



UNIT:
THE SECRET OF FOXFELL FOREST

Candy Jar is pleased to announce the third novel in its UNIT range, *The Secret of Foxfell Forest*, by popular writer Nick Walters.

Range Editor Tim Gambrell tells how this book came about. He says: "Nick contributed one of the early Lethbridge-Stewart novels, *Mutually Assured Domination*, so it adds a pleasant symmetry having him write one of the first UNIT novels, too. We talked over some initial ideas before Nick suggested he bring back the Valethske from his 2001 BBC PDA *Superior Beings*. When he laid out the basic premise of *The Secret of Foxfell Forest*, I knew we were on to a winner."

Nick explains the background to the story:

"The story of *The Secret of Foxfell Forest* goes back a long way. It's an idea I had right after writing *Superior Beings*, over twenty years ago. *What if the Valethske crash-landed on Earth? How would they survive?* Because they see humans only as prey – they do not differentiate between us and, say, pigs. They are totally inimical to humans. If you encounter them, it's game over, man, game over! But stranded on Earth and outnumbered, a handful of Valethske would need to find new ways to adapt and survive."

Nick continues: "So when I was asked to do a UNIT story, this idea resurfaced. UNIT versus the Valethske – it was irresistible. But I wanted this to be more than a mere shoot-em-up, as there's more to UNIT and the Valethske than that. I wanted to show how UNIT deals intelligently and compassionately with alien threats, and how the Valethske are not mere monsters, but people in their own right, without compromising either. UNIT are still a force to be reckoned with – and the Valethske are still something to be feared. And without giving too much away, they retain their savage integrity right to the end."



"Nick's passion and enthusiasm for the Valethske and the story he wanted to tell was evident from the start," says Tim. "We agreed the UNIT character split between *Foxfell* and Iain McLaughlin's *Catacombs of Seville* – with the events of both books happening at the same time – and really I just had to light the blue touchpaper and sit back. Having decided that UNIT books two and three would take place simultaneously, splitting the regular cast between them, it was important to make sure both books didn't tread similar ground. It was also important to make sure the stories they told were to the best scale. I think both Nick and Iain judged things perfectly. We have two books telling very different stories, yet both very much UNIT stories. While *The Catacombs of Seville* takes Major Branwell and Corporal Benton to Spain, *The Secret of Foxfell Forest* has the more traditional setting of an English manor house and woodland for Captain Turner and CSM Nicholls to explore. And with the Valethske it's great to have a link to the old BBC Books range."

Nick tells us more about *Superior Beings*, the BBC Fifth Doctor book which introduced the Valethske: 'It was published over two decades ago and is long out of print. I don't expect anyone to have read it and you certainly don't need to have read it before reading *The Secret of Foxfell Forest*. In fact, it's probably better the less you know about the Valethske. Having said that, there are 'Easter Eggs' for anyone who knows *Superior Beings*. And, as with *Superior Beings*, there's a homage to the film *Withnail & I*. In fact, the exact same homage! All part of the fun!"