

Brochure

The apocalypse: a great day out for the whole family.

Joe Haldeman

Who among us is not enriched by a return to our roots? Billions of people and others have gone to great expense and trouble to find their way back — not just to the place where they were born, but to the various worlds to which they can trace their distant ancestors, affines and primary clones.

But not one in a million has gone all the way back.

For many centuries since Old Earth was condemned as officially uninhabitable, it has been sitting unused, a reliquary for archaeologists and historians, and a worst-case scenario for terraformers — notoriously, the most unmarketable piece of real estate in Sirius Sector. Now, at the dawn of the 31st 'Century', the Disney-Bertelsmann Consortium (DBC) is proud to announce that Terra is returning to usefulness, ready to take a new and important place in the human and humanized Universe.

Note: A 'century' was once a significant fraction of the human life span, and for the first 30 or so twyops after the discovery of consciousness, centuries were used as a primary chronological unit. Its

physio-symbolic origin had to do with the period of the planet around its primary and the number of manipulators primitive humans were born with. There were ten of them at the end of two 'arms'; and ten to the second power became a century.

Beginning at midnight, 1021.9445 Two-Pop, with allowances for relativistic contraction (31 December 3000 Old Style), DBC will be offering month-long Catastrophe Tours of Old Earth. A multi-gigacredit undertaking, Catastrophe Tours will thrill humans and others by recreating the unique sequence of disasters that finally resulted in the Diaspora and Rebirth.

Feel the horror!

As trillions of anaerobic microorganisms strangle in an atmosphere that slowly poisons itself with oxygen! DBC's unique *Time-Out™* field compresses eons into seconds, so that with your own eyes, or similar organs, you can watch the evolution of the tiny creatures that would become the temporary rulers of a transformed planet.

Watch the terrible glory!!

Of evolution in action, as multicellular creatures learn to eat each other while staking out more and more territory — from the

primeval depths up to the coral shallows, then further up onto land, growing from delicate amoebas to sponges, shrimp, fish — and then from clever little lizards finally into huge lumbering reptilian monsters, and then ...

See the terror!!!

As a mighty asteroid crashes into the Yucatan Peninsula! With DBC's *TimeOut™* field working in reverse, follow the shockwave in excruciating slow motion, as it circles the planet, destroying thousands of species and paving the way for the temporary primacy of mammals! For species with sufficiently heavy armour, DBC offers the option of 'surfing' the shockwave — watching in real time as it pulverizes everything in its path. (Participants must be able to withstand impulses greater than 1000 standard joves and temperatures greater than molten iron.)

Or, for somewhen a bit cooler...

Freeze off your extremities!!!!

As ice fields expand from the Poles nearly to the Equator! Again, DBC's *TimeOut™* field transforms what was once a glacially slow strangulation into a breathtaking crystalline transformation. An optional winter sports package is available for suitably hardy species, although DBC takes no responsibility for your safety. Some of the animals are big, and all of them are hungry.

Thrill to the 'Four Horsemen'!!!!!!

As the 'human' race, in its primal incarnation, is decimated time and again by war, pestilence, famine and plague. They aren't real, of course, by modern standards, but their suffering is real enough!

Laugh at the 'Final Trump'!!!!!!

Whose humorous double meaning will be explained, when a combination of ultimate weapons with greed finally ends war and suffering — by eliminating nearly all potential victims! Customers with a sufficiently developed appreciation of irony, and lovers of symmetry, will be amused by the rightness of the ultimate disappearance of oxygen, and the return of the planet to its original anaerobic owners.

Disclaimer: No advanced life forms are harmed by this entertainment. The only creatures that survive on Earth are a few hardy, rapidly mutating species that thrive on disaster.

Joe Haldeman has written more than 20 novels, and four collections of short stories and poetry. His latest novel, Forever Free (a sequel to The Forever War), is published by Orion in the United Kingdom and Ace in the United States.

WATCH THE TERRIBLE GLORY

**SEE THE TERROR
FEEL THE HORROR**

LAUGH AT THE FINAL TRUMP !!!

CATASTROPHE TOURS

1021.9445 Two-Pop

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