



The Doomsday Book

By Connie Willis

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For Kivrin, preparing an on-site study of one of the deadliest eras in humanity's history was as simple as receiving inoculations against the diseases of the fourteenth century and inventing an alibi for a woman traveling alone. For her instructors in the twenty-first century, it meant painstaking calculations and careful monitoring of the rendezvous location where Kivrin would be received.

But a crisis strangely linking past and future strands Kivrin in a bygone age as her fellows try desperately to rescue her. In a time of superstition and fear, Kivrin -- barely of age herself -- finds she has become an unlikely angel of hope during one of history's darkest hours.

Five years in the writing by one of science fiction's most honored authors, Doomsday Book is a storytelling triumph. Connie Willis draws upon her understanding of the universalities of human nature to explore the ageless issues of evil, suffering and the indomitable will of the human spirit.

From the Paperback edition.

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The Doomsday Book By Connie Willis Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Connie Willis labored five years on this story of a history student in 2048 who is transported to an English village in the 14th century. The student arrives mistakenly on the eve of the onset of the Black Plague. Her dealings with a family of "contemps" in 1348 and with her historian cohorts lead to complications as the book unfolds into a surprisingly dark, deep conclusion. The book, which won Hugo and Nebula Awards, draws upon Willis' understanding of the universalities of human nature to explore the ageless issues of evil, suffering and the indomitable will of the human spirit.

From Publishers Weekly

This new book by Hugo- and Nebula-award-winning author Willis (*Lincoln's Dreams*) is an intelligent and satisfying blend of classic science fiction and historical reconstruction. Kivrin, a history student at Oxford in 2048, travels back in time to a 14th-century English village, despite a host of misgivings on the part of her unofficial tutor. When the technician responsible for the procedure falls prey to a 21st-century epidemic, he accidentally sends Kivrin back not to 1320 but to 1348--right into the path of the Black Death. Unaware at first of the error, Kivrin becomes deeply involved in the life of the family that takes her in. But before long she learns the truth and comes face to face with the horrible, unending suffering of the plague that would wipe out half the population of Europe. Meanwhile, back in the future, modern science shows itself infinitely superior in its response to epidemics, but human nature evidences no similar evolution, and scapegoating is still alive and well in a campaign against "infected foreigners."p. 204 This book finds villains and heroes in all ages, and love, too, which Kivrin hears in the revealing and quietly touching deathbed confession of a village priest.

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From Library Journal

A time-traveling history student is trapped in the Middle Ages, dangerously close to the onset of the Black Plague. Her rescuers in 21st-century Oxford battle their own deadly epidemic to reach her in time. The author of *Lincoln's Dreams* (LJ 4/15/87) balances two storylines with exquisite skill as she depicts a pair of closely knit communities--each facing an unknown and frightening enemy. Willis uses the language of time travel and advanced technologies to speak of human concerns, finding parallels that transcend time in the hopes, struggles, and fears of her modern and medieval characters. The clarity and consistency of her writing, as well as her deft storytelling ability, place her among this decade's most promising writers. A priority purchase.

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