

When I returned to the common the sun was setting. The crowd about the pit had increased, and stood out black against the lemon yellow of the sky—a couple of hundred people, perhaps. There were raised voices, and some sort of struggle appeared to be going on about the pit. Strange imaginings passed through my mind. As I drew nearer I heard Stent's voice: "Keep back! Keep back!" A boy came running towards me. "It's movin'," he said to me as he passed; "it's screwin' and screwin' out. I don't like it. I'm goin' home, I am." I went on to the crowd. There were really, I should think, two or three hundred people elbowing and jostling one another, the one or two ladies there being by no means the least active. "He's fallen in the pit!" cried someone. "Keep back!" said several. The crowd swayed a little, and I elbowed my way through. Everyone seemed greatly excited. I heard a peculiar humming sound from the pit. "I say!" said Ogilvy. "Help keep these idiots back. We don't know what's in the confounded thing, you know!" I saw a young man, a shop assistant in Woking I believe he was, standing on the cylinder and trying to scramble out of the hole again. The crowd had pushed him in. 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 pitched 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 stuck my elbow into the person behind me, and turned my head towards the Thing again. For a moment that circular cavity seemed perfectly black. I had the sunset in my eyes. I think everyone expected to see a man emerge—possibly something a little unlike us 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. 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 saw the shopman struggling still on the edge of the pit. I found myself alone, and saw the people on the other side of the pit running off, Stent among them. I looked again at the cylinder and ungovernable 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 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. 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 wedge like 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 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.

Questions:

1. What leads us to believe that this passage is from a science fiction story? (4)

Having read this passage, one can easily understand that this is taken from science fiction. The reason is that events that are discussed in this passage cannot happen in normal life. It depicts the activities of the author that can hardly perform by a normal man. Besides, it also depicts different creatures that do not exist in this world.

2. How was the crowd behaving? (4)

The crowd was very excited. It was also raising its voices about the pit. Moreover, people, who were there, were elbowing one another

3. Why did the mood of the crowd alter? (4)

The mood of the crowd altered because it saw what it did not expect. In fact, it expected that there was a human being would come out of the pit. However, it saw a creature like a snake coming out. Thus, its mood changed, and it went back.

4. What was the narrator's initial reaction to the "Thing"? (4)

The initial reaction of the narrator was that he was somewhat scared by that thing, which somewhat resembled snake, and it rattled in the air towards him. Besides, he turned a little back while eyeing the cylinder. In short, the appearance of that creature threatened him in one way or the other.

5. Why did the writer feel disgusted? (4)

The writer felt disgusted because he saw a thing, which he had not seen before. It was like bear coming out of the cylinder. its mouth was V-shaped, where brow ridges and lower lip were missing. Besides its skin was oily and fungoid. In short, different thing made the author feel disgusted to a great extent.