

NARRATOR

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.