



# Doctor Who: The Face-Eater

*Simon Messingham*

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When the Doctor and Sam arrive on Proxima II they find a settlement rife with superstition and unrest. The native Proximans are inexplicably dying out, and humans too are being killed in horrific ways, with each corpse's face being stripped bare. Posing as investigators from Earth, the Doctor and Sam must track down the force moving through the dark catacombs beneath Proxima City.

## Doctor Who: The Face-Eater Details

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# From Reader Review Doctor Who: The Face-Eater for online ebook

## Nicholas Whyte says

<http://nwhyte.livejournal.com/1715242...>

I've consistently enjoyed Simon Messingham's other Doctor Who books, and this one was no exception: essentially a rewriting of Colony in Space to make it much much better, with the Master out of it entirely and a single bloc of colonists and management faced with indigenous aliens who have acquired strange powers. Messingham succeeds in drawing convincing characters inhabiting his newly constructed colonial settlement, with the Doctor and Sam appearing among them just as the situation starts to get bad. Rather a good sf novel on its own merits.

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## Varad says

Human colony on another planet faces potentially lethally alien threat while threatening to tear apart from internal tensions and divisions. Stop me if you've heard this one before. Or, I should say, stop me if you've seen this one before. Because if you're a *Doctor Who* fan, you've definitely seen this one before.

The "base under siege" is the ur-plot of *Doctor Who*. This doesn't quite fit that mold, but it greatly resembles the "colony under siege" plots Jon Pertwee's Third Doctor so often found himself in. *The Face-Eater* feels very much like a Third Doctor story, but with the Eighth Doctor and Sam filling in for the Third Doctor and Jo.

The plot is straightforward. The planet Proxima 2 is the site of the first human colony beyond the solar system. The colony is on its own, as it will be eight years from the time of settlement before another ship from Earth visits. Things seem to be going well until an apparent serial killer starts targeting the workers building the colony, which exacerbates tensions between the workers and the colony's administrators.

It's all bog standard stuff. The administrators are typically heartless and over-stressed corporate types who will make the trains run on time damn the consequences. The workers are oppressed and over-worked, though not particularly noble. The workers all come from different nationalities and backgrounds: Chinese, Ukrainian, Nicaraguan, Kenyan, etc. The workers seem so polyglot and cosmopolitan that it seems as though they were recruited solely so the writer could check various ethnic boxes in some kind of parody of racial inclusiveness.

The alien menace doesn't care where its victims come from, it will eat them regardless. Just what the nature of that menace is I could never quite figure out. As best I could figure, it is some sort of group mind created by the planet's natives to defend them against some long ago threat. But as superweapons often do, it turned on its masters and wound up consuming all organic matter on the planet. The few remaining natives had found a way of keeping it in check, but the humans, blundering as humans always do, accidentally awaken it, to their considerable peril. I think that's what's going on. But don't hold me to it.

I can't point to anything particularly wrong with the book. It's a typical *Doctor Who* story. I suppose, though, that's the problem. There's nothing in the book, save that we're told so, that marks this as an Eighth Doctor story. Paul McGann only played the Doctor once on television, so his Doctor isn't easy to

characterize. But the writer's job is to overcome such difficulties. It's not terrible, it's not great. It's mediocre. The Doctor's had worse adventures and more interesting ones. This one he's unlikely to remember either way.

Posted 28 August 2013

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### **Angela says**

The Doctor and Sam land on the first colony on an alien world. There is a string of very unusual murders that need to be solved. It takes a while to get going, but is a nice story even if it has some stereotypical characters. An engaging read, though I do wonder how much more Sam can take. A good read.

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### **Christopher Hatch says**

A generally okay book. Not exactly amazing but perfectly reasonable story. Again it's another story which has the Doctor and Sam split up for the majority with yet more trauma for Sam.

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### **Em says**

A fantastic and thrilling ride. With the beginnings of an intense mystery novel, the story soon brings in the Doctor and Sam and flings them into a bewildering and terrifying adventure. Add this to the list of ones I wish were TV episodes or movies.

I'll admit the bad guys had me fooled for a while.

Lots of VERY scary monsters, good plot twists, and an accurate portrayal of the Doctor and Sam.

If you love the Doctor, this is a MUST READ.

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### **Adam Highway says**

Well this was a surprise. Could have given up early on, as this novel takes a long time to warm up. By the end, however, I was actually afraid reading it at night. Truly creepy, disconcerting, and a surprisingly dark book. Recommended.

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### **joy says**

I have read most of the current doctor who books and these are just very different from each other. For example why is the doctor's companion Sam always almost dying. The way each writer writes it into their book is just plain annoying. Yes the present doctor's companion gets their selves into troubling situations but Sam can't even cross the street without almost getting hit with a bus. I like the old style of writing they have with the eighth doctor's character

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## **James Barnard says**

By this stage in the BBC Books range, there were signs the whole thing was starting to run out of steam. With umpteen books set in the future on alien planets, the lack of familiar reference points was starting to drag, and the Doctor/Sam team was badly in need of the shake-up which would come with the introduction of Fitz Kreiner the following month.

‘The Face Eater’, like the books which preceded it, is a solid, well-told story of paranoia at the highest levels of a colonial hierarchy. The thing is, that repetition of similar stories set in similar locations did the range no favours at all – and the fact this is addressed head-on here doesn’t change the lack of imagination which saw so many of these scheduled consecutively.

A good, undemanding read.

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## **Sean Homrig says**

This one starts off pretty promising, with a compelling and suspenseful horror story set in a far-away earth colony. Then the Doctor and Sam arrive and somehow the story goes tits up. Perhaps I shouldn't have put the book down for two weeks and then gone back to it, but the second half of the book is a mixture of the metaphorical running through corridors (poor Sam is pretty much dragged to hell and back) and a buildup to a terrible deus ex machina ending that is almost as bad as the giant Ace in "Loving the Alien". One gets the impression that Messingham altered a treatment he had for another science fiction story to include the Eighth Doctor, then wrote half of it two days before the editor's deadline. The result is the equivalent of literary blue balls, with me feeling frustrated at the letdown after such a promising opening. Skip it.

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## **Ken says**

The EDA’s have really been hit or miss with The Doctor and Sam up until this point, but I had great fun reading this one.

The story is quite straight forward as the TARDIS team respond to a signal from the human colonists on the Proxima II as they are being gruesomely attacked.

There’s a really great horror vibe running through this story, especially legends of ancient spirits being awoken by the colonists.

A relatively straightforward plot. It’s a slight shame that The Doctor and Sam are separated for most of this story, but felt their characteristics were spot on.

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