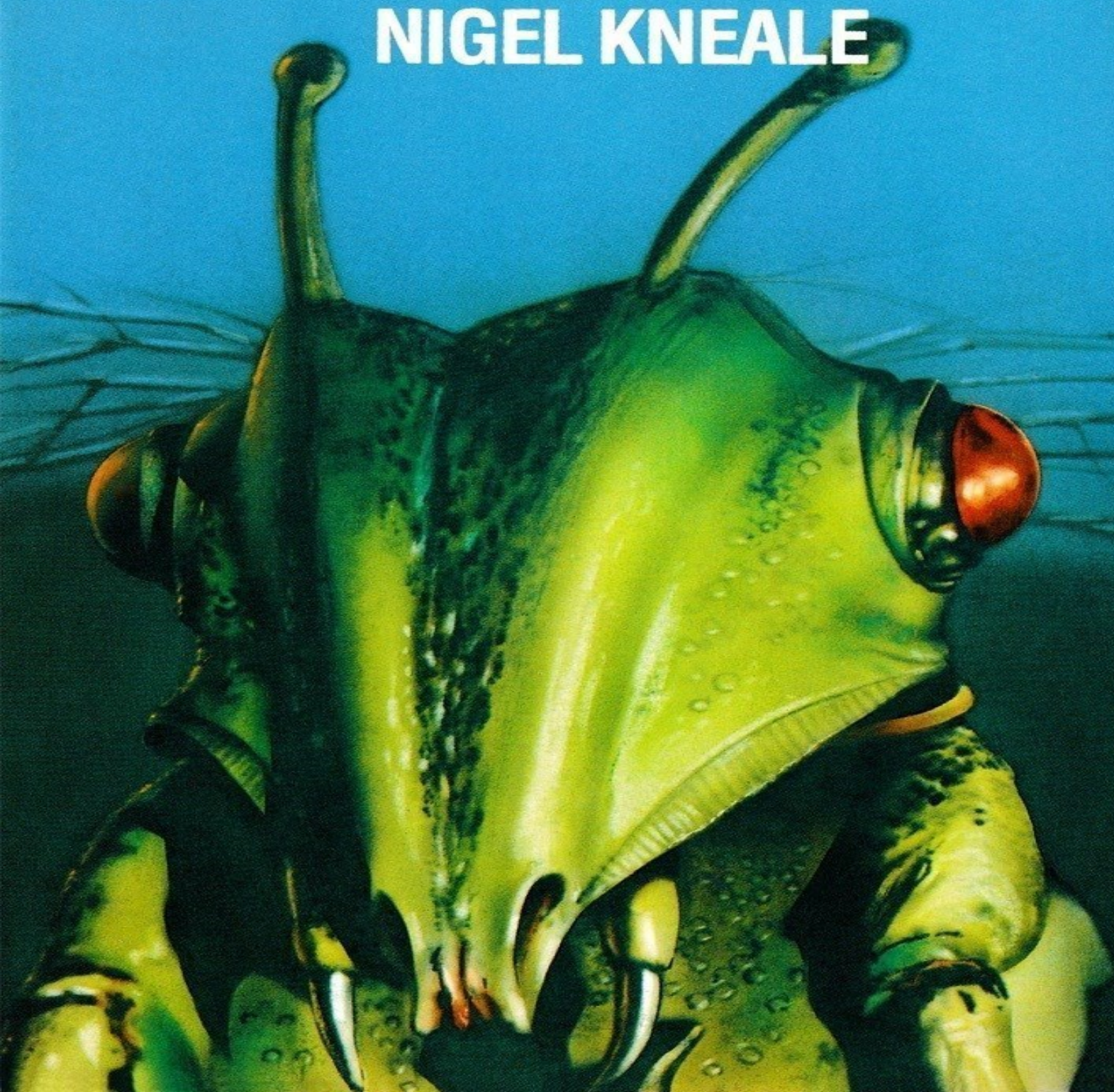


A QUATERMASS CLASSIC

QUATERMASS AND THE PIT

NIGEL KNEALE



QUATERMASS AND THE PIT

Hobbs Lane, in central London, has been the scene of mysterious incidents for centuries past. Stories of hauntings and of strange apparitions abound . . . and now an excavation crew have discovered parts of a skeleton that contradict all previous theories of Man's ancestry. Professor Quatermass is in London for top-level talks on a military project for the furtherance of space war—an enterprise to which Quatermass is violently opposed.

But his attention is drawn away from the battle with officialdom, when the Hobbs Lane site yields an even more startling find—a vast rocket made of a metal unknown to science. And soon after that, the terror begins . . .

In Arrow by Nigel Kneale

THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT

QUATERMASS II

QUATERMASS AND THE PIT

QUATERMASS

NIGEL KNEALE

Quatermass and the Pit



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AUTHOR’S NOTE

In revising this script for publication, I have simplified both technical terms and directions to make it more easily readable. I have also amplified descriptions, and discarded the precise breaking-down of the action into those scenes performed live in the electronic studio, those pre-filmed, and special effects—though anyone technically interested could probably work this out for himself.

I should be glad, however, if the reader would still bear in mind that the whole structure of this story is primarily shaped for presentation by cameras, and the dialogue written for actors to speak.

FOREWORD

‘Suppose a building contractor was excavating a site for a big office block and going really deep,’ I remember saying, ‘and suddenly came across what looked like a space-ship—’

‘Let’s do it!’ said Rudolph Cartier.

It was 1959, when a lot of reconstruction was going on, the final rebuilding of the blitzed areas. There were hoardings up everywhere with peep-holes cut in them for passers-by to inspect progress.

The idea made a third Quatermass story possible without dropping too obviously into repetition. It had to be about alien visitation, of course, and the professor instrumental in coping—those elements were inescapable. But whereas the first serial dealt with a contact in real time and the second one with an invasion already established for a year, this would be long after the event. The intrusion would have come five million years in the past, when no resistance was possible, so that it succeeded wholly and built certain undesirable characteristics into Earth’s future population. Quatermass would be fighting his own heredity. A new pattern.

The first two serials had by now re-appeared in shortened cinema-film shape. The American actor Brian Donlevy, once an excellent comic heavy but gone quite to pieces, bawled his way through them in what was meant to be the role of poor Quatermass. (For the record, the third and best of those films starred Andrew Keir as Quatermass.)

Our new TV professor would be André Morell, a civilised and debonair figure. He would be the man in the middle, one of an almost symbolic trio. On one side of him would be the primitive Breen, played by Anthony Bushell with his special brand of ice-cold menace, and on the other the only too human, vulnerable figure of Dr. Roney. Here the Canadian actor Cec Linder put in a memorably warm characterisation.

These three were to typify human variants, afflicted to different degrees by the alien tampering and driven by the implanted instincts into displays of superstitious fear and racial rigidity when the capsule in the pit warmed up.

The excavation became the main element of the story. To simulate it for the pre-filmed sequences, tons of mud were spilled into the BBC’s newly acquired studios at Ealing. The designer, Clifford Hatts, made it appear to get dug deeper and deeper by the simple device of raising its sides, so that a contractor’s hut first seen at ground level finished up thirty feet above the bottom of the hole.

The Kine-and-Wilkie special effects team, now rich with experience, turned in brilliantly effective devices. People still talk about their poltergeist coffee-stall, the ground that moved beneath a man’s body, the space ship that came organically alive. They made excellent Martian monsters, too, both dead and alive.

All the technically risky sequences were gathered safely on film by Cartier with the flair that had stayed with him since his UFA days. But he never ceased to push his luck, making heads shake in the luxury of the Riverside Studios, newly converted to TV, when the show came to be transmitted there. It was still largely live, and that was where the rest of the characters came in: the woman who read tea-leaves, the cop with the frightened childhood memories, the clubmen and the pensioners and rubbernecks and barflies and the rest.

It was a time when some delicate theories were being framed about the intimate medium and the small screen and the need for social commitment. I suspect we broke most of those rules before they had a chance to harden, with what amounted in TV terms to a cast of thousands. The audience wanted, needed, enjoyed its imagination being alarmed. Soon came all those accounts of council meetings being abandoned and pubs emptied when people made for their sets on Quatermass night.

No, we weren’t committed. But we had some style. We were pretty good.

Nigel Kneale

PART ONE

The Halfmen

Fade in opening music.

Close shot of two street name-plates, one above the other on the ancient brickwork of a small corner house. The more recent of them is white, in the standard London County Council format, lettered: HOBBS LANE, SW1. The older plate, dark and rusted, reads more simply: HOB'S LANE.

The camera pans, to take in all that remains of a little working-class street. Most of it has been demolished. A building contractor's fence runs along the opposite side, and cuts across the street itself a short distance down from the corner. Only five of the small terrace-houses are left, and their demolition is clearly imminent. That farthest from the corner is an almost roofless ruin. The one next to it is still curtained, as if occupied, but the others are closed and empty. And the street itself is stacked with cement bags, grab-chains, stacks of reinforcing metal, scaffolding, sand. A board on a steel frame reads: 'Site of Future Office Block, BALDHOON HOUSE.' Beyond the hoarding, the jibs of grab-cranes can be seen moving in the excavation. A truck, laden to capacity with gouged-up clay, drags itself out through a gap in the hoarding and down the little street.

Cut—to the excavation. This is about twenty feet deep at the lowest point of the unevenly-dug floor. A ramp runs up one side, and a second truck is waiting at its foot, shuddering under the shock of the loads dumped by two hard-working grabs. Men are at work with picks. A concrete-mixer is rumbling. On the other side of the excavation is a rough wooden structure—a contractors' hut.

Close shot of grab teeth closing on a mass of clay and rising with it, swinging it round towards the waiting truck. The jib halts. The clay falls on to the heap already in the truck.

The Truck Driver is standing by, smoking a cigarette. Suddenly his eyes widen. He throws down the cigarette and jumps forward. He scrambles up the side of the truck, his attention on the piled clay. He turns and waves excitedly.

TRUCK DRIVER [shouts]: Look here—look at this! Hey, boys!

The grabs swing to a halt, motors idling. The Operator of one comes scrambling down from his cab. Beyond, men are dropping picks and moving towards the wildly gesticulating Truck Driver.

TRUCK DRIVER: See what's here—quick! Come on, all of you!

In the hut, the Foreman has been conferring with the Clerk of the Works. They look out at the running men. Puzzled, the Foreman mutters and starts towards the door. Crash in music.

Cut—to where a spadeful of clay is being swung down from the truck. It comes to rest on top of an oil-drum. The Grab Operator and the Truck Driver, in whose hands the spade is carefully gripped, peer closely.

TRUCK DRIVER: It's a skull all right.

GRAB OPERATOR: Bashed in . . .

The thing is the colour of the clay in which it is still embedded, and crushed as if by vast pressure. But part of the eye-socket and some teeth can be made out clearly.

Other men are crowding round, falling silent as they see what it is.

A COLOURED WORKMAN: You reckon he might'a been murdered or something?

TRUCK DRIVER [fingering the skull gently]: No, it's all—you know—fossilized. Like stone.

GRAB OPERATOR: It must have come up with my last lot.

TRUCK DRIVER: Been down there a long time. Maybe hundreds of years.

COLOURED WORKMAN: Hundreds—

GRAB OPERATOR: What do we do with it?

TRUCK DRIVER: Here's the gaffer.

The Foreman comes hurrying across the excavation floor, ready for trouble.

FOREMAN: What's going on here? What's the stoppage?

COLOURED WORKMAN: He's found a skull!

The Foreman comes up, frowning. He puts out a hand to touch it.

TRUCK DRIVER: Careful. It's real old.

FOREMAN: Aye . . . looks it.

TRUCK DRIVER: Reckon we ought to report it? You know, to a museum or something?

GRAB OPERATOR: Yes—like them Roman remains that time—

FOREMAN [doubtfully]: I dunno. There'll be trouble if work's held up.

TRUCK DRIVER: Listen—it may be worth something good. To all of us!

GRAB OPERATOR: That's right—

COLOURED WORKMAN: Let's get on with it!

FOREMAN: All right. [To Coloured Workman.] Jack—stay here and don't let anybody muck it about.

He starts back towards the hut, followed by the increasingly excited men. The Coloured Workman is left looking down at the shape on the oil-drum. At his shoulder is an Old Workman, the last to arrive on the scene.

COLOURED WORKMAN: What d'you make of it?

OLD WORKMAN: I dunno. I don't like this place. Haven't done since we started.

COLOURED WORKMAN: Gah! [*He turns away and pulls himself up on the step of the truck. He surveys the load. After a moment he points.*] Hey—I think I can see another bit . . .

Dissolve . . . to a news-stand of London evening papers. In the absence of the vendor, neat stacks of the papers are arranged on boxes along the wall, held down by stones. Pan along these. Headlines read: 'APEMEN AT KNIGHTSBRIDGE' . . . 'KNIGHTSBRIDGE APEMEN—MORE FINDS EXPECTED' . . . A poster beside them is scrawled 'THREE BODIES, SAYS SCIENTIST!' A Passer-by picks up a paper and drops coppers into the tin tray.

Dissolve . . . to a brass name-plate . . . NICKLIN INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH IN NATURAL HISTORY. Pan up to a wide shot of the building beyond—an imposing, blackened pile somewhere in South Kensington. At the top of the curving flight of steps, people are passing in and out through swing doors. Pan up to the long windows above, amid the balustrades and columns.

Cut—to the Institute lecture-hall, panning across a few rows of seated Journalists towards a low dais.

Here, behind a table with the regulation water-carafe, are an elderly Institute Official and Dr. Matthew Roney. Roney is a volatile, lean Canadian. Behind the rimless glasses, humorous eyes flash and the mouth is mobile. His personality is warm, unscientifically impulsive—even rash in the view of some of his colleagues. He is on his feet now, leaning forward across the table.

RONNEY: Gentlemen—and ladies too—I'm relieved to see you. The idea of calling this press conference hasn't entirely met with approval. [*He turns to the Official at his side.*] Has it?

OFFICIAL [*uncomfortably*]: Really, Dr. Roney—

RONNEY [*to his audience again*]: But to be blunt about it, I'm counting on your help—and through you, that of the public. As you may know, I'm in charge of the digging at Hobbs Lane, Knightsbridge. We've been there for a week now, and I'm worried. [*He pauses, looking round the faces in front of him.*] We need time, to do our work properly—and I'm afraid we're not going to get it. The owners of the site want to get on with their building. That's natural enough. And they're pressing us to get out.

OFFICIAL [*alarmed*]: That was confidential!

RONNEY: Oh. All right, please keep it off the record that they're trying to kick us out. [*There is some laughter, through which his voice cuts with rising pugnacity.*] But if they do, they may wreck one of the most remarkable finds ever made!

He comes quickly forward, down the steps from the dais. Close to the Journalists now, he continues with excited urgency.

RONNEY: I've made statements that these fossils are important. Now I'll go further. I believe they are of *unparalleled* importance! They may teach us more about our remote ancestors than we have ever known! I believe they will show that creatures essentially resembling mankind walked upon this Earth between three and five million years ago!

There is a stir, particularly among those representing specialist and scientific journals. Cameras are aimed, flashing. A white-haired Journalist in the front row frowns.

WHITE-HAIRED JOURNALIST: Dr. Roney—isn't that far further back than has been supposed?

RONNEY: Several times as far. Up to now the figure's been put at about half a million years.

A SECOND JOURNALIST: Can you prove it?

RONNEY [*after a moment*]: No. Not till I've got every scrap of evidence out of that excavation and made full tests. I'm giving you my deep personal conviction, based on what I've found so far. My hunch, in fact.

A THIRD JOURNALIST: What exactly *have* you found, up to now?

RONNEY: Parts of two skulls, fragments of upper and lower limbs. Probably from three individuals.

SECOND JOURNALIST: Can you tell us what they would have looked like?

WHITE-HAIRED JOURNALIST [*turning to him*]: Hardly, at this stage—

Roney holds up his hand.

RONNEY: Yes, I think I can. At least, I'm prepared to make a guess.

There is an expectant stir in the audience as he turns towards an open door at the side of the lecture hall. He beckons. A girl in a laboratory coat enters, pushing forward a trolley on which is a bulky form covered with a sheet.

RONNEY: My principal assistant, Miss Barbara Judd. With our attempt at a reconstruction. [*To the girl.*] Right over here . . .

He helps her guide the trolley along in front of the dais. Journalists stand up to see. Cameras are aimed.

Roney throws back the cloth covering, to reveal a clay figure. About four feet high, it is built on an armature, and only sections of it have been fully modelled: the head and chest, parts of the limbs. It stands upright, its long arms dangling but not reaching the trolley surface. The forehead is domed, the cranium massive.

RONNEY: These modelled portions represent what we've found so far—filled out with imaginary flesh. He wasn't very big. He had the face of an ape. But he had a big brain. And he stood like a man!

Flashguns flash. The Journalists crowd forward round the trolley. There is a babel of questions.

Dissolve . . . to a close shot of an Evening Gazette, with the headline: 'FIVE MILLION YEARS OLD!' Under it is a photograph of Roney standing by

the reconstructed apeman. A smaller heading declares: 'VITAL DISCOVERY, SAYS SCIENTIST.'

Track back as the newspaper is picked up from where it lies on a bar counter; and studied by a frowning man as he sips a brandy-and-soda. This is Armitage, a florid-faced magazine owner. Beside him is Baines, a birdlike man with white hair. The background of heavy, worn furnishings and old-fashioned portraits suggests the club that this is. Baines turns with pleasurable malice to where Roney is standing thoughtfully a yard or so away.

BAINES: I must say, Roney, I'm glad I'm not in your shoes. A lot of people may think it's a trifle improper to publicize wild guesses. Particularly if they turn out to be bad guesses.

The barman places another large brandy at Armitage's elbow.

ARMITAGE: Thanks. [*To Roney.*] Water? [*He slops some water into the glass.*] Poor old Roney! Those press boys gave you the treatment, didn't they? I know what they're like when they get started.

He pushes the glass along to Roney.

RONEY: Thanks. No, they didn't. I said it all of my own free will.

BAINES: What possessed you?

RONEY: I want the man in the street on my side. Trite, I grant—but if he doesn't come in off his street and help me, there'll be a block of offices clapped on that site, bones and all, before we can think. Armitage, your health! [*He gulps brandy.*] You're really the reason I've come down to the club today.

ARMITAGE [*a glance at Baines*]: I'm being bearded?

RONEY: That's it. Those excellent journals of yours haven't shown much interest so far.

ARMITAGE: Weekly magazines work a long way ahead.

RONEY: I know. That's exactly when I may need your support most—about a month from now. I'll give your photographers special facilities and—[*He takes Armitage's empty glass out of his hand and calls across to the Barman.*] Another large brandy.

ARMITAGE: No, Roney, thank you. I really have to go. Look, I never interfere with my editors, but—oh, I'll get them to ring you. 'Bye now.

RONEY [*as Armitage rises*]: Goodbye—

BAINES [*going too*]: Good luck!

As the two men make for the door, mingling with other club members, Roney sighs. The Barman brings the brandy he ordered.

RONEY: Oh, I don't—[*He changes his mind.*] Yes, I do. [*He picks up the glass and takes a gulp.*]

A hand descends on his shoulder. Roney splutters and turns. He gives a delighted grin at the newcomer—a grey-haired man in his fifties.

RONEY: Quatermass!

QUATERMASS [*shaking his hand*]: Roney, how are you? Fit enough but tired? Harassed by publicity?

RONEY: Harassed by not getting enough. Till a week ago I was a retiring sort of creature. Now I behave like a—a press agent!

QUATERMASS: There are times when you have to do it—play for public support.

RONEY: I have to, now! Thank God there's at least one man who understands—have a drink. [*But Quatermass indicates his own, almost full glass.*] Oh. Of course I've said far too much, far too soon. If I'm wrong—[*he throws up his hands.*]

QUATERMASS: If you're wrong, it won't matter, will it?

RONEY [*smiles*]: No. I'll just retire. They can stick me alongside the Piltdown Forgery, as another horrid warning! [*A quick sigh.*] Quatermass, it must be years. What are you doing now? Still buried out at your rocket research place?

QUATERMASS: Mm. Shall we lunch?

RONEY [*glances at his watch*]: Doubt if I've time—

QUATERMASS [*to Barman*]: Arthur, can we have a few sandwiches? Something plain?

RONEY: I'd almost forgotten you were a member.

QUATERMASS: I'm just up for a conference. At the War Office.

RONEY: War Office? I thought you were—well, strictly a civilian outfit?

QUATERMASS [*wryly*]: We were.

RONEY: Good heavens . . . they're taking you over?

QUATERMASS: If I say so, I'll be infringing official secrets. But it seems we have to move with the times.

RONEY [*sincerely*]: Quatermass, I'm sorry.

The Barman brings a plate of sandwiches.

QUATERMASS: Thanks. [*He offers them to Roney.*] Cheese. How much time d'you need in that excavation?

RONEY [*shrugs*]: Depends on what we find. You can't rush it. Some of those pieces of fossil are so fragile that—[*He breaks off.*] Come and see for yourself. I'd like you to.

QUATERMASS [*shaking his head*]: I wish I could.

RONEY: When your conference finishes.

QUATERMASS: Oh, then . . . I doubt if I'll be good company.

He signs to the Barman and pays him, then turns with Roney towards the door.

QUATERMASS: You know, Roney, with all your troubles you've got one thing to be thankful for. There's no military value in fossil apes!

Dissolve . . . to Hobbs Lane.

The building operations are at a standstill, and the street is full of sightseers. A long queue of people is filing past the fence, crowding at the

gaps that have been made for them to watch the digging party at work below in the excavation.

The inevitable TV news team is there too. In front of its camera, a Woman Interviewer is at work with a stick microphone, buttonholing some of those leaving the gaps. She picks on a Teddy Boy, whose own appearance is apelike enough, and the girl with him.

INTERVIEWER: Now—you've just been watching the diggers at work. What do you think about this business—the Missing Link?

TEDDY BOY: Missing Link? I dunno . . . it's all right, if they want to have it.

INTERVIEWER [*quickly, to the girl*]: And what do you think?

GIRL: I like it.

INTERVIEWER [*baffled*]: Like it? The Missing Link?

GIRL [*defensively*]: Yes, I do!

Desperately, the Interviewer turns to a Stout Woman.

INTERVIEWER: You, madam—do you think it's right to hold up the building work here?

STOUT WOMAN [*forthrightly*]: Till they get them monkeys' bones dug up—yes, I do! They ought to be let!

INTERVIEWER: Thank you. [*She whisks round to a Business Man with homburg and briefcase.*] And you, sir—what is your opinion?

BUSINESSMAN: Um—er—

But even as he opens his mouth, the Interviewer catches sight of something more interesting. She turns quickly, blotting out the Business Man.

INTERVIEWER: I think I can see someone whose opinion is really worth something. Dr. Matthew Roney, the scientist in charge here—

She signals the TV film camera to move with her, and hurries across to where Roney is just alighting from a taxi.

INTERVIEWER: Dr. Roney, would you grant me a word?

RONNEY: Oh—just a moment. [*He turns back to the taxi, in which Quatermass is sitting.*] Thanks for the lift. [*Quietly, indicating the Interviewer.*] I suppose I asked for this.

Quatermass watches with a slight smile as Roney is steered away to answer questions in front of the news camera, with sightseers crowding round. Then he leans forward to speak to the taxi driver.

QUATERMASS: Whitehall, please. The War Office.

The taxi starts to move off.

Dissolve . . . to where Quatermass is entering a large conference room at the War Office, a few minutes later. In most respects the room is unremarkable, with its long centrally-placed table and sombre furnishings. But on the walls are huge telescopic photographs of the Moon and Mars. Those of the Moon are marked out in places with small painted patches and operation-flags.

As Quatermass takes papers from his briefcase and lays them at his place near the head of the table, the other members of the conference are assembling. They are half a dozen in number—two Senior Civil Servants; a tweed-clothed, tousled scientist; another small, grim, bald scientist; an ageing General whose face is almost permanently twisted in a faint, tic-like smile . . . and Colonel Breen.

This man is a few years younger than Quatermass, alert and cold in manner, his uniform immaculate. On the table between them are a clutter of plans and notes, and two models of multi-stage rockets.

BREEN: Well, Professor Quatermass—

QUATERMASS: We enter the last round. [*As Breen smiles patiently.*] Isn't that what you were going to say?

BREEN: Nothing so pugilistic. Just that it'll soon be over, and you can enjoy a rest. [*Quatermass looks at him sharply.*] We all can.

The Minister's Private Secretary enters quickly, clutching a zip-case.

SECRETARY: Will you take your seats, gentlemen? The Minister won't be a moment.

Those round the table do so. Quatermass watches Breen narrowly, troubled by the man's easy confidence.

The Minister enters. He is a good committee man and fixer, noted for his composure under difficult circumstances and his swiftness of decision. He sits at the head of the table with the Secretary beside him.

MINISTER [*cheerfully*]: The final session. I'm sure you all feel as I do. It shouldn't take long to agree our conclusions. I've asked Harrison to make a rough draft.

He turns to the Secretary, who hands him some foolscap sheets. Quatermass glances quickly at his colleagues.

QUATERMASS: But surely, sir—there's been no agreement up to now?

MINISTER [*a show of mild annoyance*]: I should have thought there was. A very substantial measure. About the whole administration of the Rocket Group—its finances—practical operation—

QUATERMASS: But not its purpose.

MINISTER: We aren't here to formulate policy. That's for a higher level, as you well know.

There are nods from the Senior Civil Servants.

QUATERMASS: We've got to express our views. We're men, not mechanical computers.

A small silence. When the Minister speaks again, it is with patronizing gentleness.

MINISTER: Professor Quatermass . . . isn't your concern perhaps unduly personal? I think we all realize how much is owed to your . . . formative influence . . .

QUATERMASS: I brought the Rocket Group into being.

MINISTER: But it is, after all, a government project. It always has been.

QUATERMASS [*stubbornly*]: It was intended for peaceful scientific research. Not to be taken over and perverted to fulfil such a monstrous concept—[*he*

ignores the Minister's gesture of protest]—as this Dead Man's Deterrent!

There is another hush. The Minister lifts his eyes from the table. In them is the expression of one drawing on new reserves of patience.

MINISTER: I thought I'd made it clear at the outset. The decision has been taken. We are here only to settle the *means*—of carrying it out.

TWEEDY SCIENTIST: I must say, sir, I'm rather inclined to agree with Quatermass. The commission that founded the Rocket Group expressly stated that—

MINISTER [*less patiently*]: This is a *change* of policy. As confusion seems to be arising, I'll ask Colonel Breen to restate it.

TWEEDY SCIENTIST [*apologetically*]: I didn't mean—

MINISTER [*silencing him with a gesture*]: For information only, not further discussion. Briefly, please—and finally.

Quatermass throws himself back in his chair and looks round the faces of his colleagues. Breen is on his feet. His voice is clipped, assured.

BREEN: The setting up of permanent bases on the Moon, and possibly Mars also, is envisaged within five to seven years. Those bases will be military ones. The present state of world politics leaves no doubt about that.

GENERAL: So there's a race on. [*The smile-like tic works.*]

BREEN: As usual, it is a race. Whoever plants those bases can police the earth. Ballistic missiles will be stored there—slave missiles designed to respond automatically to military activity on Earth. Even if an aggressor nation should totally wipe out a neighbour in a nuclear attack, it would itself be obliterated by missiles from space. That is the concept of the Dead Man's Deterrent.

QUATERMASS [*wearily*]: You really believe that missiles could be so accurate?

BREEN: They could locate the Earth.

QUATERMASS: And destroy everything on it?

A pause.

BREEN [*quietly, as he sits*]: We should not have been the aggressors.

QUATERMASS: No. But we'd send all humanity up in smoke to avenge ourselves!

MINISTER [*smoothly*]: I take it that greater accuracy in these missiles would be a constant object?

BREEN: Of course.

GENERAL: The absolutely ultimate weapon.

MINISTER: A Sword of Damocles, hanging over the head of any aggressor ready to fall—

GENERAL: We might call this Operation Damocles?

MINISTER [*pleased*]: Yes—yes, good idea.

Quatermass has risen to his feet, appalled. He almost shouts at them.

QUATERMASS: Stop this! [*As they turn in surprise.*] Ultimate weapon! Can you still pretend to believe in such a thing? There never has been one and there never will be. [*Bursting out.*] All this means is that from the very start we'll be going into space with one thought. War! [*He goes on with an effort.*] Don't you see . . . we are on the edge of a new dimension of discovery. It's the great chance . . . to leave our vices behind. War first of all. Not to go out there dragging our hatreds and our frontiers with us. [*Almost painfully.*] Gentlemen, we must not lightly agree to this plan. We have a human right to express opinions, to advise against it. I implore you—

He looks round the faces in front of him. The General's is hostile, belied by the tic. The tweedy scientist looks unhappily down at the table, and his bald colleague is without expression. The Civil Servants seem to be embarrassed at being asked for a personal expression of views. Breen shows only a faint contempt.

The Secretary looks to the Minister, and the Minister is bland.

MINISTER: I'm a little surprised.

QUATERMASS: Is that all?

MINISTER: And disturbed. To hear such naïve views still put forward.

QUATERMASS [*shocked*]: Naïve!

MINISTER: They compel me to ask—have you a conscientious objection to remaining as head of the Rocket Group?

Quatermass stares back at him. This is it at last, the open challenge.

QUATERMASS: You want me to resign?

This is a shade too direct for the Minister. He gives a little smile of embarrassment.

QUATERMASS: I shan't! I'll stay in control there as long as I can. Use what influence I can bring to bear to try to prevent—

MINISTER [*quickly*]: Thank you. Of course, I should be glad of your cooperation, until such time as—[*he clears his throat.*] Meanwhile, a new Assistant Controller will be joining the Rocket Group under you. Colonel Breen.

QUATERMASS: Breen! [*He looks across to see Breen showing no surprise at the announcement, and throws it at him accusingly.*] You knew!

MINISTER: I told him this morning. He's being seconded from Army duties.

QUATERMASS: I see—

MINISTER: I think you'll agree about his fitness for the post. Unrivalled experience with military rockets . . . ballistic missiles. Any comment?

QUATERMASS [*slowly*]: For the present, none.

The Minister gives him a sharp look. Tight-lipped, he nods. He turns to the others.

MINISTER: Now—let's consider this draft. Pass the copies round, please—

As the drafts are circulated, Quatermass sits sunk in bitter apathy. Track back along the table. The papers are being studied and spectacles are brought out. Crane down . . . to one of the model rockets, picked out clearly against a Moonscape on the wall behind . . .

Dissolve . . . to the floor of the excavation at Hobbs Lane.

Close shot of a small portable radio standing on a flimsy table . . . from it comes the voice of a newsreader with a mid-afternoon summary. Beside the radio are a twin-lens camera, measuring instruments, preservative sprays, and other apparatus. Pan up to show the excavation. The clay floor has now been marked out with pegs and lines, with planks running between them as pathways. Roney is there on his knees, picking gently at a patch of clay. His assistants, several men and woman, are working methodically with trowels and other digging gear.

VOICE OF NEWSREADER: . . . In Vienna, the conference on nuclear disarmament remains deadlocked by failure to agree an agenda. Terrorist activity in Nigeria has been responsible for eighty-seven more deaths during the past month. Police report that Birmingham was peaceful last night, after almost a week of racial disturbances. More fossil bones were found today at Knightsbridge. Dr. Matthew Roney has confirmed that they too belong to the species he has described as ‘the earliest known true hominid’. That is the end of this news summary.

Roney has come to his feet, listening. As the radio resumes a programme of light music, he gives a slight grin. Barbara Judd comes out of the contractors’ hut—which has evidently been pressed into service as the digging party’s headquarters. She takes the reflex camera from the table and joins Roney, who is once again kneeling by the latest find. She focuses on it.

RONEY: Drying nicely. It is a shoulder-blade. [*He places a white rule in position beside the fossil.*]

BARBARA: It looks in better condition than the others.

RONEY: More of it, anyway. Got it? [*As she nods and winds on the camera, he proceeds to slide a metal plate under the specimen, where he has picked the clay away.*] You know, I think there were four bodies.

BARBARA [*surprised*]: Four?

RONEY: At least. [*He carefully lifts the metal plate with a small mass of clay in which the specimen is embedded, and turns towards the hut.*] Carry on there. Keep an eye open for vertebrae—there may be some that relate to this.

She takes his place, picks up the trowel.

As Roney passes the table on his way to the hut, hold and track in on the radio. It is playing very faintly. There is a short burst of static. Then it fades out completely.

Cut to where, a few yards away, an older woman in a floppy hat—Miss Dobson—suddenly sits back and puts a hand to her head.

BARBARA [*glancing across at her*]: Miss Dobson—are you all right?

MISS DOBSON: Just my head. It’s so close down here—clammy, rather. Don’t you notice it?

She gives a gasp. Barbara puts her trowel down and comes hurrying along the plankway towards her.

BARBARA: Perhaps you should call it a day?

MISS DOBSON: Nonsense. Just a touch of migraine—it’s gone now. [*She looks upwards.*] Oh, see them all gaping up there! I’m making an exhibition of myself!

She picks up her trowel and resumes work. Barbara goes back to hers. Miss Dobson, who is working at a slightly lower level than her companions, turns up a couple more trowels-full . . . and frowns. She digs again, carefully. There is a faint scraping sound. She puts the trowel down and uses a fine probing instrument instead. Then she turns excitedly.

MISS DOBSON: Miss Judd—Miss Judd! I think I’ve got something!

Cut to the interior of the hut. The contractors’ gear has been pushed to one side, and the long trestle table that occupies a large part of it is now covered with Roney’s equipment—jars, test-tubes, boxes, bottles of preserving fluids, and note-books.

Roney is carefully lowering his latest find into a wooden box. As he proceeds to pack it round with wood shavings, he dictates to the assistant beside him, who is making out a label.

RONEY: Probably right scapula. Part of clavicle may also be present. Go carefully. Get it over to the Institute right away. [*He turns to where a vacuum flask is standing on the window shelf*] Now for some coffee—[*Through the window overlooking the site, he catches sight of Barbara Judd signalling to him.*] Another find! [*He makes for the door.*]

Cut to the excavation floor as Roney comes hurrying from the hut.

BARBARA: Dr. Roney—

RONEY: Something good?

BARBARA [*leading the way*]: No. Come and see.

He follows her along the plankway to where Miss Dobson is kneeling, with the other assistants crowding round. A small patch of something like black metal is showing in the clay.

MISS DOBSON: Dr. Roney, I’m afraid it’s only a pipe.

RONEY: A pipe?

MISS DOBSON: Water, I think. It might be a trunk sewer. [*She giggles.*] Good thing I wasn’t using a pick-axe!

RONEY [*with a glance up at the watchers above*]: They’d have had a laugh.

MISS DOBSON [*looking up*]: Oh dear, they’re all excited now. They think we’ve found something.

Excited voices float down from the crowd above. Roney crouches and runs his fingers over the shiny surface.

RONEY: Smooth. Trowel, please—[*Miss Dobson hands him hers, and he prises more clay away from the ‘pipe’.*] Very smooth.

BARBARA: It seems to curve downwards. You know, I don’t think this is a pipe.

RONEY: Then what would you suggest?

BARBARA: An unexploded bomb.

RONEY: Eh?

MISS DOBSON: Oh, my goodness! Yes—it does look like one—

Roney sees his assistants moving back in alarm. He turns angrily to Barbara.

RONEY: Why did you have to say that! We can't afford to lose time—

MISS DOBSON: It ought to be reported, Dr. Roney.

RONEY [*submitting*]: Very well. Miss Judd, get in touch with—who is it? The police?

BARBARA: I think so.

She goes off towards the hut. Roney glowers at the assistants.

RONEY: We could go on working at the other side there.

There is no response. With a sigh of exasperation, he drops on his knees a few feet from the disturbing object and sets to work on his own.

Cut—to the interior of the hut, where Barbara is telephoning.

BARBARA: Hello, is that the police? I want to report what may be an unexploded bomb . . .

Dissolve . . . to Hobbs Lane, a short time later.

The last sightseers are being shepherded out of the street by two Policemen as an Army Landrover drives round the corner, followed immediately by a large truck with a canvas top. A Police Inspector steps forward and signals to the vehicles. As the Landrover comes to a halt, Captain Potter jumps out—a serious-faced young man in charge of the bomb-disposal unit. The Inspector hurries across to speak to him. Meanwhile the truck has pulled in just behind. A Corporal and three Sappers start unloading spades and other gear, while their Sergeant goes off with Potter towards the gap that leads into the building site.

The Policemen are erecting a barrier of poles across the end of the street when the Inspector turns to them, pointing towards the only house that has curtained windows.

INSPECTOR: Somebody still living in there?

POLICEMAN: Dunno, sir—

INSPECTOR: I'll see to it. You carry on.

He crosses and knocks on the door. Almost immediately it is opened and a white-haired old woman looks out—Mrs. Chilcot. The Inspector talks to her quietly, pointing to where the barrier is now complete, and one of the Policemen is setting up a notice reading: POLICE NOTICE. UNEXPLODED BOMB. KEEP CLEAR.

Dissolve . . . to the floor of the excavation, a short time later.

A quantity of clay has been dug away from the object, and three or four feet of it can be made out—a broad, mud-streaked surface. The Sappers watch as the Sergeant approaches it with Captain Potter, who is taking headphones and a magnetic microphone from a canvas case.

SERGEANT: What type would say it was, sir?

POTTER [*his soft Northern voice full of doubt*]: Could be a Satan.

SERGEANT: Yes, sir. Except—

POTTER: Except what?

SERGEANT: I never seen a Satan with bumps.

Potter looks quickly at where he is pointing. There does seem to be some sort of convolution in the surface, showing through the splotched clay. He moves carefully forward and crouches beside the thing. With the headphones on, he gently wipes the glistening surface and places the microphone against it. It slithers away. He catches it, frowning, and holds it against the thing while he listens intently.

POTTER [*after a moment*]: She's not started ticking, anyway. Something odd, though—the mike didn't stick. It can't be steel.

SERGEANT: What then, sir?

POTTER: I don't know. [*He rubs at it gently.*] If it fell during the war, the surface ought to be corroded by now.

SERGEANT: Yessir.

POTTER: There's no corrosion.

SERGEANT: Sure, sir? All the Jerry stuff I ever seen was pretty well—

He moves up beside Potter and touches it himself. He gives a little puzzled grunt.

POTTER [*slowly*]: I don't think it's any kind of metal. [*As the Sergeant stares at him.*] Let's get some of the mud off it. Use a fine spray of water—that can't do much harm.

Roney is hurrying towards them across the muddy floor.

RONEY: Captain Potter—can you tell me yet? How long is this going to take?

POTTER: Look, sir—I advised you to leave—

RONEY: I'm in charge here.

POTTER: Not now. Carry on with the spraying, sergeant.

SERGEANT: Sir!

He turns to his men and gets busy directing a water-jet to be brought into position. Roney comes close to Captain Potter.

RONEY: You understand the importance of my work here?

POTTER: I've read the papers.

RONNEY: I'm under pressure to complete it quickly—far *too* quickly. Now this turns up and wrecks all my arrangements!

POTTER: If it blows up, it'll wreck more than arrangements.

RONNEY [*shaken*]: You really think it might?

POTTER: Our job's to prevent it. Frankly, that may take days. It's a big one.

Cut to where Corporal Gibson is directing a fine spray of water on to the muddy shape. As the clay is washed away, the surface shows dark grey and glossy to a length of four or five feet.

CORPORAL GIBSON: How long do we go on with this, sarge?

SERGEANT: Till I say stop.

He moves off towards Captain Potter, who is watching with Roney a few yards away.

GIBSON [*to the Sapper holding the water-pipe behind him*]: Till he says stop . . . ! Hey, Westie, how much d'you know about Jerry planes?

WEST [*a small, thick-witted man*]: They're all Yanks.

GIBSON [*patiently*]: In the war, I mean—when they still made their own. There wasn't any that could'a carried a thing this big. I bet you!

Cut to the Sergeant and Potter, with Roney hovering anxiously.

SERGEANT: Looks bigger than a ten-tonner.

POTTER [*deeply puzzled now*]: And it's not a buzz-bomb. [*Turning.*] Dr. Roney, in your digging did you find any sign of a hole that this might have made when it came down?

RONNEY: No. Of course all the heavy excavating had been done before, by grabs. You could ask the building contractors.

POTTER: Five minutes' break, sergeant.

He starts towards the hut. Roney fusses after him as watchfully as any back-seat driver.

RONNEY: You're going to ring them now?

POTTER: That's my business, sir.

RONNEY: Well, I just hope that—look, Captain Potter, forgive my putting it this way, but—you're a young man. You can't have had the wartime experience that would—

POTTER: I should call in a second opinion, is that it?

RONNEY [*gratified to find his point so quickly taken*]: If you don't know what the thing is—

POTTER: I'm finding out!

He turns on his heel and goes into the hut, leaving Roney standing. Barbara comes up, and Roney turns to her furiously.

RONNEY: It's deliberate! I've annoyed him and he's going to work to rule!

BARBARA: I'm sure that's not—

RONNEY: Look at them! They're making tea!

He points at where, on the far side of the excavation floor, the Sergeant and Sappers are indeed in the early stages of a brew-up.

RONNEY [*nodding at the hut*]: And he's probably turning that hut into the officers' mess! [*With sudden decision.*] Barbara, stay here as long as they let you, and keep an eye on things—

He strides off towards the ramp.

BARBARA [*stumbling after him*]: Where are you going?

RONNEY: To get a second opinion!

He runs up the ramp . . .

Dissolve . . . to the conference room at the War Office. The Minister is shifting his chair back from the table.

MINISTER: I think that concludes our business for the present, gentlemen. Thank you all for your help. [*He rises.*]

SECRETARY [*gathering up his papers*]: You will receive copies of the agreed report in the course of the next few days.

He follows the Minister out. The members of the conference are getting up, collecting notes. Quatermass sits dejectedly. Opposite, Colonel Breen is packing his briefcase. The General pats him on the shoulder as he passes on his way to the door.

GENERAL: Well, Breen—congratulations on the appointment.

BREEN: Thank you, sir.

GENERAL: High time. [*With a glance at Quatermass, he goes out.*]

QUATERMASS: So . . . we're colleagues.

BREEN: Yes. I'm sure we'll get on very well together.

The phrase has an edge on it that makes it almost a threat.

QUATERMASS: When do you start?

BREEN: As of now, I understand.

Quatermass rises and scuffs his papers together, cramming them haphazardly into his briefcase. Outside the conference room there is a sudden commotion in the corridor, angry voices raised. A Messenger enters the room backwards, almost colliding with the two Civil Servants as he tries to keep somebody out.

MESSENGER: No further, if you please! [*Over his shoulder.*] Professor Quatermass here? Gentleman to see him—

Roney pushes past him into the room. Seeing Quatermass, he makes towards him. The Messenger looks helplessly at the two Civil Servants, and shrugs.

QUATERMASS: Roney—

RONNEY [*spluttering with rage*]: Trying to stop me! I've had all I can take of petty bureaucrats! Quatermass, I had to catch you before you left—

Quatermass pulls him aside, motions him to speak more quietly. Breen watches with amusement as Roney talks to him rapidly.

RONNEY: A bomb—an unexploded bomb—turned up on the site. There's a squad of soldiers there now, messing about.

QUATERMASS: What can I do?

RONNEY: Hurry them up! You know these people—I mean, look where we are right now—

QUATERMASS [*grimly*]: My dear Roney, if I had any influence with the Army . . . ! [*He glances at Breen, who is making for the door, and an idea strikes him.*] Wait a second. [*He calls.*] Breen!

Breen halts in the doorway. Quatermass crosses to him, with Roney at his elbow.

QUATERMASS: This is Dr. Matthew Roney. You'll have heard of him, no doubt—the prehistoric finds at Knightsbridge. [*To Roney.*] Colonel Breen.

BREEN: Oh, yes—

RONNEY: How are you.

QUATERMASS: Roney's got trouble there from a bomb-disposal squad. Can you help?

BREEN: You mean interfere?

RONNEY: They need expert advice.

BREEN: Who says so?

RONNEY: It's a fact.

BREEN. Good heavens, I've had no official request. It would be quite irregular—

QUATERMASS: What about a request from me?

BREEN: From you?

QUATERMASS: A friendly one. [*A faintly malicious smile.*] We're colleagues now, don't forget.

BREEN [*glares, then with ill grace*]: I'll come with you. I promise no more.

QUATERMASS [*grinning*]: Good man. I'm sure we'll get on very well together.

The three of them start out of the conference room, Roney hurrying in the lead.

Dissolve . . . to Hobbs Lane. It is dark now, and the little street is lit by an old gas lamp at the end, with a faint glow from the lights below in the excavation.

A stout policeman named Ellis, together with a younger colleague, is on duty at the barrier and engaged in argument with Mrs. Chilcot, who is outside it, gripping her still more elderly husband firmly by the hand.

ELLIS: Sorry, Mrs. Chilcot—you can't go back in there. Not till everything's made safe—

MRS. CHILCOT: Just to get some more cl'oes. The place we're in, he feels the cold. It won't take a minute.

ELLIS [*dubiously*]: I don't know—

YOUNG POLICEMAN: There's nothing going on down there just now.

ELLIS [*to Mrs. Chilcot*]: All right, then—quick as you can. Or you'll have me in trouble.

He lifts the pole barrier and the old couple pass through to make for the curtained house.

MRS. CHILCOT [*grumbling as she goes*]: Having to beg to get in me own 'ome!

ELLIS [*lowering the barrier, mutters*]: The builders have been trying to shift 'em for months. Took a bomb to do it—

YOUNG POLICEMAN: Look out.

A taxi is approaching the barrier. It pulls up and Roney scrambles out, followed by Quatermass and Colonel Breen. Roney pays the driver and hurries towards the barrier.

RONNEY: You know me, officer—

ELLIS [*nodding*]: Who are they, sir?

QUATERMASS [*smoothly*]: We're here to look at this bomb of yours.

Breen comes forward, imposing in cap and greatcoat. Ellis salutes and his colleague follows suit. Breen acknowledges. The Policemen open the barrier and pass the three men through. As soon as they are out of earshot, Ellis jerks his thumb at the house and whispers urgently.

ELLIS: Charlie—quick! Get those two old codgers out of it! I don't care what they're doing—stir 'em out!

The young Policeman hurries towards the house.

Cut—to the ramp leading into the excavation. Here Barbara Judd is sitting on one of the oil-drums that mark its edge, watching the scene below. The bomb-disposal squad are working by lamp-light, laying in sandbags and planks to support the sides of the now deeper hole they have made.

She rises as Roney comes down the ramp.

RONNEY [*looking down*]: They're still at it?

BARBARA: Yes. Any luck?

Then she sees the two men coming down behind him out of the darkness.

Cut to the excavation floor, where the Sergeant has also noticed the figures moving above. He touches Potter's arm and nods towards the ramp.

Potter glances round and goes quickly to meet the newcomers. Breen comes first.

POTTER [*saluting*]: I'm in charge here, sir. Can I help you?

BREEN: That's rather the question *I* was going to ask.

RONEY [*to Potter*]: This is Colonel Breen, of guided missiles. And Professor Quatermass.

Potter stiffens.

BREEN [*with a nod towards the hole*]: What have you got there?

POTTER: I—I don't know yet, sir.

BREEN: Informed your superiors?

POTTER [*glowering at Roney*]: Not yet, sir.

BREEN: Mind if we take a look?

He leads the way towards the trench-like hole. Seeing them coming, the Sergeant turns to the Sappers and mutters an order. They scramble clear.

Breen, Quatermass, and the others come down—and stand staring.

Fade in music.

The thing in the trench is laid bare to a length of about eight feet, a whale-backed shape, and clearly indicating by its gentle curve the enormous bulk that must still lie hidden underneath.

QUATERMASS: A bomb?

POTTER [*at Breen's side*]: There's been no sign of an ingress cavity, sir—I checked with the firm who did the excavating.

BREEN: I suppose the hole might have collapsed . . . closed up . . .

Quatermass is glancing round.

QUATERMASS: The famous excavation.

RONEY: Yes. [*Unhappily.*] We're probably standing on priceless fossils at this moment.

QUATERMASS: Aha?

RONEY: About here they dug out the first skull.

Quatermass moves forward along the edge of the trench. Breen follows, eyes on the thing below them.

QUATERMASS: A trifle muddy.

Breen slips and almost crashes down into the trench. Quatermass puts out an arm and grabs him.

BREEN: Thanks—

They step up on to the firmer sandbags on the other side.

After a moment Quatermass calls across to the others.

QUATERMASS: Roney—where did you say the skull was found? Where *exactly*?

RONEY: In the earth that's all been dug away now. Two or three feet above this level. [*He turns to Barbara.*] That's right, isn't it?

BARBARA: Yes, it *was* here.

QUATERMASS [*sharply*]: You said *above*?

BREEN: What's wrong?

QUATERMASS: If it was above this thing—[*He calls again.*] Roney, tell me—how long did you estimate the skull had been there?

Roney's voice echoes slightly in the excavation as it comes back to them.

RONEY: Something like . . . five million years.

QUATERMASS [*a whisper*]: Five . . . million . . . years . . . !

His eyes drop to the shape in the trench below. Track in quickly to close-up.

Crash in end music.

Fade vision to black.

PART TWO

The Ghosts

Fade in . . . the floor of the excavation.

Breen looks sharply at Quatermass. On the other side of the trench, Roney and the bomb-disposal squad are listening curiously.

BREEN: What are you trying to suggest? That this thing's been here for—? [*He steps down into the trench for a closer look, touching the grey shining surface.*] Feel it—it's hardly corroded.

POTTER: It's not corroded at all, sir.

QUATERMASS: Oh?

BREEN [*puzzled*]: It may be an experimental alloy.

POTTER: Is it metal, sir?

In a moment, Quatermass is beside Breen in the trench.

QUATERMASS [*wiping away greasy mud till the surface gleams*]: I believe he's right—it may not be. There's something about the character of it—[*He pulls out a pocket-knife.*]

BREEN: Wait—what are you doing?

QUATERMASS: I'll be careful. [*Gently, he scrapes with the tip of a blade and looks closely.*] No mark. . . . [*He turns the ring on his little finger and scores it several times across the grey glaze. He looks up.*] Harder than diamond!

He moves along the trench, probing into the soft mud with his fingers, exploring the great shape. Just beyond the limit of the cleared part, he uncovers a small blunt point. He digs more vigorously, with both hands. The thing appears to be about six inches long.

POTTER [*in concern*]: Looks like the horn of a sea-mine. Mind what you're doing, sir—better let me get at it. Sergeant—listening gear, quick!

The Sergeant comes running with it. But Quatermass has taken no notice. He is picking clay from the root of the horn-like object.

QUATERMASS: It joins the main surface smoothly. No sign of a joint.

POTTER [*pulling on the headphones*]: Please, sir—

QUATERMASS [*running his fingers over it*]: Quite featureless. Seems to be just an elaborate knob. [*He rises, and Potter scrambles into his place with the microphone.*] Oh, test for fuses by all means—but I doubt if you'll find anything. [*He watches Potter apply the microphone, which fails to stick, as before.*] To me it suggests a support for some kind of exterior mechanism or casing that was shed in flight . . . [*he glances at the clay round about them*] . . . it would have to be in flight. At any rate, I shouldn't wonder if you come across more of those.

Having listened without result, Potter stands and turns to Breen.

POTTER: You think I ought to carry on, sir?

BREEN: For the moment, yes.

Potter clammers out of the trench and gives instructions to the Sergeant. Quatermass is watching Breen's absorbed expression.

QUATERMASS: Well, Breen? Are you taking over?

BREEN: I can offer my advice.

QUATERMASS: They could hardly refuse it, from the principal expert.

BREEN [*almost reluctantly*]: We're both due at the Rocket Group in the morning.

QUATERMASS: It can spare us for a day.

BREEN [*with a stiff smile*]: This is a problem. I enjoy problems. [*A quick glance at Quatermass, then he calls.*] Captain Potter—[*As Potter comes hurrying back, he speaks to him quietly.*] I'd like to sit in on this case, if you don't mind.

POTTER: I'd be very relieved, sir.

BREEN: Better let your people know.

POTTER: Yes, sir—right away.

He starts towards the hut, but Breen checks him.

BREEN: Later. Have you seen the Civil Defence records of this area?

POTTER: I've got copies. [*He fumbles in his pocket.*]

BREEN: Good.

POTTER: Nothing fell on this street but a few incendiaries.

Breen frowns at the crumpled sheets of flimsy that Potter passes to him. Roney and Barbara have come closer, listening.

BREEN: Records can be mistaken.

BARBARA: Why not ask the people who live round here?

RONEY [*grasping at this*]: Right! That'd save time—

POTTER: This street's empty, what's left of it—

QUATERMASS: Are you sure? When we arrived just now, I thought I saw an old couple.

BARBARA: I'll find out—

She harries off towards the ramp. Breen turns to Captain Potter in annoyance.

BREEN: Go with her. This isn't a game.

RONEY: She knows that.

Breen gives him a cold glance as Potter goes off after the girl. Then he turns to Quatermass, who is thoughtfully studying the thing in the trench again.

QUATERMASS: Any guesses?

BREEN: Perhaps—a V-weapon.

QUATERMASS: A flying bomb? A V-2 rocket? It's not either of those.

BREEN: The Germans cooked up some pretty strange things during the war. Rather more of them than we ever knew, I suspect—

The Sergeant, working in the trench, turns to them with excitement in his voice.

SERGEANT: Sir—sir—

BREEN: What is it?

SERGEANT: There's a place here, sir—it looks like a sort of hole!

As they scramble forward to look, track in to where he is pointing. There is a suggestion of a rounded rim in the side of the thing, where the Sergeant is gouging out mud.

Crash in linking music . . .

Cut—to the lamp-lit street above, where Mr. and Mrs. Chilcot are being ushered out of their house by the younger Policeman. She is clutching a string bag bulging with woollen underclothes, and an old shoe-box.

YOUNG POLICEMAN [*pleading*]: Hurry up, please—you'll be getting us in a mess—

MRS. CHILCOT: I couldn't find his long woollies. You know, his clean ones. He'd put 'em down somewhere in all the commotion—hadn't you?

Mr. Chilcot seems unaware of what is being said to him. He nods vaguely, holding on to a battered paper carrier bag. The Young Policeman slams the door behind them, but Mrs. Chilcot fusses back again.

MRS. CHILCOT: Oh, I've got to lock up—

YOUNG POLICEMAN: Quick, then!

MRS. CHILCOT: Hold this—

She pushes the bundle of underwear into his arms while she rummages in her handbag for the key. P.C. Ellis comes hurrying from the barrier.

ELLIS: For Pete's sake get a move on! Didn't I tell you—

MRS. CHILCOT [*locking the door*]: He had to have his long woollies—

ELLIS [*fuming*]: Getting you two evacuated's like trying to drive wild horses!

MRS. CHILCOT [*taking the bundle back from the Young Policeman*]: He may need to wear two pairs at once. It's cold where we're staying—

Ellis is looking towards the entrance to the excavation. He grabs her firmly by the arm.

ELLIS: Out of it, quick! There's trouble coming—

MRS. CHILCOT: Hey—

As she and her husband are steered towards the barrier, Potter and Barbara Judd come hurrying after them.

POTTER: Just a minute!

ELLIS [*caught*]: Sorry, sir—I know they shouldn't be here. I've been trying to—

POTTER: It's all right. I want to speak to them.

BARBARA [*turning to him in surprise*]: You do? You hadn't even thought of it.

POTTER [*irritated*]: Go ahead, then.

BARBARA [*turning to the old people*]: You've lived here for some time?

MRS. CHILCOT [*glaring at the Policemen*]: We have! We're the rightful occupiers. We don't leave here for builders or bombs or nothing else—till we got to.

BARBARA: Then you were here during the war?

MRS. CHILCOT: Yes. The other one too—the first one. [*Anticipating the question.*] You want to ask about the bomb? Well, nobody here knew of any, I can tell you that. There wasn't nothing but a couple of them little fire kind—didn't do hardly any damage.

BARBARA: Oh.

MRS. CHILCOT: We'd have heard the thump, wouldn't we? Unless it was a very small one.

BARBARA: It isn't small.

POTTER: What about that house next door? It looks as if something hit it.

MRS. CHILCOT: No—it was just let to fall down. All the roof—it's a disgrace. The trouble we've had with creeping damp—[*to her husband*]-haven't we?

Mr. Chilcot, dimly aware that he is being addressed, nods.

POTTER: How long's it been like that?

MRS. CHILCOT: Oh, donkey's years. Ever since—[*She breaks off and turns to Ellis.*] You tell him.

ELLIS: Thirty odd years, I'd say, sir. People wouldn't live in it.

BARBARA: Why?

ELLIS: Oh, a lot of—er—well, some tale about it being haunted.

BARBARA: Haunted! [*She shoots an amused glance at Potter.*]

MRS. CHILCOT: Oh, not just a tale. It was quite a sensation at the time—reporters coming here day after day and—[*Again she breaks off. She takes her husband by the arm.*] You'll be wanting your supper. We'd better get along—
She leads him towards the barrier.

BARBARA: Thank you for your help.

POTTER: Oh, yes. Thanks.
P.C. Ellis grins back at them as he helps the Chilcots through the barrier. . . .

Cut—to the excavation floor.
Close shot of the cavity in the glossy side of the buried shape. Working carefully, the Sergeant has cleared enough mud from it to show that the hole must be large and circular. He is picking out handfuls of clay softened by the spray of water that Corporal Gibson is playing on it.

SERGEANT [*glancing up at Quatermass and the others*]: Doesn't seem to be anything but clay, sir.

QUATERMASS: Is it hard?

SERGEANT: Like iron, till you work it a bit. A job to make any impression on it. [*To Gibson.*] Here, squirt that closer.
As Gibson moves in with his hose, Breen turns to Quatermass.

BREEN: It's evidently some sort of hatch. For servicing or fuelling. Got burst in when the thing struck, and rammed full of earth.

QUATERMASS: Then there should be machinery inside. Fuel pumps and so on—
Barbara and Potter come hurrying from the foot of the ramp.

QUATERMASS: Did you catch them?

BARBARA: Yes. They don't remember anything coming down.

POTTER: They were hardly reliable. Old man senile, old woman a bit round the bend.

BARBARA: She started telling him a ghost story. Still, she was right about the incendiaries.
The Sergeant's voice comes from the trench.

SERGEANT: Stand back, Gibson—

BREEN: On to something, sergeant?
In the trench, the Sergeant is working on his side. He is plastered with mud and panting with effort in the confined space as he digs with his fingers in the cavity. The upper half of the circular hatch-opening is clear now, and he has gouged to a depth of about a foot inside it, directing the water-spray himself.

SERGEANT: I dunno, sir. [*To Gibson.*] Swing that lamp down here.
Gibson unhooks a shielded inspection lamp from where it hangs on a long spike stuck in the earth. He points it into the cavity.

SERGEANT: I can feel something. Rough and hard—it may just be stone—

POTTER: Let's have a look—
He steps down into the trench beside the Sergeant, taking the lamp from the Corporal and shining it at the mud that glistens and trickles under the Sergeant's fingers. Clay crumbles . . . washes down . . . and the eye-sockets of a skull appear.

SERGEANT: It's one of *them*—another of 'em!

POTTER [*to those above*]: A skull! Tell Dr. Roney!

Cut—to the group above, as Quatermass turns and calls.

QUATERMASS: Roney!

Roney, who has been sitting dejectedly on an upturned box a few yards away, jumps up and comes running. Barbara peers down past Potter.

BARBARA: Go gently with it—they're so fragile—

RONEY: Let me see—
He plunges forward through the piled mud. Breen grabs at him angrily.

BREEN: Mind where you're putting your feet!

RONEY [*shaking him off*]: Let me go! [*Peering.*] Yes—yes—it *is* one! Let me handle this, please. Barbara, get the things—
Barbara runs off to the hut. The Sergeant and Potter move along the trench to make room for Roney. He slithers into Potter's place and looks into the cavity. He puts both hands in. Potter holds the lamp close.

RONEY: Thanks.
Above, Quatermass is frowning.

QUATERMASS: Right inside . . .

BREEN: What's so odd about that? It was already here in the clay—when that thing fell, it got rammed through the hatch by pressure.
Barbara comes hurrying back with instruments and metal trays. She hands them down to Roney.

RONEY: Quick—I've got it almost clear! [*As he works.*] Magnificent! A beauty! We've found nothing like this—it's almost intact!

QUATERMASS: Intact?

RONEY [*delightedly*]: Yes—yes!
He works at it again. Potter moves the lamp closer. Mud trickles and puddles down from the cavity . . . then Roney is turning with a metal tray that holds a mass of sodden clay. In it is the skull. Unlike the first one, its outline shows it is quite unbroken. Roney gets a steadying hand from

Potter as he passes the tray up to the girl. Quatermass and Breen move quickly in for a close look at it. Potter helps Roney up out of the trench.

RONEY: Potter, if you strike anything else, let me know at once. [*To Barbara.*] All right—I'll take it now.

Beside himself with excitement, he takes the tray back from her and goes off towards the hut like a man carrying high explosive. Barbara picks up the other instruments and follows.

BREEN: Just chance it wasn't smashed. It *must* have been forced in there—

Potter stands up in the trench.

POTTER: Dr. Roney—[*Seeing Roney has gone, he turns to Quatermass and holds something up.*] Another bit of fossil. Not much, but he said anything at all—

QUATERMASS: I'll take it to him.

He takes the muddy scrap from Potter and goes quickly after the others.

Breen remains where he is, staring perplexedly down at the trench.

Cut—to the interior of the hut, as Barbara enters and holds the door open for Roney. He puts his burden down on the trestle table, gloating.

RONEY: We were right! We were right! [*He pulls off his jacket.*]

BARBARA: They can't say now that you were guessing.

Quatermass comes in, holding the muddy fragment of fossil in the palm of his hand.

RONEY: Quatermass—

QUATERMASS: They found this too.

RONEY [*giving it a cursory glance*]: Barbara, will you—[*As she takes it from Quatermass, he is busying himself with the preparation of bottles, sprays, etc. He is hardly able to take his eyes off the major find.*] It proves everything! Look at that cranium! This past week I've been accused of everything from gross ignorance to falsification—

QUATERMASS: Roney—

RONEY [*rolling his sleeves up*]: One eminent colleague declared that if I reconstructed the bones of a boiled fowl I'd produce a monster! [*Muttering.*] Now to get all this mud away [*He starts work on it with a soft brush and water.*] . . . This isn't a freak. Nothing freakish about it. A consistent but unknown species.

QUATERMASS: It's remarkably preserved.

RONEY [*enthusiastically*]: Yes, yes—isn't it? Far better than the first one—

QUATERMASS: How?

RONEY [*hardly listening*]: Mm?

QUATERMASS: What protected it?

RONEY: Well, obviously, if it was inside that—inside that—

As if the implication of this suddenly hits him, he rises from his work and stares at Quatermass.

RONEY [*whispering*]: Good heavens! [*He looks from Quatermass to Barbara and back again. He slowly shakes his head.*] It couldn't have been, of course. It simply couldn't, if that's some kind of bomb—

Quatermass starts towards the door, then turns back to speak to Barbara as an afterthought.

QUATERMASS: Miss Judd, this old woman you questioned—

BARBARA: Yes?

QUATERMASS: Was she so unreliable?

BARBARA: Well, I told you. She was chattering about—about a haunted house.

QUATERMASS [*a slight smile*]: Oh? Where was it?

BARBARA: One of those up there. The end one.

Quatermass steps outside the door and glances up.

QUATERMASS: It looks the part, anyway.

Potter comes hurrying towards him across the excavation floor.

POTTER: Professor Quatermass—can you spare a moment? The Colonel would like a word. [*As Quatermass goes off, he looks into the hut.*] Better pack everything now, if you will.

BARBARA: Why?

Cut—to a close shot of a Geiger counter as it is swung backwards and forwards over the ground by Sapper West. It is clicking in short, rather feeble bursts. The Sergeant is listening.

Pan to where Breen is standing. Quatermass joins him.

QUATERMASS: A Geiger counter . . .

BREEN: I just thought I'd check. [*Calls.*] Sergeant?

SERGEANT [*calls back*]: It's a low level, sir.

BREEN [*to Quatermass*]: But there's some. Concentrated round that end of the—of the missile.

QUATERMASS: Um. Think the Germans were on to nuclear propulsion in 1940? Clever folk, the Hun!

Roney comes hurrying towards them with Potter at his heels.

RONEY [*indignantly*]: Quatermass—he's ordering us out—

BREEN: This clay's radioactive.

RONEY: What!

QUATERMASS: It seems very mild, but it's only sense to make sure. [*To Breen.*] What about a lab test?

BREEN: Yes. Potter—

RONEY: Oh well—we'd better pack up, then—get that new skull safely away. [*He goes back towards the hut.*]

By the trench, the Sappers are coiling hosepipes and stacking spades. Gibson switches one of the lamps off. Near the end of the trench, Sapper West is holding the clicking Geiger counter over a hot spot, marking it while Potter trowels a sample of clay into a box. Behind, another lamp is snapped off.

Quatermass looks round the darkening excavation, then up. Silhouetted against the evening sky is the end house, the one they talked about. The beams of its collapsed roof stand out . . .

Dissolve . . . to the street above, a few minutes later.

The bomb-disposal squad come briskly from the gap in the hoarding. The Sappers make for their truck and pile into the rear. The Sergeant jerks the tail-board up and runs to the cab, where Gibson is already in the driver's seat.

Just behind, Colonel Breen and Potter are getting into the Landrover, Potter carrying the soil-sample box. Following them, Quatermass halts and looks across at the wrecked house. Roney and Barbara pass, laden with boxes and the girl shoots him a curious glance.

The two Policemen lift the poles that form the barrier across the end of the street, and the Army vehicles drive through. Roney and Barbara follow on foot. P.C. Ellis looks back to where Quatermass is standing alone. Quatermass goes slowly towards the house with the long-boarded windows. He tries the front door. Its padlock is hanging broken, and it opens at a push. He takes a torch from his pocket and flashes it on as he goes inside.

Cut—to the interior of the house as Quatermass enters. The beam of his torch moves forward across the little hallway, picking out broken boards, fallen plaster, bare laths. He passes through a patch of moonlight from the broken roof, and turns. In the doorway behind him is a silhouetted figure.

P.C. ELLIS [*after a moment*]: Are you there, sir?

QUATERMASS: Oh—hello, officer.

ELLIS [*coming along the hallway, feet crunching in the debris*]: You're one of them working on the bomb, aren't you?

QUATERMASS: That's right. It struck me a look in here might be helpful.

ELLIS: Oh. None of this was bomb damage, you know.

QUATERMASS: Indeed?

ELLIS: I told that young Engineers officer. It's been empty since 1927—I worked it out afterwards.

QUATERMASS: Some kind of ghost scare, wasn't it?

ELLIS: Oh, he passed it on, then. Well, yes, it was. Nobody's lived here since. [*He laughs.*] Shows how soft people can be—the housing shortage and all.

QUATERMASS: 1927. I suppose you didn't live round here at that time?

ELLIS: A few streets away, as a matter of fact. Of course I was only a nipper then. But I do remember the fuss. [*He flashes his own torch on as he walks slowly forward.*] Us kids used to run and touch that front door for dares. There was all sorts of tales . . . about noises being heard. Bangs and bumps. Even things being seen. You know how it is, once they start. [*He turns aside and opens a door.*] See here. This was supposed to be the bad place. The old kitchen.

Cut to the kitchen as they enter it. Ellis has to force the door back, against the piled debris on the floor. Quatermass flashes his torch across a broken sink that lies separated from the ends of pipes protruding from the floor. And on across the disintegrating walls . . .

QUATERMASS: Look at those scratches.

Picked out by the torch, the marks look like savage slashes made by huge talons. Ellis turns his own lamp on them.

QUATERMASS: What would have made them?

ELLIS [*after a moment*]: Kids.

QUATERMASS: They must be bolder than in your young days, then?

ELLIS: Why shouldn't they be? It's all quiet now.

He turns back into the hall. Quatermass follows quickly, curiosity aroused by this last remark.

QUATERMASS: I suppose you yourself, as a boy . . . never witnessed anything?

ELLIS [*gives an embarrassed laugh*]: I'd better get back on duty, sir.

He moves towards the front door.

QUATERMASS [*following*]: The old couple next door—d'you know where they've gone?

ELLIS: The Chilcots? Yes, sir—I've got the address. [*He takes out his notebook and shines his torch on it as he flicks through the leaves.*] Here we are—What is it, sir?

Quatermass is moving quickly back down the little hall, making for the kitchen.

At the doorway of the room, he flashes his torch inside. His face, in the dim reflected light, is alert for danger. Crunching footsteps along the hall announce Ellis. He comes to Quatermass's shoulder.

QUATERMASS: I thought I heard . . . [*He frowns.*] I *did* hear . . .

He glances at Ellis. The policeman's heavy face, as he looks watchfully about the room, is quivering. There is sweat streaming down from under the helmet brim.

QUATERMASS: There's nothing. Let's go.

They turn to leave . . .

Dissolve . . . to close shot of a teacup, inverted in a saucer, being turned by a fat hand. Track back to take in the owner of the hand—Miss Groome. She is a stout woman with heavy-lidded eyes, wearing a shapeless flowered dress in bad need of repair.

Sitting at the table with her, in the light of a low-slung lamp with a fringed shade, are the Chilcots. On the table are used supper things. The little room is oddly furnished, its walls stuck with magazine cuttings among sentimental framed prints.

Mrs. Chilcot watches as Miss Groome prepares to read her cup. Mr. Chilcot is sunk in vacancy.

MISS GROOME [*frowning*]: Oh, this *is* a strange one.

MRS. CHILCOT: What d'you see, Miss Groome?

MISS GROOME: It's hard to say, right out. I'll have to consider. There's a sea voyage here—

MRS. CHILCOT: Oh, no! How could I leave him?

MISS GROOME: Um. Let's do his, then. Sometimes they go together.

She takes Mr. Chilcot's empty cup from his hand and turns it over. He watches vaguely as she revolves it in the saucer. There is a knock at the front door which opens directly into the room. Miss Groome gives a heavy sigh of annoyance.

MISS GROOME: Oh, who's that! They'll disturb it all! [*She drags herself to her feet.*] I suppose I better . . .

She lumbers to the door and opens it. Quatermass is outside.

QUATERMASS: Good evening. Er—I'm looking for Mr. and Mrs. Chilcot.

MISS GROOME: Oh. They're here. Come in.

QUATERMASS: Thank you.

She closes the door behind him as he enters and comes forward into the light.

QUATERMASS: My name is Quatermass. I'm a scientist and I'm concerned with that—with the bomb.

MRS. CHILCOT: Oh, have you fixed it?

QUATERMASS: I'm afraid not. May I sit down?

MISS GROOME: I suppose so. Want some tea?

QUATERMASS: No, thank you. [*He sits and turns to the Chilcots.*] I really want to ask you about the house next door to yours.

MRS. CHILCOT [*defensively*]: Oh, yes?

QUATERMASS: Mr. Chilcot—

MRS. CHILCOT: No, ask me. [*Quietly.*] He's a bit . . . you know, getting on. [*She puts an affectionately protective hand over her husband's.*]

QUATERMASS: You remember the . . . disturbances there?

MRS. CHILCOT [*guardedly*]: Yes.

QUATERMASS: When did they break out?

MRS. CHILCOT: Oh, let me see . . . well, they was worst the year after the General Strike.

QUATERMASS: 1927.

MRS. CHILCOT: That's right. They lasted, you know, and they didn't just stop, either. They got less and less, gradual like.

QUATERMASS: What form did they take?

Mrs. Chilcot looks to Miss Groome for moral support.

MISS GROOME: I thought all you scientists was sceptics?

QUATERMASS [*warily*]: Most of us are open-minded. We try to be.

MISS GROOME: You certainly *ought* to be!

QUATERMASS [*to Mrs. Chilcot*]: Did you hear any sounds?

MRS. CHILCOT: Oh, yes. Dreadful sounds. The people couldn't stay in that house with them—they had to go in the end. Terrified! [*She is growing more talkative as she goes on.*] There was—sort of tapping and knocking. Like some person wanting to come in, only there wasn't nobody there. In the floors it come. And in the walls—we could hear it, too. And things would move, all by themselves—in rooms that had nobody in them. It's a fact! Chairs and tables and ornaments—even the beds was moved about! [*She is becoming fearful at the memory.*] They had the police in, and a parson even. Didn't do no good. I remember one night Earnshaw run in to us—the people was called Earnshaw—run in yelling like a maniac. They'd *seen* something. [*She stops, shaking.*]

QUATERMASS: What?

MRS. CHILCOT: A figure. [*To Miss Groome.*] Gimme a cup, will you?

Miss Groome fills one.

QUATERMASS: I'm sorry if this is upsetting. I—[*He decides he may as well go on.*] Those scratches on the kitchen wall—

MRS. CHILCOT: You seen them?

QUATERMASS: Were they made by children?

MRS. CHILCOT [*apparently astonished by the suggestion*]: Children . . . ! [*She takes the cup from Miss Groome's hand and drinks deeply.*]

MISS GROOME: Why are you asking her all this? Getting her in a state?

MRS. CHILCOT [*before he can reply*]: Oh, they used to come every day. Reporters. What had I heard—what had I seen? I had my picture in all of ’em. So had he. [*She nods at her husband.*] They didn’t believe us really. Just made us look silly.

MISS GROOME: Do *you* believe her?

QUATERMASS: I only want to find out the truth. I’m sure Mrs. Chilcot—

MISS GROOME [*heavily*]: Of course it’s true! If you’re not a fool, you *must* believe . . . in the whole world of spirits. [*She picks up the inverted teacup in front of Mr. Chilcot and points the mouth of it at Quatermass, nodding towards the old man.*] His whole future’s in there . . . can we but read it aright.

Quatermass looks from her to the Chilcots, and at the empty cups whose purpose is suddenly clear. He gets to his feet.

QUATERMASS: Thank you, Mrs. Chilcot—

MISS GROOME [*snaps accusingly*]: You’re a sceptic!

QUATERMASS: Thank you very much for your help. I’m sorry I disturbed you. I’ll let myself out.

Miss Groome watches with a sneer as he goes. As soon as the door closes, she settles down with Mr. Chilcot’s cup and studies it. She frowns as if she sees something alarming there . . .

Dissolve . . . to giant skull of a fossil dinosaur. Track back to take in its surroundings—the passage outside Roney’s office in the Nicklin Institute. It is the following morning. Roney and Quatermass are approaching, past other mounted skeletons of extinct beasts, and show-cases. As Roney opens the door of his office, Quatermass nods at the giant skull.

QUATERMASS: You’ve got good company.

RONEY: Company? Oh, that’s Charlie—he’s a dinotherium. Come inside.

Cut to the interior of the office as they enter. Quatermass looks round the small room. Steel shelving and other additions assort oddly with the Victorian ponderousness of its original form, but everything is additionally overlaid with apparatus, books, jars, mounted fossil specimens. Roney puts his briefcase down on the desk and shuffles through the correspondence and notes that are waiting for him.

RONEY: This delay! I just hope your colleague’s getting a move on.

QUATERMASS: Colleague?

RONEY: Colonel Breen—with his radioactivity tests.

QUATERMASS: Oh. Yes. For a moment I forgot—

RONEY: I’m sorry to have to say it, but he’s the sort of man I just don’t take to.

QUATERMASS: Good!

RONEY [*surprised*]: Eh?

QUATERMASS: I told you my Rocket Group’s being taken over. Well, he’s the official receiver. A career militarist of the worst type, cold as a corpse, with a slide-rule mind. That’s my colleague. [*Changing the subject.*] What have you got here?

One long shelf is loaded from end to end with a mass of apparatus. Successive metal frames contain assemblies of wiring and transistors, switch-boxes and cathode tubes. At the end comes a helmet-like shape with jointed rods projecting from it.

RONEY: Oh—it’s just a sort of nonsense thing.

QUATERMASS: You made it? [*As Roney nods.*] I didn’t know you had a mechanical streak.

RONEY [*joining him by the shelf of apparatus*]: Oh, I don’t grub in the ground *all* the time. This does me for a hobby or vice. I like to fiddle with it—or used to when I had the time.

Quatermass touches the headpiece.

QUATERMASS: Looks like a space helmet, popular version.

RONEY: Space . . . well, it’s just about the opposite. [*Warming to it.*] An idea I’ve been chasing for a long time. Connected with my work in a way—to investigate the thought processes of primitive peoples.

QUATERMASS: What does this do?

RONEY: As a matter of fact it doesn’t do anything. Properly, that is. But the principle—you know the old business of catching electrical discharges from the brain? I’m trying to go further, to focus inside there—[*he touches his temple*]—on the optical centres. Interpret subjective impressions, fact or hallucination. See what the subject sees—in his mind’s eye. [*He grins.*] I’ve even got a name for it. Optic-encephalograph. Grand enough for the Royal Society—if only it’d work!

QUATERMASS [*slowly*]: When Breen boots me out of the Rocket Group, I’ll come and help you develop it. [*As Roney returns to his desk with a laugh.*] I’m not laughing. [*He studies the apparatus again, impressed.*]

RONEY: To business. What are those questions of yours?

He opens his briefcase and takes out a vacuum flask, from which he proceeds to fill two plastic cups.

QUATERMASS [*coming to take a seat by the desk*]: Last night I lay thinking for hours.

RONEY: Then you’ll need this coffee. My own brew—the stuff they make here’s a killer. What about?

QUATERMASS: Coincidence.

RONEY: Yes, it’s a troubling thing. A breeder of false theories. [*He looks at Quatermass quizzically as he passes him a cup.*]

QUATERMASS: Thanks. These fossil apes—you put their age at between three and five million years?

RONEY: Dating’s very difficult, but I’d say nearer five.

QUATERMASS: How do you work it out? From the condition of the earth?

RONEY: That wasn't much help in this case. Much more by their place in the evolutionary line. We know of ape-like creatures still older than these . . . and others less old. Both accurately dated.

QUATERMASS: But I thought this was an *unknown* species?

Roney puts down his cup and leans across the desk with a slight smile.

RONEY: If the thought's been occurring to you that they weren't of this earth—[*by the way Quatermass stiffens slightly, he knows he is right*]*—put it out of your mind. You've spent too much time among rockets, Quatermass. No, these hominids—these man-apes—are new to us, but they fit into the known scheme of things. They've got a line of ancestry as far back as thirty million years—and, I believe, a clear line of descent right down to ourselves. [He gets up from his chair and goes to a filing cabinet.] The oddest thing about them is the shape of the skull—as if it had suddenly enlarged about that time. [He pulls open a drawer and rummages among the files.] I've got it all charted. Points of similarity to known species . . . Damn that girl! She's put them away somewhere.*

QUATERMASS: Your Miss Judd?

RONEY: Yes. Said she wanted a couple of hours to herself this morning . . . at a time like this! To have her hair done, I'll bet! Trust a woman! [*He rummages in the cabinet with increased annoyance. The telephone rings.*] Answer that, would you—

QUATERMASS [*picking up the receiver*]: Hello—this is Dr. Roney's office . . . Oh yes, Quatermass speaking. Right. [*To Roney.*] It's Breen.

Roney hurries across to the desk.

Cut—to the interior of the hut in the excavation at Hobbs Lane. The Sergeant is just handing over the phone to Colonel Breen. Through the open doorway comes a clatter of heavy machinery, which quietens as the Sergeant goes.

BREEN [*into phone*]: Quatermass? I'm at Hobbs Lane. I've had work resumed here, with mechanical excavators—it seemed the only way to get at the thing properly, so I thought I'd risk it. Taking due precautions, of course. We're getting on nicely—uncovered a lot more knobs and bumps, all apparently solid castings and harmless. I'm taking the level down about eight feet all round the missile. So if you care to come along—

Cut—to Roney's office, as Quatermass angrily interrupts.

QUATERMASS [*into phone*]: Care to! Why didn't you let me know before? . . . Couldn't find me? Of course they could—I left messages!

RONEY [*at his shoulder, listening agitatedly*]: Mechanical excavators! The whole site'll be ruined—

QUATERMASS [*into phone*]: Listen, Breen, what about that soil test? Did you get the result?

Cut—to the hut in the excavation, where Breen is picking up clipped sheets of paper from the table in front of him.

BREEN [*into phone*]: Negative. Harwell shot the report through for me—I've got it here. There's a lot of irrelevant stuff in it, but the main thing is this. The radioactivity's harmless. [*A sharp query from the other end.*] Yes, I said irrelevant. [*An angry exclamation follows. After a moment he shakes the report out straight.*] Very well, very well! This, for instance—

Cut—to Roney's office, where Quatermass listens with growing astonishment.

QUATERMASS [*into the phone*]: Traces of what? Repeat that, please . . . Beryllium . . . artificial isotopes of thorium! [*He glances at Roney.*]

RONEY: Artificial? That radioactivity's man-made?

QUATERMASS [*into phone*]: Go on, Breen!

Cut—to the hut, as Breen reads from the report he is holding.

BREEN [*into phone*]: 'These would suggest the presence of a nuclear reactor . . . but calculations based on the half-lives of such isotopes give an apparent age which is clearly absurd. Please submit further samples.' You see? Their own word for it—absurd.

Cut—to Roney's office.

QUATERMASS [*into phone*]: Nevermind the absurdity—how old? [*His face puckers.*] Yes. Yes, I'll be along. Soon. [*He puts the receiver down.*]

RONEY: How old did they say?

QUATERMASS: About five million years.

Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to the excavation at Hobbs Lane, a short time later.

A wide shot shows that a great quantity of earth has been removed, almost completely exposing the glittering grey hull. Its diameter is more than the height of a man, its length about twenty-five feet. The surface bears flattened plate-like bulges, and is studded with a regular pattern of the horn-like protrusions.

The whole of the opening in the side can now be seen. Potter and the Sergeant are working to clear the interior—Potter is actually inside it, while the Sergeant directs a spray of water. Potter is covered with slimy mud as he digs and scoops at the softened stuff.

The rest of the bomb-disposal squad are busy shoring up the sides of the deepened pit with planks and baulks of timber. The hut, which was formerly on the floor of the excavation, is now several feet above the level where they are working. The door opens. Breen and Quatermass emerge from it and come down the rough ladderway that now provides access to the lower level.

Breen crosses to where Potter is working.

BREEN: Still no sign of any mechanism?

Potter's muddy face looks out through the wide hatch-opening.

POTTER: No, sir. We keep coming across more bits of fossil—that’s all there’s been, though.

Breen turns away, frowning.

QUATERMASS: Just a smooth mass of—what is it, ceramic? No jets, nozzles, fuel pumps, pipes—

BREEN: I don’t understand it.

QUATERMASS: Still clinging to that idea of a German V-weapon?

BREEN: What else?

A few yards from the great hull, Roney is kneeling by a scatter of assorted fossil bones. He has instruments and sprays with him and is evidently engaged in an emergency operation.

RONEY [*tragically*]: Colonel Breen—why didn’t you send for me at the start? Allowing these to be simply smashed up in the digging—crushed to bits—

BREEN: We had to carry on.

RONEY: It was criminal! Even these fragments are falling to pieces from exposure. And their position in the clay—that was vital information, all lost! [*To Quatermass.*] There must have been whole thigh-bones, ribs, vertebrae—everything I needed—

QUATERMASS [*stooping quickly*]: Isn’t that rust? [*He touches a fossil fragment.*]

RONEY [*looks*]: Yes. Be careful—

QUATERMASS [*turning another scrap of bone*]: Traces of copper salts on this one. [*He looks round the clay at their feet, gouges up a handful and inspects it closely.*] Everywhere! Breen, I think I’ve found your mechanism.

He scrambles up and across to where mud is being churned from the interior of the hull by Potter and the Sergeant. He paddles it with his hands like a gold prospector. As Breen follows, he looks up at him.

QUATERMASS: See those green streaks? And the red? Suppose those are your fuel pipes, jets, nozzles? Corroded out of existence?

BREEN: In a few years—it’s hardly likely.

QUATERMASS: Not in a few years. [*He stands, looking round the floor of the excavation.*] Decaying as the radioactivity decayed.

A few yards away, Gibson and Sapper West have paused in their work of shoring. They are listening.

GIBSON [*quietly*]: Hey, Westie—they’re stuck.

WEST: Eh?

GIBSON: They haven’t got a clue.

WEST: Well, have you?

GIBSON: Listen, they’re the experts. That Quatermass—he’s big stuff. Rockets.

WEST: So?

GIBSON: Well, if *he’s* in a bewilder . . . [*He glances round at the hull.*] . . . I won’t be sorry to say tata to this. [*West gives him a faint grin and resumes driving in a wedge with the mallet in his hand. The thump increases Gibson’s nervousness.*] Careful, can’t you!

Cut to where Roney is rising with a selection of fossil fragments spread carefully on a broad metal tray. As he starts up the ladderway towards the hut, he sees Barbara hurrying down the ramp, evidently puzzled by the changed appearance of things. She is staring at the hull below.

RONEY: Where have you been? I needed your help badly—

BARBARA: Do they know what that thing is yet?

RONEY: No, but they’ve just about wrecked all our work trying to find out. Come on—we’ve got to see to these—

BARBARA: I’ve got something to tell Professor Quatermass—

RONEY: Let him come up, then. [*Turns and yells down.*] Quatermass! [*To her.*] Hold that door open—

Cut to the interior of the hut as she opens the door and Roney carries the tray inside. He puts it down carefully on the table.

BARBARA: You’ve got a lot there.

RONEY [*bitterly*]: Nothing to what there must have been! Get your coat off—we’ve got to try and save these—

He starts feverishly laying out the fragments ready for the application of preservative sprays.

Quatermass comes in.

QUATERMASS: You want me?

RONEY: She does. [*He pours fluid into a spray-gun.*]

BARBARA: I’ve been doing some research. [*She pulls her case open and takes out a clip of large stiff sheets. She pushes these at Quatermass.*] Have a look. [*She pulls her coat off and joins Roney.*]

QUATERMASS [*looking at the sheets*]: Photocopies?

BARBARA: They’re of newspaper files. Year 1927.

QUATERMASS: Oh? [*He reads aloud.*] ‘The Knightsbridge Spook . . . May 18th, 1927.’ [*He turns to another sheet.*] ‘Figure that walked through bedroom wall!’ [*To Barbara.*] Why did you do this?

RONEY [*to her*]: Quick—get your notebook.

She takes her notebook from her case. He is laying out measuring instruments—rules and callipers of different sizes.

BARBARA [*to Quatermass*]: I thought last night that you seemed curious. There’s a lot about it there.

QUATERMASS [*reads again*]: ‘My Night of Terror . . . by Mrs. Anne Chilcot!’ And there she is . . . thirty years younger. No—[*He throws the sheets down on the table.*]—I had enough of that last night. [*She shoots him a quick glance.*] We’ll do pretty well if we can make sense of the known facts—that thing out there, for instance—without dragging in the supernatural. Spooks and My Night of Terror!

BARBARA: I'm sorry. I thought I might be helping.

QUATERMASS: My fault.

Something on the top sheet catches his eye. He reads a few lines with a deepening frown.

RONEY: One—complete femur, broken in two pieces—32 centimetres long in all. Diameter at widest—[*He measures it with callipers.*]

Barbara makes notes. Quatermass has picked up the photocopies again. He reads softly.

QUATERMASS: ‘Curious crowds round the house in Hobbs Lane became so numerous yesterday that traffic was obstructed. Lorries were unable to proceed to work being carried out nearby on the new Tube extension’ . . . Tube extension! [*He looks thoughtfully out through the window.*]

Cut to the floor of the excavation, where Potter is just swinging himself out from the interior to speak to Breen.

POTTER: Yes, it's solid. I can't find any way through, sir.

BREEN: Let me see.

The Sergeant hands across an inspection lamp with its trailing cable. Potter ducks back inside with it and Breen holds on to the edge of the hatch-opening as he peers in. Quatermass comes down the ladder way from the hut and goes across to them.

QUATERMASS: What's going on?

BREEN: We seem to have reached a solid bulkhead. The thing's blocked right across.

He moves aside to let Quatermass see. Most of the earth has been removed from the interior, which seems to be a bare shell. Potter slaps his hand against the solid surface that runs across it close to the hatch-opening.

BREEN: Better wash it down in case there's any sign of an opening in it.

POTTER: Sergeant—lay on the spray again.

As the Sergeant brings the equipment into position, Breen leads Quatermass forward and points to the massive forepart of the hull.

BREEN: You see, there's all this to be accounted for. It's not very likely to be solid.

QUATERMASS: A sealed compartment.

BREEN: Which might be a number of things—a warhead, for instance.

QUATERMASS: Of your V-weapon?

BREEN: This makes it a little more likely, don't you think?

QUATERMASS: I suppose it does.

BREEN: We'll assume that's what it is. Take routine precautions and get on with cracking the nut.

QUATERMASS: Quite a nut . . .

Cut to where Potter is washing down the bulkhead with a spray of water. It sluices down and adds to the slippery mess underfoot. Outside, the Sergeant and other Sappers are manhandling a small electric pump towards the hull.

POTTER: Hurry up with that, sergeant. It's like bath night in here.

SERGEANT: Right, sir. [*He connects a length of steel hose to the pump.*] Gibson . . . no, West . . . grab the other end and get inside there with it.

West glances at his companions as he picks up the hose.

GIBSON: Go an' make it beautiful, Westie.

The Sergeant switches on the pump, which whines and clatters, as West is given a helping hand inside by Potter. The little man looks about for a moment, in awe of the strangeness of the interior. The glazed surface gleams through the mud, reflecting Potter's inspection lamp.

POTTER: Hurry it, laddie.

West directs the end of the hose into the muddy water swilling round their ankles. It sucks and gurgles. Potter inspects the bulkhead closely as the spray cleans it. He turns to Quatermass and Breen as they look in.

POTTER: There's no way through. Only some markings.

QUATERMASS: Markings?

POTTER: All over the surface here.

He shines the lamp for them.

Cut to where Roney is coming down the ladderway, followed by Barbara. He is looking across to where he collected the fragments on the ground earlier.

RONEY: I'm sure there was another scapula—[*He notices the group round the hatch-opening.*] What have they found now?

He makes his way across to join them. Potter is using a wrung-out cloth on the bulkhead, on which an etched pattern can be seen—of interlocking circles.

Quatermass turns to find Roney at his elbow, staring in.

RONEY: Quatermass—it's a pentacle.

QUATERMASS: What?

RONEY: Those marks. One of the ancient cabalistic signs. They were used in ancient magic.

Creep in music.

QUATERMASS [*after a moment*]: Potter, give me a hand inside, will you?

POTTER [*grabbing his arm*]: Hold tight—it's as slippery as glass.

As he helps Quatermass through the hatch-opening, a long screech echoes inside the hull. Potter twists round.

Cut to where West is crouching on the floor of the hull at the far end, his face turned to the blank surface. He is shuddering with terror. Potter makes his way towards him, slithering. Quatermass comes behind.

POTTER: West—

He grabs the little man by the shoulder and swings him round. West's eyes are staring wildly.

WEST: It was—*[his eyes search the chamber and his voice drops to a choking whisper]*—a kind of figure! It went—went through the wall!
Quatermass's face tightens.

Fade up music to full. Fade vision to black.

PART THREE

Imps and Demons

Fade in . . . the interior of the hull.

QUATERMASS: Let's get him outside—

Between them, he and Potter manage to manhandle Sapper West along the treacherous surface to the hatch-opening, where the Sergeant is waiting to grab him.

Cut to the exterior as West is passed through. He clings to the Sergeant's arm. He is sagging at the knees, hardly seeming to see Breen and the others as they crowd round.

BREEN: What's the matter with the man? Is he ill?

QUATERMASS [*following through the hatch-opening*]: He may be.

SERGEANT: All right, West—take it easy, lad—

WEST [*half-coherently*]: I thought it was the wall shining—and then it moved and come at me! And went—and went—

POTTER [*firmly*]: The hut.

He and the Sergeant steer the shaking man to the ladderway that leads to the hut. The Sappers are staring after them.

GIBSON [*softly*]: Little Westie . . . he's got the horrors.

By the hatch-opening, Roney turns to Quatermass.

RONEY: What did he see?

BREEN [*before Quatermass can answer*]: Nothing. The confined space got him—claustrophobia. A man like that should never have been on the squad.

QUATERMASS: Roney—just now you said something about those markings. [*He points to the bulkhead.*]

RONEY [*nodding*]: They form a pentacle. Of course that may just be coincidence—

QUATERMASS: You said it was used in black magic. [*As Roney nods again.*] Could he have overheard?

RONEY: Oh. [*Considering.*] No, he was right inside—I don't see how—

QUATERMASS: Nor do I. By the way, take a look—up there—all about the interior—faint and mostly obscured still—

He flashes the inspection lamp along the inside of the hull. Roney looks and exclaims.

RONEY: Good heavens, they're all over it—cabalistic signs!

Quatermass switches off the lamp. He starts towards the hut, Roney with him. Barbara follows.

Breen is left blinking after them. His hand rests on the edge of the hatch-opening. After a moment he glances down. He rubs his fingers across it. He turns and calls to Gibson.

BREEN: Corporal—break out some picks and start digging. I want the level taken down a bit further.

GIBSON: Yes, sir. [*To the other Sappers, as they make for the the stacked spades and picks.*] You heard, boys. [*He mutters.*] Keep 'em busy. Don't give 'em time to think. Psychology . . .

Cut—to the interior of the hut, where West is slumped in a chair, his head between his knees. Potter pulls him upright, and the Sergeant further loosens his already loosened collar.

SERGEANT: West—wake up, lad! [*To Potter.*] Did he hit his head?

POTTER: I don't think so.

Quatermass comes in with Roney, who makes for a first-aid box on the wall after taking one quick look at West.

QUATERMASS: How is he?

POTTER: Just passed out.

SERGEANT: Funny thing, shock.

RONEY [*turning from the wall cupboard with a hip-flask in his hand*]: Try this brandy. I always keep a drop by in case of accidents.

Barbara comes into the doorway and watches as Potter puts the flask to the half-conscious man's lips. West splutters and opens his eyes. For a moment they are blank—then the fear returns and he looks wildly round.

POTTER: All right, West, all right—

SERGEANT [*sharply*]: Pull yourself together!

QUATERMASS [*quickly*]: No, sergeant, that's not the way. Give me a moment—[*He pushes the Sergeant and speaks to the shaking West.*] What did you see?

WEST [*confusedly*]: I dunno—

QUATERMASS: You said a figure.

WEST [*after a moment, whispers*]: It was little. Like a dwarf.

QUATERMASS: A dwarf?

Behind, Barbara crosses quickly to the table.

WEST: It went—crooked. Horrible. I dunno—just horrible—

SERGEANT: Its head tucked underneath its arm?

QUATERMASS [*angrily*]: Shut up!

WEST [*grabbing Quatermass's arm*]: I did see something, sir—I did—

QUATERMASS: Very well.

Barbara's voice cuts across the hut. They turn. She has the photocopied news reports in her hand.

BARBARA [*reading*]: ‘. . . The figure was small, he said. Like a monkey or a dwarf. It seemed to cross the room and go through the wall . . .’

WEST [*tense*]: What are you reading there?

BARBARA: A newspaper report. ‘The Hobbs Lane Ghost’ . . . June the first, 1927.

POTTER: What!

QUATERMASS [*quickly, to West*]: Did you know about that? Had you ever heard of it?

WEST [*genuinely puzzled*]: No. No, I never—[*His alarm returning.*] 1927? They saw it then?

Quatermass goes to the girl and takes the sheets from her. He studies them.

SERGEANT [*to Potter, with a nod at the man in the chair*]: What now, Sir?

POTTER [*quietly*]: Get him away. He'd better go sick for a few days. I'll write a note to the M.O. And, sergeant—

SERGEANT: Yes, sir?

POTTER: He'd better not talk to the other men.

Cut—to a close shot of a pick striking down into clay. It crashes against something solid. Corporal Gibson, who is wielding it, starts back.

GIBSON [*calls hoarsely*]: Something here, sir. Something hard.

Colonel Breen comes hurrying across. The other Sappers break off their digging and move closer as Gibson drops his pick and probes into the broken earth with his hands.

GIBSON: Feels smooth—I think it's the same stuff. It's grey and shiny—

Breen kneels beside him and digs his hands in too, clearing the mud from a flat surface.

BREEN: I can feel—yes, an edge, curving—

Above, Potter comes out of the hut, followed by the Sergeant with West hanging on to his arm. The Sergeant guides him round the upper level towards the ramp. Potter scrambles down the ladderway to Breen and the others.

POTTER: I've sent that man off sick, sir. [*The eyes of the Sappers go to where West is being helped away. Potter sees the churned-up clay.*] What's this?

BREEN: I believe we've found the hatch cover. [*As Potter kneels to investigate the shape in the ground.*] The edge of it's finely threaded.

POTTER: Yes—

BREEN: Like the opening.

POTTER: Then this must have been unscrewed—[*The implication hits him, as it hit Breen earlier*—from the inside! [*He meets the cold eyes.*]

BREEN: Automatically, perhaps. Or vibration might have loosened it in flight.

POTTER: I suppose so, sir . . .

Cut—to the interior of the hut, where Quatermass is reading from one of the photocopied sheets. Barbara is studying others.

QUATERMASS: ‘. . . People in neighbouring houses told the same story. Said Mr. Parker at Number 15: “There have always been bad tales about Hobbs Lane. But I never bothered about them till now. I was born in this street, and I recollect my parents having stories about ghosts. There was something over a hundred years ago . . .”’

BARBARA: This one confirms. [*Reading.*] ‘Cases of alleged haunting have been reported before in Hobbs Lane, notably in the eighteenth century . . .’

She looks from Quatermass to Roney, who is standing beside them, listening. She gives a slight nervous laugh.

QUATERMASS: Any comments, Roney?

RONNEY [*slowly*]: I don't normally, before noon, but—[*He takes a long swig from the medicinal flask of brandy.*]

Dissolve . . . to a close shot of Potter, his head covered by a welder's helmet. Track back to show the oxy-acetylene burner he is gripping in his gloved hands, its flame directed on to the grey glossy surface of the hatch cover. This is now supported by steel scaffolding in an upright position—a massive glittering disc, cleaned of all clinging mud. Breen and Quatermass are watching.

BREEN [*glances at his watch*]: That must be enough. [*Calls above the roar of the burner.*] All right, Potter—

Potter cuts off the burner and pulls the helmet off. He wipes the sweat out of his eyes. Quatermass and Breen move in for a close look.

QUATERMASS: No effect.

BREEN: It must have had!

Quatermass holds his palm close to the spot where the flame was applied. He frowns, touches the surface lightly, then firmly rests his hand on it. He looks at Breen, who touches it in his turn—and mutters an astonished exclamation.

BREEN: I don't understand. The burner was on it for five full minutes.

QUATERMASS: It's not even warm.

POTTER: I held the same spot all the time.

BREEN [*irritably*]: I know.

POTTER: Want to try again, sir?

BREEN [*shakes his head*]: No. We can give up any hope of getting through the bulkhead with that.

Potter packs away his equipment. Quatermass is running his fingers over the glossy, unmarked surface.

QUATERMASS: A good, stout door. Ceramic material of some kind, resistant to heat of over three thousand degrees, harder than diamond. This stuff's what every rocket engineer's been looking for—a heatproof casing to get through the Earth's atmosphere.

BREEN: What are you trying to say?

QUATERMASS: Think the Germans made it in 1940 and then lost the secret? Ask them—ask von Braun. Why don't you?

He starts towards the opening in the hull, fumbling in his pocket as he goes.

Cut to where the Sergeant and the Sappers are clustered round the ladderway, watching.

1ST SAPPER: What's the boffin up to now?

GIBSON: Going to try and open it up with his little pocket-knife. Funny if it blows us all up—

SERGEANT: Stow it, Gibson.

GIBSON: Think he knows what he's doing, sarge? He doesn't. None of 'em do, this time . . .

Creep in music.

Cut to the interior of the hull as Quatermass enters. What he brings from his pocket is a small high-powered magnifier. He turns this on the etched circles on the bulkhead, examining first one, then another, at a range of only an inch or so.

He steps back, following the main circle with his finger. He checks it again with the magnifier.

At a slight sound, he glances round and sees Breen watching him through the hatch-opening.

QUATERMASS: Look at this! One circle's etched more deeply than the others. This one—[*he demonstrates it*—the biggest.

BREEN [*heaving himself inside*]: Let me see.

QUATERMASS: You'll need to use this. [*He gives Breen the magnifier.*]

BREEN [*peering*]: Yes. I wonder—

QUATERMASS: Another opening? If it could be unscrewed—

BREEN: There's nothing to get a purchase on.

QUATERMASS: If we had just one small hole—that would do to start it in its socket.

BREEN: But this is harder than diamond—

QUATERMASS: We could try borazon. That's several times harder still. Can you get hold of a drill with a borazon bit?

BREEN: I don't know. It might mean bringing in a civilian operator.

QUATERMASS: Why not?

Frowning, Breen starts climbing out through the hatch-opening.

BREEN [*doubtfully*]: If I could find a reliable man who could keep his mouth shut. . . . [*He calls.*] Potter! [*To Quatermass.*] You see, I don't want any scares started. . . .

Dissolve . . . to the news desk of the Evening Gazette.

The News Editor, a lean, sad-eyed Irishman, has copies of recent issues in front of him, with headlines reading: 'Knightsbridge Apemen—New Finds!' . . . '5 Million Years Old!'

With him are a thick-faced young reporter, Nuttall, and a Photographer. From beyond come the buzz and clatter of the busy news-room.

NEWS EDITOR: Look, a thing like this apemen story can't just fizzle out.

NUTTALL: But it has. On everybody, not just us.

NEWS EDITOR: Nuttall, boy, it can't be *let* to. It isn't a ha'porth of use squatting humbly outside a police barrier. [*Disgustedly.*] Unexploded bomb!

NUTTALL: What d'you want me to do? Rush the barrier and elbow them aside while they're taking the fuses out?

NEWS EDITOR [*wearily*]: No. One, that isn't the story. Two, I don't believe it.

NUTTALL: Why not?

NEWS EDITOR [*shrugs*]: It . . . doesn't feel right.

NUTTALL: Oh, don't start having hunches. Leave that to the Bruin.

PHOTOGRAPHER: It must be a bomb. Look at the gear they brought in.

He selects a print from the sheaf he is holding, and holds it in front of the News Editor—who waves it away.

NEWS EDITOR: Let's stick to the point. One minute it's all the greatest discovery of the age—apemen five million years old—next minute, not a peep!

Where's our vociferous friend Dr. Matthew Roney, for instance?

NUTTALL: Can't find him.

NEWS EDITOR: Tried?

NUTTALL: Yes. He's not at the Institute.

NEWS EDITOR: Then where?

PHOTOGRAPHER: Here! [*He stabs his finger at a figure on another of his prints, holding it out for them to see.*] Isn't that him?

NUTTALL [*peering over the News Editor's shoulder in surprise*]: Yes, just going through the barrier. Not your best, George, but it *is* Roney. When did you get that one?

PHOTOGRAPHER: This morning.

NEWS EDITOR: Who’s that with him?

NUTTALL: I don’t know. George?

PHOTOGRAPHER [*shakes his head*]: Search me.

A figure in a light-coloured overcoat looks in from the passage. The slightly tarnished aplomb that comes with it is that of James Fullalove, one of the Gazette’s principal columnists.

FULLALOVE: Hello, what’s funny?

NEWS EDITOR: Nothing’s funny.

FULLALOVE [*coming forward*]: You all look so glum I thought you must be secretly splitting yourselves. Or is it sad lasciviousness? George get something dirty?

NEWS EDITOR: It’s apemen.

FULLALOVE [*with sympathy*]: Oh, apemen—I’m sorry. Dan, I came to beg help. One of the Bruin’s glittering ideas—James Fullalove Investigates. Tearing into angry young men or sex in coffee bars or—

NEWS EDITOR: No, James.

FULLALOVE: All I need is—

NEWS EDITOR: I’m in conference.

FULLALOVE: Conference! These two?

NEWS EDITOR: All right—you lend it a bit of tone, then. [*Tossing the photograph across to him.*] Know who that is?

FULLALOVE [*studies it, shakes his head*]: The chap in glasses . . . sorry.

NEWS EDITOR: Not him. The other.

FULLALOVE [*surprised*]: You mean you don’t—! That’s Quatermass, of course. Our old pal the professor, missing from the papers of late, but— [*Frowning.*] What’s he doing there? [*Alert now, he comes to the desk and runs through the other photographs.*] I know that face too! Big brass, War Office—guided missiles—got it, Breen! Colonel Breen! Unexploded bomb, eh? Danny boy, let me in on this, will you?

NEWS EDITOR [*to the others, triumphantly*]: What did I say! [*To Fullalove.*] But can you spare the time?

FULLALOVE: Number one in my series. James Fullalove Investigates—the Apemen of Knightsbridge!

NEWS EDITOR [*points his thumb at the Photographer*]: Want him?

FULLALOVE: Er—better not. No reflection, George, but perhaps one of those little spy cameras—

PHOTOGRAPHER: I’ll see what I can do.

He hurries off. Fullalove studies the photographs again with a smile of anticipation.

FULLALOVE: Quatermass . . .

Dissolve . . . to the floor of the excavation at Hobbs Lane. Not far from the hull, an electricity-generator is standing. Cables run from it towards the hatch-opening in the hull. The Sergeant is testing it.

Cut to the interior of the hull, where Quatermass is watching the setting up of the borazon drill. It is a powerful instrument on a swivelling arm, clamped to the edge of the hatch-opening that is closest to the bulkhead. A battery of lamps has been installed above, extending from another clamp, similarly fixed.

Sladden, the drill operator, is a tough, hard-eyed man with cropped hair. As he swings the drill experimentally on its arm, and makes adjustments to the clamps, he talks to Quatermass and to Breen, who is leaning in through the opening.

SLADDEN: I reckon this’ll cut through pretty well anything that exists. I did steel armour-plate with it, six inches thick—just like that! Oh, it was legal. Bloke shut in a strongroom. I got him out. [*He grins.*] Secret job, like this one.

BREEN [*icily*]: Then I’m glad you don’t talk about it.

SLADDEN [*unabashed*]: What’s in behind there? Anything dangerous?

QUATERMASS: Probably not.

SLADDEN [*cheerfully*]: All right, I’m insured. You insured, sir? Oh, it’s a good thing to be insured . . . at least it cheers you up . . .

Cut to where Potter has joined the Sergeant beside the ticking-over generator.

POTTER: How’s she running now, Sergeant?

SERGEANT: Okay, sir. Just that bit of trouble at the start. [*As Potter looks it over.*] Better than relying on the public juice supply round here. Safer, in case —

POTTER: Yes . . .

He straightens, rubbing his hands. He glances across the excavation floor.

Across at the far side of it, on the higher level, the Sappers are crouching over steaming mugs. Gibson has finished his and is flapping his arms across his chest.

POTTER: Another brew-up?

SERGEANT: I let ’em, sir. It’s got so perishing cold down here.

Potter nods. As if reacting to the suggestion, he shivers. He rubs his hands again—then looks more closely at one of them, stretching the palm open.

A few yards away, Barbara Judd is descending the ladderway from the hut. She carries a large specimen box and is evidently taking a look at the proceedings on her way out. But as she nears the end of the hull something else catches her eye. She stoops. A small bird, a sparrow is lying

dead in the mud. Its legs are straight out, as if it is frozen. She picks the body up and glances round curiously at the shining hull. Then she drops the bird and rises.

As she goes on past the generator she notices Potter struggling to wind a field-dressing round his hand.

BARBARA: Can I help?

POTTER: You ought to be on your way now, but—thanks. A bit awkward with my left hand.

BARBARA [*rewinding the bandage*]: What did this?

POTTER: I—I'm not sure. My sergeant's got a touch of it, too. Looks like mild frostbite—but it can't be. [*He follows her glance towards the hull.*] That thing doesn't feel—even cold—

Breen calls from where he is standing beside the hull.

BREEN: Captain Potter!

POTTER: Sir—

BREEN: We're ready to start.

Potter snatches the bandage hurriedly round his hand.

BARBARA: Sorry—

POTTER: All right—it's everybody out now. [*Calls.*] Sergeant—send the men off.

Across the excavation, the Sergeant jumps to his feet where he has been having a quick mug of tea with the rest of the squad. The Sappers hastily get ready to leave. Roney comes out of the hut, carrying further boxes. Potter steers the girl over to the ladderway, calling up to him.

POTTER: Dr. Roney, will you leave now, please. Take Miss Judd with you.

BARBARA: Can't we wait?

POTTER: Outside the barrier.

He hurries across to the hull.

Roney helps Barbara up the ladderway and they make for the ramp. The Sappers are also on the move, heading the same way.

Cut—to the interior of the hull, as Sladden swings his drill to touch the glossy surface of the bulkhead.

SLADDEN: Sure that's the spot you want—exact?

QUATERMASS: Yes. [*Speaking across to Breen.*] Just inside the main circle, in case we can use it for leverage.

POTTER [*joining Breen by the hatch-opening*]: Cleared for action, sir.

BREEN: Right. What's wrong with your hand?

POTTER: Oh—nothing serious. [*Looking inside.*] Is Professor Quatermass staying?

BREEN: I've told him not to. I could make it an order.

QUATERMASS [*shortly*]: I'm staying. In here.

Sladden rubs his chin. He grins at Quatermass.

Cut—to where the Sergeant has taken his place beside the generator. He pulls a whistle from his pocket.

Potter joins him, looking up towards the rim of the excavation.

SERGEANT: All out, sir.

Cut—to the street above. Roney and Barbara, then the bomb-disposal squad come running through past the barrier which a Policeman is holding open. Corporal Gibson is last.

GIBSON: Right round the corner, there! [*To the Policeman.*] And you, mate—

The Policeman lowers the barrier hurriedly and follows after them. A whistle-blast sounds from the excavation below.

Cut—to the excavation floor, where the Sergeant is blowing his warning blast. He lowers the whistle.

A moment later the sound is echoed—in a coarser version, much lower in pitch and wavering. It dies rapidly away. Potter and the Sergeant look at each other.

SERGEANT: Funny echo . . .

Breen turns from the hull and shouts angrily across.

BREEN: What's happening now? Switch on!

The Sergeant turns the generator to full throttle. Then he throws himself down on the ground, beside Potter.

Cut—to the interior of the hull, where Sladden is watching the ammeter on his apparatus. Above, the lamps brighten.

SLADDEN: Right—here we go!

He switches on the drill. It drones loudly. He pushes it into contact with the bulkhead—and the thin screech of a skidding drill-bit is heard. After two or three seconds he withdraws it and switches off. He peers quickly at the spot and turns, puzzled, to Quatermass.

QUATERMASS: Try again.

Once more Sladden switches on and brings the drill to bear. Again it skids. The screech rises in pitch and seems to echo inside the hull, to wobble in pitch, battering at the eardrums. Quatermass shakes his head as if trying to clear his brain of the sound. Sladden bares clenched teeth. Breen's eyes are pressed shut.

Now, added to the wailing screech, comes a deep, thudding vibration. The effect on the three men is almost immediate. Sladden's body arches as if twisted by pain. He turns wide, staring eyes on Quatermass, who is shuddering himself. Breen clutches at the rim of the hatch-opening to steady himself. The whole hull seems to be vibrating under them.

Then Sladden seems unable to take any more. He jerks the drill clear.

The screech of its skidding stops—but the deep vibration goes on. Sladden throws himself against the bulkhead where he had directed the bit.

SLADDEN [*shouts*]: There's nothing! It hasn't made a mark!

The heavy vibration seems to increase in power. Sladden claps his hands over his head, swaying. Quatermass grabs him, pulls him towards the hatch-opening. Breen helps.

A medley of little sounds beats about them.

Then they are outside.

A few yards away, Potter is scrambling to his feet. He knocks off the generator and its chugging dies away.

POTTER: They're in trouble—come on—

The Sergeant hurries after him towards the hatch-opening, where Quatermass is supporting Sladden. The drill-operator collapses on the ground as if Quatermass has lost the power to hold on to him. And Breen is staring about confusedly, swaying on his feet.

POTTER: What happened?

QUATERMASS [*nodding at Sladden*]: Look after him. [*He turns to Breen.*] He's just shaken . . . we all are. [*He grips Breen and pulls him round.*] It was . . . it was the vibration in there. Some sort of freak acoustic effect. It must have been!

Breen looks at him stupidly, then pitches to his knees and retches helplessly. Potter runs to him anxiously.

QUATERMASS [*looking down at the vomiting Breen*]: Probably . . . best thing for him.

POTTER: Are you all right?

QUATERMASS: I think so. We had no luck with the drull . . . the *drill* . . . it wouldn't . . . wouldn't . . . [*He realizes his speech is confused. He passes a shaking hand across his face.*] Take some . . . Roney's brandy . . .

He starts unsteadily towards the ladderway that leads to the hut. Behind, Potter attends to the gasping Breen, while the Sergeant helps Sladden to sit up.

Quatermass halts and listens. The deep-pitched vibration seems to be returning.

He shakes his head and takes another step or two.

Suddenly the sound rises rapidly in pitch and volume, to end in a series of rapid taps—almost a tearing in the atmosphere. Quatermass swings round. The others are motionless, also listening.

Then there is dead silence.

Quatermass scrambles up the ladderway and makes quickly, not for the hut now, but the ramp that leads to the the street above.

Cut—to the corner of Hobbs Lane, near the barrier. Roney and Barbara are looking anxiously along towards the excavation. The Sappers are standing nearby.

BARBARA: It's stopped now. [*She turns to Corporal Gibson.*] Do you know what it meant—that noise? [*As he shakes his head.*] There's something wrong down there! Isn't there something we can do?

GIBSON: We got strict orders, miss. Barring an explosion—

RONEY: They know what they're up to.

BARBARA: Do they?

She turns away from the corner, hands knotted, pacing past the waiting Sappers. Pan with her—to where James Fullalove comes into her path.

FULLALOVE: What's going on?

BARBARA: I don't know—I only wish I did! [*As if she wonders whether he can help.*] Who are you?

FULLALOVE: Name's Fullalove. I'm a reporter.

BARBARA: Oh, not now—

She turns her back on him and rejoins Roney. Fullalove starts to follow, and finds the Policeman barring his way.

POLICEMAN: See the sign, sir? [*He indicates the 'UNEXPLODED BOMB' notice.*] No further, please.

FULLALOVE: I'm press. Tell me—who are down there? What are they trying to—

RONEY [*calls excitedly*]: Quatermass!

He runs to the barrier to meet him.

Quatermass is breathless and dishevelled as he hurries into view. He is almost pulled through the barrier by Roney. A scatter of bystanders push forward, curiosity further aroused.

POLICEMAN: Mind out there! [*To Fullalove.*] That means you, too!

RONEY [*to Quatermass*]: Well?

BARBARA: Are they safe down there?

FULLALOVE [*pushing forward*]: Professor Quatermass—

Quatermass grabs Roney's arm and pulls him aside.

QUATERMASS [*urgently*]: Roney—you recognized the pentacle down there—and the other signs. How much d'you know about that sort of thing? Occult practice?

RONEY: Just a little. In my work—

QUATERMASS: I want you to come with me!

Potter comes running from the excavation entrance, scrambling under the barrier.

POTTER: Professor—

QUATERMASS: Potter, tell Colonel Breen from me—to attempt nothing more till we get back.

POTTER [*doubtfully*]: I'll try, sir.

QUATERMASS [*grimly*]: At the moment I think he's fairly amenable. Now, Roney—

FULLALOVE: Professor Quatermass, if you wouldn't mind—

Quatermass throws him a quick glance. Then he and Roney hurry away.

Barbara turns questioningly to Potter, but he shakes his head. A moment later Fullalove sets off in pursuit.

Track in on the wall above the heads of the watchers, on the street name-plates . . . HOBBS LANE . . . HOB'S LANE . . .

Fade in linking music.

Dissolve . . . to close shot of an eighteenth-century street pamphlet. Under a crude woodcut of ghostly shapes with horns, comes the title: 'A True Hiftorie of the Hob's Lane Ghoftes.' It is subtitled: 'Authentick Teftimonials Concerning the Amazing Events at Knightes Bridge. Alarming Noises and Spectrall Appearances.'

Pull back to take in Quatermass, poring over this and other pamphlets spread on a table. He and Roney are in a gloomy, echoing vault lined with shelves of massive volumes.

QUATERMASS [*reading*]: 'Alarming noises and spectral appearances' . . . September 1762. [*He turns the pamphlet over.*]

RONEY [*reading from another*]: 'Our informant further states that grievous sounds emanating from the very earth . . .' [*he glances at Quatermass*] ' . . . have so affrighted certain fellows employed in the digging of a well, that one is like to die mad . . .'

QUATERMASS: Digging a well? Any of the others mention that?

RONEY: Not that I've noticed, but—

Both of them turn to search through other pamphlets.

An elderly Librarian comes up to them with a large open box-file.

LIBRARIAN: Finding what you want, sir?

QUATERMASS: Some.

LIBRARIAN: Street pamphlets are your best source for that sort of thing—nonsense stories and wild rumours. Amazing what they'd believe in those days.

QUATERMASS: Yes. [*As the Librarian puts the box down and shuffles away.*] Oh—more of them? Thanks. [*He sighs.*] Roney, surely it's possible for . . . for ghosts, let's use the word . . . to be phenomena that were badly observed and wrongly interpreted?

RONEY [*reading, absorbed*]: 'One inhabitant of Hob's Lane doth assert he hath often times descried the apparition of an hideous goblin . . . and once several.'

QUATERMASS: Several?

RONEY: ' . . . And that this place is long notorious for weird happenings'!

QUATERMASS: Even then.

RONEY: Hob's Lane . . . notice they all spell it H—o—b.

QUATERMASS: Spellings change.

RONEY: Where have I seen that, though? [*He frowns, then.*] Of course! There are two name-plates on the street. The newer one spells it with two B's, like the cricketer. But the old one—

QUATERMASS: What about it?

RONEY [*a pause*]: Hob . . . was one of the familiar names for the Devil.

There is a faint click nearby.

Quatermass swings round—to where a figure is standing with its hands to its face, half in the shadow of a column. It steps forward, lowering a sub-miniature camera.

QUATERMASS: Fullalove!

FULLALOVE: Excuse me. [*He aims the tiny camera again, this time at the illustrated print in front of Quatermass.*] We haven't met for some time.

QUATERMASS: You followed us here.

FULLALOVE: Of course. From . . . [*he glances at the print again*] . . . Hobbs Lane. [*Bluntly.*] Tell me, sir—what have you found there?

QUATERMASS: I've no statement to make. [*Moving away, he calls to the Librarian.*] Thank you very much—I think we've seen all we want.

LIBRARIAN [*shuffling into view*]: Very well, sir—

QUATERMASS [*to Roney*]: Where next?

FULLALOVE [*before Roney can answer*]: The Westminster Abbey archives, I think. Let's go.

He leads the way. Roney shrugs.

QUATERMASS [*angrily*]: Look here, Fullalove—

But he follows. Roney follows, too.

Dissolve . . . to the floor of the excavation at Hobbs Lane. Sladden rises from a box on which he has been sitting and nods to Breen.

SLADDEN: All right, sir. If you want to have another bash, I'm ready.

BREEN: Good man!

He turns to Potter. The rest of the bomb-disposal squad are back in the excavation too, waiting for instructions.

POTTER [*anxiously*]: D’you think we ought, sir? Quatermass particularly requested that—

BREEN: Is he running this show?

POTTER: No, but he seemed on the track of something.

BREEN [*coldly*]: Oh, did he! [*He takes a couple of steps towards the hull. The deeper effects of shock seem to have worn off, though he is still very much on edge.*] I’m inclined to agree with him on one point. What shook us up must have been acoustic disturbance—caused by the shape of the interior—that polished surface. Now, Potter—

POTTER: Sir?

BREEN: This time we’ll blanket out the sound. Got some sacks—sandbags?

POTTER: Yes. [*He calls.*] Sergeant!

The Sergeant comes running and Potter turns to speak to him. A moment later he hurries back to the Sappers at the side of the excavation. They jump into activity. Meanwhile Breen has pulled himself into the hull through the hatch-opening. Potter joins him.

POTTER: Sacks coming along, sir.

BREEN [*his voice strange*]: We may not need them. Is Sladden there?

POTTER: Er—yes, sir. Sladden—

The drill-operator comes up as he beckons, and looks in at Breen.

BREEN: You said—you said your drill took no effect?

SLADDEN: Afraid that’s right, sir. But next time—

BREEN [*sharply*]: Look at this!

Sladden heaves himself in through the opening and peers at the bulkhead where Breen is pointing. It is the point where the drill was aimed earlier.

SLADDEN: A hole! But—I never made that—

BREEN: Sure?

SLADDEN: It’s wider than my drill-bit. [*He looks more closely.*] This doesn’t look as if it was drilled at all . . . [*he turns to Breen with a worried expression*] . . . it’s sort of melted!

Outside, the squad are arriving with armfuls of empty sacks and sandbags. Potter signs to the Sergeant to dump them on the ground.

SLADDEN [*to Breen*]: Got a pencil, sir? I don’t think it goes right through . . . [*He tests the hole with the silver propelling pencil Breen hands him. The pencil disappears for several inches, then:*] No it stops . . .

Potter turns away from the hull and looks quickly round the excavation. He sees Barbara Judd on the ladderway and hurries across to meet her.

POTTER: Any idea where they might have gone—your boss and Quatermass?

BARBARA: No. I’ve just tried the Institute again. They aren’t there.

POTTER: Oh.

BARBARA: Is it something bad?

POTTER: Look, will you do something? Just get away from this place! Please!

He goes abruptly, back towards the hull. Inside Breen is crouching by the hole. Sladden is starting to dismantle the drill.

BREEN: Hurry up—get that thing clear—

SLADDEN: Doing my best, sir.

There is a sudden sharp hiss of air from the direction of the hole. Breen starts, stumbles back against Sladden.

BREEN: Look out—

SLADDEN: It’s through—

Close shot of the hole in the bulkhead, as the hiss of air grows louder and louder . . .

Dissolve . . . to close shot of a fourteenth-century illuminated manuscript. It shows black, almost insect-like figures. Surrounding them is the Latin script, gothic-lettered.

Track back, showing that the page is in an ancient leather-bound volume of huge size, carefully preserved. Quatermass and Roney are studying it, while the page is held open by an anxious Abbey Librarian.

Fullalove is nearby, watching.

QUATERMASS [*reading*]: ‘In the winter of the year 1341 . . . the Abbott of Westminster did strive against . . . an outbreak of evil . . .’ [*To Roney.*] Yes? [*Roney nods.*] ‘ . . . at Hobbes Lane in the village of Knyghtesbrugge. Imps and demons did appear. Foul noises sent by the Devil . . .’

He breaks off, staring in front of him.

RONNEY [*reading on*]: ‘ . . . Did sorely afflict the . . . charcoal-burners that have lately come there . . .’

QUATERMASS: Charcoal-burners.

RONNEY: I think that’s right. [*He looks to the Librarian, who nods.*]

QUATERMASS: They’d be felling trees. Big ones, heavy ones. [*A pause.*] In 1762 a well was being dug. In 1927 there was a Tube extension. And now—! You see—all disturbances of the ground!

Fullalove moves in to take a photograph of the page.

Roney reads on. He nods to the Librarian, who turns the ancient vellum leaf carefully. A few lines down on the next page, something catches his

eye.

RONEY: Quatermass! 'It has long been known as a troubled place. . . .' In 1341!

But Quatermass is already on his way out. With a mutter of thanks to the Librarian, Roney hurries after him.

FULLALOVE: Wait for me—

He takes a quick shot of the page and goes to catch them up.

Dissolve . . . to the interior of the hull.

Breen is peering through the hole in the bulkhead, by means of a self-illuminating instrument with a thin barrel—similar to medical apparatus. He straightens up and carefully withdraws it. Potter looks in, framed in the hatch-opening. The whole of the interior has been liberally sound-deadened with empty sacks.

POTTER: Make anything out, sir?

BREEN [*turning his face away*]: I—I'm not sure. Nothing bulky. I'm certain there's no explosive.

POTTER [*relieved*]: Then we can finally discount a warhead. Mind if I look, sir?

BREEN: Oh, let's get on with it!

POTTER: Right, sir—

Cut to the excavation outside as Potter turns away. The Sergeant and his squad are busy sorting out a quantity of heavy tackle a few yards away.

Then he sees Barbara Judd running to the ramp to meet Quatermass and Roney. Fullalove is with them. She talks excitedly to them as they come, pointing to the hull.

QUATERMASS [*scrambling down the ladderway to the lower level, angrily*]: What's he trying to do! Didn't Potter tell him to wait?

BARBARA: Yes, he tried, but—

POTTER: Something's happened, sir. Colonel Breen's in there—he'll explain. [*As Quatermass goes to the hull, he turns and calls to the waiting drill-operator.*] Sladden—we'll need to use some of your gear for this, too—

Cut to the interior of the hull as Quatermass scrambles through the opening. Breen points to the hole in the bulkhead.

QUATERMASS: How did you do it?

BREEN: It just happened.

QUATERMASS: What!

BREEN: The vibrations of the drill must have taken effect on the material in some way. Look through it. Use this. [*He switches on the instrument in his hand and passes it to Quatermass.*] When it opened, there was a rush of air—inwards.

QUATERMASS: Inwards?

BREEN: The pressure inside must have been much lower. Or non-existent. [*He watches Quatermass insert the instrument through the hole and look into the eyepiece. Hoarsely.*] Do you see anything?

QUATERMASS: Not sure . . . [*He turns the instrument slightly.*] My God! [*He starts back, shaken, and turns to Breen.*] It looks like—an eye! [*As Breen nods, Quatermass wipes his forehead and looks again. This time he is in no doubt.*] It's not moving . . . did you see it move?

BREEN: No.

Quatermass sits back. He sniffs. He pulls the instrument from the hole and sniffs again.

BREEN: What do you smell?

QUATERMASS: Corruption. Decomposition. When did this open?

BREEN: Perhaps—an hour ago.

QUATERMASS: We'd better work fast. If we're going to find anything inside there—

BREEN: I've seen to it.

Potter can be heard outside, giving instructions to his squad. He puts his head in.

POTTER: Get clear now, sir—d'you mind?

Quatermass pulls himself up, and out through the hatch-opening. The Sergeant and others are waiting there with levers, chains, and other tackle.

He draws Potter aside and speaks to him quietly.

QUATERMASS: Potter—you'd better warn your men. Things may happen.

He moves on to where Roney is waiting, deep concern in his face. Barbara is with him, also watching as Potter directs the fitting of tackle to the bulkhead.

RONEY: You told him?

QUATERMASS: Yes. [*Looking at the hull.*] Somehow it must set off some—subjective impressions. Seeing things, as West did. Or hearing things, as several of us did—[*He breaks off.*] Where's Fullalove?

RONEY: I don't know.

QUATERMASS: He sneaked in here with us. Never mind—

Pan towards the hut.

Cut—to the interior of the hut, where Fullalove is standing to one side of the window. He is telephoning.

FULLALOVE [*impatiently*]: Listen, old man, I can see the thing now! I'm not fifty feet from it! . . . No, I don't know what it is, and I don't think they do either. But they're opening it all up. Yes . . . yes they seem to be trying to unseal a closed compartment . . .

Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to a high shot of the excavation, a few minutes later. Crane slowly forward, over the roaring generator with Sladden in attendance on it . . . past the group of Sappers, in an anxious huddle . . . towards the hull. Here, the battery of lamps is blazing down on Potter and the Sergeant, who are straining with all their strength and weight on the levers fixed through the hole in the bulkhead. Both men's faces are twisted with effort.

Behind them, Quatermass and Breen are crouching to watch.

With a sudden jerk, the levers give. They stagger and the Sergeant almost goes down.

POTTER [*grunts*]: It's moving!

QUATERMASS: It is a hatch-cover, then—

SERGEANT [*steading himself*]: Phew, what a stench!

They apply themselves to the levers again. Now these turn more easily.

Just within the audible range, a deep-toned vibration shakes the hull. It rises rapidly in speed to a swift tearing sound.

QUATERMASS: All right—ignore it! Keep going!

Cut to the excavation outside the hull. The vibration comes again, cut across now by piercing stridors that seem unlike anything in nature. Fullalove comes out of the hut above, to see the Sappers moving back in confused alarm. Roney is looking wildly about, and the girl has her hands clasped to her head.

As the sounds die away, Fullalove scrambles down the ladderway.

There are cries inside the hull—but they are cries of excitement. The levers have done their work.

The hatch-cover is out of its socket. Edge grinding hollowly on edge, its weight is taken by the tackle as the Sergeant and Potter draw it back. Even with this support, the movement of the huge disc sends them staggering backwards.

Quatermass jumps forward, an inspection lamp in his hand. He holds it high.

Creep in music.

The forward chamber is filled with a mass of pale, flimsy substance, crossing and connecting in a complex pattern, and now plainly disintegrating into shreds. And amongst it the traversing light picks out three figures. They are dangling, held by the substance round them. Insect-like creatures . . . rather more than two feet high . . . with tripod legs and stick-like forelimbs hunched like those of a mantis. Each face is a mockery of the human, with a pointed proboscis below its two complex eyes. Above this triangular mask sprout antennae shaped like antlers.

QUATERMASS [*softly*]: The demons . . . !

One of the figures slips through the rotting gossamer with a quick rustle. It drops and hangs again, suspended.

Watching. Breen jerks back involuntarily, drawing in his breath.

QUATERMASS: It's all right—they're dead. They've been dead a long time.

Track in on the figures. Fade up music to full. Fade to black.

PART FOUR

The Enchanted

Fade in . . . the exterior of the hull.

Quatermass turns and calls through the outer hatch-opening to Roney, who comes quickly to peer in. He is too astonished at the sight of the creatures to say anything. Then there is a gasp of horror at his shoulder. It is the girl.

BARBARA: What are they!

QUATERMASS: Whatever they are, they're decomposing fast. Roney, I think this is a job for you.

RONEY: Yes . . . yes. [*Pulling himself together; he turns to Barbara.*] Phone the Institute. Tell Klein—no, that'll keep. Just get some supports here right away.

As he clambers inside, Barbara hurries to the ladderway. She passes the little group of Sappers.

GIBSON: Hey, miss—what have they found?

But she shakes her head and goes on. The men exchange uneasy glances. Fullalove comes towards the hull, drawing the tiny camera from his pocket.

Cut to the interior of the hull, as Roney draws out the first of the bodies, holding it with great care, supporting the trailing legs. His face twists with revulsion. The same nausea is hitting the others in the hull. The Sergeant puts a hand over his mouth and nose.

BREEN: Like a—colossal insect—

RONEY: In some ways. In others, more like a crab or—

POTTER: That's the smell—like rotting fish!

SERGEANT: Or locusts.

At an appealing glance from Roney, Quatermass helps to support the limp body.

QUATERMASS: Can't—guarantee my stomach. Look, you can almost watch it decomposing—

SERGEANT [*weakly, to Potter*]: Sir, I think I better—

POTTER: All right, get out.

The Sergeant claws his way out through the main hatch-opening, on to the muddy floor of the excavation. He is gasping. He staggers a few steps, white-faced, and finds himself the centre of an excited group—his squad. Discipline is taking second place to alarm.

GIBSON: What is it, sarge?

SERGEANT: Insects—

GIBSON: What d'you mean?

SERGEANT: I dunno—they're big—dead, though. [*Still sick.*] God, the stink follows you out here—

GIBSON: Dead how? Listen, we dug that thing up—we got a right to know! [*He runs to Potter as he comes through the hatch-opening.*] Sir, what's in there? What are they?

Potter ignores him, hurrying to where Barbara is struggling down the ladderway with metal trays and the camera.

POTTER: He's yelling for that gear—let me help—

BARBARA [*handing over trays*]: Take these—

Pan with Potter as he goes quickly back to the hull with them and passes one inside to Roney. Roney slips it deftly underneath the body, arranging the limbs so that it is supported.

RONEY: All right, Barbara—take this up to the hut. Keep it level. It's leaking. And use number four sealing fluid on it.

BARBARA: Will that be safe?

RONEY: Have to risk it. And get on to Klein the moment you can. Tell him what to bring—containers—without going into detail. Now—camera? [*He takes the reflex camera, with its flash unit attached ready for action.*] I want to use this on the others right where they are now, before I start pulling them out.

She moves away, carrying the dead creature past the staring Sappers.

Inside the hull, Roney steadies himself to take a shot of the forward chamber. He pulls off his tie and stuffs it into his pocket as he prepares to step forward into it.

RONEY: Don't want this catching in anything—

QUATERMASS: Be careful of those membranes. The way they're arranged in there, they might represent anything—even some kind of instruments—

BREEN: Instruments! Your imagination's running wild.

QUATERMASS: Yes. Isn't yours?

He gives Roney a steadying hand as he puts one foot over the opened bulkhead and crouches to take a second photograph.

Roney touches the membranous substance that seems to sprout from the very walls of the chamber. Delicately as he puts his fingers to it, some of it shreds away into tatters. He stands still, and aims the camera again.

BREEN [*pushing forward*]: Dr. Roney—how long have those things been dead? Any idea?

QUATERMASS: I told you—

BREEN: I'm asking *him*!

In the forward chamber, Roney winds on his camera with minimum movement.

RONEY: Pass me another of those trays, will you?

BREEN [*insistently*]: If they'd been in there more than—than a few years, they'd have decomposed completely?

RONEY: Oh, all the decomposition's taken place in the past hour or so, I think. [*He takes the tray that Quatermass hands through to him.*]

BREEN: Roney, that makes no sense—

RONEY: Don't bother me now, please! [*He crouches by the second of the creatures.*]

Quatermass turns to Breen and pats the bulkhead by which they are standing.

QUATERMASS: This compartment was sealed. If the things inside it were sterile—without bacteria of any kind—they would be safe from corruption.

BREEN: Even if they were dead!

QUATERMASS: Yes. They could stay in there unchanged for a year—or a million years. Until our atmosphere got in. Filthy London air. Then they would rot. As they have done.

RONEY [*calls*]: Quatermass—

Quatermass turns quickly as Roney passes out the second body. . . .

Dissolve . . . to the ramp, a few minutes later. One of Roney's colleagues, Dr. Klein—a tall, solemn-faced man—is hurrying down followed by three assistants from the Institute. They are carrying massive specimen boxes, almost like small coffins, as well as boxes of chemicals and other necessities.

Potter comes to meet them.

POTTER: Dr. Klein?

KLEIN: Yes—

POTTER: Would you come this way, please?

He goes in front of them along the upper level towards the hut.

Cut—to the interior of the hut, where a close shot shows one of the insect-creatures glistening in the transparent skin of plastic that has been sprayed on to it.

It is lying in one of the trays, supported by wads of gauze. Trickles of dark fluid are draining from it down to the troughed rim.

Track back to show its two companions similarly laid out. Barbara, in a muslin mask, is working on one of them with a spray-gun.

Fullalove is taking photographs. Roney is telephoning.

RONEY [*into phone*]: All right, but they ought to be here *now*! These things are disintegrating—don't you realize that—? [*As the door opens, and Potter shows the new arrivals in.*] Oh, here they are now. [*He bangs the phone down and hurries across to them.*] Klein, am I glad to see you! Let's get started—

Klein and the assistants stare as they near the three prone figures.

KLEIN: What are they? How did you—?

RONEY: No questions yet. [*To the Assistants.*] Just get those boxes ready. Plenty of packing in each. [*To Barbara.*] How's that one?

BARBARA: Not so good.

RONEY: If we can just save the shell of it! Try to keep the body fluids separate and correctly marked up. Now, Klein—

As he talks quietly and intensely to his colleague, Fullalove turns away towards the door.

Cut—to the interior of the hull.

His jacket off, Quatermass is crouching halfway into the forward chamber. He is carefully examining the remains of the membranous strands. There are small frond-like forms here and there. As he touches one, it comes away in his hand.

There is a scrabbling behind him. He turns to see Fullalove hauling himself through the outer hatch-opening.

FULLALOVE: Professor? Sorry to disturb you. [*Crawling forward.*] What's in there now?

QUATERMASS: Only what you can see. It seems to be going to powder.

Fullalove leans forward to take a photograph through the opening.

FULLALOVE: You think it grew there?

QUATERMASS: I think it's a mineral substance.

FULLALOVE: Sprouted like stalactites, then?

QUATERMASS: No. I think it was put there. [*He frowns at the tiny frond in his fingers.*] These remind me of something, you know . . . something I've seen . . . photographs . . . Of course! Nerve-endings!

FULLALOVE: Eh?

QUATERMASS: If you see them enormously magnified, the fibres terminate . . . in something the same way.

FULLALOVE: Those creatures. Could they have, well, belonged to this earth?

Quatermass shakes his head slowly and with certainty.

Cut to the exterior of the hull as Breen and Potter approach. Breen's manner is nervous, jerky as he gesticulates with his cane.

BREEN: Take external measurements, compare them with the internal—over the whole structure. I want every single cubic inch accounted for—[*He looks up to see Fullalove climbing out of the hatch-opening.*] Who’s this? [*As Quatermass follows him out.*] Quatermass, who is this man?

QUATERMASS: James Fullalove, *Evening Gazette*.

BREEN: How did he get into this place? Did you arrange—?

QUATERMASS [*equably*]: Not exactly, but—

BREEN: He’s got no business here!

FULLALOVE: On the contrary, I think I have. And please stop talking past me—

BREEN: This site is under military jurisdiction.

QUATERMASS: Surely not? There’s no bomb. It’s not a question of protecting the public any longer, but of informing them.

FULLALOVE: Thanks. Colonel Breen, I’d be glad of your expert opinion, too, on this—

BREEN [*curtly*]: Get out. Potter, get him out of here!

Potter gives him a doubtful look, then signals across the excavation to the sergeant, who comes forward.

QUATERMASS: Breen, there’s no need for this—

BREEN: I’m in charge here. I want this man off the premises immediately. [*Calls.*] Sergeant, take him and escort him to the barrier—take him!

The Sergeant grabs the unmoving Fullalove by the arm. A moment later, Gibson arrives to help. Between them they get him up the ladderway and march him off towards the ramp. Fullalove, white with anger, protests no further.

QUATERMASS [*quietly*]: That was a mistake, Breen. A bad one.

BREEN [*heatedly*]: Don’t tell me what to do! I won’t stand by while you feed wild theories to the gutter press. There’s been enough nonsense talked about this thing and—and—[*He turns on Quatermass.*] Dead millions of years! I know the smell of death and how short a time it lasts!

QUATERMASS: Have *you* got an explanation?

BREEN: Yes, I have!

QUATERMASS: Why not share it?

BREEN: When I choose.

They turn as, on the upper level, the door of the hut opens. A gruesome little procession starts out on its way round to the ramp . . . Klein and the assistants, Roney, and Barbara . . . carrying the three boxes between them. They are holding them horizontally, which increases their resemblance to coffins.

QUATERMASS [*quietly*]: You can’t keep those a secret for long!

Dissolve . . . to the Evening Gazette news desk a short time later.

Close shot of a furiously angry Fullalove. He is waving a sheaf of his photographs at the News Editor, who has a telephone to his ear. Behind, a shirt-sleeved Compositor has proofs of the front page.

FULLALOVE: Dan, be tough about it! Middle pages too! You’ve got to get these pictures in—all of’em!

NEWS EDITOR [*covering the receiver with his hand*]: Take it easy, James. [*Into the phone.*] Yes, sir—which headline? [*He beckons the Compositor.*] Harold—

The Compositor holds up the proof page for his inspection. Above large photographs of the hull, with an inset close-up of one of the insect-figures, there are bold headlines: ‘SPACE MACHINE FOUND! Giant Insects Inside It!’

FULLALOVE [*exasperated*]: Look—let me go up and talk to him again—

NEWS EDITOR [*a gesture for quiet as he speaks into the phone again*]: Right, sir . . . right. [*He puts the phone down.*] It’s just that small head there—‘War Office Hushes It Up.’

FULLALOVE [*flaring*]: What’s the matter with it? I’ve still got the marks of being bounced through their barrier! Is he scared?

NEWS EDITOR [*grinning*]: Scared? He thinks it’s not strong enough.

FULLALOVE [*mollified*]: Oh. What about ‘Terror Stalks Whitehall!’

NEWS EDITOR [*a sudden queasy doubt*]: These creatures *are* dead, aren’t they?

FULLALOVE: *He* was scared, I know that!

NEWS EDITOR: Who?

FULLALOVE: This Colonel Breen. [*A pause.*] ‘Blimp Blunders!’

NEWS EDITOR [*scribbling on a piece of paper*]: Too personal.

FULLALOVE: I *feel* personal!

NEWS EDITOR [*reading what he has written*]: ‘Fullalove Beats Army Ban!’ How’s that? [*As Fullalove nods, he turns and pushes it at the Compositor.*] Set it, Harold. [*The Compositor hurries off with it. He picks up the proof page again.*] Nice late edition . . . !

Dissolve . . . to a close shot of a poster in an Evening Gazette frame. At the top are the printed words ‘KNIGHTSBRIDGE APEMEN’ as the prevailing item ready for the daily addition. In the space below is chalked: ‘NOW MONSTER INSECTS!’

Pan up to the newsvendor, selling papers at a brisk rate. His pitch is across the road from the Nicklin Institute, and he is making the most of the fact.

NEWSVENDOR: Gazette! Monster insects found! Gazette! [*To a customer, pointing.*] They got ’em in there now, guv’. You can’t get in—but you can read all about it! Gazette—

Cut to where a curious crowd is gathering round and on the steps of the Institute. A doorkeeper is waving away those at the top of the steps.

The door closes firmly.

Cut—to a laboratory in the Institute.

It is a bleak room with the usual rows of work-benches, though at some time an attempt has been made to enliven it with brighter paint—including a wide frieze decorated with copies of primitive cave-paintings.

Roney is sitting scribbling notes. Quatermass has his eyes fixed on one of the creatures from the hull. It has been mounted almost upright on its three legs, supported by plastic structures. It has a curious hunched attitude, its stick-like forelimbs drawn up under the triangular mask, its antlered antennae thrust forward.

QUATERMASS: This was the bad one?

RONEY [*not looking up*]: Yes. That's why we set it up like that—there seemed less chance of damaging the legs. It's dry and brittle. All soft parts and fluids extracted—

He nods at several small specimen jars, some with shapeless contents suspended in clear liquid, others holding the dark fluid seen earlier.

Barbara comes up.

BARBARA: Are those ready for analysis now?

RONEY [*nods*]: Take them to Dr. Klein, will you? [*As she loads them on to a tray, he turns to Quatermass.*] The Insect Department are already working on our two good specimens.

QUATERMASS: Insect? That how you classify it, then?

RONEY: Right, Barbara—[*He opens the door for her, then returns to Quatermass.*] Call it an arthropod. That includes all insects, spiders, crabs. Except that none of *them* have this tripod leg-formation, of course. Those are interesting, too—[*he points*]—antennae shaped like horns.

QUATERMASS: The horned demons. In those old prints and manuscripts. As if that image were somehow projected into men's minds. That face . . .

RONEY: Rather pretty.

QUATERMASS: It's like a gargoyle. Roney, that's not just a simile—haven't you seen it before, carved on walls in a dozen countries? Is it somewhere in the subconscious? A race memory?

Roney looks at him. Then he nods towards the wall.

RONEY: How d'you like our decor?

QUATERMASS [*irritated*]: Damn your decor!

RONEY [*deadpan*]: I agree. It is a bit chi-chi for a lab. Confuses the eye when you're trying to read a measure. [*He walks forward. Listening now, Quatermass moves after him.*] They're copies of palaeolithic cave paintings. About 30,000 years old. [*He points.*] Look at that one.

Cut to a close shot of the painting. It shows a horned figure with what seems to be a partly human body. But the resemblance to the insect-figures from the hull is striking—particularly in its stance.

RONEY: A cave man in a ritual mask. I wonder where the idea came from? [*He turns back towards the figure on the bench, and goes on deftly.*] You know, I think these are old friends we haven't seen for a time.

A pause.

QUATERMASS [*with rising but restrained excitement*]: Weight and structure point to a low gravity environment . . . a thin atmosphere.

RONEY: Correct, sir. Perhaps a world that's dead now—but a few million years ago, could have been teeming with life?

QUATERMASS: I wonder . . . ! [*As they go close to the creature, Quatermass gives a small laugh.*] When I was a boy it was the great burning topic. Were there really canals there, and who made them? I remember my awful disappointment when somebody proved that . . . Martians couldn't exist.

RONEY: An odd word. Practically worn out before anything turned up to claim it. Martian.

Track in on the Martian . . .

Dissolve . . . to Hobbs Lane, a short time later.

There is a growing crowd of excited people at the barrier, still with its 'UNEXPLODED BOMB' sign. Some of them are reporters and photographers, and they are getting annoyed.

The Policeman on duty holds up his hand.

POLICEMAN: Sorry—I've got my orders—

FIRST REPORTER: Don't keep saying that!

SECOND REPORTER: Bet my editor's worse than your inspector! [*He winks at the photographer with him.*]

THIRD REPORTER [*a tiny, persistent man*]: Have they found any more of those insects?

POLICEMAN: I don't know what you mean—

SECOND REPORTER [*with another wink at the photographer*]: He must be the only man round here that doesn't!

FIRST REPORTER [*pointing across the barrier*]: Here's one of them now! [*Calling.*] Hi, sergeant—

The Sergeant comes up to the barrier on the other side.

SERGEANT [*to the Policeman*]: What's going on here? What's all the row about?

POLICEMAN [*helplessly*]: Reporters.

FIRST REPORTER: Sergeant—is there still any danger?

SECOND REPORTER: Why can't we go down there?

THIRD REPORTER: Have you seen these insects?

SECOND REPORTER: Tell us what’s happening, chum!

SERGEANT: It’s secret.

FIRST REPORTER: Secret! Except to the *Gazette*, is that it?

SECOND REPORTER [waving a copy]: Look at it—they’ve got the whole story!

FIRST REPORTER: They bought the exclusive rights or something?

The Sergeant takes the paper.

SECOND REPORTER: Now come on—let us through—

SERGEANT [turning back]: I’ll see about this.

FIRST REPORTER [yells after him]: You get your officer up here—right away!

THIRD REPORTER [also yelling]: I said, did you see these insects—?

Cut—to the floor of the excavation. Potter is just emerging from the hull. In his gloved hands he holds a torch, as well as callipers and other measuring gear evidently borrowed from Roney’s apparatus in the hut.

Breen is waiting for him.

POTTER: All accounted for. There can’t be any more sealed compartments.

BREEN: Good. Then we can—

Potter is brushing shreds of shining membrane from his uniform. He is liberally powdered with it.

POTTER: This stuff’s all going to dust in there. If you don’t mind sir, I’ll just—[*He pulls his jerkin off and shakes it hard.*] The Professor seems to think it might have been some sort of—apparatus.

BREEN: Does that make sense to you?

POTTER [quelled]: I suppose not, sir. Besides, it didn’t connect with anything. If there *had* been external propulsion units, I still don’t see how—[*a slight, nervous smile.*] Unless the hull itself did the thinking.

BREEN: Are you out of your mind!

POTTER [put out to find that he has been taken so seriously]: Sir—

BREEN [with cold fury]: I’ve heard enough stark idiocy here today! Leave that to civilians!

He starts towards the ladderway. Sladden, who has been standing with the group of Sappers, comes forward to intercept him.

SLADDEN: Sir, have you finished with my gear?

BREEN: Later!

Sladden turns indignantly to Potter.

SLADDEN: Some of my gear still inside there—can I take it now?

POTTER: It’ll be all right.

SLADDEN: I can’t go without it, you know—it belongs to my boss. I’m the one that’s got to—

But Potter has hurried after Breen, who is clutching the newspaper the Sergeant has just brought down to him.

BREEN: Look at this! Presumably the work of Quatermass’s friend!

The telephone in the hut starts ringing. The Sergeant hurries off to answer it.

BREEN [reading]: ‘Army Impose Panic Censorship!’ Just because their paid hack was chased out of where he had no business to be! *Panic censorship* . . . [He looks at Potter strangely, the rage altering in him.] What are they implying by that? What are they trying to—[*He breaks off and looks past Potter towards the hull.*]

POTTER [hesitantly]: Are you all right, sir?

BREEN [after a moment]: Of course! [He crushes the newspaper into a ball.] I’ll show them what can happen when they start flinging implications—

He starts abruptly towards the hut. At that moment, the Sergeant appears in the doorway.

SERGEANT: Phone, sir—for you.

BREEN: Who is it?

SERGEANT: Someone at the War Office, sir.

BREEN [a thin smile as he glances at Potter]: I’m anticipated, then. [He goes quickly to the hut . . .]

Dissolve . . . to the laboratory at the Nicklin Institute. Close shot of the restored figure of the apeman. Track back to take in Roney as he runs his hand over its cranium. Quatermass is beside him.

RONEY: You see—it’s just the skull formation that’s out of line. For the rest, these creatures accord with known evolution.

QUATERMASS: An ape with an over-developed cranium—

RONEY: Oh, huge, for its place in the family tree. Nearly a thousand cubic centimetres capacity.

QUATERMASS: Intelligent?

RONEY: Hard to say. Mere size doesn’t necessarily mean that. But *something* had developed—some faculties—

QUATERMASS: Or had been developed.

RONEY: Eh?

QUATERMASS: How many of these ape-creatures were there in the pit?

RONEY: Seven . . . six at least.

QUATERMASS: Six or seven, from the rear compartment of the machine.

RONY: We don't know it for a fact—

QUATERMASS: Let's suppose it. And in the fore-compartment—[*he turns to where the Martian stands on the bench*]*—there were these.*

RONY: What's in your mind?

QUATERMASS [*thoughtfully*]: The will to survive . . . it's an odd phenomenon. Roney, if we found out—knew for certain—that our Earth was doomed, say by climatic changes, a thousand years from now, or a hundred, what would we do about it?

RONY: Nothing. Go on fighting each other as usual.

QUATERMASS [*a wry smile*]: Yes. You're right, of course. [*A pause.*] But if we weren't men—

The door opens. Barbara looks in.

BARBARA: Oh, good—I hoped you'd still be here. [*She comes forward*] Is it possible to give out a statement of some kind? That crowd outside—it's getting huge. And a bit ugly.

Roney goes to the window and throws it open. There is an excited murmuring from the street below.

BARBARA: Apparently they're convinced there's something sinister going on. [*The phone rings and she picks it up.*] Laboratory . . . yes, he's here. [*She turns to Quatermass.*] Professor, it's for you.

QUATERMASS: Oh? [*He takes it.*] Quatermass . . .

Barbara joins Roney at the window.

BARBARA [*peering down*]: Look at them! It'll be a job getting through if this goes on—

RONY: You'll get home, don't worry.

BARBARA: Home? I've got to go back to Hobbs Lane first.

RONY: Why on earth—?

BARBARA: To get some notes. My own stupid fault—I forgot them.

She starts back towards the door. Pan with her and hold Quatermass.

QUATERMASS [*intophone*]: Yes, yes—I'll come at once. [*He puts it down and turns to the others.*] Well, back to the War Office. We're in trouble!

Dissolve . . . to the conference room at the War Office.

Close shot of Colonel Breen, framed against one of the blown-up photographs of Mars on the wall. He is obviously discomforted. Track back to take in the Minister as he paces up and down angrily. Evening papers are scattered on the table—the others have attempted to copy the Gazette's story by this time. The Private Secretary is picking unhappily through them.

MINISTER: I don't know which shook me the most—that wild news story, or the fact that you two were at the bottom of it!

He winces as the phone rings. The Secretary grabs it.

SECRETARY [*guardedly, into phone*]: Hello? . . . Oh hello, Ranscombe. I'm afraid he's still not—Just a moment. [*He covers the mouthpiece quickly and turns to the Minister.*] P.M.'s private secretary? [*The Minister shakes his head.*] Sorry, the Minister's still not available. Try again in about twenty minutes.

He puts the receiver down before any objection can be made at the other end. The Minister turns to where Quatermass is sitting dejectedly in a chair.

MINISTER: You see? And the Home Office badgering about cordons and emergency police action! Now before they call a special cabinet meeting on me, I'd like to have just a few answers ready! [*As the phone rings again.*] Oh, kill it!

The Secretary mutters into the phone and puts it down. The Minister resumes his pacing.

MINISTER: I didn't even know you were still in London. As far as I was aware, you were both going back to the Rocket Group for Breen to take over—[*hastily*]*—to take up his new duties. Why didn't you?*

QUATERMASS: It was my fault. I involved Breen in this—

MINISTER: Oh, don't talk as if you'd been scrumping apples! This is serious.

QUATERMASS: You don't know *how* serious!

The Minister stops in his tracks.

MINISTER: You'd better tell me.

QUATERMASS [*getting to his feet*]: I take it you've an idea of the facts?

MINISTER: Those press reports. And more from Breen before you came. But I'm still at a loss to make any sense out of it.

QUATERMASS: When I was last in this room, it was to discuss planting military bases on the Moon—

MINISTER: Let's keep to the subject!

QUATERMASS: —And on the planet Mars. [*He moves past Breen towards the blow-up on the wall.*]

BREEN: What are you suggesting now?

QUATERMASS [*to the Minister*]: You're demanding explanations, sir, that I can't give or prove. I'll give you guesses.

MINISTER: Better than nothing. [*As he sits down, the phone rings again and he turns on the Secretary.*] Hell! Say we're taking no calls! [*To Quatermass.*] Go on.

The Secretary mutters inaudibly into the receiver.

QUATERMASS: Dr. Roney and I are satisfied those arthropods are . . . not of this Earth.

MINISTER: Where, then?

QUATERMASS [*a slight shrug*]: One possibility is Mars.

MINISTER: Mars . . . is dead. Nothing there but a few scraps of lichen.

QUATERMASS: Five million years ago it may have been very different.

MINISTER: Oh—

QUATERMASS: Suppose, at that time, there were living beings on it with advanced techniques.

MINISTER: No harm in supposing.

He glances at Breen, who sits watching Quatermass with narrowed eyes.

QUATERMASS: Techniques that enabled them to visit the Earth. At a time when the most advanced creatures here—our own ancestors—were still only a type of Pliocene ape. And suppose they possessed other techniques—biological ones.

BREEN: Biological? You’re trying to make out that there’s a connexion with those—those—

QUATERMASS: The Pliocene man-apes found at Knightsbridge are abnormal.

BREEN: And your insects are responsible?

QUATERMASS: *Your* insects. I think you saw them first. [*Breen throws himself back in his chair.*] Perhaps they weren’t able to endure our atmosphere—the strong oxygen, the bacteria. So when they came they stayed sealed in that compartment. While in the other section—the ape mutations, the result of their experiments, brought back to be released on Earth.

For a moment there is silence. As they stare at Quatermass, the Secretary swallows several times, his adam’s apple working up and down in his throat. The Minister drops his eyes to the table in front of him. Breen leans slowly forward.

BREEN: You believe that happened?

QUATERMASS: I said it’s a guess.

BREEN: That apes were taken from this planet to another and—and—

QUATERMASS: Altered. By selective breeding—surgical methods—perhaps both. I suppose the aim would be to increase the intelligence—[*struck by a sudden doubt*]*—I suppose—*

The Secretary cannot refrain from butting in, overcome by curiosity.

SECRETARY: In effect, a colonization?

QUATERMASS [*nods*]: It would be a way of taking possession of the Earth, perhaps because their own world was finishing. Only a colony by proxy—but better than leaving nothing at all behind.

SECRETARY: Surely—it would have had to be carried out on a huge scale?

QUATERMASS: Yes. Oh, yes. If I’m right . . . *if* I’m right . . . we’ve just come on a single instance. Probably an accident . . . a landing that went wrong and they all died. The Thames valley was swamp then.

A pause.

MINISTER [*his voice strained*]: You realize what you’re implying? That we owe our human condition to the intervention of—of—[*He waves a hand in the direction of the newspapers on the table*]*—insects!*

QUATERMASS [*softly*]: I suppose I am.

The Secretary reaches for the water-carafe.

MINISTER: Breen, do you accept any of this?

BREEN: No! [*He rises.*] No, I don’t—not a single word. Quatermass, you asked me a short time ago whether I had a theory of my own. Well, here it is! [*He turns to the Minister.*] And it does not involve Martians or obscene experiments!

MINISTER: Go on, please!

BREEN: Only Germans. And it goes back, not millions of years, but to 1944.

QUATERMASS: Breen, you can’t still be hanging on to that—

BREEN: I suggest that when they knew they were losing the last war, the Germans attempted a propaganda scare. They sent over an experimental V-weapon that would produce—[*He stabs his finger down at the newspapers*]*—precisely the effect it has produced! [To Quatermass.] Thanks to your help! Though rather late for their purpose.*

MINISTER: What about those—creatures?

BREEN: Fakes! Put there as a circumstantial touch. Like mermaids at a fair, made up of odds and ends of flesh and bone. The oldest trick in the business!

The Minister’s face begins to relax.

MINISTER: Ingenious.

QUATERMASS: Except that it didn’t happen!

BREEN: I say it did.

MINISTER: Yes—yes, it has that Wagnerian, black imagination. Painstaking people, the Hun. [*He rises.*]

QUATERMASS: Wait, sir—you’ve got to hear expert testimony—

MINISTER [*dismissing this*]: Oh, experts!

BREEN: I’m sure I’m right, sir.

MINISTER: I’m sure you are. I like the commonsense of it—it *feels* right. [*To the Secretary.*] We’ll let the Home Secretary off his beat, shall we?

SECRETARY: Get him now?

MINISTER: Yes. [*While the Secretary grabs the phone, he turns again to Breen.*] This mysterious missile—is it safe?

BREEN: I’ve had it thoroughly checked.

MINISTER: No possible danger to the public?

BREEN [*shakes his head*]: None. I'm certain.

MINISTER: Good. We'll get things back to normal, then. Have that barrier down, people back in their homes, let the Press see whatever they want. We'll prepare a short statement now, and—

SECRETARY [*turns to him, phone in hand*]: Here he is, sir.

Quatermass can contain himself no longer.

QUATERMASS: Think what you're doing! At least wait till you've had time to—

MINISTER [*coolly*]: How dare you! [*He turns to the Secretary, who has had the presence of mind to clap his hand over the mouthpiece, and takes the receiver from him*] Hello, John? Sorry you've been led such a dance this evening. All over, now. It's a gigantic false alarm [*He smiles*]

Quatermass turns from him to Breen. Breen's face is expressionless.

Dissolve . . . to Hobbs Lane.

The 'UNEXPLODED BOMB' sign is being lifted aside by two Policemen. An Inspector is waving his hands at the small, chattering crowd who are still hanging round the barrier. At least one Reporter is still there. A few people are still arriving, including a couple in heavy motor-cycle kit with the inevitable white crash helmets.

INSPECTOR: That's official. There's no further danger.

REPORTER: What about that thing down there?

INSPECTOR: There'll be a full statement in the morning.

REPORTER: You mean it was a hoax?

INSPECTOR: I don't know, sir. [*To the Policemen.*] Open the barrier—

MAN IN CRASH HELMET [*disappointed*]: A hoax!

GIRL IN CRASH HELMET: We come here specially!

REPORTER: Inspector—the bomb disposal people. They're still down there. Those are their trucks.

INSPECTOR: They're just packing up.

REPORTER: Can I go down—take a look at things?

INSPECTOR: Tomorrow, sir. Sorry I can't help you, but don't forget—it *is* private property. We can't have everybody wandering—

The Reporter turns away with a shrug of annoyance.

REPORTER [*to a Photographer with him*]: Let's have a wet.

They go. The crowd is starting to break up.

GIRL IN CRASH HELMET [*fed up*]: O-O-oh!

MAN IN CRASH HELMET [*glances at his watch*]: Too late for the flicks now, too . . .

Cut—to the floor of the excavation.

The generator is running quietly, supplying power to the battery of lamps still blazing inside the hull. There the Sergeant is busy alone, throwing out sacks and sandbags. The Sappers are stacking their gear at the foot of the ramp, ready for removal. Sladden is with them.

It is almost dark.

SLADDEN: Cripes! Stuck here till the last!

GIBSON: You're only a civvy, mate.

SLADDEN [*nods towards the hull*]: Leave the lamps till I'm through, he says. All right, sergeant! I thought he had some real delicate job on. Well, look at it—slinging out bloody sacks!

FIRST SAPPER: Wonder he didn't make us do it.

GIBSON: No, he wouldn't.

FIRST SAPPER: What?

GIBSON: They haven't had us touch that thing since this morning.

SECOND SAPPER: He's right. Why?

GIBSON: Hands. [*He holds up one of his, looks at the palm.*] It got me a bit.

SLADDEN [*inspecting his own*]: Yes. That cream fixed it, though.

GIBSON: Didn't fix him. Or young Potter—I saw when he took his gloves off. Phew! [*He looks at the hull again.*] He's not such a bad sergeant—

The Sergeant has emerged from the hull.

SERGEANT [*calls*]: Gibson! James!

GIBSON: —Till he starts bawling. Then he's just like the rest. [*Calls back.*] Coming, sarge.

He and the First Sapper scramble down towards the hull. At the Sergeant's direction, they start gathering up the sacks he has thrown outside.

SECOND SAPPER [*to Sladden*]: I'm glad this job's over.

Sladden gives him an uneasy glance.

Cut to where Gibson and the First Sapper are ramming empty sacks into a single one. The Sapper nods at the hull beside them.

FIRST SAPPER: You reckon this was really a Jerry job?

GIBSON: That's what the man said.

FIRST SAPPER: Funny, though. All them stories about this place. That was before they ever had Jerries.

GIBSON: Here—shove `em down!

FIRST SAPPER [*packing the sacks down hard*]: You reckon little Westie really seen anything?

The Sergeant comes up behind him and throws down a last armful of sacks.

SERGEANT: Little Westie what? His nerve was gone, son—he spent too long on clearing mines off beaches.

The First Sapper concentrates on the sacks. Above, Potter comes out of the hut and calls down.

POTTER: Sergeant—soon as you're ready, we pull out. [*He goes on round towards the ramp.*]

SERGEANT: Yes, sir. [*To Gibson and the First Sapper.*] Come on—jump!

Sladden comes up.

SLADDEN: Take my gear now, sergeant?

SERGEANT: Yes. Knock the generator off and—

SLADDEN: Leave it to me.

SERGEANT: Okay. Got gloves?

SLADDEN: No.

SERGEANT: Take these.

He peels off his wool mitts. Underneath, his hands are bandaged.

SLADDEN: Ta.

Gibson and the other Sapper lift the loaded sack and move off towards the ladderway. The Sergeant follows. The Second Sapper is already at the foot of the ramp, clapping his hands against his sides as he waits.

SERGEANT: What's the matter with you? Grab them boxes and shift—at the double. That'll warm you!

Pulling on the mitts, Sladden watches the bomb-disposal squad picking up their bundles and boxes of gear and starting up the ramp. Gibson turns to him and shouts.

GIBSON: So long, boy!

There is a straggle of shouts from the others. Sladden waves back.

SLADDEN: So long.

He goes to the generator and switches off the engine. As it cuts, the lights in the hull die. He walks briskly towards it.

Cut—to the street above.

As Potter comes along from the excavation, he finds the single Policeman on duty is arguing with Barbara Judd.

POLICEMAN: Sorry, miss—if I was to let you go down there, they'd all want—

BARBARA: But I must! I've told you who I am—

POTTER: What's the trouble?

BARBARA [*turning*]: Oh, thank goodness! I've got to get some notes. They're valuable.

POTTER: Where?

BARBARA: From the hut.

POTTER: Oh, damn—we're just leaving. It'll be all shut down. [*He turns to where the Sergeant and the squad are coming into view, struggling with their loads, and calls.*] Sergeant, anyone still below?

SERGEANT [*calls back*]: Yes, sir, Sladden.

BARBARA: There you are—I'll be quick. [*She starts off towards the entrance to the excavation.*]

POLICEMAN: Hi, miss—

POTTER: It's all right. [*Frowning.*] I think.

The squad get busy loading their gear into the truck . . .

Cut—to the interior of the hull.

In the glow of a small flashlight locked on to the bib of his overalls, Sladden is working with a spanner to dismantle the clamps on the edge of the outer hatch-opening. He stops and listens, conscious of the empty fore-compartment behind him. There is no sound anywhere. He goes on with his work, whistling softly.

There is a deep thud.

Sladden breaks off again with sudden alarm in his face. He glances out through the main hatch-opening, but evidently sees nothing. Puzzled, he turns back.

There are two more thudding sounds, as if coming from the earth itself. Sladden looks quickly and fearfully round. There is a faint rapping, which rapidly grows in volume—then a second burst which overtakes the first, rising shrilly. Simultaneously comes a succession of deep thuds.

Sladden turns in terror to get out of the hull. His feet go from under him and he falls headlong.

The torchlight bounces back into his face from the glossy surface. Now the noises seem to run through the whole structure of the hull, surrounding him. He stares in utter horror as the spanner that fell from his hand slides, zigzagging, along the floor of the hull—of its own volition. He tries to scramble to his feet, slithering and clutching.

Above his head, the cables attached to the lamps are moving, coiling like snakes.

The dreadful thudding comes again.

Seemingly having lost all sense of direction, Sladden plunges blindly about, his breath coming painfully. The flashlight on his chest dies away. As another burst of sounds crashes out, rising to a screech in the air, he throws one arm across his eyes as if to shut out some terrible sight. The cables are lashing. The air is filled with a gobbling roar.

Cut—to the ramp, as Barbara makes her way down it in the near-darkness. The only faint, flat illumination comes from the street above. She freezes, as across the excavation bursts a medley of appalling sounds, mixed with howls in a human voice. She starts back against the earth wall.

Below, a figure bursts from the hull, stands for a moment, then comes crouching, almost hopping.

Barbara shrinks back in fright.

The figure is coming up the ladderway. And the thunderous sounds advance with it. Planks rise in the air, floating. A length of steel cable twists. Earth is rooted up. Pebbles and gravel fly through the air like hail, dashing against the corrugated iron sheeting at the top of the ramp. Struck by a fragment, Barbara cries out.

The figure that rushes up the ramp is hardly recognizable as the drill operator. The eyes are staring, mouth locked back. The arms are held high, unnaturally crooked. As it rushes past, the diabolical noise goes with it.

Cut—to the street. Potter is running towards the entrance to the excavation. Behind him, the squad are scrambling from the truck to join him. Potter suddenly slithers to a halt, throwing up his hand.

The bunched figure hurtles from the excavation entrance in a torrent of monstrous, shattering sound. The soldiers make a disorganized grab at it, but it is already past them and blundering down the street. It crashes through the straggle of remaining sightseers, who scatter in alarm. And away into the darkness.

Potter stares for a moment in amazement, then turns and makes for the entrance to the excavation.

A few people, including one or two of the Sappers, run to the corner. They stand irresolutely and do not try to follow the running figure. It can no longer be seen, but its ringing footsteps seem to have changed in gait. They are lighter, faster. And the weird battering in the air is dying away . . .

Cut—to the ramp, where Barbara lies slumped.

Potter comes running down and stoops beside her. He lifts her. There is blood on her face. She stirs, her eyes open—with terror in them. They go distractedly from Potter to the dark space below. But it is quiet now . . .

Cut—to a street not far away. Running footsteps grow louder in the darkness. Then Sladden pitches into the pool of light from a street-lamp. Sweat streams down his face as he clings to the lamp standard. He shudders, looking back as if in dread of something behind him. He is panting. His eyes close. A moment later there comes a faint tapping—somewhere, nowhere. His eyes wide and desperate again, he staggers forward—towards the lights and human figures he can see at the end of the street. A coffee stall, with a couple of customers.

The customers—a man and a woman—look round in mild surprise at the haggard, mud-stained figure that totters past them to the stall.

Sladden looks up at the stall owner and raises a hand to him in a wordless appeal for help. The man frowns, casts an uneasy glance at the customers. Mistaking the nature of the appeal, he picks up a cup. In the same instant there is a devastating screech in the air. A pile of saucers rises on its own and shatters on the pavement. Bottles fly and smash. The customers stagger back, the woman crying in fright. Cups jump in dozens from under the stall owner's hands, to scatter in smithereens across the street.

Sladden goes running again. And the deep thudding follows him. The man customer helps his companion up from where she fell. The stall owner scrambles out of the now darkened stall and runs a few angry steps among his pulverized crockery that shines whitely all over the street.

Dissolve . . . to a great iron gate, which creaks slowly open in the near-darkness. The exhausted, breathless shape of Sladden is clinging to it. He reels forward, feet crunching on a gravel path. Beside it are the low humped shapes of gravestones. This place is a church yard. A choir can be faintly heard inside the building.

There is a faint crackle of unnatural sound. Impelled again, Sladden makes for the source of the singing. He stumbles past a buttress—glowing stained-glass windows—heading towards a lighted doorway. Then, strength finally gone, he pitches to the ground.

After a moment, footsteps crunch. He twists to see the maker of them.

An old, gentle-faced clergyman is looking down at him. The mild eyes sharpen.

Pan from Sladden's terrified face to the gravel beside him.

It is moving, rippling as if rats are running under it . . .

Crash in end music. Fade to black.

PART FIVE

The Wild Hunt

Fade in . . . the excavation at Hobbs Lane.

At the foot of the ramp, Barbara Judd looks fearfully about as she talks to Potter.

BARBARA: The whole place seemed to be—shaking. Things were flying about. Earth and stones and—even things like those planks.

One heavy piece of timber is thrust into the ground on its end, as if it had fallen from a height. Others are lying scattered on and below the ramp.

Above, the Sergeant appears, followed by the rest of the squad.

POTTER: And something hit you.

The blood on her forehead is drying now.

BARBARA [*looking towards the hull*]: It was in there. I heard it as soon as I started down. Sounds . . . and yells. And then . . . he came running!

POTTER [*turns and calls*]: Sergeant—you saw it was Sladden?

SERGEANT [*joining them*]: Yes, sir. I suppose it was him, but—

BARBARA [*quickly*]: But what?

SERGEANT: I don't know. The way he moved—

POTTER: Look after Miss Judd for a minute.

He goes quickly down the ladderway towards the lower level. Barbara takes an anxious step after him, but the Sergeant catches her arm.

Cut to the hull as Potter reaches it. He peers in through the hatch-opening—and sees the torn lighting-cables drooping limply from the clamps. He climbs inside, and picks up a broken lamp bracket with the bases of shattered lamps still screwed into it.

Cut to the Sappers moving down the ramp.

SECOND SAPPER: I knew something was going to happen.

GIBSON: Did you hell!

SECOND SAPPER: Just before we packed up, it got deadly cold.

FIRST SAPPER: It still is! [*He shivers.*]

GIBSON: It's the time of the year—

FIRST SAPPER: Why doesn't he hurry up!

GIBSON: All right, he heard you.

Pan from the squad, past the Sergeant and Barbara, to where Captain Potter is pulling himself up the ladderway again. He comes to join them, with the broken bracket and a length of cable in his hand.

POTTER: All lamps smashed. Cables torn to bits. [*He passes the piece of cable to the Sergeant, who whistles as he looks at the torn end.*] You know the breaking strength of that stuff?

SERGEANT [*impressed*]: Yes, sir, I do.

POTTER [*to the girl*]: Where's Quatermass?

BARBARA: He was called away to some kind of conference.

POTTER: Could you find him?

BARBARA: I'll try. First, I'll just get what I came for. Those notes. [*She goes towards the hut.*]

POTTER [*to the Sergeant*]: Stick with her. Take her wherever she wants to go. Use the Landrover.

SERGEANT: What about you, sir?

POTTER: I'm going to look for Sladden.

He runs off up the ramp. The Sergeant watches him go, then turns to the hut.

Dissolve . . . to Roney's office at the Institute.

Close shot of the drained and plastic-filmed body of the Martian, rigidly attached to its stand. Pan from it across the dark room to where Roney is slumped in his chair by the desk. A small lamp is glowing beside him. For a moment it seems that he might be dead; then, as footsteps echo along the passage outside, he stirs.

The door opens and Quatermass comes in. He is furiously angry.

QUATERMASS: He wouldn't listen!

RONY [*sleepily*]: Eh? Who?

QUATERMASS: The Minister, of course! Behind that smooth committee front he's scared stiff—scared of the Press, scared of being blamed for something, scared of his colleagues! He wants easy answers.

Roney is on his feet now, switching on the main lights. He nods at the Martian.

RONY: Easy answers? About those? [*As Quatermass pulls off his coat.*] Did you try to explain?

QUATERMASS: Yes. Every word rang hollow. Martians—biological experiments on apes in the Pliocene Age. 'You realize what you're implying?' he

said. ‘That we owe our human condition to the intervention of insects!’ Outraged. His dignity affronted. I got a glimmering of what Darwin must have had to put up with!

Roney is taking the flask and cups from his briefcase. He proceeds to pour out.

RONNEY: Coffee?

QUATERMAS: Thanks.

RONNEY: So he just wasn’t satisfied?

QUATERMAS: On the contrary, he was! [*At Roney’s surprised look, he goes on.*] You may not have realized it, Roney, but that hull we dug up was a German propaganda weapon, launched in 1944! And those—[*he points to the Martian*]—are fakes! If you look closely, you’ll find a little swastika on it somewhere!

RONNEY: He swallowed *that*?

QUATERMAS: It appealed to his commonsense. So . . . Breen is now busy preparing an official statement. Meanwhile, all precautions are cancelled. The barrier’s down.

RONNEY [*a long, low whistle*]: Well . . . I suppose there’s no actual harm in that.

Light, rapid footsteps are approaching along the passage.

Roney frowns and goes to open the door.

RONNEY: Barbara—

BARBARA: Is Professor—[*She sees him.*] Oh, thank heaven you’re here! [*She comes into the room, shaky and out of breath. The cut on her head has now been treated with plaster. She drops a folder on Roney’s desk.*]

RONNEY: You went back for that after all?

BARBARA: I thought I’d better. When I got there—

She sways. Quatermass catches her, helps her into a chair.

RONNEY [*anxiously*]: Maybe a drop of—no, not coffee. [*He pulls the brandy flask from his hip pocket.*]

QUATERMAS: Your head—

BARBARA: Something hit me. [*She sips the brandy.*] The entire excavation seemed to come alive—every solid object moving by itself!—and the most frightful noises I’ve ever heard! And then out of the hull I saw this—this—[*Her hands are shaking. She can hardly go on.*] It was the drill operator. They said it was and it must have been. But he wasn’t like a human person any more! The way he moved—running and running—

QUATERMAS: What happened to him? Where is he now?

She shakes her head, takes another gulp of the brandy.

BARBARA: Captain Potter went to look for him.

QUATERMAS: This outbreak—it quietened down?

BARBARA: Yes. After he’d gone.

Quatermass and Roney look at each other.

RONNEY: This ought to make them think twice about opening the place up to visitors!

QUATERMAS: I wonder. [*He picks up his coat and turns to Barbara.*] Who’s in charge there now?

The phone rings. Barbara grabs it.

BARBARA [*into the phone*]: Hello . . . Yes! Have you found him? Where? . . . [*She picks up a pencil and scribbles on a pad.*]

QUATERMAS: That Potter?

BARBARA [*nods to him, then into the phone again*]: A church? . . . I see . . . All right, in about ten minutes.

As she puts the phone down, Quatermass snatches up the pad, tears off the sheet.

QUATERMAS: I’ll go there right away. I take it Potter’s waiting?

BARBARA: Yes. [*She rises.*] Let’s go.

RONNEY: You?

BARBARA: I want to see . . . Sladden. See what he looks like, now. I must.

Quatermass goes to the door and opens it for her. He turns to Roney.

QUATERMAS: Will you wait here? In case anyone else tries to get in touch?

Roney stands in the doorway, watching them hurry down the passage. Pan from him to a close-up of the dead Martian . . .

Dissolve . . . to a close-up of a gargoyle carved in ancient stone. The long, triangular mask, the bulging eyes are reminiscent.

Pan from it across choir vestments hanging on pegs to where Sladden is half-lying in a heavy chair. The elderly Vicar is sitting nearby, watching him. The dimly-lit vestry has its verticals askew, and dark wood gleams with centuries of polishing. The church is an old one.

Potter is by the outer door, which is slightly ajar. He is keeping an eye on the street beyond. A stout woman helper comes in with cups and a jug of hot cocoa. She puts them down on the table near the Vicar. At the sound of a taxi drawing up outside, Potter goes quickly.

The woman helper pours out cups of cocoa. The Vicar takes one and offers it to Sladden. He seems normal now, though his face is still slightly moist with sweat and there is a confused expression, or more nearly a lack of any expression, in his eyes. For a moment he stares at the cup, then takes it.

The woman helper goes. Sladden sips the cocoa.

The door opens and Potter returns with Quatermass and Barbara. The Vicar gets up from his chair. Without speaking, the girl comes forward a

step at a time. When she can see Sladden's face, she halts.

SLADDEN [*after a moment*]: Hello, miss.

As if some vital question has been answered, Barbara relaxes. She seems unable to reply to him, manages only a nod. She grips the back of a chair. Her eyes close as some of the tension goes out of her.

Sladden watches her. He seems only to be puzzled, then manages a semblance of a smile as Quatermass comes forward.

SLADDEN: Prof.

QUATERMASS: Sladden. [*To the Vicar.*] My name's Quatermass.

VICAR [*shaking his hand*]: Mine is Gilpin. [*He draws Quatermass aside and goes on in a whisper*] I understand you're this man's employer?

QUATERMASS: Well—I was, today.

GILPEN: You know what caused this—this condition of his?

Quatermass shakes his head. He watches as Sladden drinks the cocoa, holding the cup tightly in both uncertain hands.

GILPEN: We were having a choir practice tonight. I happened to step outside for a breath of fresh air—and I saw him. [*Even more softly.*] He was on the path, crawling along. He was in evident terror. It occurred to me that he looked as if—[*He breaks off, as if he has infringed a confidence.*]

QUATERMASS: As if what?

GILPEN [*slowly*]: As if he was seeking sanctuary. I called Mr. Edwards—the choirmaster—and together we brought him in here. He was nearly exhausted, yet—agitated in a dreadful way.

QUATERMASS: Did you send for a doctor?

GILPEN: No. When I heard those sounds—[*Quatermass gives him a sharp look*]—I asked Mr. Edwards to go, to dismiss the choir. I knew I must stay alone with this man. I was sure he had been in contact with spiritual evil.

QUATERMASS: You managed to calm him down.

GILPEN: I think I helped him. Then, after a time, this officer came.

QUATERMASS: I'll have to question him.

GILPEN: Must you?

QUATERMASS: Yes. He was alone when it happened, whatever it was.

GILPEN: Perhaps tomorrow—

QUATERMASS: There may be danger in waiting. Danger to others. [*He crosses to Sladden, who is still hunched over his cup. Quatermass picks up the jug from the table.*] More cocoa, Sladden?

Sladden sits passively while Quatermass pours it for him. Then Quatermass pulls up a chair and sits facing him. The Vicar comes to Sladden's side. Behind, Barbara and Potter watch intently.

QUATERMASS: Sladden. [*Sladden turns his vacant eyes.*] Can you remember what happened? In the excavation tonight? [*There is no reaction.*] D'you remember being there at all? You stayed behind to dismantle some equipment—

Sladden's hands shake. The cup slops over and the Vicar leans across to take it from him. Sladden's hands remain cupped in front of him, as if he is unaware it has gone. Quatermass glances round at the others. He points to Barbara.

QUATERMASS: Did you see her there? This girl? [*As Sladden's eyes go to her.*] She was hurt—by something that was flying through the air. Do you remember objects doing that—moving and flying about?

For a moment there is no further reaction. Then terror floods into Sladden's eyes and he gives a wild cry, almost a scream. The suddenness and violence of it startle them.

SLADDEN: I run and run—to get away! [*The Vicar puts a hand on his arm.*] They were coming!

QUATERMASS: What were? Stones—pieces of metal?

SLADDEN: *They—they—*

QUATERMASS: Sladden—

GILPEN [*quickly*]: No more, please!

SLADDEN [*twisting about in the chair*]: I remember! It started and then—then I couldn't see anything but them! [*He leans forward and grips Quatermass's hand in both of his.*] Like you took out of the hull! With the eyes and horns and—

POTTER: He saw the creatures!

SLADDEN [*a moan*]: They were alive.

The others in the room react.

QUATERMASS: Alive?

SLADDEN [*his eyes vacant again, as if he is seeing them now in his mind*]: Hopping, like. Very fast—hundreds and hundreds and hundreds—and—[*Again he grips Quatermass's arm like a vice*]—I knew I was one!

He whimpers.

QUATERMASS: You knew how they moved?

SLADDEN: Jumping—leaping through the air—

GILPEN: Let him alone!

QUATERMASS: Where?

SLADDEN: In and out. Them big places—in and out of them. Huge, right up into the sky—

QUATERMASS: The sky? What colour is it? Blue?

SLADDEN [*whining*]: No. Dark . . . dark . . . purple . . .

He shudders, muscles tightening, and pulls away from Quatermass.

There is a rapid tapping somewhere in the room. It rises in pitch. An object hits the floor and clatters across it. The choristers' vestments swirl where they hang on the wall. Gilpin clutches Sladden by the shoulders, bends close to him, eyes closed.

The sounds die away as rapidly as they came. Quatermass, who jumped to his feet when they began, looks round. For a long moment he and the others are motionless, waiting. But there is no recurrence.

BARBARA [*whispers*]: That's what it was like down there—only far worse.

QUATERMASS: What fell?

POTTER: This. [*He picks up a heavy cylindrical ruler evidently used for the registers.*] I saw it roll off the desk by itself.

BARBARA: Oh—

QUATERMASS [*to her*]: It was cold like this, too?

She nods. They look at Sladden. His eyes are closed, his breathing rapid and shallow.

Gilpin turns angrily to Quatermass.

GILPEN: You should have left him alone! He's not free of it yet!

QUATERMASS: Perhaps it was always in him.

GILPEN: What do you mean?

QUATERMASS [*quietly*]: Perhaps this is a—faculty that's dormant in many of us. An inheritance, if you like.

GILPEN [*indignantly*]: I should have expected that from you! I understand you're a scientist—are you going to explain all this away in fashionable terms? Call it suggestion and hysteria?

Quatermass shakes his head.

QUATERMASS: On the contrary, I agree with you.

GILPEN: Agree?

QUATERMASS: What has been uncovered *is* evil. It's as anciently diabolic as anything ever recorded.

GILPEN [*puzzled*]: I'm afraid I don't—

QUATERMASS [*glances at Sladden, then softly*]: I believe that what he gave us just now was a description of life on the planet Mars, five million years ago. [*The Vicar stares from him to Sladden.*] Now—I've got to try and take this further.

GILPEN: No—

QUATERMASS: It's all right. I don't mean at this moment. [*Moving close to the man.*] Sladden, I want to make an experiment. I want you to come to the excavation at Hobbs Lane and show me exactly what you did tonight—the order in which you did it. Will you?

GILPEN: What possible purpose would it serve?

QUATERMASS [*quickly, quietly*]: I'll have apparatus there to make records of—all that may happen.

GILPEN: Even if it means putting this man in peril?

A pause. Sladden looks up. He is beginning to recover.

SLADDEN: Hey, guv—

Quatermass bends close to him.

SLADDEN: It's a queer do, isn't it? But you're right—it *is* me, I can feel it. [*A pause.*] When?

QUATERMASS: Tomorrow. I promise you I'll be careful.

Sladden looks up at the Vicar.

SLADDEN: Would you come?

GILPEN: Of course, if you want me. But I must advise you that it would be better not to have anything whatever to do with this—

SLADDEN [*to Quatermass*]: Okay, prof.

Quatermass nods. He rises, meeting Gilpin's eyes. Then he glances at Potter, who is listening intently to something. Potter crosses to a heavy door with iron hinges. He listens again.

POTTER: Where does this door lead?

GILPEN [*coming forward*]: Into the church. Why?

POTTER: There's somebody in there.

The Vicar lifts the latch and opens the door. From the gloom beyond, a figure comes blinking into the light.

QUATERMASS: Fullalove! What on earth brought you here?

FULLALOVE: What brought you?

He takes in the scene, with gratification. From his breast pocket he pulls the tiny camera . . .

Dissolve . . . to a room at the War Office, a short time later. Colonel Breen is at a desk heaped with papers and folders. While the Minister's Private Secretary talks quietly on the telephone a yard or two away, Breen is speaking into the hand-microphone of a dictation machine.

BREEN: . . . And to assist in identifying the missile, the West German Federal Government has kindly agreed to make fresh searches into—

SECRETARY: Colonel Breen—[*As Breen switches his microphone off and turns.*] The news agencies are asking again, apparently. Will there be any further statement tonight?

The Minister sweeps in with a bunch of newspapers in his hand.

MINISTER: No, there will not—till tomorrow! They can jolly well rest content with that short denial—[*As the Secretary turns away to supply this answer, he holds up the papers*]—which seems to have turned the trick, by the way. First editions supplied by courtesy. [*Reading.*] ‘Space Machine Wartime Hoax!’ [*Turning to another paper.*] ‘German Fakes—Official!’ All except the *Gazette*—where there must be a lot of red faces by this time. [*He smiles at the papers.*] Nothing they like better than trumping a scoop. Dog fancies a little snack of dog very much indeed—[*He breaks off, turning to the door.*] What the devil!

It is Potter. He comes forward, pushing past the protesting Secretary.

SECRETARY: Look, you can’t possibly come in here just now! Will you please—

POTTER [*to Breen*]: Sorry, sir. But I’ve something to tell you. . . .

Dissolve . . . to Roney’s office at the Institute.

Under the dead eye of the Martian, Fullalove has already made himself at home in Roney’s chair. Quatermass is sitting on the desk beside him, watching something that is going on on the other side of the room.

FULLALOVE: I wonder what Captain Potter’s chances are—of getting them to retract?

QUATERMASS: Zero.

FULLALOVE: You’re probably right. Once they’ve put out an official denial . . . Did you see it, by the way?

QUATERMASS: No.

FULLALOVE: As flat and bald as the Minister himself. That’s what started me on the trail again.

He sits up and looks where Quatermass is looking.

Roney and Barbara are going over the shelf full of electronic equipment. She has a clip-board in her hand, checking. He gently lifts the curious headpiece down.

RONEY: You realize this thing was never properly completed? It’s still strictly experimental. [*He blows some dust off it.*]

QUATERMASS: Can you get it working, that’s the point?

RONEY: Oh, goodness knows. [*To Barbara.*] When did we run it last?

BARBARA: Six months ago. We made some tests.

RONEY [*glumly*]: I remember. *Some* tests! Hardly showed a thing. [*He fiddles with the wiring that trails from the headpiece.*] All right, let’s go over these circuits for a start.

FULLALOVE: What is it?

QUATERMASS: He calls it an optic-encephalograph.

FULLALOVE: Good word. Rather suggests all that tangle of whatnot there. And its function?

QUATERMASS: It’s designed to locate visual impressions inside the brain. Either what the eyes see—or hallucination. Whichever dominates at the time.

FULLALOVE: Aha.

RONEY [*checking connexions*]: The original aim was to use it on primitive types—explore the trance conditions they go into so easily. [*To Quatermass.*] This is going to take a few minutes. Barbara, will you shift that junk off there—

She starts moving the accumulation of papers and files that lies on top of the computer cases.

FULLALOVE [*to Quatermass*]: You want to try it tomorrow—down there? [*Quatermass nods.*] On a subject? [*Quatermass nods again.*] That hull, missile, whatever you call it—any idea how it works? I mean, it *does* work—it’s not merely inert, is it?

QUATERMASS: Yes, it works.

FULLALOVE: Any idea how?

QUATERMASS: I think it’s activated by vibrations. Perhaps by electricity—any source of energy.

FULLALOVE: And then it has these effects on people?

A pause.

QUATERMASS: Fullalove, how long have you been a journalist?

FULLALOVE: Reporter, please.

QUATERMASS: All right, how long?

FULLALOVE: Fourteen years, come Michaelmas.

QUATERMASS: You must have noticed them often. Accounts of—mysterious movement of objects.

FULLALOVE: Yes. ‘Lead flung through roof—boy denies he did it. Mystery noises continue.’ Same as at Hobbs Lane. Poltergeist stories.

QUATERMASS: Telekinesis. It’s an interesting faculty.

FULLALOVE: Faculty?

QUATERMASS: You may have it yourself.

FULLALOVE: Hey, wait a minute—

QUATERMASS: We may all, to some extent. The dormant ability—to twist our energy into supernormal channels, outside ourselves. And if you want to know how it came there—[*Fullalove follows his glance towards the Martian on the stand.*]

FULLALOVE: You really think that they—?

QUATERMASS: Yes. Plus another old, strange talent. Second sight, clairvoyance. Tonight that filled Sladden’s brain with a vision of ancient Mars.

Barbara turns from where the banks of equipment are warming up, tubes glowing, signal lights flickering.

BARBARA: But there *is* something about the—the hull! It does take an effect. I’ve felt impressions when I’ve been near it—we all have—

QUATERMASS: My point is that we're sensitive to it because we're—predisposed. Phenomena happen, always *have* happened from time immemorial, in every part of the globe—and without the stimulus of a thing like that in the excavation. Perhaps we all retain vestiges—from a time when they colonized the Earth at second hand. Oh, their experiment must have failed, collapsed, got lost in a reversion to savagery. But something remained . . . and still shows up now and then. The occasional poltergeist outbreak that alarms a suburban street. Myths. Perhaps even witchcraft can be explained that way.

FULLALOVE: Those symbols in the hull?

QUATERMASS: Yes.

FULLALOVE [*slowly*]: So . . . as far as anybody is . . . we're the Martians now.

A steady hum comes from the computer-units. Needles are moving on dials. Valves glow.

Roney, who has been almost oblivious to their talk, is adjusting the settings on the headpiece.

RONEY: I think . . . that's about it. [*He turns as Quatermass comes up.*] Now we want a subject.

QUATERMASS: Fullalove—you can write about the experience some time. Come and sit here.

Doubtfully, Fullalove takes the offered seat. He submits while Roney lowers the headpiece over him until it is resting on his shoulders. Barbara adjusts its position carefully. Roney sets tiny controls in the rim that runs round the journalist's temples.

BARBARA: That feel all right?

FULLALOVE: Mm. I just hope it's safe. I had an uncle who dabbled in do-it-yourself electrics. Saved by his rubber soles time after time—

RONEY: Now keep your eyes on that desk lamp over there, will you?

He turns to the control panel and makes tiny corrections there. Quatermass comes to his side, watching the hooded monitor screen.

RONEY: Damn! There—that's better—

On the screen glows a small, fitful unsteady image.

QUATERMASS: The lamp! [*He looks from the screen to Fullalove.*] Through *his* eyes. It works—by God it does. Roney—you're a genius!

The image vanishes from the screen as Fullalove turns to look. Quatermass turns him towards the desk lamp again . . . and it reappears.

RONEY [*without modesty*]: It's rough. Rough as can be—and that was an easy test. Perhaps if you go over the circuits with me, we can make something of it—

He goes on worriedly fiddling with the controls.

QUATERMASS [*a slight smile*]: Yes . . . let's do that . . .

Dissolve . . . to the interior of the hull, next day.

The Vicar is halfway through the hatch-opening, holding firmly on to the rim as he looks about. Fresh lamps are glowing on a new bracket, and they show him all he wants to see. He turns and clammers out.

Outside, the bright daylight gives a harmless matter-of-fact air to the proceedings. As Gilpin stoops to pick up a small attaché-case he had left on the ground . . . crane forward past a tape recorder set up on a stand with its microphone pegged into the ground beside it and facing towards the hull. . . past a cine-camera being set up on a tripod by Barbara Judd . . . to where the banks of electronic apparatus from Roney's study have been laid out. Here Roney and Quatermass are at work, watched by the unhappy Sladden. Massive accumulator-packs are supplying the current for their gear.

Beside the hull, Fullalove steps forward to speak to the Vicar.

FULLALOVE: Well, Mr. Gilpin?

GILPEN: It seems quiet and harmless. But there *are* those occult signs—no doubt about them.

FULLALOVE [*a nod at the Vicar's case*]: May I ask what you've got there?

GILPEN: Oh—I thought, in the event of it seeming wise to attempt exorcism—

FULLALOVE: Bell, book, and candle, eh? But that's been tried here before—in the year 1341.

The Vicar stares at him.

Cut to where Roney has fitted the headpiece over Quatermass's shoulders and is making adjustments to the fine controls on the rim. He turns away to the control bank which rests on a stout box. He peers into the hooded screen.

QUATERMASS [*looking upwards*]: What can you see?

RONEY: The ruined house up there . . . steady . . . now close your eyes. [*Quatermass does so.*] Right . . . right. That's it. I think we'll do.

As he makes his last checks, Quatermass turns away to the drill operator.

QUATERMASS: Now, Sladden—the first thing you did was switch off the generator?

SLADDEN: That's right.

QUATERMASS: Stand by, then. When I signal, do it. [*As Sladden hesitates.*] Don't worry about our apparatus—we've got independent power packs for it.

SLADDEN: Have I . . . got to go in there?

QUATERMASS [*seeing the reason for the hesitation*]: Oh. No, I'm going to do it—try to do roughly what you did last night. Keep watching. Shout if I go wrong.

SLADDEN: Okay, prof. [*He goes to take up his position by the generator.*]

QUATERMASS [*to Roney*]: There's only one way it could work—that the hull takes up energy from the generator, perhaps by induction. Then when the supply's cut off, there's this violent reaction—

Barbara comes up.

BARBARA: The recording gear's all in place.

QUATERMASS [*a slight indrawn breath*]: Right. Let's start.

He pulls on the mitts Sladden wore the previous night and picks up Sladden's spanner. As he walks towards the hull he plays out the cable that is connected to the headpiece. Reaching the hatch-opening, he steadies himself against the rim and looks round.

Roney turns from his monitor screen and gives him a thumbs-up sign. Barbara steps quickly across to the tape-recorder and switches it on. As its spools start to revolve, she goes to the cine-camera and sets that into action also. Quatermass signals to Sladden, who cuts off the generator. He pulls himself inside the hull. The lamps are out. He waits.

After a few seconds there is a thud.

Quatermass lifts the spanner, works at the bracket as Sladden had done. He tenses as the sound comes again—and again. It rises into a blasting crackle. The deep reverberation returns. For a moment longer Quatermass continues working with the spanner. Then the looped cable hanging from the lamps begins to move and twist of its own accord. He stands still with his eyes tightly closed.

Cut to where Roney, Fullalove, and Gilpin are grouped about the monitor screen. The Vicar glances round—to see Sladden stumbling blindly towards the hull. He strides across to the man and grabs him. Roney is fidgeting with the controls as he waits for a signal to appear on the blank screen.

RONEY [*agitated*]: Not a thing—not a damned thing!

Cut to the hull, where Quatermass is holding on to the hatch-opening, his eyes squeezed shut. The noises are getting louder. He turns and calls.

QUATERMASS: Roney—I'm getting no impression! Just a kind of—confusion. [*He pulls himself out through the hatch-opening.*] I don't think it's operating through me—

Pan along the glossy surface of the hull—to where the girl is leaning against it. Her eyes unseeing, she supports herself as she tries to make her way towards Quatermass. Noticing, Roney scrambles to his feet and waves her back.

RONEY: Barbara! Get away from there—

But she is close to Quatermass now. Her face is twisted as if with pain and she is clutching at the apparatus on his shoulders.

BARBARA: Let me! I can see—see—[*She gives a gasping cry.*]

QUATERMASS [*grabs her writhing body and turns quickly to yell*]: Roney—come here!

BARBARA [*moans*]: Let me do it—

QUATERMASS: All right—all right—[*As Roney reaches them.*] Get this gear off me! She's the one!

Roney works to free the clasps that hold it in position. A few feet away, inside the hull, cables are lashing savagely. Something breaks free and falls with a clatter.

Cut to where Sladden is grovelling in abject terror at the Vicar's feet. Gilpin's horrified eyes go round the excavation, which seems now to be filled with the deep reverberations, the shrill metallic screeches, sudden deafening crackles. Here and there, small objects are in free movement. Fullalove scrambles into Roney's place at the monitor screen.

Cut to the hull, where Quatermass and Roney are struggling to transfer the headpiece to the girl. She stands with her back to the hull, pressed against it. Quatermass snaps down the clasps on her shoulders. Roney makes frantic adjustments to the settings. Her head jerks from side to side, then holds position.

Cut to where Fullalove is watching the monitor screen.

FULLALOVE [*calls out*]: It's getting something now!

There is astonishment in his face, and alarm. A few yards away the Vicar calls to him.

GILPEN: We can't let them go on with this—they're madmen—

But as he takes a step forward, Sladden clings to him.

SLADDEN [*wailing*]: Don't leave me! Don't—[*He is in the same state as the girl, shuddering and wild-eyed.*]

Roney scrambles back to his apparatus, joins Fullalove at the screen. He, too, reacts to what he sees there.

Cut to Quatermass, supporting the girl. She is like a medium in a state of trance—twisting about, lips drawn back from clenched teeth. All round them, the uproar is at its peak. Clods of earth are bowling along the ground. Planks burst outwards from the shored wall of the excavation. Stones clatter. A sheet of tarpaulin flaps wildly as it rises in the air.

BARBARA: Hold on to me! Hold on—hold—

She screams as she seems to rise from the ground under his grasp. Her arms twist crookedly. Her face grimaces into a rigid mask. She yells again—this time with a kind of mad exhilaration.

Roney jumps up from his place at the control panel.

RONEY: Get her out of it! Quick—

He runs to the hull, where Quatermass is already freeing the girl's head from the apparatus. But the outbreak is beginning to pass. The unearthly sounds are slowly dying away.

Roney pulls the apparatus away. Quatermass holds on to the girl as she collapses.

RONEY: Barbara! Barbara, you're all right. Oh, my dear—

QUATERMASS: What she must have seen!

RONEY [*white-faced*]: I saw them too—

Barbara gives a moan of fear as consciousness starts to flicker back. Quatermass lifts her, carries her away from the hull.

Fullalove looks slowly up from the now blank screen. He pulls himself to his feet, a shaken man. As Quatermass approaches, the Vicar turns

from where he has been trying to calm the shuddering Sladden.

GILPEN [*his voice trembling with anger*]: Oh you'll be answerable for—for what you've made these people endure!

QUATERMASS: I know that.

SLADDEN: They were different this time—different to what I seen last night! All that killing—

Quatermass turns towards the ramp. Breen and Potter are hurrying down it.

As he takes in the situation, the younger man breaks into a run. He comes scrambling down the ladderway and grabs the half-collapsed girl away from Quatermass.

POTTER: What's happened to her? What have you done?

He turns aside with her. Quatermass meets Breen's cold eyes at the top of the steps.

BREEN: Well, Quatermass, what have you done? Potter mentioned some kind of insane experiment, but—[*He glances round the excavation floor, his face taut with what might be apprehension.*]

QUATERMASS: Let's get out of here. I think we've got something to show you. Roney?

Pan down to where Roney is removing a large spool of video-tape from his apparatus. Track in on this as he places it carefully in a protective case . . .

Dissolve . . . to the War Office conference room.

Close shot of the same spool of video-tape as it is fitted into position in electronic projector. It is threaded carefully over the vision heads by the operator, a young Sergeant in Intelligence uniform.

Pan to the audience who are taking their places in the several rows of assembled chairs. The Minister is there, face dark and frowning, with his Secretary beside him on one side and Colonel Breen on the other . . . Roney and Barbara . . . Captain Potter . . . three or four senior Civil Servants.

Quatermass is standing by the projection screen, facing them.

QUATERMASS: What you're about to see is a memory. [*For a moment there is a puzzled stir in the growing audience.*] A memory stored for millions of years in that hull—a machine whose complexity we can only guess at—and now picked up by the susceptible brain of a young woman. You will have to excuse the technical quality. Our apparatus is less subtle than that thing in the pit—if you don't mind me saying so, Roney.

MINISTER: And what do you claim it shows?

RONNEY: The Wild Hunt.

The Minister twists in his chair at this voice from the row behind.

MINISTER: The what?

RONNEY: Wild Hunt. It appears in legends the world over. The phantom ride of devils or witches, that it's supposed to be fatal to witness—

MINISTER: Really, gentlemen!

QUATERMASS: That's the legend. This is the fact that may have given rise to it. You are going to see what I believe was a race purge—a cleansing of the hives. [*He calls.*] Video tape ready, sergeant? Please carry on.

The room lights are switched out, and a beam of light shoots from the electronic projector. Simultaneously come the recorded sounds heard in the excavation—reverberations, tapping, the bubbling churr, and the short, strident screech.

At first the picture on the screen is totally incoherent—flashes of light and darkness with juddering patterns of interference. And throughout its running time of less than a minute, this condition returns as vision is repeatedly lost. But between these missing portions the picture clears—still coarse and flickering, but unmistakably an image. Suddenly the spatter of electronic interference changes its nature. It is seen to be a hail of missiles, large and small, filling the air from every direction—perhaps stones, but their form cannot be distinguished. And among them, twisting, hopping as if to escape—are horned bodies. A Martian mask shoots past, then another, like creatures flying from slaughter. Shiny carapaces bob and scuttle over one another, driven, stampeding . . .

A Martian head turns, palps working. Struck by a sudden hail of tiny missiles, it shatters . . .

Another Martian figure is struck by a mass of flying debris and instantly buried. Another, dragging itself along the ground, is smothered . . .

Now the picture seems to be that seen through the eyes of a hunting Martian. It moves in monstrous, jerky hops—swings towards another Martian face, with flashing eyes and palps—and away. Faster now, it moves in on a group of three, singles one out and makes for it. It turns to flee but is struck by the hail of missiles that rain about the hunter.

The horny body is crushed to pulp . . .

The picture swings away, flailing wildly—disintegrates into a pattern of moving dots—clears again for a brief moment as it moves over a scatter of many Martian bodies. Some are limbless, some twitching in their last agony. Then the frame is finally obscured. It breaks up into flashes of light again, as the sounds also die away.

The screen is blank. The beam from the projector cuts. The room lights return.

There is silence at first. Barbara sits with her hands covering her face.

MINISTER: Most . . . curious.

SECRETARY: Yes. Those extraordinary insect figures . . .

QUATERMASS: Arthropods exactly like those we found. You'll have noticed that they were killing—and being killed. I think we may have seen ritual slaughter, to preserve a fixed society—to rid it of mutations. You find something like it on Earth, among certain termites and wasps. Now my concern is that this stored memory of killing should be coupled with another power that hull in the pit seems to possess—the power to redirect human energy!

A pause. The Minister looks at Breen.

BREEN: Power to redirect—

QUATERMASS: Into force beyond control!

BREEN: You're referring to the commotion down there today?

QUATERMASS: Not only today. This girl turned out to be highly susceptible, like the man Sladden. But we've all felt it to some extent—you have yourself.

BREEN: Nonsense! A few vibration effects—

QUATERMASS: How can you say that!

MINISTER [*holding up his hand*]: Gentlemen—please! There is really no need for this. We're looking for rational explanations—and I think there *is* one. [*All attention is on him as he swivels round in his chair to speak to the man behind him.*] Dr. Roney, this truly amazing apparatus of yours was designed to detect—was it not—hallucination?

RONNEY: Originally, yes, but—

BREEN: Hallucination! Exactly, sir—you've hit it!

There is a burst of protest, in which Quatermass, Roney, and Barbara are exclaiming together. The Minister waves his hand again.

MINISTER: Let's call it a mental image. The young lady clearly has imagination, and she's overwrought. She had seen these—these creatures which Colonel Breen insists are fakes. So what more natural than—? [*He throws up his hands in a gesture of finality, and arises.*]

QUATERMASS [*horrified*]: No, sir—you can't dismiss it like that—

MINISTER: You'd prefer I dismiss Colonel Breen's theory?

QUATERMASS: If you'd been there yourself—if you'd witnessed it all—

MINISTER: Professor Quatermass, I believe you are wrong in this matter. Ridiculously wrong.

He turns towards the door. Breen follows him.

QUATERMASS: You're going to admit people to that excavation?

MINISTER: Tonight. The Press—radio and television personnel—

QUATERMASS: You must not, sir!

MINISTER [*sharply*]: We all have a duty to relieve the public mind—which has been wantonly alarmed! And I demand from you—as a loyal Government officer—complete cooperation!

He goes out quickly through the door which the Secretary is holding open for him. Breen follows. Dismayed, Quatermass watches them go. Fade in linking music.

Dissolve to . . . Hobbs Lane, that night.

The dark street is crossed by headlight beams from the many vehicles that are trying to crowd into it and are being turned away by the police on duty. A number of cars and trucks are already there, and now a newsreel van is waved in to add itself to the feverish activity. The aerial of a TV outside-broadcast truck is being set up. Technicians and photographers are running with their tripods and cameras, milling round the entrance to the excavation. Journalists are being admitted, showing their passes. Farther up the street, by the corner, there are throngs of sightseers.

Prominent near the excavation entrance is a huge electricity-generator truck. From it cables are being run down towards the ramp . . .

Cut—to the floor of the excavation.

Here a television camera is already in position opposite the hull, while newsreel crews are placing their film cameras nearby, in readiness for interviews.

Like the street above, the place is alive. Journalists are milling round the hull, photographers taking flashlight shots across the rope-and-peg barrier that surrounds it. High-power lamps are being carried into position to be trained on it.

On the ramp a harrassed Official grabs the arm of an Electrician coming down with his mate.

OFFICIAL: Is the generator ready?

ELECTRICIAN [*with a nod towards the top of the ramp*]: Set up in the street now.

OFFICIAL [*anxiously*]: There's a lot of stuff here—far more than I expected—all these lamps and cameras—

ELECTRICIAN: Don't worry. Our genny'll take all the load they can put on it.

OFFICIAL: Everything coming at the last moment—I'm told nothing—no warning. We'll try to cope, though. Oh—can you run a cable across there, to the hull? [*He points.*]

ELECTRICIAN: Inside it?

OFFICIAL: The TV boys want to get some shots there.

ELECTRICIAN: Do our best. Ted—

The electricians move off after him towards the lower level.

Cut—to the TV and newsreel interview point, where a cold Cameraman is rubbing his hands.

CAMERAMAN [*grumbling to the Technician working with him*]: Bloody damp hole! Last three weeks I've done floods, frogmen, and down a sewer— [*He sees the Official hurrying past and calls to him.*] Hey, chief—how long till they switch the juice on?

OFFICIAL: Any minute now. When's your programme?

CAMERAMAN: Seven o'clock.

OFFICIAL: Oh, you'll be all right. Quite all right. [*He goes on his way.*]

CAMERAMAN [*grumbling*]: I hope so. Leaving everything till the bloody last. [*He looks sourly round.*] This place won't do my bad leg any good Hey! [*He nudges his colleague, indicating a man who has come down the ladderway and is standing at the foot, looking about.*] Isn't that, you know, old

whatsisname? Quatermass?

Before the colleague can get interested, the excavation is bathed in brilliant light from the high-powered lamps, drowning the dim illumination from the old builder's inspection lights round its edge. The Cameraman is cheered.

CAMERAMAN: The juice! That'll warm it up a bit.

Quatermass moves on.

Cut—to a knot of journalists nearby, to whom Colonel Breen has been reading his prepared statement. The Secretary is with him, sitting at a tiny table on which is a pile of copies. Most of the journalists present already seem to have one. On Breen's other hand is a very subdued Captain Potter.

BREEN: '. . . The West German Federal Government has kindly agreed to make new searches of existing wartime records, with a view to final identification of this machine.' Thank you.

SECRETARY: Copies of the statement here for anybody who hasn't one. And now—any questions?

A Woman Journalist is on the point of speech when Fullalove pushes past her to the front.

FULLALOVE: What convinces you that your V-weapon theory is correct?

BREEN [*snaps*]: My experience! [*He turns to the Woman Journalist.*] Madam?

WOMAN JOURNALIST: Don't you agree, Colonel Breen, that this propaganda plan you've uncovered shows the Nazis had no *idea* of the true British spirit on the Home Front?

BREEN: Er—I suppose—

FULLALOVE: Colonel Breen, this morning I made some inquiries of my own. D'you know that the highest officials of German wartime rocket research deny that any such weapon existed?

SECRETARY [*protectively*]: I think you must allow time—

FULLALOVE: Let him answer!

BREEN [*icily*]: Mr. Fullalove, a day or two ago you were assiduously inquiring into the activities of ghosts and demons! Perhaps you've had their opinions, too?

There is some laughter.

FULLALOVE: I demand an answer! This is far too serious a matter for you to—

SECRETARY [*rapping the table*]: Next question, please! Next question!

But heads are turning. The name 'Quatermass' is running round. A moment later he pushes his way through the group of journalists.

QUATERMASS: I've got a question. Is Colonel Breen an imbecile—or a coward?

There is dead silence. Breen and the Secretary stare in outraged astonishment.

FULLALOVE [*whispers to Quatermass*]: Go on—give it to him!

BREEN [*recovering, hoarsely*]: What—what d'you mean by that! How dare you—

SECRETARY [*quickly*]: Just a second. [*He comes in front of the table and attempts a confidential word.*] Professor Quatermass, I thought it was clearly understood that you were to take no part—

QUATERMASS [*pushing him aside*]: I asked a question! Is Colonel Breen afraid of something! So afraid that he resorts to the thinnest rationalizations—

BREEN [*violently*]: I say what I *know*—and *believe* to be the truth!

The journalists are surging round the table as the two men glare at each other across it.

QUATERMASS: Tell them what you've seen here. And heard! Tell them what happened to West and Sladden. Potter, you were a witness—you tell them—

There is a sudden succession of dazzling, lightning-like flashes from the direction of the hull, accompanied by the unmistakable clattering detonation of an electrical short-circuit.

Frightened faces turn. The lights dim and flutter.

A man is outlined, hunched, in the hatch-opening. Behind him the fierce flashes continue inside the hull. Then the Official goes running across the excavation floor, yelling desperately towards those at the top of the ramp.

OFFICIAL: Cut it—cut it! Cut the power!

A moment later the excavation is plunged into dimness, with only the weak working-lights above. People stumble towards the hull, calling out, blundering into one another. Quatermass and Potter are the first to reach it—quiet and dark again now, though smoke is drifting from the open mouth of the hatch-opening.

A man is crawling there, coughing and retching. Quatermass grabs him. It is the Electrician.

ELECTRICIAN [*weakly*]: My mate—he's in there—

Potter makes for the hatch-opening.

QUATERMASS [*urgently*]: Potter, be careful!

OFFICIAL: It's safe now—the current's off—

QUATERMASS: I don't mean that. [*To the Electrician.*] What happened? Quick!

ELECTRICIAN: He had the live cable. He must have slipped or something—

He twists to see as Potter reappears through the smoke, dragging something after him. The Official hastens to help and between them they drag out the charred body of the Electrician's mate.

ELECTRICIAN: He—he dead?

POTTER: Yes.

Quatermass rises and moves quickly close to Potter. He keeps his voice down.

QUATERMASS: Potter, did you see anything else in there?

POTTER: No. Nothing.

He and the Official lift the body between them, and move away from the hull. Quatermass gives the shaking Electrician an arm to lean on and they go after the others.

In a moment they are the centre of an excited, chattering crowd.

Creep in music.

Crane in slowly towards the hull until the black hatch-opening, from which wisps of smoke still trail, fills the frame. Crane in through the opening . . .

At one or two points the dark, glossy interior surface seems to be glowing very faintly. It is almost as if it were coming alive. Crystalline veins . . . ceramic arteries . . . appear in sluggish pulsations of light . . .

Fade up music to full.

Fade to black.

PART SIX

Hob

Fade in . . . the floor of the excavation.

A few yards from the hull there is an excited huddle round the electrocuted body—kneeling by it are Captain Potter and the Official who helped him to carry it clear. A Police Inspector flashes a torch on to the charred shape. A woman journalist breaks into a moaning cry.

OFFICIAL: What do you think—artificial respiration?

POTTER: No use. He's burnt up.

INSPECTOR: We'd better get an ambulance, anyway. There's the other chap to see to. [*Turning.*] Higgins—

He goes quickly to give instructions to a nearby Policeman. The Official turns to where the Electrician is being supported by Quatermass and Fullalove.

ELECTRICIAN [*distressed*]: I couldn't help him, see? I just couldn't—

FULLALOVE [*reassuringly*]: All right, boy.

OFFICIAL: You said he fell?

ELECTRICIAN: That's right. It's as slippery as hell inside there. He was just fixing the junction-box when he—he—

FULLALOVE: It was an accident.

QUATERMASS [*slowly*]: It may not have been.

FULLALOVE: Quatermass!

OFFICIAL: What do you mean?

ELECTRICIAN: You making out it was my fault? [*He grabs the Official by the arm.*] Listen—there was nothing I could'a done—nothing—

OFFICIAL: I believe you. [*Worriedly.*] Well, I suppose things have got to go on as arranged. [*He calls up towards the top of the ramp.*] Switch on again—soon as you're ready up there! All except the line to the hull! Kill that! [*He turns to the others.*] Soon have the lights back . . .

Cut to the hull, where a single figure is moving cautiously towards the hatch-opening. It is Barbara Judd. Reaching it, she peers inside. After a moment a faint glow lights her face . . . dies down as she looks quickly round for the source of it. Then it comes again. She backs away with a terrified cry.

The group round the body react. But just as Quatermass and others start in the direction of the hull, the lights come on again. The whole excavation is suddenly bright and dear.

QUATERMASS: What did you see?

BARBARA: In there—it's glowing.

Quatermass goes to the hatch-opening and peers in. He turns to her—and the alarm in her face changes to confusion.

BARBARA: But I was sure! It was just before the lights came on. Perhaps that's it—everything's too bright now to see—

QUATERMASS: You shouldn't have come here—you of all people. [*He catches her by the arm and pulls her away from the hull.*] Potter—

BARBARA: I don't want to go!

QUATERMASS: Potter, get her away. Are you free to do that?

POTTER [*uncertainly*]: Well, I think if—

Quatermass sees the reason for his doubt. Breen is pushing his way through the crowd with the Secretary at his heels and accompanied by the Official. They make straight for the hull, evidently bent on inspecting it for themselves.

QUATERMASS: Keep back!

OFFICIAL: The cable's disconnected. It's quite safe—

QUATERMASS: I think not. [*He goes to Breen, and his voice is low and incisive.*] Get everybody out of here quickly.

BREEN: I'll do nothing of the sort. Just because there's been an accident—

QUATERMASS: Very well. [*He turns and shouts across the crowd.*] My name's Quatermass! If that means anything to you, take my advice—leave this place now. I think there may be grave danger here!

A momentary hush, then a tumult of shouted questions from the journalists, who close in on Quatermass. Then Fullalove's voice is heard yelling above the rest.

FULLALOVE: Let's go where the Professor can give us a full statement! Anywhere—away from here! Hurry!

He is waving them towards the ramp. There is a general move in that direction, with Quatermass in the midst, when Breen calls out.

BREEN: One moment! [*They straggle to a halt.*] If you wish to leave, that's entirely your business. But the official arrangements will proceed as planned.

He turns on his heel and walks calmly to where the TV and newsreel cameras are set up with their crews still doubtfully attending them. His manner has its effect on everyone present. The journalists look at each other. One or two on the ladderway step down again.

QUATERMASS [*yells*]: Do as I said! Get out! [*He turns and runs to the interview point, where Breen and the Secretary are busy with a TV interviewer.*] Breen, you can't! [*He indicates the camera crews.*] You're deliberately holding these people here! Cancel it—for the present, at least!

The Secretary gives a quick beckoning nod to the Police Inspector, who comes up.

SECRETARY: Precisely on what grounds are we to do this, Professor?

QUATERMASS: I've—I've reason to believe there's some new activity beginning in that thing . . .

He looks towards the hull, where another electrician, under the direction of the Official, is running a fresh cable forward. The journalists are drifting back, evidently unwilling to run any risk of missing the big story. Fullalove is among them, silent again, though he keeps his eyes more watchfully on the hull than his colleagues.

A look of hopelessness comes into Quatermass's face. Breen speaks quietly into his ear.

BREEN: What reason? Something else you can't prove? You've got plenty of witnesses this time, but they don't seem to be taking much notice. You're a tired man, Quatermass—what you need is a long rest. [*He exchanges a glance with the Secretary.*] That's not just my view—

The TV Interviewer steps briskly forward, clearing his throat.

INTERVIEWER: Colonel Breen, we're doing the live broadcast in about five minutes.

BREEN: Very well.

INTERVIEWER: Just as we rehearsed it, unless—in view of this controversy—we include the Professor for a few questions. [*As Breen seems about to object.*] It might be a good idea, sir. [*To Quatermass.*] You agree, sir? [*As Quatermass turns to him, only half aware of what he is talking about, he is already working out their positions.*] If you wouldn't mind standing over here—we'll just make a quick test for balance—

Crane away from over, past the watching journalists, towards the hull. The replacement electrician is still working on the cable a yard or two from it. Watching impatiently, the Official glances at his watch.

There is a faint crackle. It is unnoticed by the crowd round the TV interview point, but the Official hears it. He glances quickly round, first at the harmless cable, then at the hull. He rubs his chin uneasily. He goes to the hatch-opening and looks cautiously in.

Fear springs into his face. Live, fluctuating light from the interior strikes him. The crepitation comes again, louder . . .

Dissolve . . . to a nearby street.

Close shot of an Evening Gazette poster, with the words scrawled in black crayon: 'ARE WE MARTIANS?' Pan up to a newsvendor busy doling out papers to his eager customers.

NEWSVENDOR: Gazette! Gazette! 'Ere y're, guv! Gazette! They're all on the telly in a coupl'a minutes, so clean me out quick! I want to see 'em too . . .

Dissolve . . . to the interior of a pub in a neighbouring street. Close shot of television screen above the bar. An Announcer is talking:

'In a few moments we hope to take you over to the excavation at Hobbs Lane, Knightsbridge, to see something of the remarkable missile discovered there recently, and to hear an official explanation of the events which have taken place there. This will be given by Colonel James Breen . . .'

During this, track back along the crowded bar. It is an unambitious but cosy little place, evidently full of regulars. A stout Customer waves his pint at the screen.

STOUT CUSTOMER: It's on'y happenin' a couple o' blocks away! Why we got to see it on that thing? Why don't they let folk see for themselves—use their eyes? I tell you what—people don't believe nothing's happened no more unless they seen it on the telly! It's the truth—

The battered Blonde to whom the last bit is addressed, for lack of interest from anyone else, turns her back on him. She is sitting at the bar with a doggy, pouch-eyed man in a blazer.

BLONDE: D'you believe in these Martians?

BLAZERED MAN: Be your age, kiddie. [*Artfully.*] Twenty-nine, I know. [*He takes a substantial sip of his drink.*] No, it's a bloody great Jerry buzz-bomb. [*As she turns again to the screen.*] Listen, I know what I'm talking about. I was in the Ruhr when the war finished and—

BLONDE: It's on now!

There is a stir of interest along the bar. Customers push forward towards the screen.

Track in on it. The Interviewer's face appears there. He is caught looking off-screen, speaking to someone at one side:

*'What? All right—quick!' [*To front.*] 'Good evening! I'm standing just a few yards from the mysterious missile of which so much has been heard in the last day or two—'*

He turns again, evidently perturbed. Figures are running across the floor of the excavation behind him—they look like men in a panic. A crackle of sound bursts out. The Interviewer again appeals to the unseen man beside him:

*'Colonel Breen, p'raps you'd better—' [*Then to the front, with nervous rapidity.*] 'I—I'm sorry, but there seems to be something wrong here! I think perhaps—'*

The screen goes blank. Almost immediately an apology-for-breakdown notice appears. There is a ribald cheer in the pub.

STOUT CUSTOMER: Won't let you see for yerself—then they go an' muck it all up!

BLONDE [*uneasily*]: Funny noises, those . . .

BLAZERED MAN: Vision on sound, that's all. Have another?

BLONDE: Yes, I will. [*As he snaps his fingers to the barmaid.*] Edgar, they were running. Those men down there . . .

Cut—to the floor of the excavation.

The scene is one of bedlam. Journalists and technicians are scattering, colliding, yelling in anger and alarm as they crowd towards the ladderways. A man trips over a cable and falls flat on his face in the mud, then scrambles up.

The ground is shaking with a succession of rhythmic thuds. And in the same rhythm, light is beating from the hatch-opening in the hull.

At the interview-point, the Secretary is surrounded by frightened cameramen and technicians. He turns from the now incoherent Interviewer to

where Breen is staring fixedly towards the hull. He pulls at Breen's shoulder.

SECRETARY [*a man betrayed*]: Colonel Breen—[*Getting no response, he makes for Quatermass a yard or two away.*] Professor!

QUATERMASS: Pack up! Get out, all of you—run!

The cameramen take his word for it and make for the ladderways in a rush. The Secretary looks helplessly about, then throws himself aside as the TV camera topples and falls of its own accord. The last technicians go running in terror.

The official statements are whipped from the table, as if by a gust of wind, and go fluttering among the yelling crowd. A stand lamp goes out as it crashes to the ground. A cluster of lights falls. Planks writhe under stumbling feet.

The pit is growing darker as Quatermass tries to drag a helpless man from where he lies near the hull. It is the replacement electrician. The unconnected power-cable whips about his feet. He sees Fullalove nearby, his tiny camera aimed at the hull.

QUATERMASS [*yells above the uproar*]: Fullalove! Help me—

Fullalove turns and hurries across. Between them he and Quatermass pull the electrician over to the ladderway, where other hands help him up. Quatermass is becoming visibly affected now. He steadies himself—and sees Fullalove calmly turning his camera on the hull again.

QUATERMASS: Don't you feel it?

FULLALOVE: Eh? I've got to get some more pictures—

Dazedly Quatermass turns from him. A few yards away Breen is crouching with his eyes on the glowing hull, seemingly unable to take his eyes off it. Quatermass staggers towards him.

QUATERMASS: Breen—get away from here—

He pulls at Breen's arm. Breen turns on him, his face twisting into a mask. With a kind of quick ferocity he lunges at Quatermass—and the result far exceeds the apparent force used. Quatermass is flung violently to the ground among the wreckage of the table and the scattered papers which flutter like live things.

The ground beside him moves. It is a human figure covered with blood and earth—the Secretary. He moans as Quatermass lifts him, as if half out of his mind.

SECRETARY [*mutters*]: We must make a report—a report—

Quatermass struggles with him towards the ladderway.

The floor of the excavation is almost deserted now. But the ladderways and the ramp above are swarming with figures. People are blundering up towards the entrance, confused and frightened by the din which seems to break out at so many points—now behind them—now ahead, sending them tottering back, colliding with each other. Potter is among them, almost carrying Barbara Judd. A film-camera, mounted on its tripod, has been burst open and endless streamers of film are blowing out of it like entrails, tangling the escaping people . . .

Cut—to the street above, where the panic is spreading. People are milling round the many obstructions—the TV truck, the generator, the numerous vans and cars. A policeman is trying to stem the tide, to restore some kind of order. Then the panic catches him too, and he runs with the rest.

Potter appears from the entrance to the excavation, pulling the girl along with him. As they are swept along in the crush, consciousness seems to be returning to her. She looks wildly about—and starts to struggle, screaming.

BARBARA: Let me go! Let me go back—

She almost breaks free. Her eyes are wide, obsessed. He keeps hold of her, almost having to fight her to stop her running back towards the entrance. Among the figures hurrying past he sees Quatermass, with the bloodstained Secretary clinging blindly to his arm. Potter yells to him.

POTTER: Quatermass! Professor Quatermass—

But Quatermass does not appear to hear him. He is swept along in the crowd.

The noise behind them is increasing in loudness and violence. Metallic screeches ring out all round. Rubble clatters against the corrugated sheeting round the entrance. A man falls . . .

Cut—to the neighbouring street, as people come streaming round the corner, running like terrified animals. Hobbs Lane falls into darkness behind them, as if the lamps there have been struck out of existence. There are screams. And the thundering and crackling sounds follow.

Quatermass is among them, dragging the slumped body of the Secretary like a sack of rubbish. He loses his grip without noticing and runs headlong on. The limp form lies abandoned in the road. None of those who follow attempt to touch it. It is as if they do not see . . .

Cut—to the pub.

Close shot of the television screen above the bar. It is flickering with violent interference, and the Blazered Man is fiddling with the knobs.

BLAZERED MAN: No good—I can't do anything with it.

BLONDE: Let's go.

BLAZERED MAN: Damn! There was some boxing after this. [*He gives up and turns to her.*] All right—one more and we'll go on to Millie's.

He snaps his fingers at the barmaid, who is at the other end of the bar supplying a cheerfully singing group of customers. Everything is normal here.

Then the Blonde puts a hand to her head. Her companion looks at her in mild concern.

BLAZERED MAN: You okay?

BLONDE: A bit . . . dizzy. I don't know . . .

BLAZERED MAN: Hungry, I expect. You'll get some grub at Millie's. Say what you like about old Millie, she's always good for—

The Blonde sways. He is just in time to catch her.

As he helps her across to a chair, the curtains round the door are flung wide and a man staggers in.

He is small, with a straggling beard. He wears a black plastic mackintosh—and it hangs on him in tatters, one sleeve almost torn off. Under it his jacket is ripped, and he has a cut beneath one eye. White-faced, he plunges towards the counter, pushing the singing group aside.

TATTERED MAN [*panting*]: Give me a drink—quick! Whisky—anything—[*As silence falls, he is conscious that all are looking at him, and he stares back.*] I got caught in it out there. [*After a moment.*] What's the matter with you all? Don't you know?

STOUT CUSTOMER: Know what?

TATTERED MAN: Everybody running—[*He takes the drink from the barmaid and gulps.*] I reckon there must have been an explosion or something like that—I could hear it going on further away—[*He gulps again and returns the glass.*] Gimme another.

The Blazered Man has gone to the door. As he throws it open, the sound of the frightened, running crowd comes through, from a street or so away.

BLAZERED MAN: Yes—there must be hundreds! [*As the other customers crowd forward to see, he turns uneasily to the Blonde, who is half-lying in the chair with her eyes shut.*] Feel up to moving? I think perhaps we ought to—

There is a rapid crepitation close at hand—inside the bar. Very loud, like a fire-cracker. The customers jump round, startled. The Blonde gives a short, strangled scream.

There is a splutter of puzzled, frightened cries.

TATTERED MAN: That's it! Like the noises down the street!

He bolts for the door as another, less loud crackle sounds out. The customers scatter, looking about.

BLONDE [*stiff with terror*]: Edgar, what is it?

BLAZERED MAN: I'm not sure—

BLONDE [*voice cracking*]: Don't say it's vision on sound, for God's sake!

There is a crash of glass behind the bar. Bottles are flung along it. The old velvet curtains round the door and window are blown violently inwards by a screaming gust. The Blonde succumbs to hysterical sobbing as the Blazered Man drags her towards the door.

A section of the ceiling gives, as if suddenly pounded from above by a mighty fist. Plaster showers down on the yelling customers. Lights go out. They fight to get out, crazed, faces twisted as the terrible sounds build up in intensity. Their cries join those of the crowds in the street outside—for now the whole panic flight has swung in this direction. Then the bar is empty. Struck down by some flying object, only the Stout Customer remains—lying near the door, trampled down. More glass shatters . . .

Cut—to the street outside. Hounded by the unearthly sounds, people are streaming along. They shy away from the shrill detonations that break out in the ground, in the walls, in the air itself. And the thunderous vibration follows like a tidal wave, spreading outwards in rhythmic boomings that shake the earth.

Running with the rest is Quatermass, clothes torn and covered with dust from falls. His eyes see nothing as he is jostled to the edge of the crowd.

Hands seize him and pull him aside. He struggles fiercely. It is Roney who is shaking him, looking for recognition in the blank eyes.

RONNEY: Quatermass—don't you know me!

Quatermass pulls again towards the crowd. Roney jerks him round—through the nearest open doorway. It is that of the pub.

Cut—to the interior of the pub as they enter. It is even more battered. The glass backing to the bar has collapsed, and it is almost completely dark. Tables and chairs lie overturned in pools of spilt beer. The Stout Customer is still where he fell, unmoving.

Roney drags Quatermass through and throws the door, with its shattered glass panel, shut behind them. Quatermass is still struggling, but more confusedly and less violently, as Roney snatches up a fallen chair and pushes him into it. He slumps, head forward, and Roney has to catch him by the shoulder to prevent him falling out of it. Roney glances round the ruined bar. Outside, the crowd noise is quieter, receding.

Quatermass, still panting hard, looks up at him. It is as if he has to make a conscious effort to recognize him.

QUATERMASS: Roney . . . ?

RONNEY: That's better. Can I leave you a second?

Quatermass nods weakly, holding on to the arms of the chair. Roney goes to the bar.

RONNEY: Every last bottle broken. [*He picks over the debris. He finds one broken in half but standing upright.*] Still a drop in this one. [*He picks up a tankard from the floor, shakes it out and pours into it from the broken bottle.*] No way to serve decent whisky, but we're a bit low on glasses. Here—get that inside you.

He has to steady the tankard in Quatermass's hands while he sips. Quatermass looks up at him, frowning as if he is working something out.

QUATERMASS: You stopped me.

RONNEY [*as if to a child*]: That's right. I stopped you. You were being carried along so I thought I'd better.

QUATERMASS: Were they—people?

He clutches fearfully at Roney's arm as he looks towards the door.

RONNEY: Eh? Of course they were—! [*He manages to resume his deliberate matter-of-factness.*] I was just leaving the Institute. I heard shouting in the distance and—there were police cars but—

QUATERMASS: Don't you feel it?

RONNEY: What?

QUATERMASS [*hand to head*]: Here. Anything?

RONEY: No—

QUATERMASS: Perhaps some don't, a few don't. Fullalove didn't . . . [*He gulps more of the whisky, then pulls himself to his feet.*] It was what I was afraid of—the thing got a huge intake of energy. Roney, it's the hull itself—the very substance of it! This time it was almost alive, and then . . . and then . . . [*He is shaking. He manages to go on.*] . . . you can't see this world any longer!

RONEY: It's like that now?

QUATERMASS: Not so bad now.

Roney goes to the door and pulls the curtains aside to look out.

RONEY: Quieter. [*He turns to where the stout customer is lying.*] He's hurt—pretty badly. What was it like in the excavation? Anyone still there, remember?

QUATERMASS: Yes . . . a few. Breen . . . [*He is looking unsteadily about. Suddenly he makes for the bar counter and clutches it, his eyes squeezed shut with the effort to regain control.*] Got to try and help—

RONEY [*coming to him*]: Easy—

QUATERMASS [*opening his staring eyes*]: No! You have to fight this! [*He speaks quietly, warily, as if he is evading something that is on the lookout for him.*] You see—it's there all the time. [*Willing himself back to the business in hand.*] Telephone . . . telephone . . .

The telephone is still lodged in its niche behind the counter, surrounded by broken bottles and beer-soaked fragments of sandwiches. Quatermass moves towards it, leaning heavily.

RONEY: Everybody must know by now. They'll be taking measures.

QUATERMASS: All the same, I've got to try—

He cries out. There is a crash. Roney jumps forward to see the telephone lying on the floor, broken, among the glass and rubble. The cord is twisting of itself. There is a faint crepitation.

QUATERMASS [*his hand still raised*]: As soon as I touched it—

Roney stoops and puts the receiver to his ear.

RONEY: No good, it's dead now. [*He turns to Quatermass.*] Look, if you like, I'll go out and see if I can—

QUATERMASS: Don't!

He is standing rigidly, eyes fixed. There is another ominous little crackle of sound, a tapping that rises in pitch.

QUATERMASS: It's changing, I can feel it. Getting stronger!

The noises come with a rush . . .

Dissolve . . . to the news-room of the Evening Gazette.

The News Editor is crouching over a telephone by the window. Flickering headlight-beams reflected from the street below strike up into his face as he looks out. There is a roar of traffic, with much angry hooting. Above it sound the warning bells of fire engines and ambulances.

Behind him, the news-room is dark and deserted.

NEWS EDITOR [*into phone*]: Hello—hello, sir, are you there? [*It is as if whoever is at the other end has difficulty in understanding.*] It's O'Brien—news editor! I'm at the office! Can you hear me now? . . . Listen, sir, I'm worried about—[*A pause.*] No, nothing from the agencies, nothing from anywhere. Even the radio—[*He turns to twiddle the knobs of a small radio set on his desk. It is dead.*] Yours too? Everything's gone mad. I can see the street from here—[*He leans out of the window, looking down.*] Fire-engines mostly. Heading west. Oh, it's bedlam down there. Huge crowds. But this is the point sir—what about Fullalove? James Fullalove! He went there—to Hobbs Lane. Where it's all supposed to have started! What am I to—

The line is dead. He rattles the receiver hard and angrily, then looks round with apprehension in his face. He rattles the receiver again. As if in answer, there is a burst of monstrous crackling . . . in the newsroom . . .

Cut—to the excavation at Hobbs Lane.

Fullalove is near the top of the ramp, moving back down it, getting what cover he can from the heavily boarded rail that runs down the side. Dust is swirling across, glowing rhythmically in the beat of brilliance that slabs out in time with the thunderous vibrations. Fullalove takes a photograph, finds he has used up the magazine in his camera, gropes in his pocket for a replacement.

Crane across the floor of the excavation below. The same blasts of light from the unseen source pick out figures in the dusty haze, three or four of them . . . a Technician and a couple of journalists, on the ground . . . and Colonel Breen. He is half-kneeling, twisted. Nearby is a body crushed by a heavy baulk of timber ripped loose from the shoring. The living men seem to be in a state of catalepsy as they stare fixedly into the light.

Cut to the source of it—the hull.

It is undergoing a transformation. Glowing fiercely throughout its length, now bright, now dim, its whole substance is beginning to soften, melt, smoke . . . the hatch-opening losing its shape and the entire hull sagging inwards. But it is subliming into more than smoke. Shimmering patches of light hang in the air above it.

Pan up . . . to where the beams of the haunted house are palely picked out . . .

Cut—to the interior of the house, panning across the ruined hallway towards the kitchen.

Here Potter is crouching in the rubble, picking at loose brickwork in the wall—evidently that overlooking the excavation, for light comes beating through the crack. He goes on levering the bricks apart with a rusted fire-iron. His face is greasy with sweat. Otherwise he seems little affected. He glances round, goes on working. A brick falls away. He looks through the gap, his face puckering as he follows the course of the shimmering vapour from the pit . . . up . . . up . . .

Cut to where Barbara Judd is lying against the opposite wall of the little kitchen. She is motionless, but her head is slightly raised and she is watching him with the unwinking stillness of a reptile . . . or an insect. Then, very slowly, she raises her head and shoulders further. Her face seems to transform itself, so slowly that the alteration can hardly be marked, to the mask-state.

Potter sits back on his haunches, wipes a hand over his face. Hearing a tiny sound in the rubble behind him, he turns—and sees her slowly moving.

There is a violent burst of crepitation in the room, explosive in its onset. He throws up an arm as a shower of rubble flings itself at him. The rotten floorboards stir under him. The exposed laths of the walls are quivering. Alarmed, Potter scrambles across to the girl and grabs her by the wrists, though she remains motionless. Hatred blazes out of her eyes. The hideous sounds drown even the deep reverberations from the pit outside. Everything round him seems to be moving. Something strikes him in the back. He gasps with pain. Then, with revulsion in his face at what he is doing, he brings the edge of one hand down sharply on the girl's neck. She collapses. He looks down at her, appalled, and lowers her gently to the floor. The room is still. He crawls again to the crack in the wall, through which the light throbs in blinding streaks . . .

Cut—to the floor of the excavation.

Fullalove has reached the foot of the ramp, crouching behind an earth-filled oil drum put there as a marker by the building contractors. All round him are scattered papers, and things dropped in the panic flight . . . a press camera, a hat. He is looking up at where the writhing glimmer beats, casting strange forms on the corrugated wall behind him. He aims the camera at a point high above the hull, and shoots. He aims again.

Below on the floor of the excavation, two of the hunched men are turning their heads very slowly in his direction, as if made aware of his approach in spite of the seething vibration that fills the pit.

Breen turns, too—hardly more than his eyes.

And Fullalove goes staggering back under a shower of stones and mud. He falls. The crackling reports break out all round. He tries to crawl away, but rubble is pounding down, smothering him. Great clods of clay swoop at him, and bricks. He screams. A jagged mass of concrete thuds down on his back and he does not move again. A metallic gleam picks out the tiny camera, crushed out of recognition . . .

Cut—to the interior of the pub.

Pan from the whirling curtains round the window to where Roney is crouching by the unconscious customer. He has turned the injured man over on his side and is opening his collar.

Quatermass is silhouetted in the foreground, and now he moves towards Roney. Track forward with him.

RONNEY: He's in a bad way, poor creature. We really ought to get him out of here. [*He looks up and what he sees makes him cry out.*] Quatermass!

With utter confusion in his face, he scrambles back. He raises an arm to shield himself as a crackling blast bursts out and the air is alive. Glass crashes, wood splinters. He ducks behind a fallen table for cover. Rubble clatters against it, flies over it. He cries out. On hands and knees, he looks back in desperation at the advancing figure with its arms held rigidly at its sides. Roney's face is bleeding, his coat ripped. Another tearing buffet of sound, and he winces and twists under a hail of flying debris.

RONNEY: No! Quatermass—no!

He suddenly throws himself at the silhouetted figure and grapples with it. As they whirl into close shot, the face of Quatermass can be seen—twisted into the mask-form. Pan with them as the panting, blood-streaked Roney forces him back against the counter. Quatermass seems not to resist actively, yet Roney has a furious, exhausting struggle. Then he rams his face close to Quatermass's.

RONNEY [*frantically*]: It's taking possession of you! Quatermass, you mustn't let it—you've got to go on fighting it! Can you hear me?

The set expression on Quatermass's face seems to blur. Roney shakes him, looks quickly round, sees a beer-mug still containing a little. He splashes the beer in Quatermass's face.

RONNEY: Think, man, think! Use your brain—your memory! Keep hold! [*Rapidly.*] Bernard Quatermass! Remember—remember that time we went on the fishing trip together? Do you? And you got that bloody great pike that had always been in the pool. You nearly lost a finger landing him—and his tail caught that little guy that was with us—what was his name?

QUATERMASS: Stoker . . .

There is pain in his face now. It is like the return of circulation to a frozen part of the body.

RONNEY: That's right! Stoker! Toppled him in—soaked him from head to foot. But we got the pike safely back—

QUATERMASS [*with fierce concentration*]: Weighed twenty-nine pounds five ounces—

RONNEY: It did! They've got it down there yet, in a case!

He pulls Quatermass to his feet, steadying him.

QUATERMASS [*after a moment, weakly*]: All right—all right—

RONNEY: Can you hold on now?

QUATERMASS [*nods, then rapidly, as if he is holding something back with an effort*]: I wanted to kill you. I could do it without trying, without moving—I knew that. And—I would—have done it.

RONNEY: Why? Did you know why?

QUATERMASS: Because you're—different. [*He stares at Roney for a moment.*] I could feel that—you weren't—one of us. You had to be destroyed. Destroyed! [*He grips the counter, fighting for self-control again.*]

RONNEY: Don't say any more. Try to keep it out of your mind—

Above the unceasing heavy vibration, there is a new sound. A thin, distant squealing.

QUATERMASS: Listen! Out there—

He staggers across to the window and throws the tattered curtain back. Through the starred and shattered panes come far-off yelps, the cries of a badly-injured dog . . . then a terrified neighing, and the galloping of hooves in a street nearby. An unidentifiable screech rings out, and barks that change to squeals of terror.

The thudding vibration is rising in volume.

RONEY [*at Quatermass's side*]: Animals . . . they're killing the animals.

QUATERMASS: Not only animals. Roney, this is it—this is the Wild Hunt! [*He twists round, clapping his hands over his ears to stop out the continuing cries.*] This is the image that was buried in the hull! This is the compulsion—

RONEY: It was a control?

QUATERMASS: It must be! To preserve their colony—kill every mutation away from the set pattern! Destroy all that didn't belong to it—every living creature and every object! And now it's happening—five million years too late!

RONEY: You mean, using this diverted energy—

QUATERMASS: Draining the whole human energy of London to turn it into a Martian colony! That's what's happening.

RONEY: It can't possibly—after so long—

QUATERMASS: It can! [*He turns an agonized face, muttering feverishly.*] My name is Bernard Quatermass, professor of physics—controller-general, British Experimental Rocket Group—at present engaged—at present engaged in—[*Helplessly.*] I can feel it! See it . . . see *them*!

His eyes are wild, his breathing faster. Roney grabs him by the shoulders.

RONEY: Resist it! You can!

QUATERMASS: I know—

RONEY: You must! You're needed—we've got things to do that nobody else can! Remember—remember the pike!

QUATERMASS [*desperately*]: Yes, yes—the pike—

RONEY: He was hard to take—

QUATERMASS: It was late afternoon, a sunny day—

The vibrations in the earth are rising like thunder. Somewhere a block or so away, there is the sound of a building collapsing with a roar.

RONEY [*pulling him round*]: Come on!

Quatermass hangs on to his arm and together they make for the door. As Roney pushes it open the curtains billow wildly.

The flicker of distant flames strikes their faces. Smoke and dust swirl in. The ground shakes under their feet as they go . . .

Dissolve . . . to an American TV-news studio.

In total contrast, a harmonious chime sounds softly through the muffled quiet of the studio where a row of clocks give New York time and that of points west.

Pan to the Newscaster at his desk. He has his script ready, but an additional sheet is just being pushed into his hand by a shirt-sleeved youth who points quickly to the bottom line and dodges quickly out of camera range. The Newscaster glances at the sheet, looks towards the control gallery and nods.

He turns to the camera in front of him.

NEWSCASTER: Here is the 4 p.m. news flash. [*He reads.*] Latest reports on the amazing and still unexplained paralysis of London, England. In the past hour it seems to have spread to outlying districts. Power breakdowns have plunged vast areas of the city into total darkness, and all contact with the rest of the city has been broken. Planes have been diverted from London Airport. However, we are going to try and get an eye-witness account, by boosted radio link, from a U.S. freighter now above the stricken city. [*Putting on a pair of headphones.*] Go ahead, pilot. Go ahead, pilot . . .

There is a muffled sound of aero-engines, and the Pilot's voice comes back faintly, through static:

'Hello . . . hello . . . I'm over central London at this moment . . .'

Cut—to the interior of the freight plane, with the sound of motors at full volume.

The Pilot is looking down through his side window as he speaks into his hand-microphone. Beside him, the Co-pilot looks watchfully ahead.

PILOT: . . . But it's completely unrecognizable. All blacked out, except for those fires down there. Same as in World War Two. [*He looks straight out.*] I can still see lighted areas out beyond—they must be twenty or thirty miles away, though. [*Excitedly.*] Hey—one of 'em just blacked out—a whole great patch! [*To the Co-pilot.*] Did you see that, Joe? I guess that means it's still spreading, whatever it is. Now I'm just going to take one last turn around before heading for our diversion field.

He banks the aircraft. The cabin tilts and a diffused light creeps into it from below.

PILOT: Go down for a closer look . . . All smoke . . . and a lot of fires. Hey, looks like some kind of building went down then . . . a big place, by the river. [*He passes a hand across his eyes, as if to clear his vision.*] . . . Now there's something! Right ahead! [*To the Co-pilot.*] Hey, look at that, will you! I don't know what this is, but . . . doesn't seem like a fire . . .

Again his hand goes across his eyes and he shakes his head. Something about the instrument panel bothers him.

PILOT: Joe, take over a second. And watch it. There's something—[*Turning to him.*] I said take over! What's the matter with you—

The cabin is lurching. The Co-pilot topples limply back in his seat.

Grim-faced, the Pilot fights the bucking control-wheel. The engines roar and the light of fires whitens his face . . . and more than fires: a light that beats. Suddenly he claps his arm across his eyes and gives a cry of terror. The plane wheels over, out of control . . .

Cut—to a wide, high shot. Through drifting smoke, fires are glowing in the darkness. Buildings project through the murk, and now one of them slowly collapses.

Pan across this black landscape of London, picked out only in points of fire. The freight-plane can be heard screaming on downwards . . . to

end in an echoing crash. Cut to a ground level shot of a large building in flames. There are no human figures to be seen, no fire engines in attendance, no attempt to stop it. It is burning itself out. A wall bulges and collapses.

Cut to another street, alight on both sides. Again, no action is being taken as flame and smoke swirl together along its surface. Cut to a tiny knot of people, watching as if hypnotized, their mask-like faces lit by the fires. There is no longer fear in them at the reverberating boom that shakes under their feet, or any human reaction to the sight in front of them . . .

Cut to a close shot of the street name-plate ‘HOBBS LANE’ lit by a fiercer glow.

Cut to the floor of the excavation. Through swirling dust, it can be seen that the incandescent hull has almost gone . . . sublimated into the monstrous shape that hangs above the pit. A shimmering form bursts rhythmically into a blinding glare. It extends upwards for a hundred feet or more, and its outline is defined. It recalls that of the Martian bodies . . . a terrible horned thing!

Cut—to the interior of the haunted house.

Close shot of Potter, who has considerably enlarged the cavity in the brickwork. He looks cautiously through it, up at the huge beating shape. Then he turns, with decision in his face. He glances across at where the unconscious girl is lying, and starts towards the door.

There is a sound in the outer passage. A door creaks, followed by scuffling feet in the rubble of plaster. He steps quickly back, looking round for a weapon. He picks up a heavy iron fire-grid from the debris on the floor, and weighs it in his hand. He freezes against the wall.

The scuffling footsteps come closer . . . the door is pushed open. And Potter’s face relaxes.

POTTER: Roney!

RONEY [entering]: Who’s that? Potter—

Quatermass is with him, swaying and dishevelled.

QUATERMASS [his voice thick]: What are you doing here? Where’s the girl?

Potter indicates where she is lying and Roney scrambles across.

RONEY: What did it?

POTTER [wretchedly]: I did—I had to. I’d have been killed if I hadn’t. She isn’t dead—

RONEY: All right—I know.

Quatermass is crawling across to the cavity in the brickwork. He gazes out at the apparition. Roney joins him.

QUATERMASS: So . . . that’s it . . .

Their eyes go up, ranging over its great height.

RONEY: The Devil . . . the horned Devil! [He sees Quatermass is shaking like a man with acute fever.] Don’t look at it. [He pulls him away, and Quatermass slumps down.]

POTTER: The hull’s gone completely.

RONEY: Mass into energy—hovering there like a great fireball. The focus of it all, the still centre. You don’t know what it’s like outside—fires and destruction—men driven mad! [He looks at Potter.] What about you?

POTTER: Just—a bit sick.

RONEY: You must be like me—immune. We’re the lucky ones. Or unlucky. I was nearly killed a dozen times, coming here—they can sense you, pick you out. But he was with me and that confused them—

POTTER: What can we do?

RONEY: I don’t know. Now we’ve finally made it . . . I don’t know.

POTTER: When you came I was going to try and reach the barracks—look for some explosive or—

RONEY: You’d never get through.

But what Potter has said is giving him an idea. He peers again through the gap, down towards the excavation below them. He ponders.

RONEY [slowly]: Mass into energy . . . electrical energy, at a guess. [He suddenly gives a nervous laugh, and Potter shoots him an anxious look.] All right, boy—I’m still with you. Ever study legends? Then you’d know the Devil’s traditional enemies. Iron and water.

QUATERMASS [listening now]: What are you—driving at?

RONEY [excitedly]: Legend gave us the first clues in this business. It may be worth trying again! If it was possible to fling a mass of steel cable through the middle of it—connected to wet earth—that might make sense, both magical and scientific!

POTTER: It’s too simple—

RONEY: Simple, yes—but don’t you see, it’s what they’d never allow for! That even a little scrap of knowledge like that should be in the possession of minds free to use it!

POTTER: Yes . . . [After a moment.] There’s a lot of steel chain out in the street, builders’ tackle—

He starts towards the door.

RONEY: Grab as much as you can—and be careful!

He listens to Potter’s quiet footsteps moving down the passage outside. Then he picks up the fire-iron and sets to work to enlarge the hole in the outer wall. Breathing heavily where he lies, Quatermass watches him.

QUATERMASS: Going to try it from here?

RONEY: No. It’s too far to throw.

He goes on hacking at the bricks. More fall away.

From the direction of the street outside, there is a human scream, and a confused din that is almost immediately lost in the constant background throb that shakes both air and ground.

They look at each other.

Roney starts towards the door, pulls it open—just as Potter arrives with a rush, dragging a heavy coil of chain after him.

RONNEY [pulling him inside]: We thought that was you—

POTTER [teeth chattering]: They saw me. Then a man came blundering into them—a blind man with a dog—[*He lifts the chain with difficulty.*] That enough, d’you think?

RONNEY: Get the end fast to that waste-pipe. It’ll lead down to the main sewers.

Potter busies himself with this. Roney hauls the main coil quickly across to the hole in the wall. He glances round for something to use as a weight, picks up the heavy fire-grid and starts securing it to the other end of the chain. Quatermass pulls himself to his feet.

QUATERMASS: I’ll try it.

RONNEY: No!

QUATERMASS: It’s the only chance. I’m less likely to be detected. [*He nods down towards the excavation floor.*] There are still men down there.

RONNEY [after glancing down, reluctantly]: Maybe you’re right. Don’t get too close. Throw it as far as you can—right up into the fireball.

Quatermass squeezes himself through the gap.

Cut to the outside of the ruined house as Quatermass pulls himself through. The blasting light beats down, pulsing.

He glances up at the source of it for a moment, and shrinks back. Recovered, he reaches back for the coil of chain. He drops it down the slope below. It hits the roof of the hut with a thud and a rattle . . . but the noise is lost in the sonorous shuddering that fills the pit. He starts to climb down it, hand over hand.

Above, Roney looks down cautiously through the cavity.

Quatermass reaches the roof of the hut and crawls across it, paying out the chain as he goes . . . and down the side of it to the ground. He staggers, holds his free arm over his eyes to shield them, and goes on down the lower ladderway. At the foot of it is a crouching figure. Reaching it he sees it is Breen. His eyes are closed, the skin dark and cracked. Quatermass touches him—and the lifeless, drained body topples stiffly and lightly aside. He forces his eyes towards the other men in the pit. They are evidently in the same condition. He presses on, face screwed up against the piercing light. Stumbling, weighed down by the chain, he seems to lose direction . . .

Cut to Roney, watching through the cavity in the wall above. He mutters quickly to Potter, at his side, and starts after Quatermass. Potter pulls on the chain, taking the strain on it, as Roney goes down hand over hand, slithering and clawing.

Cut to the floor of the excavation, where Quatermass is weaving blindly about. He comes to a standstill and peers up at the source of the light. At the end of his tether, he drops to his knees.

Roney comes scrambling down the ladderway. He picks up the weighted chain from the ground where it fell from Quatermass’s hand. He starts forward, lifting the weight high, swinging it in readiness. Track with him as he stumbles forward. Earth and stones are flying at him, blinding him, as he rushes to the lip of the crater where the hull was.

With every scrap of his strength, he flings the weighted chain high.

Almost instantly there is a blinding flash that blots out all vision. A deafening electrical discharge.

When it is over, the excavation is totally dark and silent. Gradually, dim shapes can be made out. One is that of Quatermass as he rises from where he was flung flat by the blast. Dust hangs thinly across the excavation. The only light is that reflected by the sky from fires further away. The apparition has gone.

QUATERMASS [looking about, calls]: Roney. Roney—

He makes his way to the crater, and wanders bleakly along the edge of it. There is no trace of the man. When he murmurs his name again it is not in hope of any response, but rather as a last confused salute . . .

He turns. One or two figures are appearing at the top of the ramp. Men . . . fearful and curious enough . . . but human men . . .

Creep in end music . . .

Dissolve . . . to a television studio, some weeks later.

Quatermass is seated at a table with a microphone in front of him. On the wall behind him is a demonstration board with a large diagram of the hull. In chairs nearby are Potter, Barbara, and others . . . Sladden, Mr. Gilpin, Sapper West. An explanatory programme is evidently just concluding. TV cameras track in and out.

QUATERMASS [speaking to front]: . . . That is the full account. Matthew Roney was a brave man and a friend. Much more—it is with his kind that hope lies. For they have outgrown the Martian in us. [*Track in to close-up.*] If another of these things should ever be found, we are armed with knowledge. But we also have knowledge of ourselves . . . of the ancient, destructive urges in us, that grow more deadly as our populations approach in size and complexity those of ancient Mars. Every war crisis, witch-hunt, race riot, and purge . . . is a reminder and a warning. [*He pauses.*] We are the Martians. If we cannot control the inheritance within us . . . this will be their second dead planet!

Music to full.

Fade in caption ‘THE END’.

Roll credits and fade to black.

CAST

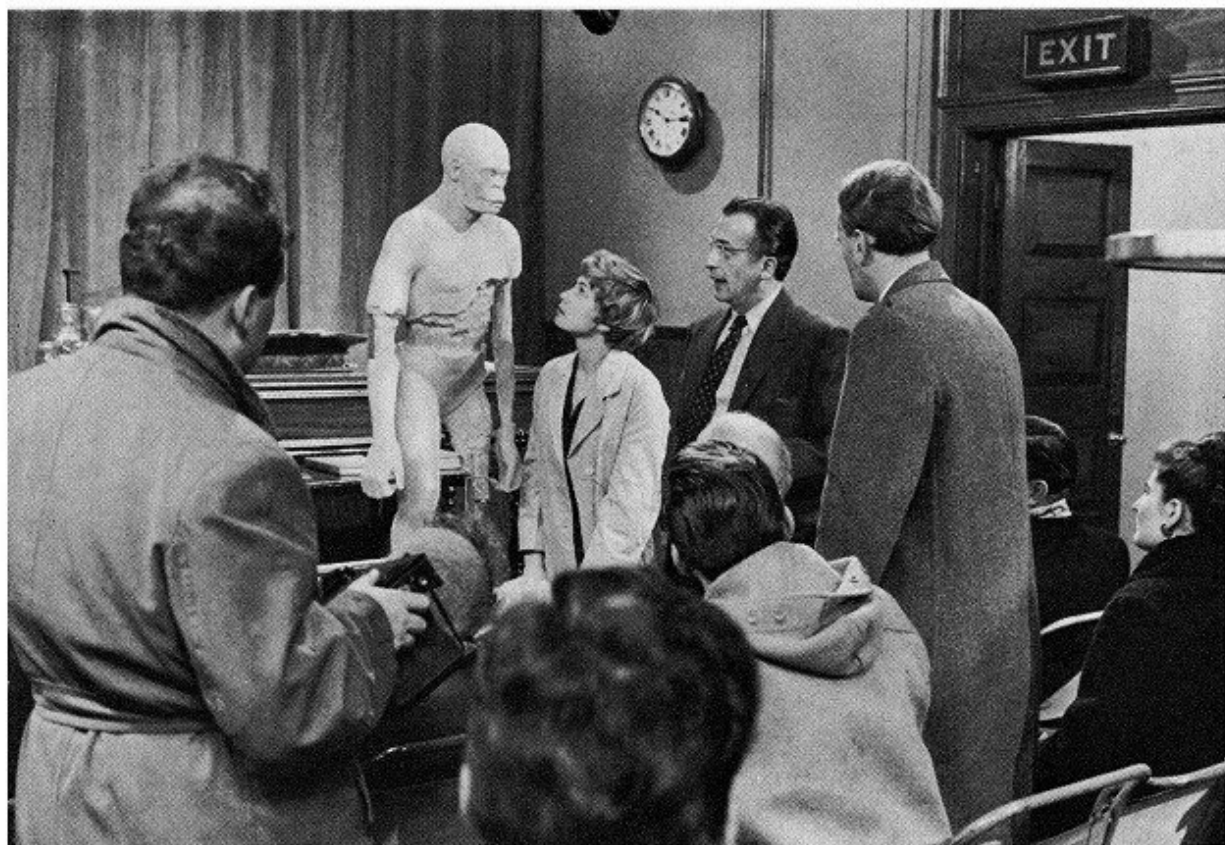
of the production by RUDOLPH CARTIER for B.B.C. Television
December 1958–January 1959

- PROF. BERNARD QUATERMASS — André Morell
- DR. MATTHEW RONEY — Cec Linder
- COLONEL JAMES BREEN — Anthony Bushel
- CAPTAIN POTTER — John Stratton
- BARBARA JUDD — Christine Finn
- TRUCK DRIVER — Van Boolean
- GRAB OPERATOR — Michael Raghan
- WORKMAN — Lionel Ngakane
- FOREMAN — John Rae
- BAINES — Arthur Hewlett
- ARMITAGE — Michael Bird
- NEWS INTERVIEWER — Janet Burnell
- MINISTER FOR WAR — Robert Perceval
- PRIVATE SECRETARY — Richard Dare
- MISS DOBSON — Nan Branton
- SERGEANT — Michael Ripper
- CORPORAL GIBSON — Harold Goodwin
- SAPPER WEST — John Walker
- SAPPERS — Clifford Cox, Brian Gilmar
- POLICE INSPECTOR — Ian Ainsley
- P.C. ELLIS — Victor Platt
- POLICEMEN — Patrick Connor, Kenneth Warren
- MRS. CHILCOT — Hilda Barry
- MR. CHILCOT — Howell Davies
- MISS GROOME — Madge Brindley
- NEWS EDITOR — Tony Quinn
- NUTTAL — Keith Banks
- GEORGE — Frank Crane
- JAMES FULLALOVE — Brian Worth
- JOURNALISTS — Bill Shine, Allan McClelland, Ian Wilson, Stanley Vine, Mark Eden, Patrick Maynard, Anne Blake
- SLADDEN — Richard Shaw
- VICAR — Noel Howlett
- OFFICIAL — Edward Burnham
- ELECTRICIAN — Harold Siddons
- TV CAMERAMAN — John Scott Martin
- TV INTERVIEWER — Anthony Pendrell
- PUB CUSTOMER — Bernard Spear
- BLONDE — Louise Gainsborough
- MAN IN BLAZER — Arthur Brander
- TATTERED MAN — Sydney Bromley
- AMERICAN NEWSCASTER — Stuart Nichol
- AMERICON PILOT — Budd Knapp

Sets designed by Clifford Hatts
Special Vision Effects by Jack Kine and Bernard Wilkie
Special Sound Effects by Desmond Briscoe
Film Cameraman—A. A. Englander, F.R.P.S.
Music composed by Trevor Duncan



‘Been down there a long time. Maybe hundreds of years’



‘He had the face of an ape. But he had a big brain. And he stood like a man!’



‘Gentlemen, we must not lightly agree to this plan’



‘I don’t think this is a pipe’



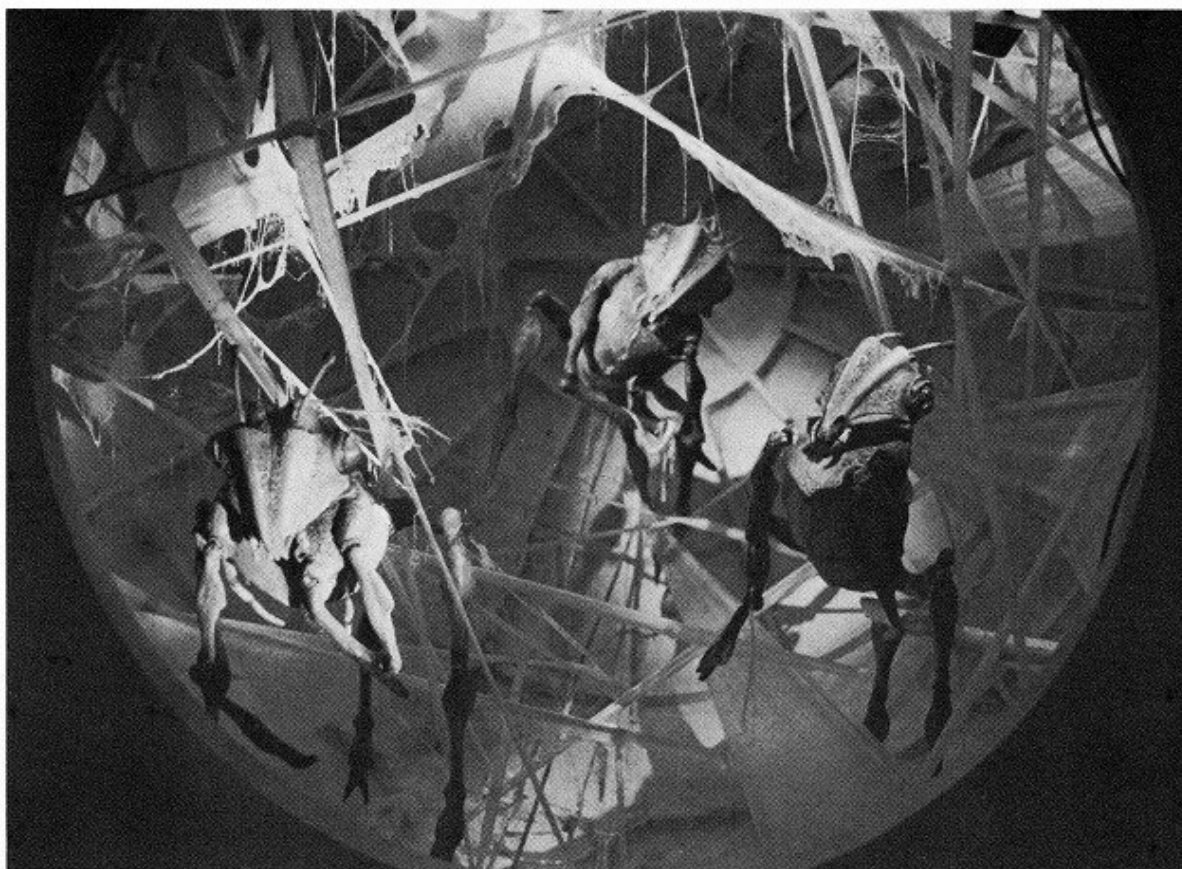
‘It was criminal! ... these fragments are falling to pieces ... vital information, all lost!’



‘It was - a kind of figure! It went through the wall!’



‘The demons ...!’



‘They’re dead. They’ve been dead a long time’



‘He wasn’t like a human person any more!’



‘As if he was seeking sanctuary ...’



‘Let me go! Let me go back - ’



‘Anyone still there, remember?’ ‘Yes ... Breen ...’



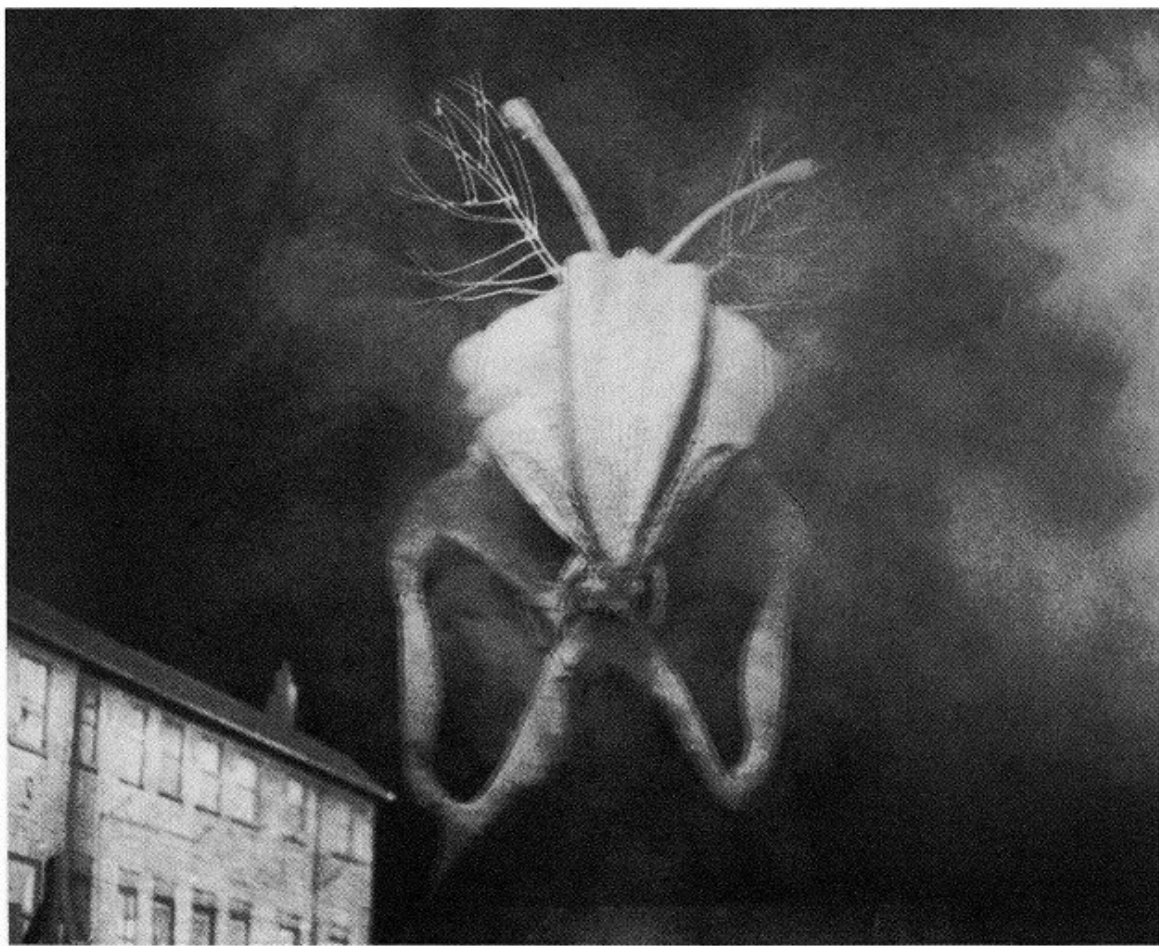
‘Use your brain - your memory! Keep hold!’



‘All blacked out, except for those fires down there’



‘The Devil - the horned Devil!’



Hob