

You loved your last book...but what  
are you going to read next?

Using our unique guidance tools, Love**reading** will help you find new books to keep you inspired and entertained.

---

**Opening Extract from...**

## **The Massacre of Mankind**

A sequel to The War of the Worlds by H. G. Wells

Written by Stephen Baxter

Published by Gollancz

All text is copyright © of the author

This Opening Extract is exclusive to Love**reading**.  
Please print off and read at your leisure.

---

# THE MASSACRE OF MANKIND

A SEQUEL TO  
*The War of the Worlds*

BY

H.G. WELLS

**STEPHEN BAXTER**

GOLLANCZ  
LONDON

First published in Great Britain in 2017 by Gollancz  
an imprint of The Orion Publishing Group Ltd  
Carmelite House, 50 Victoria Embankment  
London EC4Y 0DZ

An Hachette UK Company

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Copyright © Stephen Baxter 2017

The moral right of Stephen Baxter to be identified as  
the author of this work has been asserted in accordance  
with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act of 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be  
reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted  
in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical,  
photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the  
prior permission of both the copyright owner and the  
above publisher of this book.

All the characters in this book are fictitious, and any resemblance  
to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is  
available from the British Library.

ISBN (Hardback) 978 1 473 20509 3  
ISBN (Export Trade Paperback) 978 1 473 20510 9

Typeset at The Spartan Press Ltd,  
Lymington, Hants

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd,  
Croydon CR0 4YY



[www.stephen-baxter.com](http://www.stephen-baxter.com)  
[www.orionbooks.co.uk](http://www.orionbooks.co.uk)  
[www.gollancz.co.uk](http://www.gollancz.co.uk)

To  
H. G. WELLS  
This Extending of His Idea  
and  
The H. G. Wells Society

'If astronomy teaches anything, it teaches that man is but a detail in the evolution of the universe, and that resemblant though diverse details are inevitably to be expected in the host of orbs around him. He learns that, though he will probably never find his double anywhere, he is destined to find any number of cousins scattered through space.'

Percival Lowell, *Mars*, 1895

'It seemed to me that humanity was on the verge of a deep apprehension of its place in the cosmos. The intellectual world was alive with speculation and hope. Then the Martians came again.'

Walter Jenkins, *Narratives of the Martian Wars*, 1913 & 1928

# BOOK I

## The Return of the Martians

## A Call to Arms

To those of us who survived it, the First Martian War of the early twentieth century was a cataclysm. And yet, to minds far greater than our own and older even than the Martians, minds who regard our world from the cold outer reaches of space, that conflict must have seemed a trivial affair indeed, and unworthy.

The further a world is from the sun, the older it must be, and cooler. Thus the earth is older than hot, fecund Venus; and Mars, austere and chill, is in turn older than our temperate globe. The outer worlds, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, are ancient indeed and locked in the stasis of time and ice. But Jupiter – king of planets, more massive than the rest combined, older than Mars as Mars is older than our world, and warmed by its own inner fire – is, must be, host to the gravest intellects of all. We know now that these Jovian minds have long watched us – watched humanity, the Martians, even innocent Venus. What can they have thought of our War? The fragile sparks crossing the night, the flares of fire on the green skin of our planet, the splash of ink-black smoke – the swarming and helpless populations . . . The Jovians looked on all this as a silent god might regard his flawed creations, perhaps, their reflections unimaginable, their disapproval profound.

And yet, claims Walter Jenkins, that great chronicler of the First War, this cosmic scrutiny provides the context within which we, who once believed we were lords of creation, must live out our petty lives. Walter was right. This mighty context was to shape everything about the Second War, and indeed the most important moment of my own life.

On the other hand, I myself, like most people, stay sane by generally not thinking about it.

And speaking of grave scrutiny, as I commence this memoir of my own, I cannot help but acknowledge the long shadow cast by that tombstone of a volume which everyone knows as the *Narrative*, the history of the First War penned by Walter, my esteemed brother-in-law – if he can still be termed such after I divorced Frank, his brother – a work that, as Walter’s therapist Freud might say, has burned a particular perception of the First Martian War into the public subconscious with the intensity of a Heat-Ray. Let me warn the reader from the off that if it’s the grandeur of the cosmos that you want, all told in the lofty prose of a man who was once *paid* to scribble such stuff, then it’s another correspondent you should seek out. On the other hand if it’s an honest, factual account of my own experience you’re after – a woman who survived the First Martian War and had her life pulled to pieces in the Second – then I humbly submit this, history as I saw it.

Although I admit it is an irony that my experience of the second conflict should begin, long before a Martian again set foot on this earth, with a complicated series of telephone calls from Walter himself, emanating from a hospital in Vienna. I, who was patiently building a fresh life for myself in the New World, wanted nothing to do with it. But I have always had a sense of duty. I answered the summons.

A dotty-house, to Jupiter! From the beginning it was a tangled tale indeed.



## A Meeting of Veterans

My first inkling of the impending storm came in fact in New York, specifically at the Woolworth Building, where Major Eric Eden (retired) asked to meet me, in order, he said, to relay a message from Walter Jenkins.

My young colleague Harry Kane insisted on accompanying me. Harry was of that breed of brash American journalists who are always suspicious of all things European – he would have been even before the Schlieffen War, I think. I suppose Harry came as a kind of moral support, but with a professional curiosity too about a Martian War that to him had been only a distant spectacle of his youth.

So we made our way. It was a brisk mid-March day in the year 1920. Manhattan had suffered what everybody hoped would prove to be the last snowstorm of the year, although the main hazard on that particular morning turned out to be the slush piles alongside every sidewalk, ever ready to soak an unwary ankle. I remember that morning: the swarming, cheerfully ill-tempered traffic, the electric advertising hoardings that glowed in the grey-ness of the day – the sheer innocent vigour of a young nation – in those last hours and minutes before I was dragged back into the affairs of gloomy, wounded old England.

At last Harry and I pushed through the doors into the Woolworth. The air in the lobby, heated and scented, hit me like a slap in the face. In those days the Americans liked to be *very* warm indoors. I pulled open my coat and loosened my headscarf, and we walked across a floor of polished Greek marble that was speckled with melted snow and grit from the street. The lobby was busy. Harry, with his usual air of amused detachment – an attractive trait in a man a few years younger than me, even if it

doesn't sound it – said to me over the noise, 'I take it your Major Eden doesn't know the city so well.'

'You can say that without ever meeting him?'

'Sure I can. Where else would you set up a meeting but here? In London an American would meet you at St Paul's – that's the one with the hole in the dome, right? And a British in New York – well, here we are, in the tallest building in the world!' He pointed. 'And there *he* is, by the way.'

The man he indicated stood alone. He was slim, not tall, and wore a morning suit that looked expensive enough but dowdy compared to the peacock fashions around him. If this was Eden he looked younger than his thirty-eight years – six years older than me.

'And that must be Eden because—'

'He's the only one looking at the artwork.'

Indeed, the man was staring up at the ceiling, which (had I ever noticed this before?) was coated with mosaics that looked Roman, perhaps Byzantine. That was the Americans for you: in this new monument to a triumphant Mammon, they felt the need to reach back to their detached European past.

Harry strode across the floor, muttering, 'And could he look more the Englishman abroad? If this is the best he can do to blend into the background, no wonder the Martians caught him.'

That made me snort with laughter as I followed. 'Hush. You're terrible. The man's a hero.' Eric Eden was, after all, the only living human being who had actually been inside a functioning Martian cylinder – he was captured in the first couple of days in '07, as the military, in their ignorance, probed at the first landing pit at Woking. Having been kept alive, perhaps as a specimen for later examination, Eric had fought his way out of a space cylinder with nothing much more than his bare hands, and had ultimately made it back to his unit with invaluable information on Martian technology.

Hero or not, Eric looked rather nervous as we bore down on him. 'Mrs Jenkins, I take it—'

'I prefer Miss Elphinstone, actually, since my divorce.'

'My apologies. I imagine you recognised me from the posters in the bookshop windows.'

Harry grinned. 'Something like that.'

'It has been a well-announced tour. Just Bert Cook and myself for now, but we should be joining up with old Schiaparelli in Boston – discoverer of the canals, you know – in his eighties but going strong...'

I introduced Harry quickly. 'We both work for the *Post*.'

'I've not read your book, sir,' Harry admitted. 'It's kind of out of my sphere. I spend my time fighting Tammany Hall as opposed to men from Mars.'

Eric looked baffled, and I felt moved to interpret. 'Tammany Hall's the big Democrat political machine in the city. Americans do everything on a heroic scale, including corruption. And they were *not* men in that cylinder, Harry.'

'However,' Harry went on, unabashed, 'I've been known to dabble in the book trade myself. Sensational potboilers, that's *my* line, not having a heroic past to peddle.'

'Be glad of that,' Eric said, softly enough. A line which seemed to me the embodiment of British understatement! 'Miss Elphinstone, Walter Jenkins did warn me of your likely – ah, reluctance to become entangled in his affairs once more. Nevertheless Mr Jenkins did press on me the importance of his message, for you, the rest of his family. He seems to have fallen out of touch with you all. Indeed that's why he had to make such a circuitous attempt to contact you, through myself.'

'Really?' Harry grinned. 'Isn't this all kind of flaky?' He twirled a finger beside his temple. 'So the man needs to talk to his ex-wife, and the only way he can do it is by contacting somebody he barely knows, with respect, sir, on the other side of the world, in the hope that he can talk to his *brother's* ex-wife—'

'That's Walter for you,' I said, feeling oddly motivated to defend the man. 'He never was very good at *coping*.'

Eric said grimly, 'And that was presumably even before he spent weeks being chased by Martians across the countryside.'

Harry, young, confident, was not unsympathetic, but I could see he did not understand. 'I don't see what favours Jenkins has done you either, Major Eden. I saw the interview you gave to the *Post*, where you attacked him for claiming to have seen more of the Martians than any other eyewitness, when they were at loose in England. As you said, *you* certainly saw stuff he never did.'

Eric held up his hand politely. 'Actually I didn't say that, not quite. Your reporter rather gingered it in the telling – well, you have to sell newspapers, I suppose. But I rather feel that we veterans should, ah, stick together. And besides, if you take a longer view, Jenkins did me a favour. One cannot deny that *his* memoir is the one that has most shaped public perception of the War ever since its publication. And he does mention me, you know.'

'He does?'

‘Oh, yes. Book I, Chapter 8. Although he does describe me mistakenly as “reported to be missing”. Only briefly!’

I snorted. ‘The man’s in the dictionary under “Unreliable Narrator”.’

‘But he never related my own adventures, as he did Bert Cook’s, say, and so I got the chance to tell it myself – and my publishers to label it as an “untold story”.’

Harry laughed. ‘So it’s all business in the end? Now *that* I do sympathise with. So what’s the plan, Major Eden? We gonna stand around gawping at frescoes all day?’

‘Mosaics, actually. Sorry. Miss Elphinstone, Mr Jenkins wishes to make a telephone call. To you, I mean.’

Harry whistled. ‘From Vienna? Transatlantic? That will cost a pretty penny. I know we’re all excited by the new submarine cable and all, but still . . .’

Eric smiled. ‘As I understand it Mr Jenkins is not short of pennies, thanks to the success of his book. Not to mention the rights he has sold for the movie versions.’ He glanced at his watch. ‘Anyhow, Jenkins will make the call to our hotel suite – I mean, mine and Bert’s. If you wouldn’t mind accompanying me there—’

‘Which hotel?’

Eric looked faintly embarrassed. ‘The Plaza.’

Harry laughed out loud.

‘I myself would have been content with more modest accommodation, but Bert Cook—’

I said, ‘No need to apologise. But—’ I looked Eric in the eyes, and I recognised something of myself in there – something I could never share with Harry, good-hearted though he was. The look of the war veteran. ‘*Why* would he call? Could it be they are coming back? And *why now*? The timing’s all wrong, isn’t it?’

Eric only shrugged, but he knew what I meant.

I was never an astronomer, but since the Martian War we had all picked up a little about the dance of the planets. Mars and the earth chase each other around the sun like racing cars at Brooklands. The earth, on the inside track, moves faster, and periodically overtakes Mars. And it is at these moments of overtaking, called oppositions (because at such instances sun and Mars are at opposite poles as seen in the earth’s sky), that Mars and the earth come closest to each other. But Mars’s orbit is elliptical, and so is the earth’s to a lesser degree – that is, they are not perfect circles. And so this closest approach varies in distance from encounter to encounter, from some sixty million miles or

more to less than forty million – the closest is called a *perihelic* opposition. Again there is a cycle, with the minimal perihelic approaches coming by once every fifteen years or so: in 1894, and then in 1909, and again in 1924...

I recited from memory, 'The next perihelic opposition is still four years away. The 1907 assault came *two* years before the last perihelic. Surely they won't come, if they come at all, for another couple of years, then. But if they *were* to break the pattern and come this year, they may be already on their way. This year the opposition date is April 21—'

'And as every paper trumpeted,' Harry put in, 'including our own, that would work back to a launch date of February 27: a couple of weeks ago.'

More grim, memorised logic. In 1907 the opposition's date of closest approach of the worlds had been on July 6. The landings had begun precisely three weeks and a day before that, and the firings of the great guns on Mars had begun four weeks and four days before *that*.

But we all knew that even if the astronomers had seen anything untoward on Mars, none of us would have heard about it. Since the Martian War the astronomers' work had been hidden under a blanket of secrecy by the governments. Supposedly this was to stop the panics during the oppositions of 1909 and 1911 and 1914, witless alarms that had caused damage to business confidence and so forth, without a single Martian peeping out of his cylinder – but it had led, in Britain at least, to the possession of an unlicensed astronomical telescope being a criminal offence. I could see the logic, but in my eyes such secrecy only induced more fear and uncertainty.

So, even now the cylinders might be suspended in space – on their way! Why else would Walter summon us all so? But Walter was Walter, never a man to get to the point; I knew that I faced a time of uncertainty before this sudden tension was resolved.

'Well, let's take the call,' I said, as bravely as I could. I linked Eric's arm; Harry took my other arm; and so we walked, as three, out of the lobby. 'I think I can stand an hour or two of luxury in the Plaza.'

'And I,' Harry said, 'look forward to meeting this Cook guy. Quite a character, if half of what he says is true!'