

Short Review: “Fiend Without a Face” (1958) by Dr. John L. Flynn



Fiend Without a Face (1958). Eros, 75 min. Director: Arthur Crabtree. Producer: John Croydon. Screenwriter: Herbert J. Leder. Cast: Kyanston Reeves, Marshall Thompson, Terry Kilburn, Kim Parker, Peter Madden, and Michael Balfour.

The monsters in this low-budget quickie are disembodied brains that wrap themselves around a victim's head (with the help of a spinal cord-like tail) and sucked their victims dry. If only this production had a brain... Unleashed by a mad scientist (Thompson) who has learned to transform thoughts into physical form, these organic parasites scramble around much like the face hugger in “Alien,” propelled by the whip of their multi-jointed tails. They depend on human hosts to provide them with greater mobility as they struggle to take control of a remote army base (near the Canadian frontier), and are very difficult to kill. While the idea may be borrowed from Robert Heinlein's The Puppet Masters (1951), the climax is clearly inspired by “The Thing (from Another World)” as soldiers of the isolated base fight an all-out war with the parasites. Let’s face it: these fiends are pretty laughable, and are with little doubt too embarrassed to show their faces.

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