



Doctor Who: The Macra Terror

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In the far future a group of humans is living an idyllic existence on a distant planet. Their colony is run like a gigantic holiday camp and nothing seems to trouble their carefree existence.

When one of them claims that the colony is being invaded by hideous monsters, no one takes him seriously. But the Doctor's suspicions are immediately aroused.

What is the terrible menace that lurks at the heart of this apparent paradise? Why are the colonists unaware of the danger that lies before their very eyes? And what is the Macra Terror?

Doctor Who: The Macra Terror Details

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From Reader Review Doctor Who: The Macra Terror for online ebook

Adam James says

After obtaining every single episode of Doctor Who in its 50 year run (the internet is amazing), I've found a new obsessive pleasure: reading the novelizations along to the audio of junked episodes.

Using *The Macra Terror* as the first foray into new nerd territory, I was pretty impressed with how well this technique works. Listening to poorly recorded dialogue and trying to decipher what's actually happening (or which of Patrick Troughton's two faces he's using) all while staring at still images SOUNDS pretty enthralling...but...shockingly it's pretty mind-numbing. Reading a description of Patrick Troughton's smug wry smile as his dialogue is heard? Mind-blowing.

Well. Mind-satisfying.

Dawn says

I was a little disappointed in this Doctor Who book. I'm not sure if this was because it was about the second Doctor rather than my favourite Doctor (the fourth) or because it was written by a different person than what I usually read...

Jason Macor says

Definitely read like a novelization, but it was still a quick entertaining read. Perfect for a summer afternoon outside...well a few hours of that summer afternoon.

stormhawk says

[rather than negotiating a peace, works to see to it that the "rightful inhabitants," the humans, will throw off the yoke of their alien overlords. (hide spoiler)]

Tom Mills says

The TARDIS lands on an unnamed planet in the future. Here, a human colony is policed by the Pilot, but is really led by the Controller - a 'Big Brother' figure, with a tannoy-voice akin to the loudspeaker addresses in Quatermass II (actually provided by Nigel Kneale). He is only ever seen (via monitors) as an imposing man, given the disembodied voice. The true masters however, are huge crab-like creatures, the Macra. The colony's holiday camp image (complete with cheerleaders, public-announcements, and jingles) belies the

truth - the brain-washed colonists are closely watched, and kept in a state of complacent contentment (21 years before The Happiness Patrol). They're forced to mine gas, lethal to humans but vital to the Macra's survival.

Ben succumbs to Control's conditioning, and he betrays his friends. When he recovers, Ben destroys the gas pumping equipment, thereby killing the Macra and restoring the colony's freedom. The travellers depart before the Doctor can be appointed the new Pilot!

The Macra Terror has obvious Orwellian parallels, and Ian Stuart Black's scripts address themes of propoganda and conformity, at a time when the electorates of the West were increasingly disillusioned with government and the establishment. In the wake of political scandals and assassinations, people were questioning their obedience to authority in the 1960's. The age of deference was over. This idea is best illustrated by the Doctor's comment to Polly: "... you've been given orders while you've been asleep... Don't just be obedient. Always make up your own mind" (echoes of 1984, The Manchurian Candidate, and A Clockwork Orange). Similarly, the story's funniest scene has the Doctor rebelling against this ordered regime. When his unkempt appearance is questioned, the Doctor's clothes and hair are styled by a grooming machine. In dismay, the Doctor uses a toning device to get messed-up again: "But who wants to see their face in a pair of suede shoes?"

True, the story is let down by the Macra themselves, but this can be overlooked because their scenes are kept to a minimum, and the suspense is only heightened in the audio version.

- * A History of the Universe (Parkin, 1996) sets the action in the year 2366.
 - * This is the first story to feature the Doctor's face in the title sequence.
 - * Screened in 1967, non of the 4 episodes exist in the BBC archives. Colin Baker provides the linking narration on the CD release.
 - * The Macra made a surprise return 40 years later to menace New New York in Gridlock.
 - * The story was placed at No. 137 in the DWM Mighty 200 Poll (Issue 413, September 2009)
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Mel says

I bought the newly released audio book read by Anneke Wills. She does a fantastic job bringing the story to life, using different voices for all the main characters. I often forgot I was listening to one woman. The Macra Terror is a great 60s science fiction adventure. A holiday camp space colony, where everyone has to conform is, unsurprisingly, actually evil! This is a very subversive adventure with the Doctor saying things like, Laws are meant to be broken, and how you shouldn't believe things you are told but investigate everything for yourself! Fantastic story with a great message. Definitely recommended!

Shaun Collins says

Cant wait to watch the recon version now. Fun little story, definitely reads like an adaptation. ending seemed abrupt, will find out soon. Full review to come at www.travelingthevortex.com

Nicholas Whyte says

<http://nhw.livejournal.com/1028417.html#cutid4>[return][return]I enjoyed this more than I had expected to,

chiefly because of Black's characterisation of the Doctor, which seems to me to capture Troughton's performance better than any of the novels I have read so far. We do, of course, miss out on the superb soundscape of the original (alas, the video is no longer available), and poor Polly ends up screaming a lot. But it's a worthy attempt.

Elisabeth says

As always, the Second Doctor and Jamie can do no wrong. This time with Ben and Polly in tow they encounter monsters and mind control and poison gas seeping up from the ground. A rousing adventure with plenty of genius, courage, and running.

Yet another story sadly lost in the vaults of the BBC, but this novelization does its best.

Daniel Kukwa says

This is one of my favourite stories from Patrick Troughton's 2nd Doctor era, but the author doesn't quite push the strangeness and anarchy as hard as he can in print. It's a very readable novelization, but Ian Stuart Black is still traveling the road that will lead him to his last and best developed book, "The War Machines". This is the second stop on Black's prose journey through his own "Doctor Who" stories, and while you can see him deepening his adaptation skills, he's not quite reached the pinnacle just yet.

Kerry says

Sorry for the lack of review. I'm catching up on posting my reading, but don't feel up to comments.

Min says

I knew very little of the first two doctors. I heard more and more about them in the intervening years but the re-appearance of the Macra piqued my interest as it is not one I recalled being mentioned. The Ice Warriors, the Yeti most often, but not this intriguing character.

When the second series mentioned them, I wanted to read/see this episode to see how they were originally portrayed.

The message I take most clearly from this is to be critical of what one is told, investigate, and challenge. Conformity isn't the way to a 'perfect society'. The use of subliminal techniques to brain wash the colonist makes it very clear they were numbing the truth for the pretense of being happy. From that, also comes the accusations and social pressure to conform, as briefly did Ben, the Doctor's companion seek to have the others arrested for resisting the indoctrination.

Ever the rebel, the Doctor is my hero!

Leela42 says

Second Doctor, Jamie, Ben, Polly. Novelisation of a season 4 story of which only the soundtrack has been recovered. I enjoyed most of it, mainly due the characterisation of the Doctor; unfortunately the climax and end are rushed and not well described. The occasional minor jump in a scene makes you wonder if the author forgot to describe something or if it somehow got deleted.

Tim King says

Back in 1989 I was just nine-years-old and fascinated by Doctor Who. I absolutely loved the show and at that time Sylvester McCoy was wrapping up his tenure as the Doctor.

Nothing would excite me more than coming home after school, flipping on the TV to ABC and watching The Doctor saunter around the screen, dealing with evil aliens, strange creatures and more.

My favourite Doctor would have to be Sylvester McCoy and his adventures with Mel and more frequently Ace. Often it was through the lens of Ace that we get to learn some of the dark secrets that The Doctor contains.

Nothing will ever replace my memories of the terrifying, yet entertaining classic episode series like Paradise Towers, The Happiness Patrol , and of course The Greatest Show in the Galaxy.

So as a young fan of Doctor Who, I managed to pick up (read: beg my parents to buy me) a copy of The Macra Terror by Ian Stuart Black, first published on the 1st of December, 1987.

Ian Stuart Black was also the author of the original four television episodes first aired in 1967 on which this novelisation is based.

At that stage I was unfamiliar with Patrick Troughton's depiction of The Doctor (I still really haven't seen much) and little did I know that The Macra Terror was one of the most popular stories from his series.

I really can't remember my first reading of The Macra Terror but I do remember the descriptions of the huge, crab-like creatures that inhabit the sub-terrain and emerge at night.

I'd been meaning to re-read The Macra Terror for a long time, today I had the chance (ie. I finally remembered) to do exactly that.

For those unaware of the story, here is a quick synopsis:

The Doctor and companions Ben, Polly, and Jamie glimpse something frightening on the TARDIS' scope for a second while traversing time and space, soon after then land on a world The Doctor determines as being in the future where upon early investigation they find what appears to be a typical British-style holiday camp.

When they encounter a member of the camp attempting to escape from the local police-force, the foursome travel to the camp and are welcomed with open arms and relaxing spa treatments.

But not all is what it seems behind the thin veil of happiness...

Not having watched the original series episodes, I don't really have any direct comparison for the

novelisation, however I found it particularly easy to read. Being one-hundred-and-thirty pages long, this slim tome doesn't take a lot of time to read, which I easily knocked over about an hour and a half.

That said, I found the story quite enjoyable, and quite typical of the standard Doctor Who fare. Ian Stuart Black has written quite a readable short story, with great visual descriptions of the setting, antagonists, and alien creatures alike.

One thing I did notice, especially toward the final crescendo of the story, was the continual head-hopping. Chapters often started with a singular character perspective and shifted to include other perspectives. While this is a little off-putting it's not enough to break the stories rhythm.

If you're a Doctor Who fan looking to experience the story of The Macra Terror, and/or haven't seen the original series episodes, then I'd suggest pick up a copy if you can through Book Depository or Amazon Books

Jennifer says

I was quite keen on the idea of an earlier macra story but my fellow listener and I would both have preferred them to be more unequivocally crustacean rather than have the frequent references to 'insects'. The Second Doctor starts to show better here but Jamie still seems far too bewildered to be out of his century and Polly seems terribly wet.

Not a bad tale in itself and the motivational jingles and brainwashed happiness and compliance of the colony residents set the teeth suitably on edge.
