When a naval cruiser sinks in mysterious circumstances in the North Sea, all aboard are lost. Rose is saddened to learn that the brother of her friend, Keisha, was among the dead. And yet he appears to them as a ghostly apparition, begging to be saved from the coming feast... the feast of the drowned. As the dead crew haunts loved ones all over London, the Doctor and Rose are drawn into a chilling mystery. What sank the ship, and why? When the cruisers wreckage was towed up the Thames, what sinister force came with it? The rivers dark waters are hiding an even darker secret, as preparations for the feast near their conclusion...

My Personal Review:
Having read more Doctor Who novels than I care to admit, I'd say that this one is the best new series novel to date (winter 2007). Many of the books rank as "Just OK," but this one kept me engaged from start to end. No plot dead zones. No passages I wanted to skip. Plenty of sharp dialog, creepy aliens, and even a nifty crash between a tug and a barge. Ooh, what fun!

Like other new series novels, it's a quick read, with a fairly straight-forward plot. Unlike many of the new series novels, it avoids being silly or overly light. Stephen Cole keeps the story tightly paced, from the cliffhanger opening of a sailor caught on a sinking ship to the final scene. Some of the authors don't know how to handle the tenth Doctor--either focusing too much on Tenant's manic energy or going completely flat--but Cole strikes a balance. There are the funny Doctor moments (including a weird and poorly-timed outburst about a ship Jack Dusty), but he also is fiercely intelligent, rude, caring, a bit frightening, and alien, a quality often missing from the new series books.

If you enjoy the new series, there's much to enjoy here. The story captures the feel and characterizations of the show, focusing as much on personal stories as the science fiction. While our heroes are trying to stop the eponymous Feast of the Drowned, Rose has to deal with the
repercussions of events that happened during her "lost" year away from home. This emotional side story feeds a clever device at the heart of the narrative: love becomes a trap in an alien plot. Feast is stuck in current-day London (the Doctor seems to have trouble getting off Earth these days), but we're taken on a lively tour that starts at the Powell Estate and wanders through laboratories, a dry dock, tunnels under the city, and even the Thames. As the characters split up and go on their individual adventures, they are always connected by the central plot device.

It's the promise of the occasional gem like the Feast of the Drowned that keeps me coming back to the new series books.

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