

**CLASSIC**  
a story with  
timeless appeal

Drama

# WAR OF THE WORLDS

**ALIENS HAVE COME TO EARTH... FOR US.**

Can they be stopped?

BASED ON THE H.G. WELLS NOVEL | ADAPTATION BY SPENCER KAYDEN



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALLAN DAVEY

## Characters

Circle the character you will play.

\*Starred characters are major roles.

*Narrators 1, 2, 3, 4 (N1, N2, N3, N4)	Crowd
*Henry, a young man	Neighbor
*Clara, Henry's wife	Milkman
Ogilvy, an astronomer	Soldier
Villagers 1 and 2	Woman
	Man
	Joe

### As You Read

How do the different characters react to the alien invasion?

## SCENE 1

### THE ROAD TO LEATHERHEAD, 1894

**N1:** Henry and Clara sit in a horse-drawn cart as it rattles down a dirt road.

**N2:** Behind them, plumes of smoke stretch into the air.

**Clara (looking back):** The entire world is on fire.

**Henry:** If we can get to Leatherhead, we will be safe. We must keep hope.

**Clara:** Do you really have to return home to Maybury? We barely got out alive.

**Henry:** I must go back to help the fight.

**Clara:** It's too dangerous. I couldn't bear to lose you.

**Henry:** I will return, Clara. I promise.

## SCENE 2

### MAYBURY, THE DAY BEFORE

**N3:** It is a **tranquil** night in the village of Maybury.

**N4:** Henry and Clara are out for an evening stroll.

**N1:** What they don't know—what no one knows—is that Earth is being watched.

**N2:** As humans go about their lives, powerful beings from another planet are looking down.

**N3:** They observe Earth's **verdant** lands and sparkling blue seas with great envy.

**Henry:** What is that hissing sound?

**Clara (pointing at the sky):** Look!

**N4:** A flaming object blazes through the sky.

**Henry:** It must be a meteor.

**N1:** The object crashes in the distance. Henry and Clara walk toward the crash.

**N2:** After a mile or so, they come to a massive smoldering pit in the middle of a field.

**N3:** Ogilvy, an astronomer, stares down into it.

**Henry:** Hi there, Ogilvy. Looks like you found the meteor.

**Ogilvy:** I don't think it's a meteor. See the **cylindrical** shape?

**Clara:** How odd. It must be 90 feet around.

**Ogilvy:** I believe it is from another planet. A few nights ago, I was looking through my telescope, and I saw a red flash moving from Mars toward Earth—at great speed.

**Henry:** Really? That's incredible!

**N4:** More people arrive.

**Villager 1:** What is that thing?

**Henry:** It may be from Mars.

**Crowd (laughing):** Ha! Ha! Ha!

**Villager 2:** What nonsense!

**N1:** A scratching sound comes from the cylinder. The crowd freezes.

**N2:** A chunk of crust falls off one end.

**Ogilvy:** This is no meteor.

**N3:** The end of the cylinder unscrews from the inside and falls to the ground with a clang.

**Villager 1:** Something is coming out!

**Henry:** They look like black snakes.

**Clara:** Those aren't snakes. Those are tentacles!

**N4:** A gray mass about the size of a bear rises from the cylinder. It has two dark eyes, and its skin **glistens** like wet leather.

**Crowd:** Gasp!

**Clara:** Look how the creature's body heaves as it tries to breathe.

**Ogilvy:** It must not be accustomed to our atmosphere.

**N1:** The alien topples over and falls into the pit.

**Ogilvy:** Or our gravity.

**N2:** Another creature appears at the cylinder's opening. Saliva drips from its lipless mouth.

**Villager 2:** They are monsters! Run!

**N3:** Everyone begins to flee.

**Ogilvy:** Don't be afraid! How can they harm us when they can barely move?

**N4:** Henry and Clara climb Maybury Hill, which overlooks the field. They have a good view of the pit.



**THE ALIENS** There are more books, films, and TV shows about aliens than we can count. Sometimes these aliens are friendly explorers, curious about humans and eager to make contact. Other times the aliens are murderous maniacs, bent on destroying all life and seizing our planet's resources. What all the stories have in common is that they are as much about humans as they are about aliens. *What does War of the Worlds say about human nature?*

**Clara:** Did you see its horrible eyes?

**Henry:** I did, and yet, actual creatures from Mars? I am a battleground of fear and curiosity.

**N1:** Thin, black tentacles whip up from the pit.

**N2:** A sound of hammering echoes through the field.

**Clara:** The creatures seem to be building something.

**N3:** Henry and Clara watch Ogilvy and a group of other scientists approach the pit. They wave a white flag.

**N4:** A humped shape rises slowly.

**N1:** Then—a blinding flash of light!

**N2:** Flames shoot at the men. They fall to the ground.

**Henry:** No!

**N3:** The flames spread across the field and into the town, igniting bushes, trees, and houses.

**N4:** The ground smokes and crackles.

## SCENE 3

### CLARA AND HENRY'S HOUSE, THE NEXT MORNING

**N1:** Clara and Henry stand dazed in front of their house.

**N2:** A neighbor walks by.

**Neighbor:** What's the trouble? You two look like you've seen a ghost.

**Clara:** Not a ghost—Martians.

**Neighbor (laughing):** Oh yes, I heard. It all seems so silly.

**Henry:** They shoot fire!

**Neighbor:** Psh. Ridiculous!

**Clara:** The creatures burned everything in their path. Have you ever heard of such a horrible weapon?

**Neighbor:** No, but how much damage can they do if they are stuck in a hole?

**N3:** The milkman comes by.

**Henry:** What's the latest news?

**Milkman:** Another cylinder fell near the woods.

**N4:** Clara shudders.

**Milkman:** No need to worry. Our troops have 'em surrounded. Those brainless blobs are no match for us.

**N1:** Pop! Pop! Pop!

**Milkman:** See? That's our boys firing their guns.

**Henry:** The battle has begun.

**Milkman:** Thousands of armed men against a couple of helpless creatures?

**Neighbor:** It hardly seems like a fair fight.

**N2:** A violent crash shakes the ground.

**Henry:** I don't think we should stay here.

**Clara:** Where can we go?

**Henry:** To my cousin in Leatherhead. Go pack our valuables. I will borrow a horse and cart.

**Clara:** We must warn the neighbors.

**N3:** The tops of nearby trees burst into flames.

**Henry:** There's no time! We need to go. NOW!

## SCENE 4

### THE ROAD AWAY FROM LEATHERHEAD, THAT EVENING

**N4:** Henry takes the horse-drawn cart back toward Maybury. He has left Clara in Leatherhead.

**N1:** The sky in the distance glows orange.

**Henry (to himself):** Maybe I should've stayed with Clara.

**N2:** A strange silhouette approaches. A huge metal tripod, taller than the houses, strides down the road.

**N3:** On its top is a hood that twists and fro, shooting fire at anything that moves.

**N4:** Henry dives into the bushes. The horse gallops down the road, dragging the cart behind.

**N1:** A ray of fire shoots out from the tripod. The cart explodes.

**N2:** Henry stays hidden as the machine passes by.

**N3:** A soldier stumbles by. Henry steps forward.

**Henry:** Sir, what happened?

**Soldier:** We were about to fire upon a cylinder. My horse stumbled and threw me into a hole. I heard an explosion . . . and everything around me was burnt to a crisp.

**Henry:** What horror! But how did you survive?

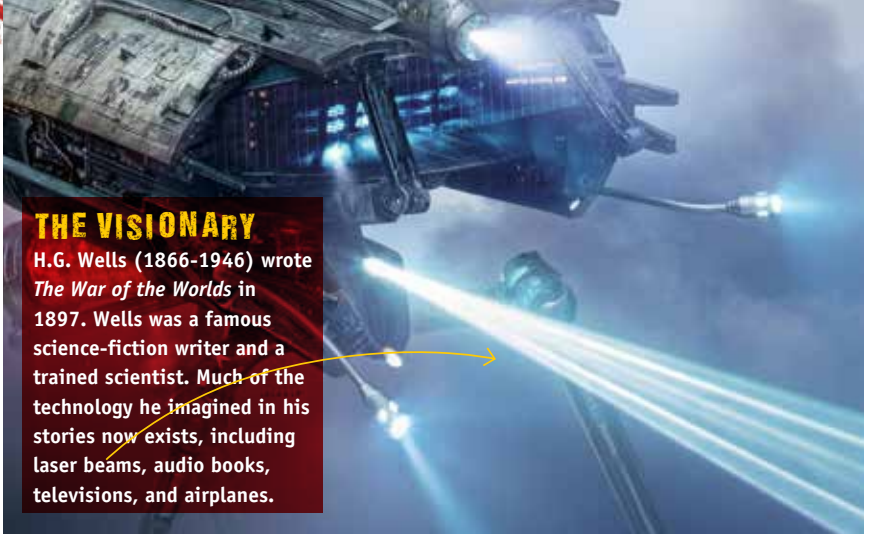
**Soldier:** I stayed there, hidden, as other troops rushed toward the pit. I watched as they were all swept out of existence.

**Henry:** I am sorry for you.

**Soldier:** Be sorry for us all. We've got reports that the

### THE VISIONARY

H.G. Wells (1866-1946) wrote *The War of the Worlds* in 1897. Wells was a famous science-fiction writer and a trained scientist. Much of the technology he imagined in his stories now exists, including laser beams, audio books, televisions, and airplanes.



Martians invaded London, that the city will soon fall.

**Henry:** What was that tripod I saw?

**Soldier:** An indestructible fighting machine. The Martians climb inside and roam anywhere they want.

**Henry:** And Maybury? What of Maybury?

**Soldier:** Maybury burns—as does, I fear, the world. We are no longer masters of our planet.

## SCENE 5

### ON THE ROAD

**N4:** Henry turns back to Leatherhead. He passes troops digging trenches and getting into firing position.

**Henry (to himself):** Those guns won't stop the Martians. It's like shooting arrows at lightning.

**N1:** In the next town, people casually pack their things.

**N2:** Men and women look sharp in their pressed suits and dresses. Laughing children run around amid the carts and carriages.

## COULD A WAR OF THE WORLDS REALLY HAPPEN?

In 1938, the writer and producer Orson Welles adapted *The War of the Worlds* into a radio story, in which Martians invade New Jersey. The broadcast was so realistic sounding that some terrified listeners thought an alien invasion was actually happening.

Of course, it was all science fiction. But the questions remain: Could aliens really come to Earth? And if they did, what would happen?

Scientists are divided over the answers.

**Henry (shouting):** Don't you know what's over there?

**N3:** Henry points in the direction of Maybury.

**Henry:** Death! Death is coming!

**N4:** A woman looks at him with pity.

**Woman:** Poor man. He's gone mad.

**Man:** The army's got things under control. We just need to get out of their way so they can do their job.

**Henry:** You aren't listening. You all need to go—*now!* Leave your belongings and run for your lives!

**N1:** The people ignore Henry, so he continues on.

**N2:** Henry sees a man sitting in the dirt weeping.

**Joe:** This is the end of us.

**Henry:** Keep your head, good man. There is still hope.

**Joe:** Hope? The Martians are **invulnerable**.

**Henry:** It might seem like that, but I know we'll find a way. There are millions of us. We can beat them.

**N3:** Pop! Pop! Pop! More gunfire.

**N4:** Henry sees the tripods in the distance. Then everything goes eerily quiet.

**Henry:** What is happening?

**N1:** An inky black cloud spreads over the valley.

**Henry:** Poison gas! Run!

**N2:** The men scramble to get away.

**N3:** They run to the next village, where they break into an empty house and hide.

**Joe (panting):** It's no use. We're doomed.

**N4:** There is a blinding flash of green light, followed by a massive thud.

**N1:** Glass shatters. Pieces of the ceiling rain down.

**Henry:** Are you all right?

**Joe:** Yes. I think so.

**N2:** Joe gets up, crackling the glass on the floor.

**Henry:** Shhhh! Quiet! The Martians may be near.

**N3:** The men remain still until dawn. Light filters in through a hole in the wall.

**N4:** Henry puts his eye up to it.

**Henry (whispering):** Another cylinder has struck right next to this house. A Martian is standing guard. And what's that? A metal cage full of . . .

**Joe:** What? Full of what?

**Henry:** People. They are collecting people and—

**N1:** Henry gasps.

**Henry:** God save us. The Martians are taking blood from the humans and injecting it into their veins. They're . . . *feeding* on us.

**N2:** Joe drops his head into his hands, moaning.

## SCENE 6

### THE SAME HOUSE, ONE WEEK LATER

**N3:** Joe and Henry, now **haggard** and dirty, are still hiding. A small pile of food sits between them.

**N4:** Henry peers through the hole.

**Henry:** The ground is covered in a strange red weed. It's like they are trying to turn Earth into Mars.

**Joe:** Who cares? We are going to starve here.

**Henry:** Don't give up. We have a chance of surviving if we stay in this house until the Martians move on.

**Joe:** What is the point of surviving? What kind of world will be left?

**Henry:** I must survive—to get back to my Clara.

DAILY NEWS FINAL

## FAKE RADIO 'WAR' STIRS TERROR THROUGH U.S.





**THE VICTORY** In this story, the aliens die from a disease to which humans are immune. This scenario is quite plausible. The human body develops resistance to common illnesses over time. If humans visit other planets, we will have to be careful to protect ourselves from extraterrestrial diseases—and to protect the indigenous life from the germs we bring with us. The same would likely be true for aliens who come to Earth.

**N1:** Suddenly, Joe pounces on the food. He shoves a fistful of bread into his mouth.  
**Henry:** We agreed to **ration** that food!  
**Joe:** I'm hungry!  
**Henry:** We have to be smart, so we can win this war.  
**Joe (voice rising):** This isn't a war, any more than there's war between man and ants!  
**Henry:** Keep your voice down!  
**N2:** Joe throws the stale bread on the floor.  
**Joe (shouting):** Enough! I've had enough!  
**Henry:** Hush! They'll hear us!  
**Joe (screaming):** ENOUGH!  
**N3:** Joe runs toward the door.  
**Joe:** Just let it be over!  
**N4:** Henry tries—but fails—to stop Joe from leaving.  
**N1:** Henry watches through the hole in the wall as Joe is swept up into one of the cages.

## SCENE 7

### THE SAME HOUSE, TWO DAYS LATER

**N2:** Henry awakens from a deep sleep. All is silent.  
**N3:** He crawls to the hole in the wall.  
**Henry (to himself):** I see the tripods, but . . . why aren't they moving?  
**N4:** Henry climbs out, squinting in the light of day.

**N1:** Everything as far as he can see is overgrown with red weeds.  
**N2:** And scattered among the weeds are Martians—dead.  
**Henry:** Can it be that the torment is over?  
**N3:** Dazed, Henry makes his way to Leatherhead.  
**N4:** He arrives to find the village **obliterated**.  
**Henry (crying):** Am I the last man on Earth?  
**N1:** Henry slowly walks back to Maybury passing blackened skeletons of buildings.  
**N2:** But when he arrives at his house, he finds it still standing. He staggers inside, passing from room to room, touching furniture, pictures, curtains.  
**N3:** Suddenly, he hears voices outside.  
**Neighbor:** No one is here. I am so sorry, Clara.  
**N4:** Henry runs out the door. And there stands Clara, alive and well.  
**Clara:** Oh, Henry! Everyone said you were dead, but I knew . . . I just knew . . .  
**N1:** They collapse into each other's arms.  
**Henry:** The Martians are all dead? How can it be?  
**Clara:** Some kind of human disease killed them.  
**Neighbor:** They had no defense against our germs.  
**N2:** The three humans stand in silence, stunned, as the sky glows orange from the setting sun. ●

### WRITING CONTEST

Compare Henry's reaction to the alien invasion with the reaction of one other character from the play (your choice!). Then explain how Henry's attitude helps him survive. Use text evidence. Send your essay to **ALIENS CONTEST**. Five winners will get *Randoms* by David Liss.

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