

War of the Worlds Transcription (Jeff Wayne Musical)

Horsell Common and the Heat Ray cont.

I awoke to alien sounds of hammering from the pit and hurried to the railway station to buy the paper. Around me, the daily routine of life, working, eating, sleeping was continuing serenely as it had for countless years. On Horsell Common the Martians continued hammering and stirring; sleepless, indefatigable; at work upon the machines they were making. Now and again a light, like the beam of a warship searchlight swept the common and the heat ray was ready to follow.

In the afternoon, a company of soldiers came through and deployed along the edge of the common to form a cordon. That evening there was a violent crash and I realised with horror that my home was now in range of the Martians heat ray. At dawn a falling star with a trail of green mist landed with a flash like summer lightning. This was the second cylinder.

The Artilleryman and the Fighting Machine

The hammering from the pit and the pounding of guns grew louder. My fear rose at the sound of someone creeping into the house. Then I saw it was a young artilleryman; weary, streaked with blood and dirt.

‘Anyone here?’

‘Come in. Here, drink this.’

‘Thank you.’

‘What’s happened?’

‘They wiped us out. Hundreds dead, maybe thousands.’

‘The heat ray?’

‘The Martians. They were inside the hoods of machines they’d made. Massive metal things on legs. Giant machines that walked. They attacked us. Wiped us out?’

‘Machines?’

‘Fighting machines. Picking up men and bashing them against trees. Just hunks of metal but they knew exactly what they were doing.’

‘Hmm. There was another cylinder came last night.’

‘Yes. It looked bound for London.’

London! Carrie! I hadn’t dreamed there could be danger to Carrie and her father so many miles away.

‘I must go to London at once.’

‘And me. To report to headquarters... If there’s anything left of it. ‘

At Byfleet we came upon an inn but it was deserted.

‘Is everybody dead?’

‘Not everybody. Look. Six cannons with gunners standing by.’

‘Bows and arrows against the lighting.’

‘Hmm.’

‘They haven’t seen the heat ray yet.’

We hurried along the road to Weighbridge. Suddenly there was a heavy explosion. The ground heaved, windows shattered and gusts of smoke erupted into the air.

‘Look! There they are! What did I tell you!’

Quickly, one after the other, four of the fighting machines appeared. Monstrous tripods, higher than the tallest steeple, striding over the pine trees and smashing them. Walking engines of glittering metal. Each carried a huge funnel and I realised with horror that I’d seen this awful thing before.

A fifth machine appeared on the far bank. It raised itself to full height, flourished the funnel high in the air and the ghostly, terrible heat ray struck the town. As it struck, all five fighting machines exulted, emitting deafening howls which roared like thunder.

Ooo-laaa.

The six guns we had seen, now fired simultaneously, decapitating a fighting machine. The Martian inside the hood was slain, splashed to four winds, and the body, nothing now but an intricate device of metal, went whirling to destruction. As the other monsters advanced, people ran away blindly, the artilleryman among them but I jumped into the water and hid until forced up to breathe. Now the guns spoke again but this time, the heat ray sent them to oblivion.

With a white flash, the heat ray swept across the river Scalded, blinded, half agonised, I staggered through leaping, hissing water towards the shore. I fell helplessly in full sight of the Martians, expecting nothing but death. The foot of a fighting machine came down close to my head and lifted again as the four Martians carried away the debris of their fallen comrade. And I realised, that by a miracle, I had escaped.

Forever Autumn

For three days I fought my way along roads packed with refugees; the homeless, burdened with boxes and bundles contain their valuables. All that was of value to me was in London and by the time I reached their little red brick house, Carrie and her father were gone.

Fire suddenly leapt from house to house. The population packed and ran and I was swept along with them, aimless and lost without Carrie. Finally I headed eastward for the ocean and my only hope of survival. The boat out of England.

As I hastened through Covent Garden, Blackfriars and Billingsgate, more and more people joined the painful exodus. Sad weary women, their children stumbling and streaked with tears; their men bitter and angry. The rich rubbing shoulders with beggars and outcasts. Dogs snarled, the horses bits were covered with foam and here and there were wounded soldiers, as helpless as the rest.

We saw tripods wading up the Thames, cutting through bridges as though they were paper. Waterloo Bridge, Westminster Bridge. One, appeared above Big Ben.

Ooo-laaa.

Never before in the history of the world, had such a mass of human beings moved and suffered together. This was no disciplined march, it was a stampede; without order and without a goal. Six million people, unarmed and unprovisioned, driving headlong. It was the beginning of the route of civilisation; of the massacre of mankind.

A vast crowd buffeted me towards the already packed steamer. I looked up enviously at those on board, straight into the eyes of my beloved Carrie. At sight of me she began to fight her way along the packed deck to the gangplank; at that very moment it was raised and I caught a last glimpse of her despairing face as the crowd swept me away from her.

Thunder Child

The steamer began to move slowly away but on the landward horizon appeared the silhouette of a fighting machine. Another came, then another. Striding over trees and plunging far out to sea, and blocking the exit of the steamer. Between them, lay the silent, grey iron-clad, Thunder Child. Slowly it moved towards shore, then with a deafening roar and whoosh of spray it swung about and drove at full speed towards the waiting Martians.

The Martians released their black smoke but the ship sped on, cutting down one of the tripod figures. Instantly the others raised their heat rays and melted the Thunder Child's valiant heart.

When the smoke cleared, the little steamer had reached the misty horizon and Carrie was safe. But the Thunder Child had perished forever, taking with her man's last hope of victory. The leadened sky was lit by green flashes, cylinder following cylinder and no-one and nothing was left now to fight them. The Earth belonged to the Martians.

Ooo-laaa.