

War of the Worlds Transcription (Jeff Wayne Musical)

The Eve of the War

No-one would have believed, in the last years of the nineteenth century, that human affairs were being watched from the timeless worlds of space. No-one could have dreamed that we were being scrutinised, as someone with a microscope studies creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. Few men even considered the possibility of life on other planets, and yet, across the gulf of space, minds immeasurably superior to ours, regarded this earth with envious eyes. And slowly, and surely, they drew their plans against us.

At midnight, on the 12th August, a huge mass of luminous gas erupted from Mars and sped towards Earth. Across two hundred millions miles of void, invisibly hurtling towards us, came the first of the missiles that were to bring so much calamity to Earth. As I watched, there was another jet of gas; it was another missile, starting on its way.

And that's how it was for the next ten nights. A flare, spurting out from Mars, bright green, drawing a green mist behind it. A beautiful but somehow disturbing sight. Ogilvy, the astronomer, assured me we were in no danger. He was convinced there could be no living thing on that remote, forbidding planet.

'The chances of anything coming from Mars are a million to one he said. The chances of anything coming from Mars were a million to one, but still they come.'

Then came the night the first missile approached Earth. It was thought to be an ordinary falling star but the next day there was a huge crater in the middle of the common and Ogilvy came to examine what lay there. A cylinder, thirty yards across, glowing hot with faint sounds of movement coming from within. Suddenly the top began moving, rotating, unscrewing and Ogilvy feared there was a man inside trying to escape. He rushed to the cylinder but the intense heat stopped him before he could burn himself on the metal.

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It seems totally incredible to me now that we spent that evening as if it were like any other. From the railway station came the sound of shunting trains, ringing and grumbling, softened almost into melody by the distance. It all seemed so safe and tranquil.

Horsell Common and the Heat Ray

Unscrewing sound effect.

The next morning a crowd gathered on the common, hypnotised by the unscrewing of the cylinder. Two feet of shining screw projected when, suddenly, the lid fell off.

Alien sound effect.

Two luminous, disk-like eyes appeared above the rim. A huge rounded bulk, larger than a bear, rose up slowly, glistening like wet leather. Its lipless mouth quivered and slathered and snake-like tentacles writhed as the clumsy body heaved and pulsated.

A few young men crept closer to the pit. A tall funnel rose and an invisible ray of heat leapt from man to man and there was a bright glare as each was instantly turned to fire. Every tree and bush became a mass of flames at the touch of this savage, unearthly heat-ray.

People clawed their way off the common and I ran too. I felt I was being toyed with, that when I was on the very verge of safety this mysterious death would leap after me and strike me down. At last I reached Maybury Hill and in the dim coolness of my home I wrote an account for my newspaper before I sank into a restless, haunted sleep.