

## The Eve Of The War

Jeff Wayne

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 we were being scrutinized, 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 twelfth of August, a huge mass of luminous gas erupted from Mars and sped towards Earth. Across two hundred million 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.

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"The chances of anything coming from Mars are a million to one - but still they come!"

JOURNALIST: Then came the night the first missile approached Earth. It was thought to be an ordinary falling star, but 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... and 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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"Yes, the chances of anything coming from Mars are a million to one," he said.

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