



Doctor Who: The Domino Effect

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Within hours one of the Doctor's friends is caught in a deadly explosion, while another appears on television confessing to the murder of twelve people. The TARDIS is stolen by forces intent on learning its secrets. When the Doctor tries to investigate, his efforts are hampered by crippling chest pains. Someone is manipulating events to suppress humanity's development - but how and why? The trail leads to London where a cabal pushes the world ever closer to catastrophe. Who is the prisoner being held in the Tower of London? Could he or she hold the key to saving mankind? The Doctor must choose between saving his friends or saving Earth in the past, present and future. But the closer he gets to the truth, the worse his condition becomes...

Doctor Who: The Domino Effect Details

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From Reader Review Doctor Who: The Domino Effect for online ebook

James Barnard says

My abiding memory of 'The Domino Effect' on first reading it in 2003 was how quickly I rattled through it. And that's absolutely the case here – it's one of the easiest reads in the entire series. I had wondered if this meant the plot itself was a little lacking, but no, it still seems very engrossing without too many obvious inconsistencies.

I've made no secret of the fact I didn't like BBC Books' multiple universe saga, but Bishop makes a good run at it here. The setting is at once familiar and disturbing – this may look like the Edinburgh we all know, but there's something very dark at the heart of things, not least the appallingly xenophobic attitudes of its citizens.

It seems appalling that one change – the diversion of people and resources from a technological advance which would enable development and exploration – could make such a difference, but the end results seem all too believable. We pity the vilified Anji, the incarcerated Fitz and the bewildered and disabled Doctor as they struggle to gain the upper hand in a deeply corrupt, anti-technological dictatorship.

The return of a historical figure who'd been at the heart of a much earlier novel does feel a little unnecessary, and undermines the novel's success in creating an unfamiliar setting from a familiar location. It would have been better without it. Other than that, though, this is a cracking read – undemanding yet engrossing.

Maya Panika says

Another day, another parallel universe - sometimes it just seems too easy to hide a plot in a paradox.

On the whole, it was a good page-turner and not over-stuffed with nonsenses (something you can't say for every EDA). It's brutal, for sure, as much as any Doctor Who book I've read. The casual cruelty, the disregard for life and justice, the complete absence of compassion are all too real and happening in too many places in our own time, on our own planet, but it makes for an often uncomfortable read and the cliff-hanger ending would have been a nuisance if I didn't already have the next book ready to read.

So, a pleasing pot-boiler; not one of the best, certainly not one of the worst. Heavily centred in the plot rather than the characters and subsequently, an easy read, but be prepared for the casual horror which I found overwhelming at times.

Basicallyrun says

I don't know. I genuinely don't. See, I'm a complete sucker for alternative histories, which TDE provides in spades, and I'm also interested in the history of computing (in a sort of vague I-fangirl-Turing-and-Babbage-and-Lovelace way), so really the *ideas* here were rather brilliant as far as I was concerned. But the writing style, in parts, was so clunky that I stopped reading just to blink at it. Most of the time it wasn't noticeably

bad, and possibly I only noticed the bits I did because I'd been warned about that, but neither was it ever noticeably good. Also, I am not terribly happy with the Doctor's explanation for why he was acting so uncaring about Fitz's fate. Anji seems to forgive him for it, but I'm not so inclined to. And they're arguments were painful to read, though I don't know enough of Anji to be able to say whether she was OOC or not.

So. OK. Fitz. Yay for Fitz being open-minded and horrified by the way the Empire is behaving. Somewhat less yay for his complete inability to *just shut up* in the face of repeated beatings. Seriously, if you've observed that saying *anything* tends to get the crap kicked out of you *stop making snarky remarks*. I probably could've accepted it if it hadn't happened about a dozen times, but really, Fitz is not stupid or brave-to-the-point-of-idiocy (the Doctor, on the other hand...).

And Turing. I can't work out whether I'm delighted by the idea of Turing surviving into his 90s, or whether what happens to him in TDE is worse than reality. Because seriously, 70-odd years in near-solitary confinement is a horrible thought, doubly so if he was forbidden from working on anything new and interesting after the shroud. But I did like his interactions with Fitz (especially how Fitz was totally cool with Turing being in love with Chris at school). It was really, really obvious, though, that Bishop had just read the Hodges biography before coming to write TDE. Thing is, I would've loved the anecdotes if they had actually expanded on what the biography said, but they... didn't. Or if they'd linked into the plot of TDE, but they seemed to be used mainly as a quick and easy way to set Turing up as an omg-3D-character so that his eventual fate would actually mean something. And I don't feel it worked.

Michael Battaglia says

"What is this?" I asked that question multiple times while reading this book, as I patiently flipped pages waiting for something, anything interesting to happen. Waited for the scenes of brutality to arc into something resembling beauty or insight. Waited for characters to make intelligent decisions and not decisions that the plot dictated they make. Waited for the stakes to clarify or just make plain sense. Waited for Fitz to get out of the stinkin' prison. Alas, only one of those came true.

I know Bishop is capable of writing a good novel. "Who Killed Kennedy?", while not a National Book Award winning masterpiece, was an interesting take on the show, rendering a point of view from outside the series and recasting what we thought was familiar into something even more alien and unsettling and creepy. But two novels past that high point, you start to wonder if it was a fluke, especially when the last novel I read of his ("Amorality Tale") had enough of an "ugh" reaction to make actively question my faith in ratings systems. This doesn't quite reach those lows, but it doesn't seem to aspire to much either. It aspires to fill pages with words, but so does the instructions for my tax forms. One holds my interest because it may mean I get money back. What does this have to offer me?

More parallel earths, as it turns out. Which is fine in itself and not the author's fault. That's the arc the series is working under, all he can do is do his best with it. But this it? The Doctor and company wind up in 2003 England where at some point scientific progress has stopped, or been severely curtailed. No computers, for instance. What's left is a more or less totalitarian regime that winds up being so bored that it resorts to blowing itself up to create headlines (indeed, when half the rebels seem to be double agents anyway, you start to wonder if the government is either doing their jobs too well or going about this the wrong way). Before long, Fitz is captured, Anji is injured and the Doctor is suffering chest pains like a senior citizen who's just realized he won the lottery. Meanwhile, nothing seems to have anything to do with the plot, which also includes the fat old white men who secretly run England and punctuate all their cliched statements with phrases like "Britannia rules the wave!" without the slightest hint that we're not supposed to take this seriously. There's a weird androgynous Oracle who says bizarre things and our actual villain hides in plain

sight, not that he does anything until the last twenty pages anyway.

What brings this one down is how slipshod it all seems. Better reviewers than I have already pointed out the obvious notion, that it takes Anji Kapoor, seasoned time traveler and one who is already aware that parallel earths and alternate histories have lately been in the mix, far far too long to realize that she's on a parallel earth and not home, even as the whole world seems to be conspiring to tell her that. But while that's dumb, I find even more egregious the scene where she insists they all go down to the local pub for a pint since she's bored of sitting inside, aware that people have been looking for her and the Doctor for days. How has she survived this long? Fitz spends the vast majority of his time being utterly useless but getting all the good lines, as he's captured and then proceeded to be beaten or tortured at odd intervals whenever the plot starts to slow down. In fact, everyone in the book is hit or shot at at least once, as the book wants to hammer into us again and again that This Is Not a Nice Place. By the time they start wantonly massacring civilians you want to shout at the book, "Enough! I get it already!" but you breeze through that scene like every other short scene because it brings you one step closer to finishing.

Once again we're stuck in a modern England with a resistance force, sort of like "The Dalek Invasion of Earth" only without the Daleks to help balance things out and provide some menace. And "The Dalek Invasion of Earth" wasn't that good WITH the Daleks, so imagine a story just like it with the one possible redeeming factor removed. Even the comic relief never works, as I can only assume is intended when the local Keystone Kop, who ha-ha has a spotty memory, fails to even recognize wanted criminal the Doctor, who was recently profiled on TV. Maybe that's nitpicking but it only shows how colorless this all seems, so joyless, so intent on going through the motions that it's become stationary. Everyone searches for Alan Turing, who is kept alive for reasons that even the villain can't articulate properly (and then reverses himself two pages later) but the scenes where he discusses in prison with Fitz being a lonely gay man were done far better almost twenty years prior in Alan Moore's "V for Vendetta".

When the end does come, it arrives with a wave of science babble and reveals that seem to be made up as we went along (the villain has never met the Doctor but knows everything about him, because . . . yes), where plot twists pile upon plot twists in an attempt to keep us off-balance, but the resolutions can't get out of their own way fast enough to even let it sink in, if we even cared about these people. Which oftentimes we don't.

It seems like not that long ago I was praising the Eighth Doctor line for taking risks and being inventive and giving us novels that hit that mark between strange and special. Now, after two novels that have been increasingly struggling to be "okay" that run seems like a happy accident of circumstance. Maybe this was written under deadline pressure, maybe its bowing too much to the needs of the overall arc, but it feels oddly shallow and stripped of the wonderful strangeness that had been characterizing the line, giving us a generic that not only could fit any Doctor, but has pretty much been done before.

To me, the biggest crime is not even the plot, but that it does little justice to our stalwart trio, Fitz and Anji and the Doctor, who other authors have proven could lay claim to being one of the most cohesive and capable groups to travel in the TARDIS. Here they seem like strangers to each other and even while separated, barely seem like themselves. When the Doctor and Anji engage in another pointless argument that thrusts them apart, it should feel heartbreaking, two old friends finally reaching their limits in a stressful time, but instead it comes across as the plot's hammerblow attempt to stretch things out a little further, not from anything organic.

It's weird, most of the mediocre books in this line strike me as bits of good novels searching for better novels to be in. Here, it all seems to coexist quite nicely, in perfect harmony, and that may be the problem.

Ianto Williams says

Really enjoyed reading this book. A strong story which maintained interest throughout.
