

War of the Worlds

"Men from Mars, Mr Jennings!" called the paper boy, barely able to contain his excitement, "Up on the common."

I found myself on the edge of a deep crater and in it was a gigantic metal cylinder, glowing with an intense heat. A thin squirming tentacle emerged from within. More tentacles were followed by a round head, with oily-brown skin which glistened like wet leather. The creature's two immense, dark eyes stared at me and its beak-like mouth quivered with saliva.

The Martian hauled its bulky body out. More tentacles appeared, as another of the creatures emerged and blasted the people with a beam of light, burning the pine trees around them.

After a sleepless night, I took my wife Alice and the maid to her cousin and then two hours later, I drove back to Maybury, when I saw a strange shape in the distance. It was a monstrous tripod of glittering metal, striding over the pine trees. Suddenly, the trees up ahead parted and another tripod came crashing headlong towards me. I wasn't sure whether these bizarre contraptions contained the Martians or were controlled by them.

The next day, along with a soldier called Hawkins, I tried to return to my wife. The whole countryside was on fire and when we reached the river we found a desperate and noisy crowd trying to cross the river. I turned to see four of the Martian Tripods marching towards us. There was only one option!

"Get under the water!" I shouted as the Martian machine raised its heat weapon. But it was shot at by the troops. I ducked under the water and after drifting on a boat, took refuge in an abandoned house.

Through the gap in the wall of the house, I could see a tripod standing guard over a glowing tube outside. The Martian tripods were gathering around a massive crater. Suddenly, there was an eerie silence. Cautiously, I crept up to the hole. The crater was deserted and I was glad to be free from the ruined house. Was I the last human being left alive?

All at once, I heard a strange howling "Ulla, ulla, ulla," It was a Martian tripod far away over the trees. It did not move but stood stock still and I decided that if it wanted to kill me, I would let it. Scrambling to the top of a pile of earth, I saw that every last one of the Martians lay dead. It seemed that the creatures had been killed by the tiniest of earthly creatures – the humble bacteria.

Unbelievably, I returned to Maybury to find my house as I had left it and my cousin and my wife safe and well.

No further visitors came from Mars. Perhaps word had been sent that Earth held nothing but death for any aliens who dared to follow? If they did, we would be ready for them!

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