



Desiccation

Sarah Potter

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St Trinian's meets Invasion of the Body Snatchers

WHEN DESICCATION THREATENS, YOU'LL DO ANYTHING TO SURVIVE...

Janet Beckett is a science scholarship girl who believes there's a rational explanation for all paranormal phenomena.

There is, if you happen to meet a know-it-all hippie pixie who lives in a dimensional transcendental toadstool.

Samantha Hamilton-Brown thinks she is the 1960's Queen of the Universe and can do as she pleases in her role as new head girl of Toffdene boarding school.

She can, until aliens cut her reign short and screw with the minds of almost every student and teacher in the establishment.

Joe Buckell is leader of a delinquent mod gang and fancies getting his end away with some hoity-toity daughters of the elite.

He does, but not in the way he envisages.

Huddled in a corner, they watch and loathe. A human has dragged them here, away from their own kind. Alone, abandoned, drifting in a world in between, when Desiccation threatens, they'll do anything to survive...

Desiccation Details

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From Reader Review Desiccation for online ebook

J.G. Gatewood says

I really enjoyed this book. Good characters. The story flowed well and was well developed, except for the beginning. I felt we could've gotten into the story a bit sooner. I also found a bit of repetition in the writing that could be fixed. All in all, I enjoyed it.

Dave Farmer says

It's hard not to judge a book by its cover, and though *Desiccation* pays decent homage to the golden era of 1960's sci-fi, the story is more a blend of different genres. The first dozen pages or so I wasn't entirely comfortable with the story. I can't put my finger on why, maybe it was a little out of my usual genre, though that's not a reflection of the story as I do enjoy delving into a different genre.

Set in a girl's boarding school rife with characters from 1960's British upper class, I floundered a little with the names – Miss Dandridge, Miss Featherstone and the hoity Samantha Hamilton-Brown, who I actually quite liked as an elitist snob. However, as their personalities blossomed I grew to both like and indeed loath those that inhabit Toftdene School.

What kept me going beyond those first pages was the rich, almost lyrical and poetic narrative. It reminded me a little of my first primary school – oak wall panels that were polished and tarnished at the same time, the smell of oldness, wood, leather, hockey sticks, thick strawberry custard poured from large battered metal jugs and no sign of a vending machine or fast food, save sweets bought from the tuck shop!

Desiccation has at its heart a quintessential Britishness that is both endearing and at times off putting. The reason why is because the Brits depicted are so concerned with saying the right thing in the right way so not to offend, that even when something terrifying is just around the corner, reaching for them in the dark, they can't help but be profoundly polite about it all. Well, most of the time, until the airs and graces are dropped and the potty mouth comes out for a quick quip or two.

I guess the reason why I found it off putting, at first, is that although I am British and often fall into the trappings of being polite, I tend to lean toward the Yankee sensibility of speaking my mind rather than beating about the bush to avoid offending someone. However, I enjoyed how Janet managed to maintain that sense of "being proper" even when faced with astonishing situations.

For me the sci-fi element seeps in so slow I barely noticed it was there for quite some time until the penny dropped and I thought "Ah, so it's like that, right?" Except it wasn't because the plot weaves some interesting elements, yes from science fiction, but there are nuances of fantasy, thriller, teenagerisms, and a glimmer or two of erotic undertones that were unexpected and refreshing.

I can't write a fair review without saying what didn't work for me. I found Quillin's need for Janet to go home and save her brother a bit of an anti-climax because no sooner had they got home than they were whisked back to school. It felt like a build up to nothing. And whilst the point of view of Andy/Joe/Samantha/ was well written, I wanted to read the same scene from Janet's view point, or at least switch back to her again.

I didn't quite get where Janet's affection for Joe came from. That seemed a bit pushed later on, whereas there was little mention of her attraction to him earlier for me to believe it, unless I missed that bit. I would have liked to read a scene or two where Samantha was practicing séances, not only for the tension and creepy factor, but to make the connection between the bad guys and her psychic powers more believable or memorable.

That being said neither of these things detracted from the enjoyment of the story. Desiccation is indeed very British, and a reminder that not all science fiction has to be about star ships, lasers and one dimensional bad guys who want to kill everything for a random clichéd reason. Like I said before this is a story of subtle blends of genres that work very well together.

So, if you fancy a sci-fi tale that treads off the beaten track, but at the same time manages to hark back to those glory days when the genre was in its infancy, I whole heartedly recommend Desiccation. It's a quirky and enjoyable story that surprised and entertained me.

Dale Rogerson says

This may be a book intended for young adults but that never stopped me before; Harry Potter, anyone? ;-)

This does not fall into the genre I usually pick up but since a friend wrote it, of course I had to read it! And what a good thing too. Though I struggled a bit with the very British language at times, (was on vacation with no dictionary and no Internet!) mostly in the beginning, I did not let it deter me from continuing on and eventually was right in the thick of it.

The science fiction aspect is almost insidious. It starts off as a story of a bright, scholarly girl named Janet trying to fit into her snobbish private school. She starts noting that very strange things are going on around her and, instead of succumbing to the seeming madness, is lucky enough to have a guardian angel in the form of a pixie named Quillin. I wish a Pixie kiss would clear up my skin!

I could not put it down and got totally enraptured by the story. Sarah Potter has a wonderful imagination and I do not hesitate to recommend this book - to both young and older adults!

Andrea Stephenson says

I was brought up on girl's boarding school stories, but this book is not like any boarding school story I read as a girl. There is a comforting familiarity about the setting and the characters, but it soon becomes clear that there is something going on here beyond the normal dramas of school life. There is something strange and dangerous happening at Toffdene and it will be up to our heroine Janet to try to save the day, aided by some strange and quirky helpers. The book has a great pace and an underlying humour that engaged me from the beginning and kept me reading rapidly until the end.

Nia Ireland says

I don't know what it is exactly but I just can't get enough of this cover, it's something about the bold colours and classic cheesy design that rocks my world so we have Jamie Noble Frier (awesome name or what?!) at www.TheNobleArtist.com to thank for that.

The plot of this story was fast paced and really did read like a B-movie: it begins with our main character Janet arriving back at her boarding school after the holidays, she settles into her school routine and then things start getting a little bit weird. Her classmates start behaving oddly and there are some giant woodlice wandering about, as we can see from the front cover (giant woodlice. I LOVE this).

I was a huge fan of Enid Blyton's Malory Towers series when I was a little girl and this book has made me nostalgic enough to read them all over again. The tone and language of this book is very similar to the old boarding school novels, when girls go for walks through meadows to picnic on boiled eggs and sardines. It just happens that this boarding school includes mind altering aliens and some very odd sexual tendencies (ok, maybe not that odd. We've all heard the rumours).

The characters in this book weren't particularly deep or memorable, with the possible exception of Quillin the inter-dimensional pixie caretaker with a pechant for seducing schoolgirls. I found his character rather funny and compelling, with the 'yeah, so what?' attitude towards his being a pixie in a world under invasion by an alien race. The characters aren't necessarily the focal point of the story, so much as the journey.

The ending of this book was very neat and satisfying, especially after all of the unexpected twists and turns it took to get there. The eccentricity and unpredictable story demanded a strong ending for it to be enjoyable and make sense, the author definitely delivered on that count!

This is absolutely the book for you if you're a fan of 'alternative' sci-fi films, want a reminder of the old Enid Blyton novels with a twist or just want something different to read!

Cee Tee says

(The only reason I took so long to read this book is that I was reading a couple others at the same time and the baseball season started!)

I loved this book. The cover shouted 'B-movie' and 'Sixties' so that drew me to it straight away.

I would say that initially I struggled to keep up with the number of characters being introduced, but that could also be because as I mentioned above, I was reading another couple of books at the same time. Whatever, the storyline and characters soon settle down and the plot develops.

What I love about this book is that it is a 'light' fun read, never really straying too far from that B-movie feel, but at the same time it is spine-tingly dark.

Sarah Potter has written this book in such a manner as to make the reader (well, me at least) at various points feel as if they themselves are on some sort of weird, psychedelic, hallucinogenic trip.

The (at times) earthy language and actions of the characters define the period and situation to a tee.

Yeah - most definitely worth a read if you like something that little bit 'different.' In a good way.

Kim says

Learning UK words

When I first started reading Desiccation I was a little confused with some of the British word usage that is slightly different from what I read in the US. I stayed persistent and finally got a flow. Sarah pulled me into the story. I wanted to know who these people were and how they were invading the school. These beings are a bit perverted. I had no idea how the story was going to end and who was going to survive. I wasn't disappointed. It is worth spending time to read. One thing for sure Sarah has one heck of an imagination. Pick this book and you will be in for a reading treat
