



## Dining Out with the Ice Giants

*Clare O'Beara*

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**Dining Out with the Ice Giants** Clare O'Beara

Dining Out Around The Solar System Book 2

Two journalists in an alternate future London meet the people from the outer planets - during one of the worst winters for cold and flooding that London has suffered. From political misdeeds to mushroom picking in a disused Tube station, Donal and Myron uncover all sorts of activities... and dangers.

## SAVED FROM LONDON'S FLOOD

Donal, an Irish journalist, and Myron, his Cockney-Jamaican colleague, are feature writers with zine London's Eye. They tend to attract trouble.

## FLU VACCINES NEARLY GONE

Since they have many friends from other planets, they also enjoy good meals in ethnic restaurants.

## BOND STAR MISTRI DIES

This winter, a whole lot of problems are facing London, and who better to cover them?

## BANK PAYMENTS HACKED

The lads might even make new friends in the process of gaining a scoop. Or new enemies.

## DRUG COMPANY SCANDAL

## Dining Out with the Ice Giants Details

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Author : Clare O'Beara

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## **From Reader Review Dining Out with the Ice Giants for online ebook**

### **Michelle MacQueen says**

Ok, so wayyy more sci-fi than I'm used to, but I found myself absolutely loving it!

Donel and Myron are journalists in a future London that is just fascinating. They are from earth, but London is home to people from all sorts of different planets. The journalists paths cross with a number of them. The best part of the book was the descriptions of these aliens. The differences between them were crazy. A ton of thought was put into that.

The book takes us through many of the stories they cover and it ends up being much more than what you see at first glance. It's amazing that a book about the future can become a sort of social commentary on todays world. Many of the problems we face become front and center in this city amongst aliens. It's crazy, right?

The story was a bit slow for me in places but very interesting in others and hilarious at some points. I wasn't expecting it to be so funny. All in all, a good read.

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### **Scott Spotson says**

Dining Out With the Ice Giants is a whimsical view of life in London, England at some point in the future where inter-planetary travel is not only possible, but is common. This story is told in first person view through the eyes of Donal, a male reporter who works for an on-line news source that is quite popular and highly esteemed.

During his regular rounds throughout the city Donal stumbles upon a race of Plutonians (inhabitants of the planet Pluto) who are being treated like slave labour. One would think after the 20th century experience in slavery and emancipation, Earth would have known better by now. But no! Apparently mistreatment of beings from other planets is tolerated and not widely reported, and Donal plans to change all that.

This book takes place in a science fiction setting, but I wouldn't really consider it science fiction. Rather, I would categorize it as humour and commentary, although in a science fiction setting. There are no spaceships in this story (none that our characters set foot on, anyway) and no laser blast fights or planetary conquest. For this reason, this story does not seem to have a traditional story line, but rather it takes time to slow down and delve into several issues, one at a time (i.e. environmental concerns, political corruption, and municipal zoning) some of which are quite intellectual and thought-provoking.

The pace is at times a bit relaxing, and the tension is light, but for those who love reading commentary, it is a feast for the mind.

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### **Anne (w/ an E) says**

Not my style. This book didn't interest me at all. I couldn't read more than 25% of it.

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### **James T. Stewart says**

This story is set 50 - 100 years or so in a future London. Life forms physically very different from us, but with similar wants, needs and failings have been found on most if not all of the planets from Mercury to Pluto. Each of them have unusual strengths and weaknesses.

For instance the Plutonians frequently insist "Pluto is a planet!" (Apparently someone told them it wasn't. I haven't read the first book in this series of 3 yet, and I definitely will. I suspect the answer may be there. In any event, they are likeable little fellows and are unfortunately being treated essentially as slaves.

The book is told from Donal's viewpoint. He is a news reporter who, along with his friend/co-worker Myron, run down news stories and sometimes are instrumental in making it happen.

I found the descriptions of "people" particularly interesting. We usually think of each other as having similar wants, needs, likes, dislikes, etc.. Ms. O'Beara has carefully described them more realistically than I would have thought possible. I felt if I walked outside and turned a corner I might meet one walking towards me and recognize what planet he/she/it was from!

Some are "good" and some are "bad," including humans as well as those from other planets. The "good guys" find the "News," relay it to their bosses and sometimes are instrumental in creating it!

A Great Book! I can't wait now to read the first book in the series, and then the third which I believe is almost done.

-- Stew

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### **Janette Hawke says**

With this second helping in the Dining Out science fantasy series, we're filling in some of the gaps in Donal and Myron's journalistic career and finding more quirky insights into the secret lives of the visitors from the outermost planets in the System. The Ice Giants are, of course, Uranus and Neptune, but immigrants from dwarf planet Pluto are also prominent in this book where we find out more about their early days in London before they go into the ice cream and frosty treats trade.

What I really like about O'Beara's dystopian London are the left field details that take what's starting to happen in the present to logical but often surprising and illuminating conclusions as hinted at in headlines of the book blurb, from ethnic James Bonds, to flood surges, to heavy runs on 'Flu vaccines (the British Space Mining variety). The friendly and courageous Neptunians are again stepping up (or should that be swimming) when the Thames starts to show its vicious side, before looking for a more permanent residence alongside the river. Our intrepid reporters are able to help them find something suitable AND affordable in return for past hospitality and favours from these gentle giants and also help the Plutonians find a much better place to stay after a rather unpleasant and macabre experience with a scary Uranian mushroom farmer.

Red-headed Tania (short for Titania) is first glimpsed by hyper-sensitive Donal at London's New Years Eve Fireworks celebration by the river and, realising there's something literally other-worldly about her, he and Myron go on a Cinderella hunt across the city and cyberspace, after losing her in the crowds after midnight. Once found, Donal quickly realises this is not going to go anywhere romantically, but uber-cool, almost mannequin-like Tania and he are interested enough in each other to stay in touch for mutual pursuits (Donal also does restaurant reviews). Which is when he discovers that Tania has dozens of wage-slave plutonians tending to her underground mushroom plantation. Suffice it to say Uranians don't appear to know the first thing about health and safety, although she does have a very basic, if not fundamental understanding of recycling... Hint of a spoiler there, but far better to take the ride yourself!

Yet another excellent and insightful read from Clare O'Beara, well-deserving of 4+ stars and, I hope, not the last we'll see of Donal and Myron.

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### **George Hahn says**

At first, I was a little put off by the story's use of humanoid characters from every planet in the Solar System. The impossibility of this offended my hard science fiction nature, but I kept going. I was soon immersed in a very well-thought about world (future London) with interestingly quirky characters. There is definitely a plot here, but it takes a while to discover it. Meanwhile, the reader wanders a strange but familiar city with exploited Plutonians, heroic Neptunians, and many more fascinating characters.

In the end, I think the story is at least part allegory, with the different alien races making points about our treatment of each other. I suspect the author has enjoyed some of the better Star Trek episodes that similarly used science fiction settings to make statements about our own society. That's plenty, even for a hard science fiction fan like me.

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### **James McCormick says**

Although science fiction, 'Dining Out With The Ice Giants,' has a grounded, gritty and realistic feel that I really enjoyed. The two main characters are journalists for a zine called the London Eye. Donal is a red headed, Irishman (restaurants and inexpensive wines) whilst Myron is an imposing six foot plus Jafraican (Adult entertainment). Both are both fully realised characters with a convincing and believable friendship.

The zine's offices are equally well penned and the author creates an atmospheric and fleshed out setting. Characters are distinct and engaging and often described with short, evocative phrases. One of my particular favourites concerned Angie, the zine's chief, "a comfortably-built lady with lots of curly brown hair and cardigans in winter. She'd have made two of the other girls."

Rather than an escapist piece of work (which is the type of speculative fiction I usually read) the novel uses the science fiction genre to look at social issues and the plight of the immigrant and outsider, those less fortunate and also the chaotic and confused nature of society. The author shines a light on the exploited and downtrodden such as the Plutonians who are more or less serfs, constantly protesting that Pluto is actually a world. The way the author ties this in with the Tania/ Titania storyline and her morally questionable mushroom business was pure genius.

The novel reminded me a little of Alien Nation in that the main character (Detective Mathew Sykes) is more

enlightened than his fellow humans, acting like a social conscience whilst investigating issues and injustices that the rest of the human race would rather not acknowledge. This is quite cleverly symbolised in the way Donal possesses super acute senses, making him more open to his surroundings and also to the alien immigrants around him.

If you like intelligent, well written sci-fi with a social conscience 'Dining Out With The Ice Giants' is the book for you.

Clare O'Beara is a very talented author and I look forward to reading her other works.

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### **Jemima Pett says**

Two journalists on a futuristic magazine (zine) are always on the look-out for stories. They are the number one asset of the zine, and known for cutting edge exposés as well as their restaurant reviews. Due to their past histories, they are also used to communicating with immigrants from all over the solar system – Venusians, Plutonians, Neptunians... well you get the picture. Due to the floods at the Thames Barrier and some heroic work by a group of fluid-loving Neptunians, our journalists get involved in this group, who would love to stay in the area, but there's a shady politician involved. Meanwhile, one of the journos is exploring the lighter side of London life (did I mention it's set in a futuristic, and very recognisable London?) by joining a dating site for red-haired people. While colour and race sensitivities have declined, since the advent of the off-Earthers, there is still plenty of prejudice around. Our journalist meets up with Tania, a red-head, sure, but with hair unlike an Earthlings, since it seems to twirl itself towards the sun.

These stories and more keep our heroes on their toes, and we see plenty of the underworld as well as the different norms in society of the future. I was gripped by the tale and the magnificent world-building (just what would Pluto produce that make it worthwhile to export to Earth?), which is coupled with some deep history of the London Underground and other nooks and crannies which those who have lived in London may be familiar. Clare O'Beara has done a great job with this book, the second in a series which started off featuring the inner planets. There's a third featuring the Gas Giants (Jupiter and Saturn) but they all involve our journalist heroes. And that comes with plenty of tips on keeping yourself out of the public eye or only known for what you want to be known for, very useful for authors developing their presence on the internet!

An excellent read, especially for lovers of societal intrigue.

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### **Marco Marek says**

The two journalists Donal and Myron were living in a futuristic London full of immigrants of every planet in our galaxy, and they always on the hunt for interview them. I choose a couple of them: Tania a Uranian girl who runs a mushroom farm with Plutonian workers, and two Neptunians with curious names: Osstprssa and Vsstcruush that Donal and Myron met at Cutty Sark in Greenwich.

There are interesting scientific new things like: antigrav lift, and excellent explanation about Helium 3 and Helium 4, for name a few.

A very good read for me, was nice to imagine the city of London with all this people from other planets, including Mercurian and Venusian that are the most near to the sun, planets where life weren't supposed to exist.

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## **Lincoln Cole says**

This story creates a future London that feels very similar to the present day world we all live in, but it has enough Novums to keep the flow moving forward and the story feeling unique and different.

I'm a sucker for stories told from the perspective of journalists or news agents or anything of that sort, so this story really intrigued me in the ability to nail down a style. The author says she drew heavily from referential material in creating this story and it shows because of how well developed the situations and storylines are.

I like when stories can be sci fi and futuristic while still holding onto those aspects that make it human, and for that reason I would highly recommend this story to anyone interested in a great read!

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## **Alexis Grove says**

Dining Out with the Ice Giants is a gem of a book that creates a world that feels just like ours – but for the several species of Aliens who have immigrated in search of employment. These alien immigrants end up filling the marginal roles that poor immigrants fill in real world society. Suitably, the aliens' willingness to work for low pay elicits resentment and scorn from Earth citizens. Moreover, scoundrels both human and alien find ways to manipulate and exploit the most powerless among the aliens. The combination of the banal – a powerful man trying to intimidate a poor young woman – with the bizarre – the woman is a Martian cleaning lady on a temporary work visa – creates a feeling of surrealism that will stay with you after reading. While this novel is correctly categorized as science fiction, it felt a lot like magical realism.

The novel's plot is multi-threaded and unfolds at a leisurely pace. If you're looking for space battles between FTL warships, this is not the book for you. While interplanetary travel is a possibility, the protagonists' concerns are at a very human scale and concern their own neighborhood and circle of friends in London. Almost the entire story is told through the eyes of Donal, an Irish resident of London, who is distinguished by super acute senses that allow him to convey every alien smell, taste, and texture in precise detail.

Donal and his best buddy Myron are unofficial human ambassadors to the resident alien communities in London. The precise nature of their connection seems to have been established in a prequel, but it's evident that most humans are content to ignore the aliens among them, who all come from poorer planets. Only Donal and Myron form friendships with off-worlders, and much of the plot consists of them helping these newcomers navigate their newly adopted city.

The book is written in British English and there is some British slang used, particularly Cockney rhyming slang, where stairs are called apples because ... well, it's a long story. In most cases the slang is explained but in a few I was left scratching my head.

But that is a minor complaint and in summary, this book is highly enjoyable, thought provoking, and definitely worth reading.

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## **Ibiloye Christian says**

I love the story telling, the conversation and the main theme. I was tempted to think this story is not really a fantasy fiction work about aliens, but let me safely say it is about social issues relating to the integration of immigrants from non English speaking and less advantaged countries into the life and work opportunity in Britain's London community. The Neptunians, the short mushroom tenders, Plutonians, Mercurians, etc and the journalists from the London Eye, and other news agencies. The Characters are interesting, Donald and Myron from the London eye, Ezekiel, Tania, Neptunians and other aliens looking for uranium and other minerals, and employment too. Though the racism thing is unappealing, the author, Clare, was successful in engaging me at every twist and education within the threading of the story. Social and news breaking addicts investigating the life and plights of the aliens through their first contact, the red head Tania in London (as the earth )...they actually succeeded in breaking the 'giant ice divide' of these aliens with the earth people, and discovered the challenges facing them, abuse (sexual exploitation and enslaving) by the indigenes and also created a load of problems too. Enjoy, every bit of it and education about journalists riotous social and nose life.

I love good stories, and don't know how many times am going to read this.

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## **Sue Bridgwater says**

I certainly picked a good time to read this middle book in Clare O'Beare's Dining Out series; January 2016, just after the horrendous Christmas and New Year floods in the UK. Here's what we hope is not a prediction for us, from Clare's vision of the not-so-distant future in her alternate earth. "Half of Somerset and Norfolk is under water, Lyme Regis cliffs falling into the sea, snow blocking roads in the Pennines. Cornwall, those sixty foot waves."

In the universe where our two heroes—Myron and Donal—live, the exploration of the solar system has led to the discovery of inhabitants on all the other planets. Some of these have come to earth, as ambassadors and business entrepreneurs, but just as with immigrant peoples between countries in our Earth, some are being exploited, employed at low wages in the least desirable jobs, or working in slave-conditions out of sight of the general population.

Myron and Donal are journalists on a zine called London Eye, and although they are employed to report on the relatively uncontroversial issues of fine dining, wines and entertainment, they rove the streets of London like a couple of hard-bitten investigative journalists of film noir vintage. Except of course for the advanced technology they and everyone else in this convincingly possible future London make use of with such ease.

I used to live in the areas covered by the story, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Islington; and am wholly convinced by Clare's evocation of the struggle that life has become (may really become?) for the increasingly poorer ordinary folk. But against this bleak background there is adventure and fun, with several plot-lines evolving through the story, and satisfying revelations at the end [no spoilers] thanks to our heroic duo weaving their way through streets, underground tunnels, computer programs, restaurants, and hit-tech offices in Docklands in their fight for the right and for justice. It's the next 50 years' equivalent of swashbuckling, and there are fireworks too!

Carefully researched and compellingly written, this is a book for fantasy/SF readers who like to identify with



the good guys and see the baddies get their come-uppance. Thoroughly recommended.

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### **Kathleen says**

Dining Out with The Ice Giants (Dining Out Around The Solar System, Book 2) takes you to an alternative London of the future where residents of Pluto, Neptune, Mars, and Saturn live alongside Earth-born Londoners. This is the world where Donal and Myron, two bright, hard-working journalists ply their trade. Donal, also the narrator, has enhanced senses, especially smell:

“I snuffed in a deep breath rich with scent of Myron – a spicy mix of powdered ginger and orange oil, to me – of Tania, a cold alternate chemical combination of dead leaves, derelict soot-clung damp brick, tarmac and traffic, compost and mushrooms.”

In the course of the book, they cover many stories, often overlapping. The Uranian woman who’s growing mushrooms in an abandoned Tube station, the Finance Minister having an affair with a Martian maid, the rescue of someone caught in the Thames flooding, the ongoing problems at the XuPharmDan plant.

Life in this London reflects concerns today: climate change, xenophobia, human trafficking, and fear of the future. But Myron and Donal are both friends and colleagues. They’ll handle whatever trouble comes their way – and probably get a good story out of it.

The ending feels more like a pause than a finale. I’m looking forward to the next book in the series. This book is a treat – well-written, fast-paced, and complex. Highly recommended!

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### **Chikamso Efobi says**

Dining Out With The Ice Giants is a very well-written futuristic, yet realistic novel set in London, which revolves around two journalists Donal and Myron who work as reviewers in a zine aptly named, the London Eye.

They investigate a number of potentially scandalous stories, one of which involves the misdeeds of an MP.

As the two friends and colleagues follow the different stories, they come in contact with different characters some of which are from other planets such as Mercury, Uranus and Neptune. Their investigation also exposes them to potentially dangerous situations.

What I particularly enjoyed about reading this novel was the way the physical characteristics of the “outer-earthlers” were so beautifully described. I could almost picture them in my mind’s eye.

It was also very clear that a lot of research had gone into the writing which made it very easy to follow, easy to relate to and difficult to put down.

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