# The War of the Worlds by H. G. Wells

### Chapter Four: The Cylinder Opens

The end of the cylinder was being screwed out from within. Nearly two feet of shining

screw projected. Somebody blundered against me, and I narrowly missed being thrown

onto the top of the screw. I turned, and as I did so the screw must have come out, for

the lid of the cylinder fell upon the gravel with a ringing concussion.

I think everyone expected to see a man emerge - possibly something a little unlike us 5

terrestrial men, but in all essentials a man. I know I did. But, looking, I presently saw

something stirring within the shadow: greyish billowy movements, one above another,

and then two luminous disks--like eyes. Then something resembling a little grey snake,

about the thickness of a walking stick, coiled up out of the writhing middle, and wriggled

in the air towards me--and then another. 10

A sudden chill came over me. There was a loud shriek from a woman behind. I half turned,

keeping my eyes fixed upon the cylinder still, from which other tentacles were now

projecting, and began pushing my way back from the edge of the pit. I saw astonishment

giving place to horror on the faces of the people about me. I heard inarticulate

exclamations on all sides. There was a general movement backwards. I found myself 15

alone, and saw the people on the other side of the pit running off, Stent among them. I

looked again at the cylinder, and uncontrollable terror gripped me. I stood petrified and

staring.

A big greyish rounded bulk, the size, perhaps, of a bear, was rising slowly and painfully out

of the cylinder. As it bulged up and caught the light, it glistened like wet leather. Two large 20

dark-coloured eyes were regarding me steadfastly. The mass that framed them, the head

of the thing, was rounded, and had, one might say, a face. There was a mouth under the

eyes, the lipless brim of which quivered and panted, and dropped saliva. The whole

creature heaved and pulsated convulsively. A lank tentacular appendage gripped the edge

of the cylinder, another swayed in the air. 25

Those who have never seen a living Martian can scarcely imagine the strange horror of its

appearance. The peculiar V-shaped mouth with its pointed upper lip, the absence of brow

ridges, the absence of a chin beneath the wedgelike lower lip, the incessant quivering of

this mouth, the Gorgon groups of tentacles, the tumultuous breathing of the lungs in a

strange atmosphere, the evident heaviness and painfulness of movement due to the 30

greater gravitational energy of the earth--above all, the extraordinary intensity of the

immense eyes--were at once vital, intense, inhuman, crippled and monstrous. There was

something fungoid in the oily brown skin, something in the clumsy deliberation of the

tedious movements unspeakably nasty. Even at this first encounter, this first glimpse, I

was overcome with disgust and dread. 35

Suddenly the monster vanished. It had toppled over the brim of the cylinder and fallen into

the pit, with a thud like the fall of a great mass of leather. I heard it give a peculiar thick cry,

and forthwith another of these creatures appeared darkly in the deep shadow of the

aperture.

I turned and, running madly, made for the first group of trees, perhaps a hundred yards 40

away; but I ran slantingly and stumbling, for I could not avert my face from these things.

**Q1**

Read again the first part of the source, lines 1 to 10.

List **four** things from this part of the text about the cylinder and its contents.

A

B

C

D

 **[4 marks]**

**Q2 [AO2 - language]**

Look in detail at this extract from lines 11 to 18 of the source:

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alone, and saw the people on the other side of the pit running off, Stent among them. I

looked again at the cylinder, and uncontrollable terror gripped me. I stood petrified and

staring.

How does the writer use language here to describe how the narrator feels?

You could include the writer’s choice of:

• words and phrases

• language features and techniques

• sentence forms. **[8 marks]**

**Q3**

You now need to think about the **whole** of the **source.**

This text is from the opening of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

• what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning

• how and why the writer changes this focus as the extract develops

• any other structural features that interest you. **[8 marks]**

**Q4 [AO4 - evaluate with reference]**

Focus this part of your answer on the second half of the source, **from line 19 to the end.**

A student, having read this section of the text said: “The writer brings the horror of the creature's appearance to life for the reader. It is as if you are there with the narrator.”

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you should:

• write about your own impressions of the creature

• evaluate how the writer has created these impressions

• support your opinions with quotations from the text. **[20 marks]**

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| AO1  | • Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas. • Select and synthesise evidence from different texts.  |
| AO2  | • Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.  |
| AO3  | • Compare writers’ ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts.  |
| AO4  | • Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references. |