First off, beautifully paced. I was gripped all the way through this. The story revs up quick and hardly gives you time for a breather after that.

The book takes full advantage of not having to worry about budget constraints and has a healthy amount of world hopping and epic starship battles.

Character-wise, the story itself largely centers on Ace. The Doctor is more in the background. One of my few gripes is that Benny is pretty irrelevant in the story and under used. Some of the supporting characters could be fleshed out more or maybe eliminated, but it doesn't really hurt the story or the flow of the book.

As for the baddies: 10 out of 10. Very imaginative, well thought out and interesting. The Shenn and the Umbra are two of the most intriguing and plausibly explained weird aliens I've encountered in the books. Wish there was more of them.

And finally, while the naked Ace battle scene was pretty cheesy, I dug it. Naughty and clever.

As I've said in reviews before, it ain't Shakespeare, but if you take it for what it is (a Doctor Who pulp novel) it's pretty good. I greatly enjoyed it.

Nicholas Whyte says

A decent enough Seventh Doctor, Ace and Benny story, with human colonists wandering into an existing struggle between two alien entities. I didn't think Bulis quite got Benny in this one but he has an excellent Ace and good Doctor. A really good ending which would have made great TV especially for New Who, as the Bad Alien Entity is put out of action by a bright idea of the Doctor's. Would be an OK book for Who fans who don't know the New Adventures, less useful for non-Who fans wanting to experiment.

Em says

FINALLY a really good Seventh Doctor novel. This one has cool aliens, great local characters, and even a pretty original plot. The whole story was fast-paced and imaginative. Granted, there was a lot of sitting around and discussing battle tactics, but the author handled it surprisingly well. Normally I hate reading about battles and military strategies. Did I mention the aliens were cool? They were amazing.

Ace and Bernice have some interesting stuff going on. Ace finds plenty of time to be a badass while still pausing to have some deeper moments. Bernice has all her usual snark.

The fact that the Doctor knew everything that was going on and was basically the sole engine of plot exposition could have gone terribly wrong, but somehow it seemed credible enough that he randomly knew everything. That's just Seven, I guess. He waltzes in and knows everything.

Alexandra says

I've never seen so many typos in a book. And you call that an ending, Mr. Bulis?

Mike McDevitt says

Heavily features Ace, so I want to forgive it a thousand sins. But not 2000. Spelling and grammatical errors abound throughout. My favorite is page 33 where our heroine muses that she "should have worn her combat suite". Weird characterization: Benny's not very clever or snarky and the Doctor has no plan beyond donning his own "combat suit". Skip it.

David says

This started out promising, but it really just got boring towards the end. Benny continues to be redundant (I hope they start writing better plotlines for her) and the resolution of the story was unexciting.

Chris says

The only thing I knew about this book was Robert Smith? saying it "may indeed be the worst book ever written in the entire history of literature". I am happy to report I do not think that is justified but, at the same time, there isn't much to particularly recommend this book. It is popcorn Doctor Who, fun setup, spaceships, alien bodysnatchers. It is fine in a very trad sense but not something anyone will remember.

Scurra says

OK, this one was weird, in that it's not actually a Doctor Who novel at all, but I can't work out what it is. And yet the story itself is fine, and the other characters are perfectly well-drawn - and, unusually, they take a full part in resolving the plot. This makes it hard to rate - if it hadn't been masquerading then it would probably get another star.

So, for instance, there is an incredible stupid section near the beginning in which Ace arbitrarily decides to start calling the Doctor "Doc". This appears to me to be a hasty editorial insertion (rather than going through the manuscript and fixing the "Doc" references which would have been much more complicated.)

The central conceit is rather good, with two nicely different alien species portrayed plausibly. Some of the set-pieces are very well done; there haven't been any space battles presented like this in Who novels up to this point, which makes them stand out. And the resolution of the plot is very clever, using the "gun hung over the fireplace" in a neat fashion (albeit a little unlikely that it would work instantly as it does here.)

Reading this back, I think I've worked out what's wrong. This might have been intended to be a Star Trek novel... Even the aliens both feel like Trek aliens rather than Who aliens now I think about it. Hmmmm.

Travis says

One of the better 'New Adventures' with a decent mystery and bad guy, good characterization some nice action scenes and the Doctor feels like the Doctor, not the mopey, manipulative guy he's portrayed as being in a lot of these books.

Bunch of plots threads that I had some doubts the writer could pull together and make work and was pleasantly surprised when he did.

plus, if you like that sort of thing, I think this is the book where Ace gets naked.

Michel Siskoid Albert says

There's this New Adventure (Doctor Who again) called Shadowmind by Christopher Bullis that I'd given up on last September. Well, with 90 pages to go, why not use my momentum to finish it? It's done. It's not that it's bad - it's got some interesting ideas and plenty of twists, maybe even one too many - but it does feel a lot less necessary than some other NAs I've read. But I'm now ready to move on - in the NA range and others.

Steven says

Can I give a book zero stars? 'Cause I'd like to do that, please.

James Bowman says

Generally good but uneven Seventh Doctor novel. For much of the book there's a really interesting central mystery and very interesting aliens, with only the occasional foray into military SF proving a distraction. The big bad's arrival is anticlimactic after all that build-up, although things start to improve once we get a feel for its actual character. Then the finale is needlessly grim, even if the villain's defeat is elegant. (B)

James Barnard says

I was initially unsure whether I wanted to reread this one. I remember enjoying it, but, even though I first read it only six years ago, in 2008 (some 15 years after it was first published), I couldn't recall very much

about it. Was this because it's actually a bit dull? Well, no, actually – there's a very good science fiction tale being told here, with a genuinely alien race attempting to interact with the human race, and it's an easy book to read.

The trouble is, it all feels a bit first-draft, and doesn't quite hang together as well as it feels it should. A couple more redrafts would have ironed out the fact that both factions of humans seem interchangeable, and given them a bit more definable character traits. This would also have sorted out the surprisingly high number of typos I spotted – one or two are unavoidable, but in some parts there seemed to be a grammatical error on every page.

That said, in a story arc loosely defined as “future” history, this may well be the best example of what those books were supposed to depict. It details mankind’s space exploration, but gives some very interesting context to it, so it feels like this really does fit within a defined continuity.

From little acorns, mighty oaks grow. And from tiny seeds, fruit trees grow. Christopher Bulis would go on to write at least one book for each of the first eight Doctors, with – mostly – real success in recreating that era. This is a solid start and a book which, if you can overlook the unpolished feel to it, is a surprisingly good read.

Donnie Springfield says

A fun concept soured by utterly joyless writing. Skip it.
