A QUATERMASS CLASSIC

THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT

NIGEL KNEALE

THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT

The first manned space-rocket plummets back to earth long overdue. Professor Quatermass and his team from the British Experimental Rocket Group wait anxiously for the crew to emerge.

But only one man is left aboard—a man too shocked to tell what happened to his colleagues. It is the beginning of a reign of terror which will hold London in its merciless grip—and threaten the entire world!

In Arrow by Nigel Kneale

THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT
QUATERMASS II
QUATERMASS AND THE PIT
QUATERMASS

NIGEL KNEALE

The Quatermass Experiment

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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. For instance, pre-filmed scenes are not distinguished from those performed live in the electronic studio, though anyone interested could probably make an intelligent guess from their location.

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

FOREWORD

Today's television drama is a precisely processed product. Good or bad, it is the result of closely-timed scripting and the editing of many takes on film or tape, sound dubbed and music added, made to fit exactly into its slot—for which it may wait months lying on a shelf.

THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT was written and produced 26 years ago, in the summer of 1953, as a serial in six weekly parts. Half an hour each, and they all over-ran wildly, by five or ten minutes. My fault entirely, as I had not time for pruning or second thoughts. In fact I was still writing the last episodes when it started on the air. It was all performed live, with only a few pre-filmed sequences, in the antiquated studios at Alexander Palace. The TV cameras there were the oldest operational ones in the world, in use since 1936 apart from being moth-balled during the war. They had fixed lenses and back-to-front, upside-down viewfinder images that must have given their operators a mild form of madness when they panned. But their very fuzziness probably helped the story.

It was the first science-fiction-type piece to be put out on British TV. I say 'type' because it has been pointed out that I don't really write science-fiction at all, but just use the forms of it. I suppose that's true. I found what science-fiction I read to be too often either facetious or mechanistic. I missed live people in them, and those were what I wanted to catch. They had to be worth acting.

1953 was an over-confident year. Rationing was coming to an end. Everest had just been climbed, the Queen crowned, and our first Comet jets were being deceptively successful. A sour note seemed indicated. So—a space flight that blew horrifically back.

The very notion of manned rockets needed explanation at that time. It was years before the first Sputnik went into orbit. Re-reading the script now, I'm relieved to find the re-entry routine makes elementary sense. My troubled professor had to do the explaining, as he also had to pull the world's irons out of the fire in Episode Six. I found a name for him in the London phone directory. There were several Quatermasses in it then. They're all gone now.

The producer-director was Rudolph Cartier. Through a combination of natural ebullience and Viennese charm he overcame the innumerable obstacles and got the show on. He found an excellent cast, led by the late Reginald Tate as Quatermass, and Duncan Lamont as a notable man-into-monster. There was a small host of such rich character-portrayers as Katie Johnson, who at the age of 75 made something beautiful out of the old lady on whose house the rocket fell.

The story depended on its characters. It had to be strictly earth-bound. We had no way of providing visual fantasies of the STAR WARS or CLOSE ENCOUNTERS kind. There was no special-effects department in the BBC. The nearest we came to it was at the final climax. I set this in Westminster Abbey because, apart from any symbolic overtones, it was the place that remained vividly in the audience's mind from the Coronation a few weeks earlier, and the simplest scenery would act as a reminder. The monster's appearance there, swollen to a hundred-foot mass of undulating fronds, presented problems. In the end I had to do it myself. Stuck through holes in a blow-up of Poets' Corner were my two hands in rubber gloves liberally stuck over with vegetation. I had prepared this model the night before, with my girl friend's help, in the crumbling studio where rainwater dripped on us through the ceiling. Against the odds, it worked. The fuzzy cameras helped and the audience's imagination did the rest.

Each week when the show ended we all went out on the Ally Pally terrace to get our breath back. We looked down on the thickening forest of TV aerials below and we knew they could all have been watching us.

Those were the days. They don't seem long ago, but this spring my girl friend and I celebrated our Silver Wedding.

Nigel Kneale

PART ONE

‘Contact has been established’

Fade in opening music.

Fade in . . . a close shot of a model rocket mounted on a stand. It is a two-stage assembly—a small, finned nose section mounted on a much more massive basic unit.

A VOICE: An experiment . . . is an operation designed to discover some unknown truth. It is also a risk . . .

Pan from the model to the scene beyond. This is the central control room of the British Experimental Rocket Group. A low electronic hum comes from massive banks of apparatus. Dials and gauges are being watched by a tiny group of people—three men and a woman. Their faces are haggard under the strip-lighting.

Professor Bernard Quatermass, the head of the Group, is a grey-haired man in his fifties. His vigorous personality is subdued now by long fatigue and anxiety. The desk beside him is covered with computer-cards and scribbled sheets. Beyond is a panel of control-apparatus, with hooded monitor-screens and rows of push-buttons, dials, and indicator-lights. Over these crouches John Paterson, his second-in-command, a younger man whose apparent stolidity hides a constant hypertension. Just behind and slightly raised is a duplicate panel where Marsh, an assistant engineer, is watching wearily.

A buzzer sounds. Paterson picks up a receiver and after a moment turns to Quatermass.

PATERSON: Tarooma coming through. D’you want it on the speaker?

Quatermass glances at the woman slumped in a chair nearby. Judith Carroon is about thirty years old, good-looking, with deep, intelligent eyes. Like the men, she wears a drab dust-coat. She is staring fixedly down at some orbital diagrams.

QUATERMASS: Might as well.

PATERSON [*into receiver*]: Hello . . . hello, Tarooma Base. Ready for your report. Your report, please.

He flicks a switch. A nearby loudspeaker crackles with static and through it comes a voice with an Australian accent. Judith tenses as she turns.

AUSTRALIAN VOICE: George Harris reporting from Tarooma Base, 3.30 hours Western Australia time. Doppler monitoring has proceeded continuously, but no trace of the rocket has been received. Repeat, no trace.

PATERSON: Message recorded—thank you, George. Same this end, I’m afraid. Keep at it and come through again in six hours. [*He puts the receiver down and looks at Quatermass.*] Fifty-seven hours now.

Quatermass nods. He crosses to Judith, who has sunk back into her chair.

QUATERMASS: What can I say?

JUDITH: If they were in a plane and it was hopelessly overdue . . . we’d know they were dead. But in that thing . . . they may still be alive.

QUATERMASS: Of course.

JUDITH: I’m not sure I want them to be. [*She meets his stare.*] If they’re heading towards the sun . . . being drawn into it . . . or out into the darkness . . . in either case they know it’s happening to them, and that they’re helpless!

QUATERMASS: My dear—

JUDITH: What went wrong?

QUATERMASS: A component failure—it must have been.

JUDITH: You can’t be sure. It might have been something in our calculations, and then everything was wrong from the start and they never had a chance. I’ve been sitting here thinking . . . that perhaps it was in my work . . . it was my mistake . . .

QUATERMASS: Everything was checked and re-checked.

JUDITH: I took part in the checking too, didn’t I?

Her face is quivering. She is heading towards a breakdown.

QUATERMASS: Why are you so determined to—? Look, if it’s a matter of apportioning blame, then I rate most for subjecting you to this. When you married Victor, I should have taken you off the project.

JUDITH: I wouldn’t have gone.

QUATERMASS: That’s what I was selfish enough to tell myself. You were too useful to me here. Now . . . all these hours you’ve been making yourself face the worst possibilities. Face the hopeful ones too.

JUDITH: Such as?

QUATERMASS: Your husband and the others aren’t just brave men—they’re experts, with a great deal of resource. That’s why they were chosen.

JUDITH: I try to remember that.

QUATERMASS: Now you’re going to go and get some sleep—under strict orders, if necessary.

As she pulls herself to her feet, a buzzer sounds and Marsh answers.

MARSH: Central control room . . . just a moment. It’s Mr. Blaker, sir, from the Ministry—he’s demanding to see you.

QUATERMASS: He’s here? Hasn’t he had enough, phoning every ten minutes? Tell them to throw him out! No . . . let him come through. [*As Marsh mutters into the receiver, he sighs.*] Damn them, damn them all . . . they spend their time obstructing whatever you’re trying to do, and when you don’t do it properly, they’re straight down on your neck . . . [*His voice trails away. He is looking at Judith.*] Why haven’t you gone?

JUDITH: I can't. You know that.

A light flashes above the door, and Quatermass goes to open it himself. He admits Blaker, a heavy-faced senior civil servant, whose professional pleasantness has worn very thin.

QUATERMASS: Blaker, come in.

BLAKER [*taking in the scene*]: Still no news?

QUATERMASS [*shakes his head*]: I don't know why you've given yourself the journey down. I promised to report anything—

BLAKER: I had to see you in person. It's a question of a press release.

QUATERMASS: What? Must you, already?

BLAKER: Obviously I don't want to visit this on you just now, but the committee feel strongly that after this lapse of time—

QUATERMASS: Fifty-seven hours, four minutes! I know!

BLAKER: Believe me, Quatermass, I'm trying to help you. The nastier the facts, the more it matters how they're presented. The whole question of future development—

QUATERMASS: To hell with future development! If you've got to break it to the world, tell them the bald truth. We lost all contact with the rocket when it swerved out of its estimated orbit at 28,000 miles an hour. Can you make that sound pretty?

BLAKER: Still no idea what did it?

QUATERMASS [*a glance at Judith, and he drops his voice*]: A fault . . . electrical, electronic, mechanical. Whatever it was, the stages failed to separate, that's all. Oh, you can assure your committee we provided reserve units . . . spares . . . and spares of the spares. I'm sorry I couldn't quite guarantee their investment.

BLAKER [*sharply*]: You can take it our sole concern now is for the crew! Frankly, what are their chances of survival?

QUATERMASS: Equally frankly, I don't—[*Checking himself*] How can anybody answer a question like that? And for heaven's sake what d'you imagine *my* concern is? What—

There is a sudden high-pitched and repeated buzzing from the control panel. Paterson grabs the receiver.

QUATERMASS: The radio line! [*He hurries across, Blaker following him.*]

PATERSON [*into receiver*]: Hello, Tarooma Base. Standing by to receive you. Come in, Tarooma.

He presses the switch which sets the loudspeaker crackling into life.

AUSTRALIAN VOICE [*excitedly*]: We're getting a radar trace! Very faint, and the direction doesn't make any sort of sense—but it's there, and coming fast!

JUDITH: A trace coming fast—

AUSTRALIAN VOICE: It's heading towards earth. Estimated distance 40,000 miles. We think it's the rocket. Are you receiving me?

PATERSON: Receiving you loud and clear. Hold it a minute—

He moves aside for Quatermass to take over.

QUATERMASS [*into receiver*]: Quatermass here. Can you give us code fixes? Quickly?

AUSTRALIAN VOICE: We're sending the first through now—on channel B. Stand by.

Quatermass turns quickly to the main computer-bank. After a moment tiny signal-lights blink, registering the reception of information. He rotates a flat knob, watching a dial . . . a faint clicking begins. Judith is at his side as other dials light up and indicators turn. Folds of punched plastic begin emerging from three slits. Quatermass examines these.

QUATERMASS: It's coming at a very steep angle.

JUDITH: A collision path?

QUATERMASS: Not yet. It all depends on this curve being confirmed. The predictor's showing an elliptical approach not too far off the original orbit.

BLAKER [*coming closer*]: What does that mean?

QUATERMASS: It may bring them round the earth instead of smack into it.

BLAKER: Then they've a chance! [*He catches Judith's eye.*] I mean, surely—

JUDITH: Just the beginning of one.

Quatermass gives her a quick glance. She seems alert and in possession of herself again.

AUSTRALIAN VOICE: Do you get that ellipse?

QUATERMASS: Tell him yes. And ask if they're attempting radio contact.

Paterson repeats this into the receiver.

BLAKER: Does all this . . . give any idea how far they've been?

QUATERMASS: The best part of a million miles from earth.

BLAKER: My God! That's beyond anything you ever allowed for!

QUATERMASS: A bit more than our modest fifteen thousand—

The loudspeaker crackles.

AUSTRALIAN VOICE: The radio link? Yes, we're testing that the whole time. We're getting no response so far . . . and their speech transmitter's still dead, too. But this must be the rocket—d'you agree?

Still scrutinizing the computations, nods to Paterson.

PATERSON [*into receiver*]: It looks like it. So keep sending those co-ordinates.

AUSTRALIAN VOICE: We will. Until it leaves our scansion field. By then you ought to be picking it up as well, unless . . . Before I sign off, is Mrs. Carroon with you?

PATERSON: She's here.

AUSTRALIAN VOICE: Well . . . tell her we're all praying hard at this end. I mean . . . even harder.

The loudspeaker goes dead. Judith gives Quatermass a wan smile. For a moment there are only the faint sounds of the computer.

BLAKER: This is wonderfully good—

QUATERMASS: No hats over the windmill yet, Blaker.

JUDITH [*slowly*]: The radio link . . .

QUATERMASS: Yes, it all depends on that. We can do nothing for them till we get a response.

BLAKER: From the crew?

QUATERMASS: From their apparatus. That's more important now.

BLAKER: More important?

QUATERMASS: Whether they can hear us or not—even if they can speak to us—those men are pretty well helpless. Our only real chance of saving them is to bring them down by remote control—as we originally meant to do.

BLAKER: And can you?

QUATERMASS: If the conditions are right . . . the timing . . . the line of approach . . . we can attempt separation.

BLAKER: Separation?

QUATERMASS: Of the stages, man!

BLAKER: Oh . . . of course.

QUATERMASS: I wondered whether you'd really understood . . . whether you people ever understand. You consider and you make recommendations but —! [*To Judith.*] Keep an eye on these for a moment.

She takes his place by the computer as he steers Blaker over to the model rocket on its stand. He taps the shining nose section.

QUATERMASS: Those three men are there—in the front stage. And they're still locked on to that—[*indicating the much larger rear section*]—the nuclear propulsion unit. Eight hundred tons of it!

BLAKER: That's the . . . part that was to be abandoned in orbit . . . ?

QUATERMASS: Right. The stages were to separate at a height of fifteen thousand miles—the crew stage to make two observational circuits of the earth and be brought back. The rear stage to stay up there—for ever, or for re-use some time—too dangerously radioactive to risk bringing it down. You see what that means?

BLAKER: If you can't separate the stages now . . . ?

QUATERMASS [*quietly*]: Then we've got to let the whole thing go—for good.

BLAKER: Abandon them.

QUATERMASS: You'll find it on the files—a policy decision for every eventuality.

BLAKER: All the same—

There is a flutter of excitement behind them. The buzzer is shrilling and the loudspeaker crackles into life. Quatermass hurries back to the control panels.

PATERSON [*into receiver*]: Come in, Tarooma Base—

AUSTRALIAN VOICE [*excitedly*]: The radio link! It's working!

JUDITH: Oh God—

PATERSON [*into receiver*]: Are you sure?

AUSTRALIAN VOICE: Faint but definite response from the rocket's automatic gear. No word from the crew yet, but . . .

PATERSON: That doesn't matter!

He looks quickly, emotionally, at the others. The camera pans across their faces . . . the set, strained look already beginning to clear from them, at the prospect of positive action.

PATERSON [*into receiver*]: I'm holding the line open. Report any change . . . anything . . .

AUSTRALIAN VOICE: You can count on that.

Quatermass is checking the steadily-issuing computation strips.

QUATERMASS: They'll be entering our own field fairly soon. [*Turns.*] Let's get ready for them. Re-set all scanners to these data, John! Marsh—call up the stand-by maintenance crew! I want everything checked and re-checked for remote-control separation. We're late already—[*he glances at the wall clock with the shadow of a smile*]—by about fifty-seven hours, eight minutes . . .

Paterson and Marsh are already dictating rapid instructions. Signal lights reply . . . muffled voices. The whole station is coming alive after the long helplessness. Fade in linking music . . .

A slow dissolve . . . to the face of the main control panel. It is some time later, and a steady high-pitched note is sounding. An oscillograph needle flickers regularly. Cut to Quatermass, watching the dials intently. Judith Carroon and Blaker are nearby. Paterson and Marsh are working at the duplicate control panel.

BLAKER: It sounds quite . . . regular now.

QUATERMASS: Yes. Full response. [*His glance flicks from dial to gauge as he makes minute adjustments.*]

MARSH: Altitude . . . 4,340 miles . . .

QUATERMASS: I'm going ahead in—[*he glances at the panel clock*]—1 minute, 45 seconds.

PATERSON: Manually? Sure you ought to—

QUATERMASS: Yes! If there's any error this time, it's going to be mine. Stand by . . .

A wider shot shows white-overalled maintenance technicians in position by the computer banks, the casings of which have been removed to expose the entire system for instant access. Positions are shifted, muscles tensed. Blaker tugs his formal collar open.

JUDITH [*suddenly*]: Before you do it—try to reach them again!

QUATERMASS: Quiet—

JUDITH: Please! In case it's possible now for them to—

QUATERMASS: John, do it! Quickly!

Paterson leans quickly forward to a microphone set in the duplicate panel and flicks a switch.

PATERSON: Base Control to rocket—we're about to attempt separation. Have you understood? Are you able to reply? Greene—Reichenheim—Carroon?

JUDITH [*leaning quickly across*]: Victor . . . Victor!

PATERSON: Are you receiving me? Over.

He flicks the switch again, and the loudspeaker crackles. There is no sound through the layers of static.

QUATERMASS: All right, that's enough. Now stand by!

Judith turns away. Quatermass is slowly rotating two large control knobs, synchronizing his movements with infinite care, guided by the swaying needles in front of him.

MARSH: Altitude 4,300 . . . thirty seconds to go . . .

Cut to the tense faces of the technicians, lit by the faint upward glow from the exposed computer-circuits. Cut to Blaker, staring, unaware of the sweat on his face. Cut to Judith, her eyes closed . . . then she turns towards the panel.

MARSH: Five seconds.

QUATERMASS [*breathes*]: Here we go . . .

A moment's pause—then he plunges home two push-buttons. A light instantly starts flashing on the panel. There is an instinctive reaction in the control room, a half-incredulous grunt from Paterson.

QUATERMASS: Wait . . . !

The flashing settles to a steady glow.

QUATERMASS: That ought to be it. Watch the screens now.

All eyes are on the hooded monitor screens, on a moving point of light.

PATERSON: It's splitting! They're moving apart—look! He's done it! He's done it—

QUATERMASS [*sharply*]: All right—quiet! [*Watching the instruments beside the main screen.*] They're clear now. I'm going to turn them. Marsh—gimbal system: you still read a full contact?

MARSH: Check.

QUATERMASS: Right.

He turns another knob to its limit, presses buttons. Another light starts flashing on the panel.

MARSH: Full response.

Cut to Blaker, confused and frowning. He turns to Judith.

BLAKER: I don't understand—

JUDITH [*whispers*]: It's the only way to reduce the speed—turn it and fire front-stage motors against the line of flight—

The second light stops flashing, glows steadily beside the first.

MARSH: Turn completed.

QUATERMASS: Deviation—check!

MARSH: Point zero seven.

Quatermass makes adjustments on the panel.

MARSH: Point zero two . . . zero.

Another push-button . . . a third light flashes for several seconds before steadying. Quatermass stands slowly, watchfully, back from the panel. The tension in the room is relaxing strangely, nobody speaking. Then the buzzer sounds and Paterson picks up the receiver.

PATERSON: Hello . . . Tarooma Base. Yes, it worked . . .

AUSTRALIAN VOICE [*through loudspeaker*]: Congratulations—nice, nice going! If you can hear some funny sounds on the line it's not interference—just the boys at this end letting go! Are you directing the rocket down to us?

PATERSON: No . . . taking account of braking ellipses . . . they should land on this side. But keep in contact.

AUSTRALIAN VOICE: You bet.

Cut to Judith as she comes to Quatermass's side.

JUDITH: Well?

QUATERMASS: You say it.

JUDITH: For the very first time . . . it isn't just words. They have got a chance.

He nods. Fade in linking music . . .

Slow dissolve . . . to a close shot of monitor screen, on which a sweeping radius of light picks out a moving spot. It is some time later, and the

sound of the radio link has altered—it is now much 'fatter', less unearthly.

Cut to Paterson, watching the screen, which lights up his face in the darkened control room. He is at the front panel, with Quatermass beside him.

PATERSON: Past the Channel coast now—

QUATERMASS: Marsh, check velocity!

MARSH: Eight hundred and forty . . .

PATERSON: Decelerating nicely.

QUATERMASS: It's too low . . . far too low for that speed. I don't think it can reach us here . . . Marsh—give the warning anyway.

Cut to where Marsh is crouched over the rear monitor screens with Judith beside him. He turns to the microphone, presses a switch down.

MARSH: Control room calling all sections—the rocket has remained under our direction. We're trying to bring it down as close as possible to this point. About . . . three minutes to go. There may be some danger, so go to assembly points, everybody. Fire and crash squads continue to stand by. [*He flicks the switch up.*]

Cut to Paterson, his face wet with sweat as he watches the screen . . . and Quatermass.

PATERSON: The glide's too steep. Any steeper and—! [*He stabs a finger at the screen.*]

QUATERMASS: I know—

PATERSON: Smack down into London!

JUDITH: If only they themselves could—! [*She engages the microphone of the rear panel and leans forward.*] Control base here—you're nearly down! Can you receive us? Over! [*She snaps the key up. The loudspeaker hums emptily.*]

QUATERMASS: [*with decision*]: We'll drop it short.

PATERSON: Retro-charges?

QUATERMASS: Fire them . . . now!

Paterson presses a button. A flicker of signal lights responds.

MARSH: Six-twenty . . . five-twenty . . . four-sixty . . .

QUATERMASS: Fabric parabrakes . . . now!

Paterson presses another button. There is a quick burst of flashing light.

PATERSON: One! . . . [*Presses a second.*] . . . Two! . . . [*Presses a third. There is no response.*] My God, Three's failed . . .

MARSH: Two-eighty . . . two-twenty . . . one-eighty . . .

Suddenly the steady note of the radio-link cuts out. There is complete silence.

JUDITH: It's down!

QUATERMASS: Where? Marsh, quickly—where?

MARSH: Just getting it, sir . . .

PATERSON: The velocity shouldn't have been too high at the end—I mean, when it struck—

QUATERMASS [*to Marsh, impatiently*]: Well?

MARSH: I make it just south of London. Croydon—no, nearer than that—

Cut to the rocket. It has come to rest at a crooked angle, nose pointing upwards from the great furrow it has gouged through a row of suburban gardens. Steam is rising in clouds from the mud, and a large parachute is smouldering as it collapses to the ground.

One of the steering vanes has ripped open the side of a house—a small, detached villa—and swirling dust mixes with the smoke and steam. Shattered bricks fill the little front garden. The flattened fence burns.

The shock of the landing is just dying down, and the reaction beginning. A frightened dog barks. A child is crying. Somewhere a half-hysterical woman is shouting.

After a moment, Len Matthews comes into shot. A burly man, with trousers pulled on in a hurry. Coughing, he kicks aside a piece of smouldering fence and cautiously goes closer to the rocket—only to jump back from a wave of heat.

LEN: Whew!

His more fearful wife can be heard calling nearby.

MRS. MATTHEWS: Len! Len, come back—don't touch it!

LEN: I'm not going to!

Other voices are calling out now: 'That was a bomb!' 'All our windows have gone!' 'Look—there it is—look!'

The dog is still barking.

MRS. MATTHEWS: Oh Len, don't go too near!

LEN [*crossly*]: I can't—it's red-'ot!

She appears, terrified, her only purpose to get him away.

MRS. MATTHEWS [*with a little scream*]: Len—look at all the smoke! It's going to go off! Come back—come back, Len!

A voice shouts nearby: 'Somebody ring the fire brigade!'

A second voice yells back: 'I have!'

MRS. MATTHEWS: Len—we'll be done for!

LEN [*who is scared too*]: There'd be the old woman—

MRS. MATTHEWS: What?

LEN: In there—she'd be inside—

MRS. MATTHEWS [*grabbing him by the arm*]: You're not going, Len. She's dead—she must be! It's no use—

LEN: Leave me be!

A Policeman comes running up, almost out of breath. Len points to the rocket.

LEN: What is it? What d'you make of it?

POLICEMAN: I dunno . . . some sort of . . .

LEN: Keep clear—it's red hot!

MRS. MATTHEWS [*desperately*]: It's one of them *things*—they finally dropped one! It's going to blow up—can't you see!

LEN [*to the Policeman*]: There's an old girl in the house.

POLICEMAN: What, in there? Half a sec—

He turns to shout between cupped hands to the increasingly noisy watchers at nearby windows.

POLICEMAN: Keep away, everybody. Get ready to move out quick—this thing may be dangerous! Grab some clothes together and pack 'em up! [*Turns to Len.*] Come on—[*He leads the way through the smouldering wreckage.*]

A mans voice calls out: 'What is it, though?' *And a woman's:* 'Come on—let's get baby!'

MRS. MATTHEWS [*furiously*]: Len, you fool—it's no good, she's dead! Len! [*As her husband and the Policeman grope their way through the haze of dust, she looks up at the rocket and gives a sob of fear.*] You've left me! [*She breaks down and stumbles away, wailing.*] It's going to blow up! It's going to blow up!

LEN: Look—I'll go round and get in a front window. They're all bust, anyway—

POLICEMAN [*noticing something*]: Hold on—there's somebody up there. Look!

A little old lady appears in the split-open upper room. She is dusty but unhurt. She is clutching a ginger cat.

POLICEMAN [*calls*]: Ma—you all right?

MISS WILDE: I've been trying to catch Henry. He was so frightened.

The Policeman steps cautiously up on to the shattered staircase and takes her by the arm.

POLICEMAN: Hope this won't drop us both through . . . Now come along, my dear. Gently does it.

MISS WILDE [*as they come cautiously down*]: What went off? Have they started again?

POLICEMAN: Oh—er—look, is there anybody else in there?

MISS WILDE: No. How could there be?

POLICEMAN: All right.

MISS WILDE: I was just going to bed and there was that terrible light and noise and Henry ran under the dressing-table and—[*She sees the rocket clearly for the first time.*] Oh, whatever is that?

The Policeman helps her down the last steps. Fire engines are approaching with bells clanging.

POLICEMAN [*to Len*]: Here—get her somewhere safe! I've got to report this.

He hurries away.

MISS WILDE: It hasn't gone off . . .

LEN: Not yet. Come on, lift your feet up. [*He steers her apprehensively through the remains of her garden.*]

Cut to the central control room of the Rocket Group. Blaker is on the telephone. Judith, in a hastily pulled-on overcoat, is at his side. In the background Quatermass is also struggling into a coat.

BLAKER: But—there must be a report in by now! Look, old man, you know who I am—and it's not under official secrets anyway, so there's no need to—

QUATERMASS: Get it out of them, for heaven's sake!

BLAKER: No, it wasn't a guided missile. But it crashed—somewhere in South London. You get all reports from patrol cars and men on the beat, don't you? What? Oh—all right, I'll hold on . . . [*Turning to the others.*] He says a report's just coming in . . . [*Into phone*] Hello? Where? West side of Wimbledon Common.

QUATERMASS: Let me—

BLAKER: Here's Quatermass himself—hold on.

QUATERMASS [*into phone, urgently*]: How bad is it?

Judith moves in and he puts his hand reassuringly on her arm.

QUATERMASS: Still whole? Much damage done? Casualties? . . . Thank God! Now listen—I'm on my way, so don't let anybody touch it. Above all, keep the fire service off. Hosing a red-hot rocket'll blow it up and there are three men inside!

He puts the phone down and turns to where Paterson is busy checking a mobile control-set.

QUATERMASS: John—are you ready with that?

PATERSON: Nearly.

JUDITH: What did he say?

QUATERMASS: It's in one piece and not too deeply buried. That's more than I'd hoped for.

JUDITH: Anything about—them?

QUATERMASS [*going to the door*]: Not yet.

He meets Marsh coming in.

MARSH: The wagon's outside, sir.

QUATERMASS: Good. Give John a hand with that stuff, will you? [*He leads the way out, Judith following.*]

Dissolve . . . to the news desk of the Daily Gazette, *Fleet Street. It is the middle of the night. Jackson, the news editor, is a small chewed-looking man. He is sitting surrounded by galley proofs, a telephone in one hand and a thick pencil in the other. From beyond comes the bustle and clatter of the open newsroom.*

NEWS EDITOR: It what? . . . How many were killed? . . . Injured . . . [*Mildly disappointed.*] Nobody? Hello . . . [*He rattles the receiver-rest.*] Hello? Yes, this is still the news desk! Have you seen the thing yourself? What's it look like? Uh . . . uhuh . . .

James Fullalove, the Gazette's *star columnist, drops by. He is a stout young man with a few cultivated personality tricks. He is pulling on a camel-hair coat, about to leave for home.*

NEWS EDITOR: Time! When did all this happen? . . . No, just roughly . . . [*He groans.*]

FULLALOVE: Poor Jacko.

NEWS EDITOR: How junior can a junior local correspondent be! Gone to ask the man in the next phone box exactly when it happened!

FULLALOVE: Which is it tonight—Iron Pipe Man Strikes Again or Robbed While They Watched Television?

NEWS EDITOR: Something came down at Wimbledon.

FULLALOVE: Came down?

NEWS EDITOR: Crashed.

FULLALOVE: Oh, a Mystery Plane. Goodnight, Jacko . . .

NEWS EDITOR: Sounds more like a flying saucer scare—lot of guff about a light in the sky and fire and smoke and—[*Fullalove turns as he speaks into the phone again.*] Hello? . . . Twenty minutes ago? All right, I'll probably send somebody. Meanwhile, get what you can yourself and phone it in. And wake up, son! [*He puts the phone down.*]

FULLALOVE: Flying saucers. Who are you going to send?

NEWS EDITOR [*standing and peering across the newsroom beyond*]: Duncan, if he's back from that—

FULLALOVE: I'll do it.

NEWS EDITOR: Doesn't look as if he—[*He turns.*] What, you? Jimmy, this is just a straight write-up job. Maybe even a false alarm. Not James Fullalove stuff.

FULLALOVE: I need something to denounce, Jacko. After dieticians and graphologists and the English Flower Show—something that's somebody's fault. That's what this'll turn out to be—mark my word. Scrape off the nonsense and you'll find—lives endangered by—something or other crass! Lay on a snapshotter, will you? Tell him to meet me down below.

NEWS EDITOR [*hesitates, then picks up the phone*]: All right—but it's got to be in right away, remember.

FULLALOVE [*sighs as he goes*]: Oh dear . . . back on the beat!

Dissolve . . . to the scene at Wimbledon Common, where floodlights are now trained on the rocket. Steam is still rising thinly, but the flames are out.

Firemen are at work, playing a thin jet on the blackened fencing. One of them comes forward to a Police Inspector near the rope barrier that is holding back a rapidly growing crowd.

FIREMAN: We could soon cool that thing off, you know—stop another outbreak.

INSPECTOR: Look, you've had instructions, haven't you—

FIREMAN: If it isn't a bomb, why treat it like a bomb?

INSPECTOR: There's supposed to be men in it.

FIREMAN: In that? Alive? [*He grunts and turns away.*] All right, lads—knock off.

They drag the hose clear and the Inspector follows. Several policeman are controlling the noisy crowd.

A REPORTER [*ducking under the rope*]: Inspector—is it true the bomb disposal people are coming to delouse it?

INSPECTOR: Look, I told you before—keep back.

A SECOND REPORTER: What is it? A warhead—a nosecap or something?

INSPECTOR: I can't tell you.

FIRST REPORTER: Don't you know?

The camera pans across the staring, jostling crowd to where Len Matthews is being interviewed by a third Reporter.

LEN: Well . . . Leonard, I suppose. Everybody calls me Len, though. Matthews.

THIRD REPORTER: I believe it came down with quite a thump?

LEN: Terrifying, that's the word. Terrifying! You see, it all happened so quick. Just this great blare of light and then the whole neighbourhood sort of shuddered. Everywhere thick with smoke—stinking—I never struck anything like it all through the blitz—

During this an estate car has drawn up at the edge of the crowd with a squeal of brakes. Doors slam, and Quatermass comes hurrying from it, followed by Blaker and the rest of his party. As they reach the barrier—

INSPECTOR: Now this is final! Nobody beyond that rope there! Sergeant, stop those people!

BLAKER: All right, all right! Inspector—come here, please. My name is Blaker. I think you'll have heard by now—

INSPECTOR: Oh, yes, sir.

BLAKER: This is Professor Quatermass. He'll be in charge here from now on.

INSPECTOR: Very well.

FIRST REPORTER: Professor—are you from bomb disposal?

INSPECTOR [*putting out an arm*]: Now then—

QUATERMASS: Not quite.

He is passed through the barrier. Judith follows. She gives a gasp of horror.

JUDITH: The heat . . . !

QUATERMASS: Remember all that's between them and that outside surface. [*He turns and calls.*] John—over here!

Paterson comes through with cases of instruments. Marsh is carrying the apparatus that was prepared in the control room—something like a massive field telephone set. The little group look up at the rocket.

MARSH [*after a moment*]: Funny. It looks exactly the same.

PATERSON: Just a bit . . . darker.

MARSH: And it's been—you can't just say far. There isn't a word. [*He puts his apparatus on the ground and kneels to prepare it. He slips headphones on.*] Their speech transmitter's probably gone altogether now, but I could just try—

QUATERMASS: Go ahead.

MARSH [*into microphone*]: Hello . . . hello! This is Marsh speaking. I'm just outside the rocket. Are you receiving me? Over.

He clicks the switch back and waits, but evidently hears nothing. Paterson moves cautiously towards the rocket, holding before him an instrument to test the temperature. Cut to where Blaker is fending off Fullalove and other reporters and photographers.

FULLALOVE: But this is absurd! If that thing's a secret weapon, tell us—we can use discretion—

BLAKER: I don't doubt that, but—

FIRST REPORTER: Look—they've got a sort of walkie-talkie! There must be something inside the thing!

SECOND REPORTER: I told you those firemen said—

Fullalove points across at where Quatermass has joined Paterson in his inspection of the rocket.

FULLALOVE: Who is that chap? I'm sure I recognize him . . .

BLAKER: I—I can't give you any information yet. Not just yet . . .

He turns away and hurries to join Quatermass and the others. Cut to where Marsh is removing the headphones. He looks up at Judith and shakes his head. Quatermass and Paterson come back from their inspection.

QUATERMASS: As far as we can tell, it's intact. Crash-damage to the vanes, that's all.

JUDITH: How long do we have to wait?

PATERSON: Till it's cool enough, three or four hours.

JUDITH: No, no—I can't! Not just—like this—

QUATERMASS: Why don't you go back to the car and rest? There's nothing to be done. Please—

She looks at him and says nothing. At the rope barrier, Fullalove is pushing forward, peering past the Inspector's bulk.

FULLALOVE [*calls*]: Professor Quatermass! [*Quatermass turns.*] I was sure I knew that face! British Experimental Rocket Group, isn't it?

QUATERMASS [*calls back*]: Yes.

FULLALOVE: So that's it!

Cameras flash. Concerned, Blaker comes up to Quatermass.

BLAKER: You don't have to tell them anything. It might be better if you didn't—

QUATERMASS: What's the use? [*He starts towards the barrier, with Blaker trotting behind.*]

BLAKER: I told you we should have prepared a statement . . .

As they reach the barrier, the reporters and photographers push forwards.

FIRST REPORTER: Let's have it, sir—what is that thing?

SECOND REPORTER: It's a rocket, isn't it?

QUATERMASS: Yes, it's a rocket.

The pressure of the crowd increases. People peer and push. The policemen link arms to hold them back.

FULLALOVE: It's been kept very secret. Where was the take-off?

QUATERMASS: Western Australia.

A babel runs through the crowd as the information passes.

FULLALOVE: Then it's travelled halfway round the world?

QUATERMASS: A lot further than that. I've been conducting an experiment—

FIRST REPORTER: Are there men in it?

SECOND REPORTER: How many?

THIRD REPORTER: D'you know if they're all right, sir?

BLAKER: Just a minute—don't rush him!

QUATERMASS: There are three men.

FIRST REPORTER: Are they safe?

QUATERMASS: We hope so. We don't know yet. At present we're waiting for the surface to cool—then we'll attempt to open it by—

THIRD REPORTER [*to Paterson*]: You know the crew? What are their names?

PATERSON: Dr. Reichenheim—Victor Carroon—

The word passes rapidly through the crowd: 'Three men!' 'They're still in there!' 'Says he's waiting for it to cool!' *This excitement is suddenly cut off by a cry—almost a scream—from Judith Carroon.*

JUDITH: Stop! Stop the noise!

The crowd falls gradually silent. Quatermass sees she is staring towards the rocket. He hurries back towards her.

JUDITH [*more quietly*]: Listen . . . !

After a moment there is a very faint metallic tapping. She turns.

JUDITH: Hear it . . . the tapping? They're alive!

The cry is taken up by the crowd.

Dissolve to . . . a broadcasting studio. It is a short time later. A newsreader is sitting before the microphone.

NEWSREADER: This is the B.B.C. Light Programme. Here is the late news summary. Just over one hour ago, a British space rocket made a forced landing in the outskirts of London. A product of the British Experimental Rocket Group, this is the first fully-manned vehicle to have executed a journey in outer space. It has a crew of three. They will be unable to leave the rocket until its surface has cooled, but first indications are that they are alive and well. The performance of the machine has been remarkable in that its flight exceeded that planned by a distance of over nine hundred thousand miles! In view of the importance of this achievement, and because the arrival of the rocket has given rise to a number of rumours, we shall be relaying a short description of the scene at the end of this bulletin . . .

Dissolve . . . to the scene at Wimbledon Common. The atmosphere has changed completely: it is something like Hampstead Heath on a Bank Holiday. Through the hubbub of a huge, excited crowd, come the hooting of cars, singing, even the cries of street vendors.

Right in front of camera is a sandwich-board reading, in shaky lettering: 'The Day of Judgement is At Hand!' It is on the shoulders of a small, shabby man who is now moved firmly aside by the Inspector. We see a B.B.C. interviewer crouched by Miss Wilde, who is seated on a box clutching her cat and looking quite composed. Len Matthews and his wife are close by, awaiting their turn.

INTERVIEWER: So really, you don't remember much about it, Miss Wilde?

MISS WILDE: Only that everything fell down and then I saw my bedroom was quite, quite broken.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, indeed . . . it's tragic that your house should have suffered. But I think we can salute—in this story of brave men—a brave little lady.

MISS WILDE: Henry was brave too.

INTERVIEWER: Henry? [*She holds him up.*] Oh, yes—Miss Wilde has her cat with her. [*Rising.*] The scene here now is one of jubilation. There's a tremendous crowd—coming in by car, on foot, from every direction. People singing and cheering. I can even see some barrow-boys cashing in over there. And now, to pick up the story, here is Mr. Leonard Matthews who lives nearby, and, I believe, was first on the scene. Weren't you, Mr. Matthews?

LEN: Yes, I seen this terrifying blare of light—

MRS. MATTHEWS: Len was out of the house in a flash!

INTERVIEWER: Mrs. Matthews—

MRS. MATTHEWS: Same as he was all through the blitz—never a moment's hesitation. I think he ought to have a medal.

INTERVIEWER: I'm sure. And now I hope to get a few words from the man in charge of the whole operation—[*He sees Marsh coming through the barrier.*] Here's one of his staff . . . Is Professor Quatermass available for a moment?

MARSH: Oh—I think so.

INTERVIEWER: Thanks. [*He ducks under the barrier, the Inspector clearing the way for him, and trails his cable towards the rocket. Two reporters descend on Marsh as he moves on.*]

FIRST REPORTER: How much public money is sunk in this?

MARSH: Well—it's difficult for me to say. I'm not exactly in charge of—

A tipsy man with a football rattle staggers into the group and claps Marsh on the back.

TIPSY MAN: Don't you be modest—there's too much of this ruddy English modesty! Tell 'em you invented it!

MARSH: But I didn't.

TIPSY MAN: Yes, you did!

SECOND REPORTER: Go and take a jump—

TIPSY MAN [*staggering away, waving his rattle noisily*]: We're all too ruddy modest . . . !

Cut to Quatermass's group, near the rocket.

JUDITH: How long since the tapping?

QUATERMASS: Thirty-five minutes.

JUDITH: Can't we signal again?

PATERSON: We've answered once. Surely—

JUDITH: To let them know where they are—that we're still here—

QUATERMASS: It'd mean a lot of hammering on the hull. Might be dangerous.

The Inspector approaches, with the B.B.C. interviewer close behind.

INSPECTOR [*quietly*]: Sir—

QUATERMASS: You want me?

INTERVIEWER [*rapidly*]: Now I'm just a few yards from the rocket . . . this huge mass of metal thrusting into the sky as if . . . [*anything for a simile*] . . . as if it were anxious to return to it! And here is the man responsible for the flight. Professor Quatermass, it's true to say, isn't it, that this atomic rocket—the very first of its kind—is a tremendous technical advance?

QUATERMASS: I think we probably have surprised a few people.

INTERVIEWER: I should think so, indeed! Designed and built entirely by British brains and muscle. Now, sir—can you tell us something about the crew?

QUATERMASS: We'll know better in a couple of hours—

INTERVIEWER: No, I meant—some personal details. Who exactly are they?

QUATERMASS: Oh—well, the senior member is my friend and colleague, Charles Greene.

INTERVIEWER: Is Mr. Greene married?

QUATERMASS: His wife's on her way from Australia at this moment. Then there's Dr. Ludwig Reichenheim—you may remember his rocket experiments in Germany before the war.

INTERVIEWER [*who doesn't*]: Of course. And the third member of the crew?

QUATERMASS: Victor Carroon. Responsible for the electronic equipment aboard. His wife's one of my assistants—she's just over there—

INTERVIEWER: Oh. D'you think I might . . . ?

QUATERMASS: I don't think she'd mind.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you, sir. [*He starts towards Judith, still talking into his microphone.*] We hope soon to have good news of these three valiant Britons. And now—here is the wife of one of them—Mrs—

JUDITH [*taken slightly aback*]: Oh . . . Carroon.

INTERVIEWER: No need to say how much we all sympathize with your anxiety.

JUDITH: Thank you.

INTERVIEWER: How does it feel to be married to one of the first three men to reach outer space?

JUDITH: I'll know that when I see him.

INTERVIEWER: Of course. You weren't able to go with him to Australia?

JUDITH: No, my work here—

INTERVIEWER: Of course. If you don't mind my asking—did you have any farewell message for him?

JUDITH [*suddenly remembering*]: Oh . . . yes. It was silly. Only the sort of thing people always send at . . . you know, at a rather serious time. I think I said: 'Take care of yourself, darling, and don't forget to bring me something back.'

INTERVIEWER [*laughs*]: Present from outer space, so to speak. Thank you very much, Mrs. Carroon. [*He turns away.*] And now, listeners, as nothing more is likely to happen here for some time, I'm returning you to the studio. [*He turns away, signalling to an assistant with a thumbs-up sign.*]

Cut to the Tipsy Man, sitting on a car roof, waving his rattle and shouting.

TIPSY MAN: We're all too ruddy modest, that's what it is. Lot of ruddy blushing English violets . . .

POLICEMAN: All right—keep it quiet up there!

The amateur sandwichman passes, filling the frame with his message of doom.

Slow dissolve . . . to the group by the rocket. It is a couple of hours later. Judith is huddled in a rug. Quatermass is crouching by the radio-control apparatus, from which now comes a steady note resembling that heard in the control room earlier. He is wearing headphones. Somewhere beyond the crowd—silently expectant once more—an ambulance bell approaches.

PATERSON [*testing the surface of the rocket with instruments, calls*]: It's quite cool now. About three hundred degrees.

QUATERMASS [*calls back.*]: All right, that's enough. I think we should try our luck.

Paterson probes along the edge of the hatch-cover.

PATERSON [*calls*]: This may be stuck fast. I can't tell . . .

QUATERMASS: Well, if this doesn't work, we'll force it. Get clear, John!

Paterson moves away. Quatermass makes final adjustments to the control set. Cut to Fullalove and other reporters in the forefront of the craning crowd.

FULLALOVE [*breathes*]: Funny . . . the same elemental excitement children feel when a paper parcel's waiting to be opened up. The longer you wait, the more exciting it gets. When is he going to pull the string? Hoping he can . . . hoping he won't have to tear the parcel to bits . . .

Cut to Quatermass. He presses the master switch. An indicator light flashes. Cut to the rocket . . . very, very slowly, the hatch-cover begins moving outwards. There is a rush of compressed air, echoed by a great gasp from the spectators. Cut to a group of them—Len Matthews and his wife, policemen, the amateur sandwichman—all staring. Cut to press photographers raising their cameras in readiness. Cut to the group by the control set. Quatermass pulls off the headphones. Judith starts forward and he puts a restraining hand on her arm.

The hatch-cover is fully open. A long pause, then something moves in the black interior of the rocket. A helmet appears . . . then a body. There is a thrilled ripple in the crowd. The man starts climbing out through the hatch-opening. His movements are stiff and clumsy. Quatermass and Paterson run forward—and the figure falls to his knees as they reach him. His helmeted head lolls. Quatermass supports him. Judith clutches at the face-piece . . . staring wildly in through the glazed visor.

JUDITH: It is! Victor . . . Victor!

She fumbles desperately with the helmet fastenings. Quatermass helps her, and between them they remove it. Dazed eyes look up at them . . . the

fleshy face of a man of about thirty-five . . . Victor Carroon.

QUATERMASS: He's all right. John, take over—

Paterson supports Carroon as Quatermass makes for the hatch-opening with Marsh close behind him. The crowd surges forward.

INSPECTOR [*yells*]: Keep them back there! Everybody, back!

JUDITH: Victor! You're home—you're safe now! Victor . . .

The dazed eyes turn with an effort to meet hers.

Cut to the interior of the rocket, as Quatermass and then Marsh pull themselves inside and look about in the light of Quatermass's torch. It is a mechanized cell. Padded banks of control apparatus, with one or two tiny indicator-lights burning . . . three long padded seats, with grips and safety-straps . . . and on the floor, two crumpled shapes, pressure-suits like that on Carroon. Quatermass drops to his knees and lifts one—it is empty! So is the other.

QUATERMASS: Quick—the access-chamber to the motors . . .

He and Marsh tug at a heavy lever-handle close to the floor. It turns . . . and they lift the massive metal cover of the small chamber below. Quatermass flashes his torch down. They look at each other blankly. Marsh scrambles to his feet.

MARSH [*in a voice that dwindles to a whisper*]: Mr. Greene . . . Dr. Reichenheim . . . But how could they—I don't understand—

Quatermass flashes his torch across the control panel. Marsh blunders past him, clawing his way out.

Cut to the scene outside the rocket as Marsh appears through the hatch opening.

MARSH [*shouts*]: There's nobody there! There's no sign of either of them!

PATERSON: What?

MARSH: They're gone! They're gone!

He almost falls to the ground. Quatermass appears behind him as Paterson runs up.

PATERSON: What's he talking about?

QUATERMASS: They're not inside.

PATERSON: But how . . . ? They must have opened the hatch at some time—got swept away—

QUATERMASS [*very quietly*]: I've checked the instruments. This hatch hasn't been opened . . . till now.

He looks across to where the half-hysterical Marsh is babbling out his story to the police and others at the barrier. The crowd's excitement rises to fever pitch. Quatermass hurries to where Carroon is supported by Judith, and grips him by the arm.

QUATERMASS: Victor, where are the others? What happened?

Carroon looks at him, heavy-eyed. He seems to be on the verge of saying something. Then he pitches forward in a dead faint.

Crash in end music. Fade to black.

PART TWO

‘Persons reported missing’

Fade in . . . the scene round the rocket.

Quatermass pulls Carroon up, almost shaking him in his desperate anxiety to get an answer.

QUATERMASS: Wake up, man—you’ve got to tell me! Carroon—

JUDITH: Stop that! Leave him alone!

Carroon’s eyes open, and he speaks slowly and thickly.

CARROON: On the way . . . back now . . .

JUDITH: You’re back—you’re home! Victor, don’t you know me?

Carroon turns his head to look at her. His expression does not alter, but he manages an attempt at a nod.

CARROON: Judith . . .

JUDITH [*distressed*]: But you don’t—! [*She puts her hand to his face, and almost recoils.*] Oh! He’s so—cold!

QUATERMASS: Shock and exhaustion. Let’s get him away from here.

He signals to the waiting ambulance men, who hurry forward with a stretcher.

AMBULANCE MAN: How do we get him out of this, sir? [*He points to the pressure suit.*]

QUATERMASS: Don’t try—just lift him. Give him complete support. That’ll be better than a stretcher.

JUDITH: He’s able to walk, but be careful.

The ambulance men get Carroon to his feet, still encased in the pressure suit. They support him towards the barrier, and the Inspector hurries ahead to clear the way. Marsh is there, still chattering excitedly to Fullalove and other pressmen.

MARSH: No! No, there isn’t anywhere inside it where they could possibly be! I just don’t understand—

INSPECTOR: Stand back, please! Let him through.

The crowd parts as Carroon is half-carried through the barrier. Cameras flash and heads crane.

FULLALOVE: Can we speak to him?

INSPECTOR: He’s ill. He can’t be interviewed. Make way there—

FULLALOVE: He’s a national hero, Inspector—don’t you realize that! Whatever he’s been through, he’s the first man in the history of the world to have done it—surely we’ve got a right—

The crowd closes in again behind the staggering trio making for the ambulance. Judith has to force her way through.

JUDITH: Keep back! Let them pass!

But Carroon seems unaware of all the excitement, or indeed of his surroundings. Then suddenly he lifts his blank face and gives a cry.

CARROON: Cold . . . cold . . . help me!

Then they are hurrying him on towards the ambulance. A wave of pity stirs the crowd. Even Fullalove is moved.

FULLALOVE: Poor bastard . . . to come back to all this, and only know you’re cold!

FIRST REPORTER: That outfit they wear—it *is* like you see in the comic strips, after all . . .

SECOND REPORTER [*turns*]: Here’s the professor!

The pressmen surge back again to surround Quatermass.

FIRST REPORTER: Any statement to make now, sir?

SECOND REPORTER: What about the rest of the crew?

QUATERMASS: I’m afraid I have to confirm that Greene and Reichenheim are missing. I don’t know how it happened.

FULLALOVE: Any theory about it?

QUATERMASS: None, yet.

THIRD REPORTER: I suppose there’s no chance now—that they’re alive?

Quatermass is suddenly hesitant.

QUATERMASS: I—I’d really prefer not to say. I must find out more details from the base in Australia about the take-off—

FULLALOVE [*quickly*]: Why? Is there a doubt that they were ever *in* the rocket?

QUATERMASS [*carefully*]: Greene’s wife is arriving by Comet later today, with Dr. Briscoe—he’s been responsible for the crew’s fitness and training. They may have something to tell us.

FULLALOVE: But you must know whether or not the rocket took a full crew?

QUATERMASS: I’m sorry. I’ve nothing more to say.

Glances are exchanged among the pressmen.

FIRST REPORTER: Haven’t you kept in touch with the Australian base? If there’s a possibility of a mistake that big, sir—

SECOND REPORTER: What about the distance that thing’s supposed to have travelled?

FIRST REPORTER: Yes—is there any doubt about that now?

SECOND REPORTER [*unpleasantly*]: I suppose there's no chance of Reichenheim and Greene arriving by Comet too?

QUATERMASS: I can assure you there'll be a statement as soon as possible.

FIRST REPORTER: Why not now?

INSPECTOR: All right, that's enough. [*He draws Quatermass aside.*] If you're agreeable, sir, I think I'd better take a look myself.

QUATERMASS: Of course. Come along.

INSPECTOR [*to a Policeman*]: Mitchell—nobody else past here.

POLICEMAN: Very good, sir.

The Inspector follows Quatermass towards the rocket.

FIRST REPORTER: What sort of alibi was he handing out? I've got a good mind to follow them.

POLICEMAN [*stopping them*]: Now, you heard what the Inspector said.

SECOND REPORTER: It's not a secret weapon, is it? What right have you got to—

FIRST REPORTER: It's no good waiting here—only lose time. [*He hurries off through the crowd.*]

SECOND REPORTER: Better get the space hero into print while he *is* one. [*He follows.*]

Track in on the thoughtful Fullalove as he too slowly turns away. The ambulance bell sounds as it moves off.

Cut to the interior of the rocket. Paterson is just pulling himself up through the opening in the floor. He has managed to get a light working, and the details can be picked out more clearly. Quatermass enters through the main hatchway, and turns to help the struggling police inspector.

INSPECTOR: So this is it.

QUATERMASS: Very snug or abominably cramped, according to your point of view. [*Pointing out the set-up.*] Food supplies . . . recording gear . . . vision monitors . . . crew positions: they're strapped down there during take-off.

INSPECTOR: How far did you say it's been?

QUATERMASS: About a million miles from earth. [*To Paterson.*] Find anything?

PATERSON [*nods to the opening in the floor*]: I've been down for a closer look. Not a sign.

INSPECTOR: What's down there, sir?

PATERSON: It's just for access to the servomotors—

QUATERMASS: For maintenance during flight.

INSPECTOR: But not a way out?

QUATERMASS: No. [*He points to the main hatch.*] That's the only way in or out. If you have more than that, you add to your pressure problems.

PATERSON: And this is where we get the mystery. Take a look at this, Inspector—[*Before Quatermass's quick gesture can stop him, he is at the control panel.*] Well, you'll have to take our word for it, but there's positive proof here that the hatch was sealed throughout the entire flight.

INSPECTOR: What—

He steps forward and peers at the instruments as if he hoped to make something of them.

QUATERMASS [*in Paterson's ear, angrily*]: Why did you have to—! [*Aloud.*] I'm afraid those won't mean much to you, Inspector.

INSPECTOR [*turning, deeply puzzled*]: But—the hatch *must* have been opened! Couldn't these instruments have gone wrong?

Quatermass is ready to accept this explanation as a way out. He shoots a warning glance at Paterson.

QUATERMASS: I dare say. Nothing's infallible—the past three days have taught us that, Inspector.

INSPECTOR: I remember seeing a film once about a . . . well, I suppose you'd call *this* a space ship. Men opened the hatch and went outside. They just seemed to float.

PATERSON: That's right—in space nothing has any weight.

INSPECTOR: And one of them got lost. Could that happen in reality?

QUATERMASS: Yes.

INSPECTOR: Wait a minute—in the film they were wearing those—what d'you call 'em?

QUATERMASS: Pressure suits.

INSPECTOR [*thoughtfully*]: To get through that hatch alive, they'd have had to use those, wouldn't they? But . . .

He turns meaningly to where the two empty pressure-suits are lying. He turns one over. The articulated shape of steel and plastic rustles hollowly.

INSPECTOR: Helmets on them and all. . . . [*He rises.*] Professor Quatermass, I've got to put in my own report about all this. We can depend on your co-operation?

QUATERMASS [*after a moment*]: Of course . . . I'll be glad to help.

INSPECTOR: I'll see there's a safe guard on this rocket meanwhile.

QUATERMASS: I take it members of my staff will have full access—to remove certain essential equipment?

INSPECTOR: Such as?

QUATERMASS: Recording and measuring equipment.

INSPECTOR: I suppose so. Those pressure suits, though—they might be usefully examined by our people.

QUATERMASS: Very well. Take them whenever you wish.

INSPECTOR: Thank you, sir.

He pulls himself out through the hatch-opening, grunting as he goes. He is a heavy man. Paterson looks curiously round at Quatermass.

PATERSON [*quietly*]: Why didn't you want him to hear about the hatch?

QUATERMASS: That's something I've got to work out for myself, without interference from the police.

PATERSON: It hadn't been opened, had it?

QUATERMASS: John . . . I'd like to get everything dismantled as soon as possible. For one thing, we've got to track down that fault. And there's the sound-record . . . I want you to do it yourself, and I'll send Marsh along to help you. I'll be at the local hospital—phone me if there's anything.

He starts out through the hatch-opening.

Dissolve . . . to a close-up of the Daily Gazette, *with a large headline reading 'SPACE CONQUERED'. Below it is a full-page photograph of the crashed rocket.*

Pull back to show it is open in the hands of Fullalove, who is reading an inside page. He is sitting on the News Editor's desk, on which are cups of coffee. It is morning.

FULLALOVE: Whitney's made a better job of the technical waffle that I'd ever have given him credit for.

He folds up the paper and drops it on the desk.

NEWS EDITOR: Not a bad special edition. Finish your coffee, James. [*Pulls paper towards him.*] You surprised me, too, you know. [*Hastily.*] In a different way, of course.

FULLALOVE: Did I?

NEWS EDITOR: When you set out you were looking for somebody to roast. [*The phone rings. He answers.*] News desk . . . yes, darling, we've had a busy night. Tell you later. I'm just going to get some breakfast and I'll be on my way. [*Puts the receiver down and rises.*] Excuse me, James. [*He takes down his hat and coat.*]

FULLALOVE: Jacko, I find after all I'm not a cynic. I'm troubled when I see an eminently truthful man driven to petty evasions.

NEWS EDITOR [*putting on his coat*]: This professor, you mean?

FULLALOVE: Yes. At the end there, he was stalling desperately. And badly. For a moment he looked ready to recant the whole story.

NEWS EDITOR [*suddenly alarmed*]: There's—there's no chance of a hoax, is there?

FULLALOVE [*reprovingly*]: I was *there,* Jacko.

The News Editor accepts this doubtfully.

FULLALOVE: Granted he's been through days of frightful strain—makes history and finds he's lost two valued friends all in the same moment. That doesn't make him tell *fibs!*

NEWS EDITOR: What d'you make of it, then?

FULLALOVE: Something had alarmed him so much . . . he felt he had to hide it. [*He taps the newspaper.*] This technical stuff of Whitney's—mass ratios, characteristic velocities, synergic curves—space ship jargon. D'you get the feel of that?

NEWS EDITOR [*putting on his hat*]: Mm? It's above my head, I know that much.

FULLALOVE: It's mankind trying to sound certain of himself, Jacko. Because he knows that just on the other side of the air there's a new wilderness. Pitch dark both day and night, empty and . . . cold.

NEWS EDITOR: You need breakfast as much as I do, so consider yourself invited. Come along, James—the story's written.

FULLALOVE: No. I've an idea it hasn't started yet. Thanks for the offer, though.

NEWS EDITOR [*going*]: Just as you like.

FULLALOVE [*picks up the telephone*]: I want to find out about the Comet service from Australia . . . Yes, arriving today . . .

Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to close shot of Carroon's hands, twisting and untwisting against the crisp sheet of a hospital bed. Pull back to show his face . . . the eyes open and staring. Judith is beside him in the small private ward, and also a lean pleasant-faced man—Chief Detective-Inspector Lomax. A ward Sister looks on.

JUDITH: Try, Victor—try to tell us. Were they hurt in some way?

CARROON: Hurt? . . . there was no hurt . . . [*There is almost a trace of wonder in his voice as he repeats.*] There was no hurt . . .

LOMAX: Odd. Each time, it's almost an answer but not quite.

Carroon's hands open and shut.

LOMAX: Carroon—listen to me! Did they go outside? [*A pause.*] Did—they—go—out?

CARROON: Out . . . side . . . from . . . outside . . . outside . . .

LOMAX: Was the hatch cover opened?

CARROON: Open . . . [*He brings his knotted hands towards his face, staring at them.*] Open . . . open . . . !

LOMAX: The hatch? Was it?

SISTER: Inspector—this must stop! Doctor said nothing to excite him—and look!

JUDITH: His hands . . .

Lomax draws Carroon's hand away from his face. It is jerked aside from his grasp.

JUDITH: He can't bear to be touched—as if it were painful.

LOMAX: Amazingly cold!

JUDITH: I know. The doctors here talked about shock symptoms, but it's far too extreme—

SISTER: Please—not in the patient's hearing.

LOMAX: Sorry, Sister, my fault. [*To Judith.*] Can I have a word with you over here?

Pull back as they come away from the bed. Sergeant Best, a chunky, intelligent C.I.D. man, is standing near the door.

LOMAX: Sergeant—stay by him in case he says anything.

BEST: Right, sir. [*He goes towards the bed.*]

SISTER: No more questions, mind.

Lomax turns to where the pressure suit lies on a trolley. It has been taken apart in several sections. Beside it is a pile of undergarments—shapeless things, all drab grey. Lomax picks these up.

LOMAX: These are the things he wore inside that outfit? [*He nods at the pressure-suit.*]

JUDITH: Yes. Dr. Briscoe designed them, specially for the experiment. They're made mostly of nylon. See—they consist of linked layers. Each joins to the next as it's put on. That makes them more wearable inside the pressure suit.

LOMAX: They would be difficult to remove from, say, a sick man?

JUDITH: They were.

LOMAX: Yes, of course. Sorry to put you through this, Mrs. Carroon.

JUDITH: No, I want to help.

LOMAX: We're investigating this case as one of 'Missing Persons'. There's a lot that's hard to understand at the moment—or to believe.

JUDITH: Why does it come to you?

LOMAX: You'd be surprised what comes to us—and just as well it does. But if I'm satisfied there's nothing I can usefully look into, I'll move quietly away.

JUDITH: I see.

LOMAX: Space is a bit outside our jurisdiction, of course—

JUDITH: Then how—?

LOMAX: But Wimbledon Common isn't. Now, apart from your personal involvement, you're an expert on the technical background. I believe you've been one of the research team for a few years?

JUDITH: On the mathematical side.

LOMAX: Well, you'll be more likely than most to recognize significant facts—or to give a meaning to anything he manages to say?

JUDITH: I suppose so.

LOMAX: Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. [*He turns.*] Right, Best—let's go.

The Sergeant rises from his place at the bedside. The Sister is just taking a thermometer from Carroon's mouth. Judith accompanies the two men to the door.

BEST: He's said nothing more, sir.

LOMAX: Um. Let's hope this is just a temporary condition and he'll soon be able to tell us . . . well . . . [*To Judith.*] Silly advice, but try not to worry too much. Goodbye, and thank you.

JUDITH: Goodbye.

Lomax and Best go off down the corridor. She turns back into the room. The Sister is staring at the thermometer with a look of perplexity.

SISTER [*breathes*]: It can't be . . . ! [*She gives him an uneasy look.*]

JUDITH: What's the matter?

SISTER [*evasively*]: I don't think he let me take it properly. Perhaps I . . . ought to have a word with the doctor. [*She goes to the door, and almost immediately exclaims*] Oh! I'm afraid you can't come in here!

Quatermass pushes past her into the room.

QUATERMASS: It's all right—I've just talked to the people in charge. How is he now?

SISTER: I had strict instructions—no one to be admitted.

JUDITH: It's all right, Sister.

SISTER: I'll have to report this—

She goes. Quatermass bends over Carroon, touches his hand.

QUATERMASS: Still this abnormal cold! They told me they were treating the shock condition—

JUDITH: Yes, he's had everything, but—

QUATERMASS: Victor!

CARROON [*after a moment*]: Victor? Yes . . . yes . . .

QUATERMASS: Listen, Victor—it's Quatermass. Look at me.

CARROON [*his eyes straying drowsily*]: All round . . . all round.

QUATERMASS: Look at me.

Carroon's eyes close.

JUDITH: Sometimes he does seem to see you—and then, nothing. And the things he says are almost like delirium, yet somehow not.

QUATERMASS: Victor . . .

JUDITH: It's useless! It's as if he's lost his memory—or his brain's been damaged or—

She suddenly collapses, sobbing. Quatermass goes to her quickly.

QUATERMASS: Now don't stop.

JUDITH: I can't bear it any longer! I can't—

QUATERMASS: You've taken more than anybody could be expected to.

JUDITH: You don't understand!

QUATERMASS: He's going through the first severe reaction. It can't last. Until we know what he's undergone, the symptoms—

JUDITH: Don't! Don't comfort me! [*A pause. She looks up at him with misery in her face.*] All those hours of waiting—the anxiety—and last night outside the rocket—what I felt was genuine—it *was!* You've got to believe that—but—[*She breaks off.*]

QUATERMASS: Go on.

JUDITH: Before that—months ago—[*She glances across at Carroon. His eyes are closed. She goes on in a whisper.*] I'd planned to leave him.

There is a long pause.

QUATERMASS: I see. Who is it? May I know?

JUDITH: Gordon.

QUATERMASS: Briscoe . . . I suppose I might have guessed that.

JUDITH: We were going to be quite honest about it . . . tell him as soon as the flight was over. And then, when the rocket didn't return . . . I felt . . . almost as if I'd *caused* it to happen. I couldn't bear it—I wanted him to come back more than anything in the world! And now—[*she looks helplessly across at the man in the bed*]—he's like that. [*Very quietly*] I won't ever leave him.

QUATERMASS: Well . . .

JUDITH: Don't say it's guilt and not love. It doesn't matter what it is—I mean that.

QUATERMASS [*after a moment*]: Are you going to tell Gordon this?

JUDITH: Yes.

QUATERMASS: Then . . . there's not much I can say. Not much I ought to say. [*He turns to look at Carroon.*] Poor creature. He's going to need you now if ever he did. Your care, anyway.

JUDITH [*hesitantly*]: Do you notice—his face?

QUATERMASS: Yes.

JUDITH: I thought deceleration effects couldn't last?

Quatermass moves towards the bed. Suddenly he notices something. He lifts Carroon's hand and looks closely at the fingers.

QUATERMASS [*a complete change of tone*]: Has anyone been here?

JUDITH: Oh yes—I meant to tell you before but—two men from Scotland Yard.

QUATERMASS: Scotland Yard! What on earth did they want?

JUDITH: They tried to ask him questions—said they were looking into the case.

QUATERMASS: That wasn't all they did! [*He shows her Carroon's hand.*] He's been finger-printed! A hasty job by the look of things.

JUDITH: Finger-printed! Then they—but they can't suspect that he—! What are you going to do?

QUATERMASS: Get him out of here right away! [*He pulls the door open and shouts.*] Sister! Sister!

Dissolve . . . to Lomax's office, New Scotland Yard. A bleak room brightened by a few personal oddments. On a table in one corner, something bulky is covered with a plastic sheet. Outside, a barge hoots faintly on the river. Lomax is studying newspapers laid out on his desk when the telephone rings.

LOMAX: Hello . . . Who? Quatermass? Yes, I've been trying to get hold of him! Show him up right away, will you?

He is putting the receiver down as Sergeant Best enters.

BEST: Fingerprint report'll be up in twenty minutes.

LOMAX: I still don't see why you did it.

BEST [*shrugs*]: Second nature. You never know . . . and he didn't object.

LOMAX [*drily*]: No, he didn't, did he? [*He reads from one of the newspapers.*] 'We trust that when his health is restored, the immeasurable courage and daring by which he has accomplished this mighty feat for his country, will be suitably and fully rewarded!' That's the man whose fingerprints you've just taken.

BEST: Yes, sir.

LOMAX: D'you ever read science fiction, Best?

BEST: No, sir.

LOMAX: We'd better start . . . to catch up on fact. [*Turning over the papers.*] Just look at these—every one full of hero worship. Whatever comes to light in this business, it's going to be tricky to handle.

There is a knock at the door. A uniformed Constable looks in.

CONSTABLE: I've got Professor Quatermass here, sir.

BEST: What!

LOMAX: Show him in.

CONSTABLE [*opens door*]: This way, sir—

Quatermass enters, a briefcase under his arm.

QUATERMASS: Chief Inspector Lomax?

LOMAX [*shakes hands*]: You're just the man I wanted to see, sir. Take a seat?

QUATERMASS [*not sitting*]: To come straight to the point—Why are you treating Victor Carroon as a suspect in a criminal case?

LOMAX: Surely that's going rather far? On the report from the Wimbledon police, we're bound to make enquiries.

QUATERMASS [*opening his briefcase*]: If I can save you any time . . . [*He produces three card folders.*] These contain particulars of all three members of the crew. [*He slaps them down on desk one by one.*] Charles Greene—Ludwig Reichenheim—Victor Carroon. You'll find everything there—medical histories, personal descriptions—academic achievements, professional activities, politics—and fingerprints! I'm convinced that the only enquiry that's likely to serve any useful purpose is a scientific one. And I'm going to carry it out myself. I've just had Carroon transferred from the hospital.

LOMAX: To your research station?

QUATERMASS: Subpoena me and I'll answer that. [*Going.*] Good afternoon.

LOMAX: One moment, sir, please.

QUATERMASS: Well?

LOMAX: Would you mind taking a look over here?

He turns to the table and throws the plastic sheet aside—to disclose two pressure-suits, still complete.

QUATERMASS: Where did you get those?

LOMAX: From the rocket, by your previous permission. They belonged to the missing men?

QUATERMASS: Yes.

LOMAX: And they're just as you discovered them last night?

QUATERMASS [*examining them*]: As far as I can tell . . .

LOMAX: I understand that specially designed clothing has to be worn inside them? [*Quatermass nods.*] Now—if one were removing one of these pressure suits, and the inner garments—from a dead body—[*as Quatermass looks up sharply*]—this would have to be taken off unit by unit, and then the linked sections of the body-clothing?

QUATERMASS: You can't just—slip out of it all, if that's what you mean! But what are you trying to—

Lomax has removed the helmet. Now he holds the pressure-suit so that Quatermass can look down into it.

LOMAX: The whole outfit's still inside there. Linked.

Quatermass, incredulous, seizes the pressure suit.

LOMAX: There may be some fairly simple explanation, sir, and I thought you might provide it. Can you?

QUATERMASS: I—I'll have to have time to consider this. [*He turns to the desk and picks up the empty briefcase.*] Good afternoon. [*He goes out, pulling the door shut behind him.*]

BEST [*thoughtfully*]: You know, that shook him.

Dissolve . . . to a shot of a Comet jetliner landing at London Airport.

Cut to one of the reception bays. Here Fullalove and other pressmen are waiting. And arguing.

FIRST REPORTER: It's as clear cut as this! A—He's on a level with Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus, B—It was some kind of hokum.

FULLALOVE: How likely is B? You know Quatermass's reputation.

SECOND REPORTER: Trouble with you is, James, you've been doing personalities too long. This time it's facts only. Whatever they are.

Nearby, a loudspeaker crackles into an announcement of the arrival of the Comet flight from Sydney.

FIRST REPORTER: If it's true, perfect—I want to believe it. Man travels a million miles into space—fine. Two men die in the attempt—that's the history of all explorations.

FULLALOVE: It's the way you wrote it up, anyhow.

FIRST REPORTER: It's the story. As to last night, I told them only what I saw. That girl's face—giving an extra dimension to the Woman Who Waits. The sight of ordinary people exulting—really exulting—in a new power.

FULLALOVE: I didn't know anybody ever exulted.

FIRST REPORTER: Well, they did. Your eyes must have been shut.

SECOND REPORTER: Anyway, what's the follow-up? Go to the hospital today—'He's too ill to be seen or moved.' Yet detectives see him and he *is* moved—smuggled out.

FIRST REPORTER: That's right.

SECOND REPORTER: The whole thing's getting odder and odder. Almost petty. You know, trivial, like police court stuff. Now why?

FULLALOVE: Perhaps it's murder.

SECOND REPORTER: It'd be a fine time to pick—like shoving somebody off the top of Mount Everest!

The First Reporter goes across to the Customs barrier and returns.

FIRST REPORTER: They'll never bring them through this way, you know. After all that messing about this morning—

SECOND REPORTER: What, then? The V.I.P. route?

FIRST REPORTER: You have to know your way round. I've an idea—

He goes off quickly, and the Second Reporter follows him hopefully. Fullalove lights a cigarette. A few passengers go by. Then a man comes hurrying along, glancing at his watch. It is Quatermass.

FULLALOVE: They're on time, professor.

QUATERMASS: Eh? [*Recognizing him.*] You . . . weren't you there last night?

FULLALOVE: James Fullalove, *Daily Gazette.*

QUATERMASS: If you've been waiting here for me—I'm sorry. I've nothing to say.

FULLALOVE: I just like watching planes.

Quatermass turns to an attendant.

QUATERMASS: Can I get through there? It's essential I meet some people—in private. I've had no time to arrange it, but—

ATTENDANT: I'll see what I can do, sir—

But it is already too late. Passengers are coming through, and pushing ahead of the others is Mrs. Greene, a woman in her early forties whose nerves are clearly at breaking point. With her is Dr. Gordon Briscoe, a tall man who is carrying the hand-luggage for both of them.

MRS. GREENE: There he is! [*She runs to Quatermass.*] What's happened—tell me! In Rome there were newspapers with silly, ridiculous reports—

BRISCOE: I told her she mustn't believe anything till she saw you.

MRS. GREENE: They were all so confused—

QUATERMASS: Look, let's go somewhere. [*To the Attendant.*] Is that room over there—?

MRS. GREENE: No—tell me now! Tell me!

QUATERMASS [*cornered*]: I—I'm sorry.

MRS. GREENE [*a tense whisper*]: Charlie? Charlie was gone?

QUATERMASS [*nods*]: I don't know what happened yet. There must have been some sort of accident. [*He looks to Briscoe, who takes the shaking woman's arm.*] Let's go to the car. I'll explain on the way.

MRS. GREENE [*near hysteria*]: But I don't understand! I've got to know—

BRISCOE: Not here. Please come.

MRS. GREENE [*struggling to control herself*]: I only want to know . . .

She allows herself to be led away by Briscoe. Quatermass is just following when he notices Fullalove watching.

QUATERMASS [*savagely*]: Well—are you going to print it?

FULLALOVE: I told you. I just came to watch the planes.

Quatermass frowns and hurries after the others. The announcer's voice barks again on the loudspeaker. More passengers pass. Fullalove goes slowly off with his hands plunged deep into the pockets of his overcoat, pondering.

Dissolve . . . to a close shot of Sergeant Best poring over enlargements of finger-prints in Lomax's office. Lomax is standing nearby, smoking his pipe.

BEST: I admit they're indistinct, sir.

LOMAX: Indistinct? They're a mess.

BEST [*perplexed*]: But I didn't botch 'em, I'm sure about that. Heaven knows I've taken enough prints in my time—

LOMAX: And they don't tally with the ones from Quatermass's dossier. [*He hands a card from the file to Best.*] Look.

BEST [*studying both sets*]: Mm . . . of course *they* might have botched taking 'em. That'd be more likely. Wait a second, though . . . see those two whorls?

LOMAX [*peering*]: Yes . . .

BEST: Identical.

LOMAX: On the other hand, look at that loop. It's in your set . . . not in the other.

BEST [*frowning*]: That loop . . . I must be getting eyestrain . . . I thought I noticed a funny one like that in . . .

He suddenly dives for the other dossiers, rummages for fingerprint cards.

BEST: Now, memory, don't let me down.

LOMAX: What are you playing at? Those are the other two men's—

BEST [*holding up a card from one of the other dossiers, and comparing it with the police card*]: There it is—the same funny loop!

Lomax stares at him, takes the two cards from him to study.

Dissolve . . . to Carroon's hands, twisting and untwisting as before. Pull back to show him sitting on a surgery couch, stripped to the waist. He is in the Medical Centre of the Rocket Group, and Dr. Briscoe is just removing a compression strap from his arm, connected to an electrocardiograph.

BRISCOE: Take it easy, Vic. There's nothing to worry about.

CARROON: There's nothing . . .

BRISCOE: No.

CARROON: There's nothing . . . here.

Briscoe gives him an uneasy glance. He moves away from the couch—to where Quatermass is standing, looking on.

BRISCOE [*in an undertone*]: The blood pressure . . . almost impossibly low. Pulse. Temperature. Reflexes. All the same.

QUATERMASS: He was perfectly fit before take-off?

BRISCOE: Strong as a horse.

QUATERMASS: Possible effects of acceleration pressure? That was always doubtful territory.

BRISCOE: During tests, he took 12g without even a bad headache to show for it.

QUATERMASS: We don't know what they had to take when the rocket went out of control. Sudden lateral spin.

BRISCOE: There'd be nothing that wouldn't pass off in a few seconds. No lasting . . . changes. [*A pause.*] It's not just his face, you know.

QUATERMASS: What else?

BRISCOE: Look. [*He and Quatermass go to the couch.*] Victor . . . [*No reaction.*] I don't think it'll do him any harm to hear us talking. I doubt if he takes any of it in. Now, I've a fairly accurate knowledge of the constitution of these three men.

QUATERMASS: Well?

BRISCOE: First of all—this is the less important—take a look at the skin. In certain places—there on the shoulder, for instance—

QUATERMASS [*peering*]: It seems swollen. Coarsened.

BRISCOE: Did the doctors at the hospital say anything about it?

QUATERMASS: They were too concerned with the abnormal temperature. . . . [*Sharply.*] Go on, what else have you found?

BRISCOE: I'd rather not say till I take a full set of X-rays.

QUATERMASS: The bone structure?

BRISCOE [*nods*]: I could be wrong about the length of a limb . . . fractionally . . . if there'd been cartilage shrinkage. But . . . not about the *shape* of bones. There's a difference, I'm convinced of it. Victor . . . Victor. [*He puts his hand on Carroon's arm. Carroon turns, looks at him.*] Raise your arm. [*He helps Carroon to do* so.] Down again. [*He raises it again and lets it go. It falls slowly and awkwardly.*] That's it—the whole characteristic movement's changed.

CARROON: Change—

BRISCOE: All right, Victor.

CARROON [*almost violently*]: Changing! Go . . . back . . .

BRISCOE: Easy. Easy.

QUATERMASS: This means something. Victor, what was changing? When was it? Was it something in the rocket that changed? [*There is no reply. He turns to Briscoe, worried.*] Gordon, I don't like this one bit. I've sometimes been . . . secretly afraid that a thing might happen that we couldn't deal with.

BRISCOE: I'll do everything I can for him.

QUATERMASS: I don't mean only Carroon.

The door opens and Judith comes in. She looks at the man on the couch as Briscoe pulls a blanket round his shoulders, and from him to Quatermass.

JUDITH: Have you—found anything out?

Quatermass shakes his head.

BRISCOE: All we know is that it's definitely not due to radiation effects. Now I'll get him something to try and step up the metabolic rate. [*He goes to a glass-fronted cupboard and takes out drugs, a hypodermic syringe, etc., and starts preparing them.*]

JUDITH: Mrs. Greene's insisting that she must see him tonight. I've tried to put her off—told her that he remembers nothing. It makes no difference.

QUATERMASS: Another one to answer for. Gordon—do you agree to this interview?

BRISCOE [*glancing up from his preparations*]: Yes.

QUATERMASS: I'll have a word with her first, then.

He goes quickly out.

JUDITH: How much harm could it do?

BRISCOE: To Mrs. Greene? She's nearly crazy with anxiety. Just to see him might be—an answer of sorts.

JUDITH: And Victor?

BRISCOE [*filling the syringe*]: There's always the chance something . . . might stir his memory, I suppose. A word or a face. You can't tell.

He prepares Carroon's arm, and adjusts the syringe.

JUDITH: He had several injections at the hospital.

BRISCOE: All right, I've checked. [*Giving the injection.*] There . . . he didn't feel it. [*He dabs the arm.*]

Judith watches him, unable to hold back what she has to say any longer.

JUDITH: Gordon.

BRISCOE: Yes?

JUDITH [*a whisper*]: I'm—staying, you know.

BRISCOE: With him?

She nods. For a long moment they face one another. Then he nods and turns away, puts the syringe down. She takes a step towards him, about to say something more. Then she halts—and forces herself to turn to Carroon.

The door opens. Quatermass brings Mrs. Greene in.

QUATERMASS: Now remember—don't expect anything.

MRS. GREENE: Victor . . .

Quatermass leads her to the couch—Briscoe is raising the head of it to support Carroon, on whom the drug seems to be taking some effect. He is already slightly more alert. Mrs. Greene sits down beside him in the chair Quatermass pushes forward. She is in a state of acute, almost

uncontrollable anxiety.

JUDITH: Victor—it's Mrs. Greene.

MRS. GREENE: He's different!

QUATERMASS: Ssh!

MRS. GREENE: Look at him! His eyes—his expression!

QUATERMASS: He's a sick man. [*To Carroon*] Now, try to remember—

MRS. GREENE: What happened to my husband? In the rocket—you must know! [*Carroon's eyes are on her but he makes no reply.*] His eyes—he understands! Can't he talk—what's the matter with him?

CARROON: In the rocket . . .

JUDITH: Victor—

MRS. GREENE: Go on—go on! Tell me—about Charlie. And Dr. Reichenheim. What happened to them? You've got to tell me!

CARROON: Inside—the rocket . . . all . . . all . . .

MRS. GREENE: That's right—you were all inside it. And then, something went wrong, and you went too far away . . .

CARROON: Far away, Lou . . .

MRS. GREENE: Lou! Listen, you heard that? Lou . . . Charlie always called me that—never Louisa.

QUATERMASS [*to Carroon*]: What did Charles say about—about Lou? Try to remember what he said! [*To Briscoe.*] If we can only get him started—

MRS. GREENE: Tell me, Victor.

Carroon turns to face her. When he speaks, the thick voice is suddenly deeper, of a new timbre.

CARROON: Cold . . . Lou . . .

MRS. GREENE [*shaken*]: Oh . . . he's imitating . . . that's exactly like—

CARROON: Here now. Here now . . . Lou . . .

The very strangeness of it affects the unnerved woman. Without thinking, she finds herself answering.

MRS. GREENE [*whispers*]: Go on. It's Lou. I'm here—

JUDITH [*horrified*]: Stop it! Stop! Mrs. Greene, he doesn't remember anything—can't you see? It's only upsetting you.

MRS. GREENE: But the way he spoke—it was just as if Charlie himself—

JUDITH: Come away.

MRS. GREENE: No, no—I want to hear—

QUATERMASS [*firmly*]: Not now! [*He assists the still protesting woman to her feet.*] A bit of unconscious mimicry—that would explain it. It probably means nothing. [*He guides her across the room, away from the motionless Carroon.*] Gordon—that film you brought back, of the take-off—?

BRISCOE: I gave it to Marsh.

QUATERMASS [*picks up telephone*]: Apparatus room . . . Marsh? The film Dr. Briscoe brought from Tarooma—I want you to set it up for projection right away. [*Puts the receiver down.*] Now . . . Judith, will you take her through to the projection room?

MRS. GREENE: What are you going to do?

JUDITH: Come along with me.

She steers Mrs. Greene away. Quatermass and Briscoe are beside the couch, and Briscoe is busy with dressing-gown and blankets.

QUATERMASS: Get him well wrapped up. He's got to see this.

BRISCOE: Shock tactics can't be relied on, you know.

QUATERMASS: I'm going to use any means I can to bring his memory back.

BRISCOE: Retroactive amnesia's a tricky condition. Add in this exhaustion and . . . why are you trying to force him? It can't help Greene and Reichenheim now.

QUATERMASS: I'll take the responsibility.

BRISCOE [*slowly*]: You *are* afraid of something.

QUATERMASS: Get him on his feet!

Dissolve . . . to close shot of a film-projector, as Marsh threads film through the gate of it. Pan across the tiny projectionist's box to where Quatermass and Briscoe are helping Carroon past into the adjoining projection room.

QUATERMASS: He's swaying with his whole weight.

BRISCOE: Just groggy balance—that's one thing the flight *could* account for.

They steer him towards a seat in the little private projection room—a bare box of a place with acoustic boarding covering the walls. Judith and Mrs. Greene are waiting. Judith takes Carroon's arm as he almost falls into his seat.

MARSH [*calls*]: All ready, sir.

QUATERMASS: Just a moment. Now, Victor—watch the screen. D'you hear me? [*He points.*] The screen over there. Let's see how much comes back to you.

CARROON: Comes . . . back . . .

QUATERMASS [*calls*]: All right, Marsh.

The lights dim, and the screen brightens. First, a shot of the rocket on its Australian launching pad during the fuelling operations, with men scurrying round the huge finned base. In a closer shot, a thin-faced man is shown directing operations.

MRS. GREENE [*involuntarily*]: Charlie! There he is—

Shots of other preparations follow—testing apparatus in the control room, and in the rocket itself; Briscoe checking the pressure suits; then Greene having his put on, piece by piece . . .

BRISCOE: Then we took a few last minute shots. A bit silly, I suppose.

The film continues . . . with the three crew members lined up at the base of the rocket, all wearing pressure suits. There is a closer shot for farewell messages. Greene says: 'Well . . . I just want to say I hope we make it. That's all.' *This is too much for Mrs. Greene as she watches. She bursts into shuddering sobs.*

Reichenheim, a tall man with a black beard, is the next in line. He slaps the pressure suit he is wearing and speaks in a thick German accent: 'Trying to look heroic—dressed in the spare parts of a vacuum cleaner! If this thing fizzles out—[*he shrugs*]—warum soll man sich denn Sorgen machen—auf dieser Welt, oder in der nächsten?' *Lastly, Victor Carroon turns towards the film camera—his face cheerful and animated, in strong contrast to the way he has appeared up to now. He grins broadly.*

BRISCOE: There he is.

Judith and Quatermass peer at Carroon in the dimness of the projection room. Seeing himself, his head is moving uneasily. One hand goes to his throat.

And on the screen, the Carroon of the pre-flight film is talking breezily. 'Well . . . this is it. I've got a little Union Jack in my pants pocket in case we land on Mars. Oh—if the wife ever sees this—take care of yourself, kid. By the way, I will try to bring you something back. Say, a meteorite for the mantelpiece. 'Bye now.' *Then follows a shot of the three men on the hoist, being drawn up to the nose of the rocket. And lastly . . . the rocket itself rising from its pad in a cloud of desert dust . . . slowly, then rapidly, into the sky. The film ends. The projection room lights come on.*

Mrs. Greene is sobbing quietly to herself. When they look at Carroon, his eyes are wide . . . and still blank.

CARROON: Bring . . . something back . . .

JUDITH [*distressed*]: Oh—why did I say that! Of all the ludicrous, empty remarks! For that to be the last thing you've said to somebody—

QUATERMASS [*a hand on her arm*]: It's not as bad as that. Well—no reaction from him. Nothing. [*He rises.*] Louisa, I'm sorry—I've upset you needlessly.

MRS. GREENE: No. I saw Charlie. I was with him . . . I could feel it.

JUDITH [*gently*]: Come with me. I'll see you get some rest now.

Mrs. Greene follows her slowly out. Quatermass is pacing up and down the little projection room, frowning.

QUATERMASS: There's still the recording gear in the rocket. I'll try that next.

BRISCOE [*nodding at Carroon*]: On him?

QUATERMASS: Why not?

BRISCOE: You've no right to go on testing him like this. He's in no condition—

QUATERMASS: What harm's it doing? Don't you see—I've *got* to know! I've never felt so—helplessly ignorant in my life.

Marsh looks in.

MARSH: Finished with the film, sir?

QUATERMASS: Yes. Pack it up. [*To Briscoe.*] What was that last thing Reichenheim said?

BRISCOE: Oh . . . my German's a bit rusty. Just—er—what's it matter, this world or the next? Warum soll man sich denn Sorgen machen—

CARROON: Auf dieser Welt . . .

The other two turn quickly. He is slumped as before, eyes distant.

CARROON: . . . oder in der nächsten.

QUATERMASS [*after a moment*]: I didn't know he spoke any German.

Briscoe shakes his head, puzzled and uneasy. He goes closer to Carroon—then turns quickly to Quatermass.

BRISCOE: Give me some technical question about the rocket—the working of it—quick!

QUATERMASS: Er . . . how is the gimbal system decontrolled?

Briscoe turns again to Carroon and speaks softly.

BRISCOE: Wie kann man das Gimbal System von der auto-matischen Schaltung loslösen?

Carroon's dead eyes fix on him and the answer comes . . . with a slowness that seems not so much due to unfamiliarity with the words as to some deeper impediment.

CARROON: Durch Ausschaltung des automatischen . . . Komputors des Servomotors von . . . den Schwebeachsen.

BRISCOE [*to Quatermass*]: By—by declutching the automatic computers from the independent axis.

QUATERMASS: It's a complete answer. But how would he—? [*He suddenly catches at Briscoe's arm.*] Ask him his name.

BRISCOE: Ihr Name ist?

CARROON [*breathes painfully for a moment*]: Doktor . . . Ludwig . . .

Quatermass looks at Briscoe. Then the door is thrown open and Marsh looks in.

QUATERMASS: What the hell—!

MARSH: There's a Chief Inspector Lomax here, sir. Are you prepared to see him?

Dissolve . . . to Quatermass's office. It is clearly a place in which he spends little time. The few pieces of furniture are severely functional. A small model of the rocket stands on the massive steel desk.

Lomax has switched on a television set, and is standing watching it.

A newsreader is in the middle of a bulletin: '. . . There has been no further announcement concerning the two men missing from the British rocket vehicle which landed last night on Wimbledon Common. The sole occupant, Victor Carroon, is at present in hospital recovering from shock and exhaustion. It is confirmed, however, that the distance—'

Quatermass comes in during this, and Lomax switches the set off.

LOMAX: A bit out of date, aren't they, sir? [*Pause.*] You did bring him here?

QUATERMASS: What can I do for you, Inspector?

LOMAX: Straight to the point—that's what I like. [*He takes the folders out of his case.*] I'm returning these three dossiers.

QUATERMASS: Since you've taken the trouble to bring them back in person . . . I take it you didn't find what you wanted there?

LOMAX: Not . . . what I expected. I think you know we took Carroon's finger-prints this morning?

QUATERMASS: Yes.

LOMAX: I'd like to repeat the procedure—officially.

QUATERMASS: Would you indeed?

LOMAX: Not just for our records, but because I'd like to check on some rather curious features . . . in a medical sense.

QUATERMASS: It's out of the question. He's in the sick bay, resting.

LOMAX: May I ask what your examination's shown? What you've found out about him?

QUATERMASS: Nothing that's evidence.

LOMAX: Well . . . I'm always glad to find co-operation! [*He glares at Quatermass, who does not react. He turns to the model rocket and touches the forepart of it.*] To go back on old ground, then—have you made up your mind about the hatch-opening? Because, alive or dead, they must have gone out of it. That much is obvious.

QUATERMASS: I suppose it must be.

The telephone rings. He answers it.

QUATERMASS: Quatermass speaking . . . Oh, John? Well, what was it? . . . As simple as that! [*To Lomax*] Paterson's located the fault in the control apparatus—it was electrical. [*Into receiver*] Thanks, John, take a good rest and the details later . . . [*He is suddenly startled by a remark at the other end.*] What! Where? . . . Yes, I'll come right away, of course. [*He rattles the receiver rest to connect with the switchboard.*] Find Dr. Briscoe—tell him to meet me at the entrance. Quickly!

LOMAX: What is it? What did he say?

QUATERMASS: He's found something, Inspector. You'd better come.

As they start out, fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to the interior of the rocket. Paterson, his face streaked with grime and wearing greasy overalls, is crouching on the floor. A section of metal panelling has been unbolted from the wall of the cabin, and he is pointing a torch into the cavity. Briscoe is kneeling beside him, peering where directed.

PATERSON [*ill-disguised alarm in his voice*]: See it now? I first noticed it when I was checking the wiring in behind there . . .

Briscoe turns. From a small case he selects a long-handled spoon and reaches into the gap. Cut to where Quatermass is standing, with Lomax just behind him, watching through the hatch opening.

QUATERMASS: Are you able to reach it?

Briscoe grunts. He withdraws the spoon, now full of something, and rises. He shines the beam of his torch upon it.

QUATERMASS: What is it?

Briscoe sniffs it.

BRISCOE: It's stiff, almost hard . . . some sort of jelly.

PATERSON: I tested at different points. That stuff's everywhere. Behind all the panels and gridding. As if—as if centrifugal force had spread it outwards from—[*he looks round him*]—from here.

QUATERMASS: A lot of it?

PATERSON: Yes. [*Fear breaks through in his voice.*] What—what went on here? What did it do to them?

Crash in end music. Fade vision to black.

PART THREE

‘Special knowledge’

Fade in . . . the interior of the rocket.

Paterson grabs at Quatermass’s arm like a desperate creature.

QUATERMASS: John—get a grip on yourself! That’s what we’re all trying to find out—

PATERSON: But—I’ve been here in the cabin the whole day! And all the time that stuff was there, and I didn’t know! Briscoe—what do you make of it?

Briscoe is transferring the sample to a jar in his case.

BRISCOE: I’m taking some back to do an immediate analysis. It looks harmless enough, but—

PATERSON: So would a broth of plague culture!

BRISCOE: Granted. But let’s not start a scare till there’s some reason for it.

PATERSON: Just let’s get out of here!

He makes for the hatch-opening, and Lomax clears it to let him scramble through. Quatermass follows him. Then Lomax sticks his head inside again.

LOMAX: Dr. Briscoe—would you mind giving me a sample too? I’ll hand it over to our people and—perhaps you’d like to compare findings with them later?

BRISCOE: I should indeed. [*He sets about getting more of the substance from the opening in the panels. Lomax turns away, out through the hatch opening.*]

Cut to the scene outside the rocket. Some attempt has been made to deal with the damage caused by the crash—baulks of heavy timber are shoring up the side of the damaged house, and some of the debris has been tidied. Some curious bystanders are staring over the rope barrier, where the policeman on duty is talking quietly to Sergeant Best. Paterson has come to a halt a few yards from the rocket, and now Quatermass comes up to him and puts a hand on his shoulder.

QUATERMASS [*quietly*]: What we all need is a long rest. Meanwhile—let’s try not to jump ahead of known facts.

PATERSON: And what are they?

QUATERMASS: Suppose we gather a few more. You dismantled the wire-recorder?

PATERSON: It’s over there in the wagon.

QUATERMASS: Good . . .

He turns, sees Lomax and Briscoe are talking together beside the rocket. Lomax is cautiously wrapping a sample-jar in his handkerchief.

QUATERMASS [*calls*]: Gordon—hurry it up, will you? I want to get back.

He and Paterson start towards the barrier.

QUATERMASS: The recording—did you test any of it?

PATERSON: Yes. I was trying to find some references to the fault, but—you know how it is, switching at random into a lot of broken talk. Then there was that end bit—

QUATERMASS: What?

PATERSON: Some sort of confusion just before the wire ran out. You’d better hear it yourself . . .

The Policeman opens the barrier to let them through, and they make for the estate car. A moment later Briscoe and Lomax follow.

LOMAX: Thank you, doctor.

Briscoe nods and goes after the others with his sample case. Lomax turns to the Policeman.

LOMAX: See nobody goes near that thing till further instructions. Nobody at all. Got it?

POLICEMAN: Right, sir.

LOMAX [*to Best, holding up the handkerchief-covered jar*]: Now we get this back to town into the hands of Pathology . . . or anybody. Just so long as they’re not mine . . .

They move off, apprehensive curiosity in Best’s eyes. Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to close shot of bulky wire-recording apparatus on the desk of Quatermass’s office, back at the Rocket Group. Pull back to show Paterson checking connexions. Quatermass is just taking his coat off.

PATERSON: What d’you want to hear first?

QUATERMASS: Er—the take-off. Then other sections. I want to be able to judge that end piece in proper comparison.

Paterson switches the recorder on. Lomax settles himself in a chair nearby. Quatermass sits on the desk.

Carroon’s voice comes first, over a faint electronic humming from controls in the rocket. ‘Sound record now running,’ *it says,* ‘Victor Carroon speaking. This apparatus will be left to run for the duration of the flight.’ *After a moment, Greene’s voice cuts in:* ‘All right, settle down, everybody. Check clamps and belts. Reichenheim, in my mirror you look outrageously comfortable. Are you?’ *And Reichenheim replies:* ‘Completely at ease, thank you, Charles.’ *For a little there is nothing but tiny creaks from equipment. Then Carroon’s voice comes again:* ‘Purple light on . . .’ *followed a moment or two later by Greene’s:* ‘Stand by . . . twenty seconds to go.’ *Reichenheim chuckles:* ‘You know something? I’m

sure that when they throw the switch, nothing at all will happen . . .'

PATERSON [*exasperated*]: A fine time to start being funny!

QUATERMASS: All right, John. Take it easy.

The record continues. Greene's voice says: 'Fifteen seconds. No more talking. Just watch the lights—ready for it.' *But a moment later Reichenheim's voice comes again, quietly:* 'You'll see . . . it won't go off.'

PATERSON: The fool—listen to him!

A longer pause, then a surging roar. Carroon's voice calls out involuntarily: 'We're moving!' *and Greene's, sharply:* 'Quiet!' *The roar continues. Paterson reaches to turn the volume down.*

QUATERMASS: That was it. And then the acceleration would begin . . . the full pressure . . .

The sound goes on swelling. Louder . . . and louder . . .

Cut on crash of glass—as a tumbler shatters on a polished floor, and a steaming watery liquid spreads from it in a pool. Cut to Carroon, twisting convulsively where he lies on a steel-tube chaise longue with heat-ray lamps directed down at him. A white-coated medical orderly is beside him, shaken and perplexed. Judith turns quickly into frame.

JUDITH: What happened?

ORDERLY: He—he just knocked it out of my hand. I thought he was going for me!

JUDITH: What was it?

ORDERLY: Only that hot drink—hot sweet stuff Dr. Briscoe said he ought to—

Carroon mutters something, throatily. They listen. The mutter becomes words.

CARROON: Nicht . . . verstärken! Tun Sie nichts um zu helfen!

ORDERLY: What? That sounds like—German—

JUDITH [*uneasily*]: It is. Victor—

CARROON [*suddenly almost choking*]: Man muss verhindern . . . zurückhalten . . .

As if in agony, he rolls sideways. He is doubled up, his face contorted.

JUDITH [*beside him*]: Victor—where's the pain? Oh for God's sake—

ORDERLY: Leave this to me.

He turns Carroon over gently—but the spasm has already passed. He lies limp, with closed eyes. Judith rises.

JUDITH: I'll see if Dr. Briscoe's back yet—

Cut to the passage outside as she hurries to open the door. Briscoe is just coming into sight, his overcoat on and carrying the sample case.

JUDITH: Oh, thank heaven—

BRISCOE: What's the matter?

JUDITH: He's just had—a kind of seizure—

Cut back to the room as Briscoe follows her quickly inside and crosses to Carroon.

ORDERLY: He's quiet now, sir. I was just trying to get him to take something when he suddenly lashed out—[*He nods at the mess on the floor.*]

BRISCOE [*frowning*]: Mm.

ORDERLY: I'd better get on with cleaning it up . . . [*He busies himself, while Briscoe takes Carroon's pulse.*]

JUDITH: I don't understand . . . he seemed to be saying something in German.

BRISCOE: What was it?

JUDITH: It sounded like 'nicht verstärken'.

BRISCOE: 'Nicht verstärken'—don't give strength—

JUDITH: But—he's never spoken the language in his life! I'm certain of that—

BRISCOE: Oh, yes he has. Earlier this evening.

JUDITH: What!

BRISCOE: He knew enough to answer technical questions on the rocket's gimbal system.

JUDITH: The gimbal system! But that was Reichenheim's own special preserve—

BRISCOE [*quietly*]: Perhaps they talked about it before and during the flight. He might have picked up phrases that way.

JUDITH: Yes, I suppose he might . . .

BRISCOE: I'll be along to give him a full examination soon. I've an urgent job to do first.

JUDITH: Oh?

BRISCOE [*evasively*]: Some . . . stuff that was in the rocket. I'm just going to check it in the lab. I'll be in there if you should need me again.

He picks up the sample case and goes. She looks after him until the door closes, then seems to brace herself slightly and turns back towards Carroon.

Dissolve . . . to Quatermass's office. Paterson is slumped wearily in a chair. Quatermass is sitting on the desk by the wire-recorder, which is reaching the end. A weird vibrating note is coming from it, interrupted by some crackles of static. It wavers, drops sharply in pitch, then rises shrilly again. Suddenly the record cuts off with a sharp click.

PATERSON: That's the end of the coil.

Quatermass switches off the machine.

QUATERMASS [*worried*]: Just about the time when the rocket would be starting the swing back towards earth.

PATERSON: What d'you make of it? That noise?

QUATERMASS: I don't know.

PATERSON: It definitely couldn't relate to that electrical fault. The motors?

QUATERMASS: No, they wouldn't be on at that point—couldn't have been. And we heard them at the take-off. Quite different. Anyway, Reichenheim and Greene were still aboard—at least we know that much. There are three voices there. If only we could tell what they were saying through all the din—

PATERSON [*jumping up*]: They weren't fit for it—we've proved that!

QUATERMASS: John—

PATERSON: I always said they wouldn't be able to handle an emergency! Good old Charlie Greene! And Reichenheim—well, you've heard those little bits of Teutonic humour scattered all along the track! Couldn't he think of anything else? As to Carroon—well, we've seen how he came through it.

QUATERMASS: That's pretty cheap. And what's the point of all this, now?

PATERSON: If you—if you hadn't given Briscoe his orders over the medical checks—

QUATERMASS [*patiently*]: I wanted you on ground control because that's where you were most valuable to me. We've been over it a dozen times—now why not leave it at that?

PATERSON: Oh yes—why not!

QUATERMASS [*hotly*]: Paterson, if you imagine any man could have done better—

PATERSON: He couldn't have done much worse!

QUATERMASS: I'm not going to start defending the crew members to you—!

A quick knock and the door opens. It is Judith. She stares in surprise at the angry men.

JUDITH: Oh—I'm sorry.

After a moment Paterson pushes past her through the doorway, and his rapid footsteps recede along the passage.

JUDITH [*looking at Quatermass as she closes the door*]: From what I caught, it sounded like the old grievance?

QUATERMASS: Yes. Why wasn't he picked!

JUDITH: In view of what's happened, you'd think he'd count himself lucky.

QUATERMASS [*with irony*]: Oh, he'd have saved the situation! . . . he believes . . . whatever it was. I don't understand this outbreak. Of course he's been under a strain—we all have. But that's not a reason . . . unless . . .

JUDITH: What?

QUATERMASS: Unless it's rationalization. A smoke screen of anger to hide . . . something he's ashamed of.

JUDITH: Or afraid of?

QUATERMASS [*changing the subject*]: How's Victor?

JUDITH: About the same. I must go back to him in a moment—I just wanted to look something up. [*He watches her abstractedly as she opens a filing cabinet and starts searching.*] These old notes of Dr. Reichenheim's—the classified ones—

QUATERMASS: Mm? Take whatever you want.

He goes out, frowning down at the floor and leaving the door swinging. His footsteps die slowly away along the passage. Judith turns from the cabinet with a heavy clip-full of papers and starts to flick through them. Fade in music link.

Dissolve . . . to close shot of Briscoe looking through the eyepiece of a tall electron microscope. Pull back . . . he is working at a bench in the research station's laboratory. There are covered containers, with some of the jelly-like substance from the rocket. Nearby an assistant is setting up complicated glass-tubing apparatus. With his free hand Briscoe is making pencil notes, attempting to reproduce the shapes he sees under the microscope. Cut to Quatermass sitting on a laboratory stool watching. Briscoe stands back, and rubs his eyes.

QUATERMASS: Well? Any conclusion?

BRISCOE [*a short sigh of perplexity*]: I still can't detect any trace of motion.

QUATERMASS: So?

BRISCOE: Well . . . for what it's worth at this stage . . . I feel pretty certain it's harmless.

QUATERMASS: That'll relieve Paterson's mind.

BRISCOE: Everyone's, I think. Now, I want to go on and do a chemical analysis and all that, but . . . I doubt if we'll ever get a complete answer.

QUATERMASS: No definite identification?

BRISCOE [*slowly*]: In some ways it's like a post-catabolic residuum . . .

QUATERMASS: Remember I'm only an engineer.

BRISCOE: It might conceivably represent the dead remnants of cell-tissue.

QUATERMASS: Animal tissue? [*Briscoe nods.*] Human?

BRISCOE: I suppose it *might* have been . . . if the whole cell structure was first modified—fantastically, impossibly changed. [*He indicates his pencil sketch.*] I've just never seen anything like this.

QUATERMASS [*slowly, awkwardly*]: Gordon . . . how far d'you think this would go towards . . . accounting for *them?*

Briscoe does not reply. He fiddles with his pencil and glances across at the staring assistant. There is silence in the laboratory. After a moment it is broken by a muffled cry a short distance away. Briscoe is immediately alert.

BRISCOE: That's from the sick bay!

He starts towards the door, with Quatermass close behind him.

Cut to the Sick Bay. A close shot of Carroon writhing where he lies. Another choking cry comes from him. Judith is beside him, the clip of notes in her hands. She is tense, half afraid of what she is doing.

JUDITH: Victor . . . Victor, when you were in the rocket . . . [*her voice trembling*] . . . Erinnern Sie sich ob . . . der Eingang der Rakete . . . verschlossen war? [*She moves nearer to him.*] Sind Sie sicher dass nichts . . . in die Rakete . . . eingedrungen . . . ist?

CARROON [*painfully, his head jerking from side to side*]: Eingedrungen . . . eingedrungen . . . No! No! Don't let it—!

JUDITH [*whispers*]: Tell Mrs. Greene—Louisa—tell her what happened! [*She has to make an effort to use the name.*] Charles . . . tell her!

The voice from Carroon's lips grows to a wild shout—and once again it is not his own voice.

CARROON: Tell, tell—tell Lou!—Lou—Lou!

There is a rush of feet along the passage and the door is flung open. Briscoe pulls Judith away from the twisting figure.

CARROON: Something—there! Something there . . .

BRISCOE: What's going on?

JUDITH: I'm sorry, I—

Briscoe attends to Carroon, trying to calm him. Quatermass takes the sheaf of papers from Judith's hands.

QUATERMASS: Reichenheim's notes. What were you trying to do?

JUDITH [*dazedly*]: Gordon said he'd answered questions in German about the working of the rocket. I couldn't help myself. I had to know more . . . about him. [*She turns away, her voice dropping to a whisper.*] It's far more than the way he looks . . .

QUATERMASS [*taking her arm*]: I know.

JUDITH: It's—like a schizoid personality, sub-dividing itself. But not—[*she has to make herself say it*]—not three existing people!

Quatermass looks across at the sick man. He seems quiet now, and Briscoe turns away, joins the others. His voice is quiet, angry.

BRISCOE: Where's Howard?

JUDITH: I sent him away—

BRISCOE: So you could conduct this little séance alone, was that it? A crass idea—anything might have happened! I mean to you. [*She is shaken. He turns to Quatermass.*] There's been a change since I last examined him.

JUDITH: What d'you mean?

BRISCOE: The skin . . . it seems to be taking on a different texture. It's not just inflammation. The blood vessels aren't dilated . . . [*To Judith*] That's why I wanted him under constant observation. That's what Howard was here for.

She moves slowly across to Carroon and looks down at him. His eyes are closed now. Briscoe is at her shoulder, watchful as she turns down the blanket.

JUDITH [*whispers*]: Oh . . . yes, I see. Those patches . . .

Her hand goes out to touch him gently. Then she bites her lip and draws back.

JUDITH: I can't—touch him!

Briscoe guides her towards the door, which Quatermass is holding open.

QUATERMASS: Get some sleep. That's what we all need most. Tomorrow I'm going to . . . well, there'll be a lot to do tomorrow.

They look at him. He is looking across the room. Cut to Carroon, stirring uneasily. His eyes are not quite shut. Fade in music link.

Dissolve . . . to Lomax's office, Scotland Yard. It is the following day, and Sergeant Best is alone in the room, telephoning. On the desk are several volumes with titles like: Rockets in Space.

BEST [*patiently*]: Yes . . . Lomax. Chief Detective Inspector Lomax. All I want to know is—is he still there, and if he is, will you very kindly put me through? [*Changing tone.*] Because it's urgent! [*A pause.*] How long ago? Ten minutes . . . that ought to be enough for him to . . . [*He listens.*] Hold it, hold it, somebody coming now.

Lomax enters, briefcase under his arm.

BEST: It's him. Okay. [*He puts the phone down.*] What did the analysis say?

LOMAX: Nothing definite—it doesn't seem to be harmful, at any rate.

BEST [*significantly*]: Just as well!

LOMAX: Mm?

BEST: Because our friend the mad scientist's got a squad at work clearing the stuff out of his rocket.

LOMAX: Say what you mean! Quatermass?

BEST: The same. Local inspector rang for you in a dither, said he'd had all sorts of official papers waved in his face, and what was he to do if anything? I've been trying to reach you.

LOMAX [*savagely*]: Right! Get Quatermass!

BEST [*surprised*]: Pull him in?

LOMAX: God almighty, they ruined you with that spell in Narcotics. [*Slapping the telephone.*] Here, man, here!

Best hastily gets started on the call. Lomax throws his briefcase down on his desk and glances at the message pad.

LOMAX: No more code calls?

BEST: No, sir, they didn't ring again.

LOMAX: Once was enough for me. As if this business wasn't complicated enough already! [*He sits, thoughtfully.*] Or perhaps that's why . . . [*He frowns at* Rockets in Space.] To anybody in that line of country, the facts we're after might be worth sharing . . .

BEST [*into phone*]: Professor Quatermass? [*Turns.*] Here he is.

LOMAX [*taking the receiver*]: Hello, sir. Lomax. I understand you've taken some hasty action on your own . . . Dr. Briscoe says it's safe? Does he? It's just as well our findings confirm that, or you might be in a nasty spot. Just what was the idea, sir? [*As he listens to the answer, his expression becomes even grimmer.*] What! Take Carroon back to it? . . . What sort of a test? . . . Haven't you put him through enough already! [*There is an explosive comment at the other end.*] Now listen, sir—I've something very serious to say to you. I'd meant to come down and explain in person, but—have you got a scramble phone there? . . . You may be a civil authority, but you must have secrets? . . . [*Controlling himself*] Very well, I can't say much in clear, but—I've had it on good authority there are people interested in your man. Professionally interested, if you see what I mean . . . It is *not* balderdash, sir, it's a question of security! . . . If you start trotting Carroon round the open countryside, it's not beyond the bounds of possibility that they might . . . Who? Certain people. That's what I called them, and it's all I'm going to call them on an open line! Now I'm warning you—[*A click. He lowers the receiver and looks at Best. He is white with anger.*]

BEST: No go?

LOMAX: He won't be bothered with any cloak-and-dagger nonsense at this time! That's what he said.

BEST: Can't you force him?

LOMAX: That's tricky—he seems to be a law unto himself, with a tame Ministry between him and the world. What doesn't help me is that he's probably quite right—ten to one it's a false alarm. All we can do is—get down there and look like faithful watchdogs!

He starts pulling on his coat again. Fade in music link.

Dissolve . . . to the scene of the crash at Wimbledon Common. A blue-overalled technician is just passing some lengths of flexible metal tubing out through the hatch-opening, to two colleagues who are collecting their gear together. Pan to where Lomax, Best, and the local Police Inspector are watching.

LOMAX: They seem to be about finished. [*To the Inspector.*] Who's in charge?

INSPECTOR [*looking round*]: That senior engineer chap—isn't his name Paterson?

LOMAX: Oh, yes.

INSPECTOR: He was here till about half an hour ago. Probably nipped across to the boozer—had as much as he could take of this. I saw some of the stuff they cleaned out of that thing . . . ! [*He grimaces and shakes his head.*] What was it?

LOMAX [*not answering this*]: Was there much of it?

INSPECTOR: Seemed to be.

BEST: Hello! . . . here he comes now. Looks as if he went for more than just a quick one.

Cut to where Paterson is approaching. He has drunk enough to make him assertive and reckless . . . and is followed by an attentive group of journalists, more cosmopolitan than previously—an American, an Indian, and a Frenchman are prominent among them. There are several press photographers as well. They trample cheerfully over the rope barrier, already dropped into the mud by the Rocket Group technicians.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Hi, Inspector—when's the spaceman due?

Embarrassed, the Inspector looks to Lomax.

LOMAX: I'm afraid we've nothing to tell you. [*Coming forward.*] Paterson, I don't know how much you've said to these chaps, but I advise you—

PATERSON: Go to hell!

LOMAX [*quietly*]: Is Quatermass aware that you've been—

PATERSON [*dismissing this*]: Oh, Quatermass . . . ! [*He turns his back on Lomax, addresses the American journalist.*] Now to go back to what I was saying. My—my point is really this! That the individuals aren't so important, only the success of the project itself. Understand what I mean?

FULLALOVE: The end justifies the means.

PATERSON: Eh?

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Wait a minute, Mr—uh—Paterson, I'd like to take you up on that rather, if I may say, rather totalitarian statement. [*He and the other pressmen close in round Paterson, while Lomax moves away to join Best and the Inspector.*] Uh—surely what happened to those guys is the whole story?

PATERSON: I don't know what you mean by 'the whole story'. I've told you—told you that in my opinion they shouldn't have been picked. They just weren't up to it—

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: I got that. Sounds just like talk, coming from somebody that stayed home.

PATERSON: What do you mean by that! I can assure you—

FULLALOVE [*quickly*]: Mr. Paterson—as a public figure you really mustn't be so sensitive.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST [*softly*]: Public figure!

PATERSON: You're James Fullalove, aren't you? Writing those bits in the *Gazette?*

There is some laughter at Fullalove's expense.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST [*nudging him*]: The thanks you get for trying to help him, James. Now he's going to lay into you!

PATERSON [*grinning stupidly*]: That's right. All pious generalizations, plus old-hat background waffle—

FULLALOVE: Pardon my ignorance.

PATERSON: Welcome.

INDIAN JOURNALIST: But surely, Mr. Paterson—what can there be concerning outer space *but* ignorance?

PATERSON: Of the facts, yes. But not of the implications. It won't be long now till a full-scale manned satellite's established high above the earth. Whoever does it will boss the show.

FULLALOVE: The show?

PATERSON: Everything—the world.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: You're pretty sure about it, mac—

PATERSON: Every inch of the Earth will be under scrutiny from it. Missiles will be directed by it at any target with one hundred per cent accuracy—

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Just a minute! It's pretty well accepted that—however you put a satellite up there, you can knock it down the same way?

PATERSON [*confidently*]: Don't you believe it. Your information must be about as old-hat as his. [*He nods at Fullalove.*]

There is a little hush among the pressmen. Fullalove glances at the others, at the American, the Indian . . . He decides to butt in.

FULLALOVE: Mr. Paterson, there's such a thing as speech off the record, and I'm sure none of my colleagues would want to take advantage—

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Hey, hey! Let him talk!

PATERSON: I intend to.

INDIAN JOURNALIST: Mr. Paterson . . . the communiqué on the landing of the rocket referred to the original intention of the experiment—

PATERSON [*nodding*]: To reach a height of fifteen thousand miles and make two orbits of the earth.

INDIAN JOURNALIST: Yes, and to make . . . certain observations. Mr. Paterson, can you tell us *who* was to be observed?

PATERSON: Who? Well . . .

Feeling suddenly that he is getting out of his depth, he looks round the ring of faces. Pan round them, ending on a square-faced Photographer. All of them are staring at Paterson. He manages a kind of laugh.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Maybe after all you'd better not answer that one.

PATERSON: No, it's all right. Obviously, the observations would have been purely scientific.

FRENCH JOURNALIST: No military or—er—political object whatsoever?

PATERSON: No. [*Lamely*] As far as I'm aware.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: As far as—! Just a minute ago you knew everything, mac!

FRENCH JOURNALIST: I think Mr. Paterson would—er—concede that there is at least one man with more extensive knowledge than his.

PATERSON [*warily now*]: Who d'you mean?

FRENCH JOURNALIST: This . . . Carroon.

Another murmur of amusement. Paterson flushes, conscious of having made a fool of himself. His audience's attention is straying too. Two or three of the pressmen have wandered away to take pictures or to look expectantly along the nearby street. It is dusk now, and lights are glimmering in nearby houses. A policeman switches on a couple of the remaining lamps that are directed at the rocket. Two other policemen are fixing the rope barrier up again, much closer to the shining shell this time. Cut to where Lomax, Best, and the Inspector are watching this operation.

LOMAX: That's fine—enough to keep the press from shoving its noses and cameras inside. Well . . . I just wish they'd show up and get it over.

INSPECTOR: It'll be dark soon.

LOMAX: I've laid on a squad car to escort them home. Then we can wash our hands of this little expedition.

INSPECTOR: I suppose . . . [*he nods towards the scattered pressmen*] . . . those chaps are all genuine?

LOMAX [*a laugh*]: Depends what you mean by genuine. I know most of them, by sight at least. Some hard cases amongst them. [*He nods at a lonely figure.*] Look at friend Paterson . . . they've had the good of him, dropped him like the proverbial old sock.

BEST: Old glove.

LOMAX: Is it? He looks more like a sock.

There is a shout. Two or three of the pressmen go running.

INSPECTOR: This must be them . . .

Cut to where the estate car is pulling up with a squeal of brakes. Quatermass scrambles out and starts towards the rocket as the first pressmen reach him.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Professor Quatermass?

QUATERMASS: Yes. Now if you don't mind—

INDIAN JOURNALIST: Is it true that the man Carroon has lost his memory?

FRENCH JOURNALIST: There he is!

A rush, as Carroon is helped from the estate car by Briscoe, with Judith taking his other arm. He is heavily muffled, even his head swathed. The vacant eyes can hardly be seen. Cameras flash. The bobbing, questioning pressmen block the way—then Lomax and other police hurry to help.

LOMAX: All right—let them through, please! If you please—

QUATERMASS: Gordon, hurry him along!

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Hey—you can't run out on us like this, Professor.

FULLALOVE: What about a statement, sir?

QUATERMASS: Later, later.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: I'd like to check with you about some of these things your colleague's been saying.

QUATERMASS: Colleague?

AMERICAN JOURNALIST [*points*]: Him.

Paterson is standing by the rocket, watching them straggle towards it.

QUATERMASS [*reaching him*]: John—what *have* you told them?

PATERSON: Nothing much. Everything's ready inside there—if you want to go ahead with this.

QUATERMASS: Of course I'm going ahead with it!

Briscoe is already guiding the swaying form of Carroon through the hatch-opening. More cameras flash. Judith follows them. Quatermass turns to Lomax.

QUATERMASS: Inspector, since you've given yourself the trouble of coming here—perhaps you'd like to be in on it? Then perhaps you won't have to telephone me at an inconvenient time to find out what happened.

LOMAX: It's what I wanted from the start, sir. Let's work together. I'm certain you can help me and—you never know, I might be able to return the compliment.

QUATERMASS: Um. [*He starts through the hatch-opening.*]

LOMAX: Best . . . keep an eye on things.

He follows Quatermass, and so does Paterson, last of all. Best turns to face the pressmen lining the restored rope barrier. The three policemen have taken up positions round the rocket, the Inspector moving between them.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Well, whatever it is they're going to do, they're going to do it. We learned that much!

FULLALOVE: They must be a tight fit.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Yeah—real snug bunnies! You seen what it's like inside there?

FULLALOVE: No.

FRENCH JOURNALIST: Eh—maybe we can do something about that. [*To Best.*] Sergeant . . . suppose just one of us could run to the opening and get a picture?

BEST: Are you serious?

FRENCH JOURNALIST: We all could share it. Just one man, for one moment? Anyone—him, for instance? [*He claps a hand on the square-faced photographer's shoulder. It startles Square-Face.*]

BEST: Come off it, monsieur.

He grins and turns away. The Frenchman shrugs. The other pressmen are already scattering.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: I guess I'll find some place to take the weight off my feet.

FULLALOVE: Daresay there's an old chair or two among this mess . . .

He rummages in the tidied wreckage, in the shadow of the rocket's twisted vane. Suddenly he peers at the battered door that must have opened into the now obliterated hall.

FULLALOVE: Good God . . . there's a light in there.

Other journalists come straggling across to look. The shattered windows of the lower part of the house have been stuck over with thick brown paper, but a faint crack of light outlines the door. Fullalove taps on it.

Cut to Miss Wilde's living-room. The old lady has just finished sharing a tin of salmon with her cat, which is in her lap, and she is pouring him a saucer of milk.

MISS WILDE: There, Henry, drink it up. Poor Henry.

Another tap at the door, and voices outside. This time she pays attention.

MISS WILDE: Oh dear, it must be someone on purpose. [*She rises, still holding Henry, and opens the door.*] Now I'm quite all right—you mustn't bother about me—

FULLALOVE: Good heavens! She's still here.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST [*scenting a story*]: Say . . . mind if I come in, ma'am?

MISS WILDE: Goodness, no. Be careful—mind you don't get all over white. This way . . .

The American Journalist picks his way inside, and Fullalove follows.

MISS WILDE: You were here last night. [*She peers past Fullalove.*] Are all those men reporters?

FULLALOVE: Yes.

MISS WILDE: Poor things. [*She calls.*] Why don't you all come inside?

Fullalove looks round. An oil lamp has replaced the cut-off electricity, picking out in its soft light a cosily odd room. There are many animal-pictures, china dogs on the mantelpiece, and an empty, battered birdcage. Her small brass bed has been brought downstairs and eccentrically lodged under a shelf with a large cactus on it.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST [*delightedly*]: Oh man—all this! Just what I need.

Other journalists are coming in.

MISS WILDE: That's just what *I* thought. I couldn't leave all my things. So I got Mr. Matthews next door to bring my bed down. He papered the windows for me too. He's so good. [*Welcoming the crowd.*] That's it—there's room for everybody. Come in and shut the door, that man.

This last is addressed to Square-Face, who is looking back at the scene outside. Suddenly self-conscious, he grins and does as she has told him.

MISS WILDE: Now I'll put the kettle on and make a big pot of tea. Luckily I've still got gas.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST [*quietly to Fullalove*]: Cute little dame. [*He glances at his assembled rivals.*] Well, so long as we're all here together . . . a cup of tea would be swell.

Miss Wilde has found a huge silver teapot, and still carrying the cat she goes to the kitchen. The American jumps forward to hold the door open for her.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: I guess last night was just like the blitz?

MISS WILDE [*very practical*]: Oh no. There weren't any sirens. And it wasn't on purpose this time—they didn't *mean* to spoil my house.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: It's still pretty tough when they do.

MISS WILDE: Yes. So many of my little treasures . . . look at poor Polly's cage.

The American casts a sympathetic eye at the half-flattened cage lying by the kitchen door.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Gosh . . . even your parrot . . . !

MISS WILDE: Oh, Polly died in 1947. But I was keeping that in his memory. [*She trots into the kitchen.*] Now come along, Henry, help me boil the water . . .

The American follows her into the battered little kitchen. Here too the window has gone and has been replaced by cardboard and packing paper. Miss Wilde fills a kettle, still somehow without putting the cat down. The American notices the Square-faced photographer just behind him in the doorway, staring. He turns to him.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST [*whispers*]: Look, mac, I'm after a little story—d'you mind? Etiquette? [*He moves in on Miss Wilde.*] Uh—maybe you'd tell me, ma'am, you'd give me your views about this whole business? You know, going thousands of miles up in a rocket—?

MISS WILDE: Oh, I expect it's quite a novelty. At first, anyway. But I'm afraid I should get rather bored. I like to be where *people* are. [*She turns.*] What are you doing?

Square Face has crossed the kitchen and has picked aside the edge of the brown paper stuck over the window space. He is peering out. At Miss Wilde's question he turns with an apologetic grin.

SQUARE FACE: Just wondered if you could see the rocket from here. But of course it's on the other side.

MISS WILDE: Now stick that paper back. It's all I've got to keep the wind away.

SQUARE FACE [*patting it back*]: I just . . . wondered how they're getting on . . .

Cut to the interior of the rocket. Carroon is lying on one of the couch-seats, and Briscoe is giving him an injection in the arm. Judith watches.

BRISCOE: That much can't hurt him.

Cut to Quatermass and Lomax. The Yard man is having difficulty in fitting himself in, as Paterson is right beside him adjusting the wire-recorder.

LOMAX: Barbiturate?

BRISCOE: That's it. If we *are* dealing with an amnesia condition, it should help . . . set the memory free. [*Dabbing the injection spot, he turns away. Softly to Quatermass*] My God, that skin of his . . . !

LOMAX [*equally quietly*]: What is all this about physical changes?

QUATERMASS: Forget it for the moment. John, are you ready?

PATERSON: I'm setting it to play back the last five minutes of the wire.

Briscoe puts the hypodermic syringe away in his case, and returns to Carroon's side.

QUATERMASS: All right, everybody. Settle down.

Briscoe moves Carroon's arms gently to his sides.

BRISCOE: Victor . . . relax. Understand? The rocket's in orbit . . . right out there at the farthest point . . . you're at the apogee . . .

QUATERMASS [*to Paterson*]: Right!

Paterson switches on the recorder. A very faint electronic hum comes from it, as from the rocket's instruments during flight. Cut to Carroon as Reichenheim's heavily accented voice comes through: 'I think about another twenty-seven hours. Right, Victor?' *Carroon starts visibly at the sound of his own voice answering on the record:* 'About that . . . till we find out if they can bring us down. Nice long wait!' *Greene's voice comes last:* 'Don't think about it, that's the best way. The Earth's almost ahead now—look, monitor two.' *There are tiny sounds of movement, a sigh of appreciation from Reichenheim:* 'Nearly a million miles away, and still . . . so schön . . . To think that we are the first of all its creatures . . . to see it like this . . . !'

There is a curious variation in the background noise . . . a very faint intrusion that rises and falls. Carroon's recorded voice cries out: 'There it is again!'

The living Carroon on the bunk quivers. Cut to Quatermass, staring down at him. The voices continue from the record. Greene can be heard giving a calm order: 'Helmets on—routine precaution.' *Reichenheim protests:* 'It's only what we heard before. See—it doesn't affect the instruments.' *The sound grows, rising and falling. Pan from Carroon, shuddering now throughout his body, across the intent faces of Judith, Briscoe . . . Quatermass, Lomax . . . to Paterson and the recorder. Pan down to the machine itself . . . fade in music link.*

Flashback dissolve . . . to the same wire-recorder in a different, slightly closer shot. Pan up . . . to three figures in pressure-suits, busy clipping their helmets into position. When they walk, their movement is a weightless swaying, held to the floor only by magnetic studs in their boots. They are grotesque figures, and now they are helmeted, their voices come muffled through small built-in microphones . . . just as the recorder has picked them up. The tallest of the three, Reichenheim, is already at the instrument panel, studying the dials.

REICHENHEIM: Nothing. Nothing showing on the scanners, either.

GREENE: It's not a meteor swarm . . .

CARROON [*joining them, points*]: There is one thing—the temperature! [*The other two turn to the thermometer-gauges.*]

GREENE: You're right. It's dropping rapidly.

REICHENHEIM: Something wrong with the pressurization?

GREENE [*checking*]: No—that's normal. I don't understand—

Suddenly all three men sway violently as the rocket twists on its axis. Simultaneously the alien sound swoops to a new and alarming level of vibration. They grab at handgrips or any other projections, to steady themselves.

GREENE: Check the stabilizer-system!

Carroon moves to another set of instruments. Reichenheim is watching the scanners, Greene the temperature. The sound continues its shrill rise and fall.

CARROON: Stabilizer system normal, according to these—

REICHENHEIM: Listen!

He turns from the scanners. Inside the helmet, the bearded face shows wild alarm. The others swing round too.

CARROON: The sound—it's inside! It's in here with us! [*He and the others turn clumsily about.*] But there's nothing to see—!

Greene suddenly jerks to one side, as if gripped by an unseen force. He grasps a hand-grip, loses it, seems to be flung back against the instrument panel. Reichenheim tries to steady him.

REICHENHEIM: Charles—what is it?

GREENE [*choking*]: Can't you feel it—can't you—

He is doubled up. Reichenheim sprawls in the opposite direction, crashing into Carroon, who clutches at him in terror.

CARROON: What can we do?

REICHENHEIM: Try to fight against it! Oh God, it's tearing me apart! [*Weakly.*] Fight it . . . !

CARROON: Greene! [*He claws his way across to where Greene is swaying helplessly, moaning.*]

GREENE: Save me . . . save me . . .

CARROON: Greene—don't give way, or we're done! Hold on—try to hold on!

He seizes him by the arm—and his face fills with horror. The sleeve of Greene's pressure-suit is empty, and collapses under his grip. He lets go, appalled. Greene sways away from him. Through the deafening screams of vibration, Reichenheim's faint voice struggles to make itself heard.

REICHENHEIM: Wir haben uns in die dunklen Räume gewagt . . . und was wir dort gefunden haben ist ein übles Ding . . . Victor, I can't see!

Carroon struggles to steady himself. He drags himself to the control panel, clutches at the handgrips. Track in to the agonized face behind the helmet, as the battering screech sweeps to its climax . . .

Dissolve from flashback . . . to close shot of Carroon on the bunk in the rocket. His eyes are squeezed shut. He is breathing in long, sobbing gulps. He breaks into an anguished cry that rings out even above the shrill vibration from the wire-recorder.

JUDITH: Stop that thing! Cut it off!

Paterson does so. There is sudden, dead silence, apart from Carroon's painful breathing. Briscoe crouches at his side.

JUDITH: It was too much. He couldn't have stood another moment of it.

CARROON: The cold . . . cold . . . !

BRISCOE: All right, Victor. [*Turns.*] He's practically out. Exhausted.

QUATERMASS: It had to be done.

LOMAX [*slowly*]: Apart from the things he was shouting . . . you could almost tell from his face . . . what must have happened . . .

PATERSON [*desperately*]: No! No, I won't have that—I won't believe it! There was some confusion, that's all we know—an emergency and they weren't ready for it—

His voice tails away. He turns to stare at Carroon, along with the others.

JUDITH: Something . . . did get in.

Fade in linking music . . .

Cut to Miss Wilde's house as the door opens and the American Journalist comes out, glancing at his watch. Fullalove follows.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: I hope they're getting some place with this lost memory session. Cigarette?

FULLALOVE [*taking one*]: Thanks. Amnesia . . . sounds a bit thin. I thought it was only something co-respondents and embezzlers claimed to have . . . and even they haven't used it for years.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST [*throwing his cigarette down*]: Here they come!

He darts forward. Hearing his shout, other pressmen come streaming from the house. Cut to the rocket, as Lomax emerges in a hurry.

LOMAX: Best!

The sergeant runs across. Briscoe and Quatermass are practically lifting the limp form of Carroon through the hatch-opening.

LOMAX: Best, get an ambulance along here!

QUATERMASS: No! He's not going into hospital again—I won't allow it!

LOMAX: Sergeant, you heard what I said—get on with it!

BEST: Right, sir. [*To the Inspector*] Where can I phone? Police box round here?

FULLALOVE: I saw a phone in the house there—

He points to Miss Wilde's door. Best hurries off towards it.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Say—why not bring him in there and let him rest while you're waiting for it? Look at him—practically passed out.

BRISCOE [*to Quatermass*]: Might be an idea.

QUATERMASS [*unwillingly*]: Very well.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: The old lady won't mind, I guess. [*To Quatermass*] You going to take him or not? Here, gimme his arm—

Quatermass is left standing, as the American and Briscoe almost pick up Carroon between them, and stagger towards the house.

Cut to Miss Wilde's living-room. Sergeant Best has entered to find her in a haze of pressmen's cigarette-smoke, clearing up teacups and filled ashtrays.

BEST: Mind if I use your phone?

MISS WILDE: Of course. Oh dear—what is it now?

She has to point out the telephone which is lost among stacks of salvaged crockery. An excited hubbub approaches, and in another moment Fullalove is holding the door open.

FULLALOVE: Miss Wilde, I'm afraid you've got more visitors—

MISS WILDE: Is that all? Well, I've got plenty of tea—

Carroon is practically carried inside by the American and Briscoe, with Judith fighting her way through the pressmen behind.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Get him over there on the bed. [*To Miss Wilde*] Sweetheart, you don't mind if this sick guy lies down a minute?

MISS WILDE: Bless my soul—of course not. Just let me straighten it—

Carroon is still undergoing violent shudders as they lay him down.

MISS WILDE: I'm afraid that pillow isn't very comfy. All my best ones were spoiled.

JUDITH: The colour of his face . . . !

Carroon lies on his back, his blank eyes on the ceiling, his breathing jerky. Above his head is the shelf with the potted cactus on it.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Stand clear, boys—give the guy some air. He's in bad shape, no doubt about it.

BRISCOE: Sergeant—what about that ambulance?

BEST [*receiver in hand*]: I'm just getting through . . .

BRISCOE: Make them hurry it! [*Looks round.*] Where's Quatermass?

Cut to the rocket. Quatermass and Lomax are engaged in a tense, whispered exchange. Paterson is slumped down a few yards away, his head in his hands.

QUATERMASS: Understand me—I want to be proved wrong!

LOMAX: A living thing . . . ?

QUATERMASS: But not as we know life.

LOMAX [*looking up at the rocket*]: Able to pass through solid steel?

QUATERMASS: Like a cosmic ray. But alive.

LOMAX: Invisible . . .

QUATERMASS: To men. Our eyes are limited.

LOMAX: Able to destroy.

QUATERMASS: To change . . . to remake other living things.

LOMAX: An intelligence, then?

QUATERMASS: Perhaps . . .

LOMAX: Higher than ours?

QUATERMASS: Different.

LOMAX: And *if* it were . . . if it entered the rocket out there . . . then when everything had happened, it just . . . went away?

QUATERMASS: Perhaps . . . it stayed. [*Their eyes meet.*]

LOMAX: You don't mean . . . him?

Track in on Quatermass's drawn face.

Cut to close shot of Carroon on the bed. His hands are moving. One reaches out waveringly towards the shelf.

JUDITH: Look at his hands.

MISS WILDE: What could he want?

BRISCOE [*puzzled*]: I don't know.

MISS WILDE: D'you think it could be my cactus that's upsetting him?

BRISCOE: No.

MISS WILDE [*taking it down from the shelf*]: Oh yes, sick people can take very strange fancies. Once when my cousin Sophie had influenza, she couldn't bear the smell of rice pudding. [*Holding the pot up.*] It might look a little alarming to someone who's poorly. I'll take it away . . . and Polly's cage too, because that's a funny shape now . . .

Carroon's eyes follow her as she goes out to the kitchen with these things. He moans. A quick jerk of the body and he is sitting upright.

BRISCOE: Victor—stay where you are—

Carroon throws him off. Judith gasps. There is a ripple of surprise among the pressmen. Carroon is rising from the bed, his movements slow as a sleepwalker's, but purposeful for the first time. Briscoe, Judith, and the others draw back as his feet touch the ground. His hands are outstretched before him, opening and shutting in a curious way. Track back with him as he advances a step at a time towards the kitchen door—which opens as he reaches it. Miss Wilde starts at finding him almost on top of her.

MISS WILDE: Oh—goodness!

She lifts an arm instinctively to her face. Briscoe pulls her quickly aside and Carroon lurches past, clutching at the doorpost. He disappears into the kitchen.

BRISCOE: Is the back door open?

MISS WILDE [*shakily*]: No, locked . . . to keep Henry in. The key's in a vase over there. [*As Briscoe gently shuts the door.*] Perhaps he's thirsty? There's nothing else he could want in my kitchen . . . is there?

Cut to the kitchen, where Carroon has come to a halt. He stares blindly ahead. Then his whole body starts to turn slowly, as if searching the room not with his eyes but with his outstretched, twisting hands. He moves slowly forward. Pan down to the potted cactus on the table, as he moves step by step towards it.

Cut back to the living-room, to the curious faces outside the kitchen door.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Doc—will he be okay in there?

BRISCOE: It may be best.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: On his own?

BRISCOE: For a few minutes. I think everything suddenly got too much for him.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Yeah, I guess so. The boys here not being exactly the quietest . . .

Suddenly they are even less quiet. A babel of questions breaks out at the other end of the room as Quatermass enters with Lomax. 'It's the professor!' 'Professor Quatermass—!' 'What about that statement now?' 'You promised!'

QUATERMASS: In a moment. Where's Carroon?

BRISCOE [*pushing his way through to him*]: In the kitchen. He made his own way there. I think it was all the noise—

FRENCH JOURNALIST: Professor Quatermass, have you found out what happened to the other men?

QUATERMASS: Wait a moment, now—

FULLALOVE: What was the result of your session in the rocket, sir? Could you stir his memory?

The journalists crowd in on Quatermass—they have waited too long to be put off any longer. Best points to the telephone and nods to Lomax as he joins him—then they too are caught up in the excited questions that ring round the smoky little room. All backs are turned on the kitchen door—where Judith is quietly trying to restrain Miss Wilde.

MISS WILDE: But I *must* make more tea, dear. I'll be careful. I won't disturb him, poor soul—

JUDITH: Miss Wilde—

But Miss Wilde has already gone into the kitchen. She glances round at the press conference, but nobody is paying them the smallest attention . . . except the square-faced Photographer, who shoots her a quick, unconcerned look, then turns back to the centre of interest. She goes after Miss Wilde.

Cut to the kitchen as Judith enters and closes the door behind her. Carroon is slumped against the table, half standing, half leaning. Miss Wilde glances at him curiously as she places the refilled kettle on the gas. She strokes her cat.

MISS WILDE: Make the kettle boil, Henry. [*She moves closer to Judith.*] My sister's son was an airman in the war. He was hurt on one of his flights, but afterwards he got quite better, you know.

JUDITH: Did he . . .

MISS WILDE [*watching Carroon*]: I think I was wrong about the cactus. He quite seems to like it . . . trying to touch it.

JUDITH: Victor . . .

Track in on Carroon's hands, on the table. They are moving constantly. The right one is opening and closing violently—near the cactus.

JUDITH: I don't like this. I'm going to tell the others—

She goes to the door—and starts back as it opens suddenly, almost knocking her inside. The Square-faced photographer slips inside, closes the door softly.

JUDITH: What d'you think you're doing? Let me pass—

The key turns in the lock. Square Face pockets it and grins at her.

SQUARE FACE: Don't worry. [*He taps his camera.*] I just want a picture . . . a single one, that's all. No trouble. We'll pay for an exclusive—we'll pay a lot. [*He moves towards Carroon.*]

JUDITH: Open this door!

SQUARE FACE: I promise you—my paper does things in a big way. Five hundred pounds for one picture—that's my editor's offer. Sir—I'm authorized to make it on his behalf—

JUDITH [*coming forward*]: Leave him alone! He's in no condition to be—

She breaks off and stares. Carroon's right hand has buried itself in the cactus, clutching the pale green flesh and spines. She turns quickly—to see Square Face at the window. He tears away part of the paper covering and looks out.

MISS WILDE: Now, I told you before about doing that! You must be stupid . . .

Square Face lifts up his camera and fires the attached strobe flash through the gap he has made. Cut—to the street outside. A large saloon car can just be made out in the dusk, parked on the other side of the street. Its headlights flick on and off again. Cut—back to Square Face as he turns quickly, decisively.

SQUARE FACE: Now we're all set. Please—I'll lose my job if I don't get this. It won't take a second—won't hurt him. [*He approaches Carroon.*] I just want him over there by the door—makes a better background, see. [*He points his camera towards the back door.*] Now come along, old man—let me help you—

JUDITH [*angrily*]: Don't touch him!

SQUARE FACE: Nothing to it, really, nothing—

He tugs at Carroon's arm. Carroon swings round—and Judith catches sight of his hand. She cries out again—this time in warning.

JUDITH: Don't touch him! Look!

Square Face turns—his face suddenly terrified. Judith screams.

Cut to the living-room, where there is a rush towards the kitchen door. Briscoe forces his way through to the locked door. Through it Judith's voice can be heard screaming again. Briscoe kicks the door in. Cut—to the kitchen as he rushes in. Carroon is slumped back against the wall, staring down at the crumpled body of the photographer. Miss Wilde, wailing softly, is clutching at Judith.

JUDITH: His hand! It was his hand, Gordon—!

BRISCOE: Quick—outside!

He drags the two women quickly out through the doorway, with a wary eye on Carroon. The hand is hidden. Cut—to the living-room as they come through. He slams the door behind them.

QUATERMASS [*pushing his way through to them*]: What is it?

BRISCOE: I'm not sure, but—

JUDITH [*moans*]: He's dead! That man in there!

LOMAX: Carroon dangerous? Best—find the Inspector, get all his men here! Some round the back—

Two shots ring out in the kitchen. A moment of thunderstruck silence. Briscoe turns to the door, but Judith grabs him, holds him back. It is Lomax who moves quickly forward and throws the door open.

The kitchen is empty. The back door is swinging open with the lock shattered. Somewhere outside a car door is slammed and a powerful engine accelerates.

Fade up end music. Fade vision to black.

PART FOUR

‘Believed to be suffering’

Fade in . . . Miss Wilde’s kitchen.

Lomax and Best come running to the back door. Lomax stares out into the darkness.

LOMAX: There they go! Looks like a professional getaway—

BEST: Lock’s been shot open from outside.

LOMAX: By God, it’s happened! Right here, under our noses . . . ! Best, find that damned squad car—if it isn’t on the job already—and get it moving. Send a call out—black four-door saloon, number unknown, heading Croydon way. Fat lot of good it’ll do, but—

BEST: Right.

He hurries out by the back door. Lomax turns to see Quatermass and Briscoe crouching over the body of the photographer. Pressmen are crowding forward into the kitchen.

LOMAX: Back, everybody! Back inside there, please!

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: That guy dead?

FULLALOVE: Where’s Carroon? Who fired that shot?

Lomax shakes his head as he shepherds the protesting reporters back into the larger room. The Inspector arrives at that moment and between them they manage to get the door shut. When Lomax turns, he sees Paterson too has come in through the swinging back door. He is dishevelled and out of breath.

LOMAX: Paterson—you were out there?

PATERSON: Yes, I saw them! I heard the shots and—there were three of them making for that car. Two of them had hold of—it looked like Carroon.

LOMAX: It was.

PATERSON: I ran after the car to see which way it went. Not very practical. And then your sergeant came.

LOMAX: Get the number?

PATERSON: No. Sorry—

Lomax turns to where Quatermass and Briscoe have been examining the body.

LOMAX: Quatermass, you’ve got something to answer for! If you hadn’t insisted on bringing him here—made it quite impossible for me to organize a proper—

QUATERMASS [*cutting him off*]: Stop saying I told you so! Think you can find Carroon?

LOMAX: We’ll do our best, of course. It may take time—

QUATERMASS: It had better not!

LOMAX: Eh?

QUATERMASS [*indicating the body*]: Did you look at this?

LOMAX: Not closely . . .

He does—and his face fills with apprehension. The Inspector and Paterson peer at it too—and react in the same way.

INSPECTOR: It’s all . . . shrunken.

PATERSON: What could have done it?

BRISCOE: I’m afraid you’re not going to find this indexed in the casebooks of forensic medicine. [*He rises.*] Something like . . . mass destruction of the tissues. And it must have been pretty well instantaneous.

LOMAX: But . . . how?

BRISCOE: There’s no sign of what you would call foul play. What d’you want me to call it—shock? Heart failure? It was both of those, and a lot more. It’s as if the life had been literally drawn out of the entire body!

The bell of an approaching ambulance sounds faintly.

LOMAX: The ambulance at last. [*To the Inspector.*] Use it to take this away and under immediate examination.

The Inspector hurries off to meet the ambulance. Lomax drops on one knee and begins a rapid, distasteful search of the body’s pockets.

QUATERMASS: Anything to identify him?

LOMAX: Handkerchief . . . coins . . . God, it feels horrible. Rotting. He was a press photographer . . . at least he had a camera . . .

QUATERMASS: Think he was one of them?

LOMAX: He may have been.

QUATERMASS: Whoever’s got him now, they can’t realize . . . ! How much did the women see? They were in here when it happened—by now they should have got over it enough to—

He is starting towards the other room when Briscoe catches him by the arm.

BRISCOE: Judith said something about his hand.

QUATERMASS: His hand?

PATERSON [*nerves at breaking point*]: Whose hand—what do you mean? Carroon’s? Briscoe, what d’you think you’re trying to suggest—

Briscoe is at the table. He picks up the overturned plant pot.

QUATERMASS: A plant pot. What about it?

BRISCOE: Now empty, apart from sand . . .

QUATERMASS: Well?

BRISCOE: The old lady had a cactus in it.

Their eyes meet. A pause. Quatermass takes the plant pot and examines it closely.

Cut to the living-room where the pressmen are engaged in noisy argument. The American turns angrily back from an attempt to get out by what is now Miss Wilde's front door.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Hey, get that! Cop outside there says we can't leave! What are we—suspects?

FULLALOVE: Well, the dead man was one of us.

FRENCH JOURNALIST: Was he? I have never seen him before. What paper was he on?

Nobody knows. Then the kitchen door opens. Quatermass and Lomax enter and are engulfed in questions. Lomax takes the brunt of these, leaving Quatermass to push his way through to where Miss Wilde sits. She looks very shaky and subdued. Judith is with her.

FULLALOVE [*to Lomax*]: Inspector—what's going on? If we're being regarded as suspects, may we know in what connexion?

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: Yeah—is it murder or kidnapping or what the hell?

INDIAN JOURNALIST: Where is the man Carroon?

FRENCH JOURNALIST: None of us could be connected with it—why are your men preventing us—

FULLALOVE: Don't you think you ought to let us have a full—

LOMAX [*protesting*]: Gentlemen, please!

The questions go on, but more quietly. Cut to where Miss Wilde is shrinking back from the plant pot Quatermass is showing her.

QUATERMASS [*very softly*]: Was it an ordinary cactus?

MISS WILDE: Yes. I bought it in the market. It was quite harmless—they don't hurt you unless you're silly.

QUATERMASS: Perhaps he knocked it and the spines stuck to his hand.

MISS WILDE: Yes, I expect so.

He turns to Judith. She is shaking her head.

JUDITH [*whispers*]: It was . . . *growing* on it. [*She shudders.*] Moving . . . !

She clutches at Briscoe as he comes up, and sobs wretchedly.

QUATERMASS: Gordon, we daren't delay.

BRISCOE: No.

Quatermass turns to where Lomax is fending off the barrage of questions. Through the open kitchen door the Inspector can be seen superintending the removal of the shrunken body by two ambulance men.

QUATERMASS: Gentlemen—I believe you want a statement?

LOMAX: Quatermass, leave this to me!

QUATERMASS: Sorry, Lomax—there's no time to waste arguing. [*To the journalists*] It's been suggested to me that there might be other parties interested in Carroon's experience—in his special knowledge. [*As Lomax starts to protest again.*] Well, there evidently are. And, God help them, they've acted already. Carroon has been forcibly abducted!

Pan across the faces of the pressmen . . . Fade in music link.

Dissolve . . . to the interior of the kidnap car. The blinds are drawn, but from time to time the lights of approaching traffic flash across the faces of the occupants. The driver is a heavy, stolid man. Behind sits Ramsay, small and dark, afflicted with a constant nervous blink. Next to him in the back seat is Carroon, his right arm thrust into his jacket. On the seat by the driver is an old raincoat.

RAMSAY [*glancing at his watch*]: All right, Michael—we're still on time. No need to hurry it. Getting to the changeover point too soon is worse than being late. [*His English is a little too well pronounced. He gives Carroon an uneasy glance, then goes on.*] Did you get a look at Walters?

DRIVER [*shakes his head*]: No time.

RAMSAY: Same here. It was him, though. He must have given himself away somehow and then . . . [*Turns to Carroon.*] D'you know? What happened to the chap with the camera? Eh? [*No reply. Ramsay frowns.*]

DRIVER: We took a risk.

RAMSAY: Well, we were right, weren't we? It worked. Sometimes you just have to act, Michael—there's just a moment to do it, and if you miss that—well! Mind you, I got a fright when I heard those women screaming. Women's screams—that's a real alarm signal.

The driver spins the wheel and the car lurches with a squeal of brakes. Carroon is almost tipped on top of Ramsay.

RAMSAY: Here!

The car straightens out and Carroon lolls back into his corner.

RAMSAY: Keep to your own side—remember I've got a gun. [*He shows it.*] Michael, take it easy on the corners. [*He takes out a cigarette case.*] Think they'll get him away tonight?

DRIVER [*shrugs*]: They'll try, probably.

RAMSAY: They should be able to. [*He lights two cigarettes, passes one to the Driver, who sticks it quickly between his lips. Ramsay turns to*

Carroon.] D'you want a cigarette? [*No response.*] You're going to be well treated, you know that? So there's no need to worry. [*He watches Carroon uneasily for a few moments.*] Why do you keep your hand stuck inside your jacket like that? I know you haven't got a gun or anything . . .

He peers out front, past the Driver. He glances at his watch.

RAMSAY: Doing nicely. Just keep on at this speed. The long way round . . . but it's safe . . . they won't suspect. [*He sits back and looks at Carroon.*] Funny to think of where he's been, isn't it . . . ?

Cut to Miss Wilde's living-room, from which pressmen are hurrying at top speed.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST: This goes into print quick—but quick!

FULLALOVE [*turns in the doorway*]: You're sure there's nothing you ought to add, Professor?

QUATERMASS: No. [*He closes the door behind Fullalove, turns to where Lomax is glaring at him.*]

LOMAX: I hope you're satisfied.

QUATERMASS: Lomax, I had to do that—at least to tell them about the kidnapping part. Let them print it. It may help us find him.

LOMAX: Help us? Look, this was something I had to try and do discreetly—investigate without a lot of—

QUATERMASS: But we can't wait! There isn't time for discretion—can't you get that into your head? [*He glances across at where Briscoe is talking quietly, calmingly to Judith in the corner of the room, and drops his voice.*] I'm convinced now that Carroon's started some kind of . . . biochemical change. This is when we need to have him under observation every single minute!

The door opens. Best comes quickly in.

BEST: The warning went out, sir—we've had some reports already of what may be the car. There's a full-scale chase on.

LOMAX [*glaring at Quatermass*]: Good!

BEST: They've got the phone number here. You'll get a direct report.

LOMAX: Thank you, sergeant. [*To Quatermass*] You see? We're not quite so bumbling and hopeless as you like to think. So from now on keep out of it! Leave me to do this—it's what I know how to do. And after we've got them . . . well, that'll be the time to consider any . . . complications.

Paterson, who has been sitting with hands tightly knotted, looks up.

PATERSON: I quite agree, Inspector. Once we start imagining things outside human experience—

QUATERMASS: The flight itself was outside human experience! John, stop trying to rationalize all this away!

PATERSON: I'm still a scientist. Not a convert to superstition.

Quatermass is about to answer him savagely, when the stairway door opens and Miss Wilde appears, in her outdoor clothes and carrying her cat in a basket. A Policeman is with her, carrying a suitcase.

MISS WILDE [*to Lomax*]: Inspector, when you leave will you lock up my house?

LOMAX: I'll see it's safe.

MISS WILDE: I'm going to stay with my sister for a while.

LOMAX: Very wise.

MISS WILDE: I didn't mind the bomb last night—not so much, because we understand those. But when that man . . . his hand . . . and the man with the camera . . . !

She is distressed. The Policeman takes her arm reassuringly, to lead her out.

LOMAX: Make sure she's all right—[*The telephone rings.*] That'll be for me. [*Picking up the receiver.*] Chief Inspector Lomax . . .

MISS WILDE [*to the Policeman*]: And I had that telephone put in so that I'd feel safer . . . ! Come along, Henry.

Holding the cat-basket high, she goes out with the Policeman.

LOMAX [*into phone*]: Who were in it? . . . Two youths and two girls? [*A sigh of annoyance.*] Thanks, old man—make it a general alert to all areas now. Yes, I'll be back soon. [*He puts the receiver down.*] Car they've been chasing was finally stopped at Blackheath. Probably a decoy. [*He picks up his coat.*] Gets his licence endorsed for speeding—and *we* lose the criminals. Best, let's get going . . .

He starts towards the door.

Dissolve . . . to the interior of the kidnap car. Ramsay peers round the blind on the back window. After a moment he turns.

RAMSAY: Not a sign. They're slipping, you know. It's comforting when we have to carry people like Walters, that *they're* pretty bad, too. I wonder how the four kids got on . . . hope they gave 'em a good run.

He peers ahead, past the Driver.

CARROON [*suddenly*]: Tell them, tell them—

RAMSAY: What? Tell them what?

CARROON: Tell . . . tell . . . tell . . .

RAMSAY: What are you talking about? What's the matter? [*To the Driver, who is glancing round.*] All right, Michael, just keep steady. Main road ahead—watch it now.

There is a glare of neon lights into the car, a noise of heavy traffic, as they cross a main road.

RAMSAY: All clear, Michael. Pick up speed now. [*He glances at his watch.*] Three minutes to go.

CARROON: Don't . . . don't . . .

RAMSAY [*uneasily to the Driver*]: I believe he's ill. They talk like this with a high temperature.

CARROON: Don't let it . . . !

RAMSAY: Information said he was pretty well recovered . . . I tell you what it is—it's that hand! The way he's got it covered up—holding it. Michael, maybe he smashed it up in the crash-landing? We've got to make it clear to them that we weren't responsible for it—there'd be trouble over a thing like that. [*To Carroon*] Let's see it. Your right hand—bring it out and let me take a look.

CARROON: Don't let—don't let it—

RAMSAY: I've got to see!

He raises the gun. He seizes Carroon's forearm with his free hand and pulls it away from the concealing jacket. After a horrified, paralysed pause he lets go and cowers back along the seat.

RAMSAY [*a terrified indrawn breath*]: It's grey! It's all grey!

DRIVER [*glancing round*]: Ramsay, what—

RAMSAY [*yells*]: Stop! Stop the car!

The Driver slams on the brakes. The car bucks. Carroon is flung forward against the front seat. As the Driver fights to control the wildly skidding car, he is trying also to pull himself away from Carroon. He throws up a hand to push him back—then stiffens. His face goes slack and his other hand falls from the wildly swinging wheel. Behind, Ramsay is screeching threats to Carroon.

RAMSAY: Let go! Let go or I'll fire! Michael—Michael—!

Blackout, followed instantly by the rending uproar of a car crash. This fades quickly into linking music on the same level.

Dissolve . . . to the newsroom of the Daily Gazette. *It is the early hours of the morning, and the place is humming with activity. The news editor, Jackson, has a copy of the latest edition in front of him.*

NEWS EDITOR: What d'you mean—'as far as it goes'? [*Reading*] 'Space Hero Kidnapped! Cold War Spreads to Universe!' [*To Fullalove, who comes into shot in his shirtsleeves, tie loose and his jacket over his arm.*] In its modest way, James, I think that qualifies as a news item. And this political background stuff—excellent.

FULLALOVE: It's a story of a kind. Quatermass's first unsolicited statement. How he managed to leave so much unsaid at the end of it, I can't imagine.

NEWS EDITOR: You think there's a still *bigger* story?

FULLALOVE: I'm certain of it. Those two women saw something, you know. I tried, but I couldn't get it out of them . . . the old one couldn't talk about it, and the young one wouldn't—

The telephone rings.

NEWS EDITOR: News desk . . . yes . . . [*He scribbles on a notepad.*]

FULLALOVE: Quatermass had an old plant pot . . . You know, it looked as if that was more important to him than the fact Carroon had been pinched . . .

NEWS EDITOR [*into phone*]: Hold on. [*To Fullalove.*] Report of a crashed car—there may be no connexion, but it *was* a black four-door saloon. And the police are searching the area now.

FULLALOVE: Give us it, Jacko—[*He takes the receiver.*] Hello—where was this? . . . Fulham? *Two* men . . . one dead, one badly hurt. You're sure neither was Carroon?

He looks at the News Editor, shakes his head.

NEWS EDITOR: False alarm.

FULLALOVE: Mm. [*He is about to put the phone down when he has a second thought.*] Listen—did you notice *anything* there that was at all odd? The sort of thing you wouldn't report because it might sound silly? . . . [*The answer brings a look of triumph to his face.*] That's it! Right, hang on there. I'll be down to join you. [*He puts the phone down.*]

NEWS EDITOR: What sounded silly?

FULLALOVE [*hurriedly pulling his jacket on*]: The driver was found dead. When they were getting him out, one of the ambulance men seems to have had the horrors and fainted.

NEWS EDITOR: I don't see—

FULLALOVE: That was the kidnap car. And they're searching for Carroon. Why, Jacko?

NEWS EDITOR: To see if he's safe, of course—

FULLALOVE [*as he goes*]: Or to see if he's dangerous?

Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to a bombed site. In the moonlight, Carroon is staggering across a waste of flattened earth and stones. Flapping like a broken wing, the old raincoat from the car is wrapped roughly round his right arm. Cut to close shot as he halts and the vacant eyes turn about, as if searching for a place to hide. His hair is dusty and wild, his jacket torn. He staggers away. Cut to the remains of a ruined building, as Carroon approaches it, stumbling through the rubble and weeds. He disappears through a gap, feet scraping. Cut to a weed-grown cellar, now open to the moonlit sky. Carroon falls into shot, drags himself into the darkest spot. He listens, hearing an ambulance approach and pass and its bell die away. Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to close shot of Ramsay, swathed in bandages. He is in a hospital bed, surrounded by screens. A Doctor has just given him an injection, and now turns to beckon Sergeant Best into shot.

DOCTOR [*softly*]: There's just a chance you may get something before he goes. Watch for it . . .

BEST: Many injuries?

DOCTOR: Just about everything one can collect in a crash like that. Know his name?

BEST: We found out.

DOCTOR [*suddenly*]: Quick—

Pan down as Best bends over the bed. Ramsay's fingers are running back and forth along the edge of the sheets. His eyes are open.

BEST: Ramsay! Ramsay!

RAMSAY: Ah . . .

BEST [*close to him, very distinctly*]: What happened in the car?

Ramsay's head jerks about. His eyes are frightened. Best puts out a reassuring hand, but Ramsay reacts with a quiver of terror.

DOCTOR: Don't touch him!

BEST: Where were you taking him? Ramsay, answer me.

RAMSAY: To the change-point . . . There'll be questions about that injured hand . . . [*Remembering.*] The hand!

BEST: What about it?

RAMSAY: It's grey—all grey! Michael, stop the car! Stop! [*He gives a thin frightened cry, eyes squeezed shut.*]

BEST [*urgently*]: After the crash—did he get away? Where did he go?

RAMSAY [*with an effort*]: He went away . . . away . . .

His eyes roll up and he collapses. The Doctor moves forward, feels for a pulse.

DOCTOR [*after a moment*]: That's it. Sorry you didn't get any more.

BEST: All right. We know who we're looking for now. [*Looking down at the body.*] Poor beggar. Well, thanks, doctor . . .

He moves out between the screens. Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to close shot of Carroon, lying in the cellar of the bombed building. It is a few hours later, towards dawn.

A cat wails somewhere nearby, and Carroon stirs. His eyes open . . . moist and motionless. Then he sinks back again against the broken stones. Hold music link . . .

Dissolve . . . to close shot of Daily Gazette *poster. Below the printed word* SPACEMAN *comes the daily variant in black crayon. Today's reads: Where Is He? Pan up past the busy Newsvendor to the building on the other side of the Embankment . . . New Scotland Yard. Traffic is heavy now, and above it, Big Ben can be heard striking seven.*

Cut to Lomax's office. Lomax, in a muddy raincoat and very harassed, is standing by his desk with a newspaper in one hand and the telephone in the other.

LOMAX [*into phone*]: No, sir . . . I'm afraid we haven't found him yet. There's been a widespread search for most of the night—I've just got back myself.

Pull back to show Quatermass, equally muddy, standing nearby. Judith is lying in a large leather chair, apparently asleep from exhaustion.

LOMAX: We lost some time on false alarms from the Hammersmith and Walham Green areas . . . We're proceeding on the assumption that he got away . . . Yes, got away . . . Well, sir, there may be grounds for thinking he's—unbalanced by his experiences. [*The phone stings. He winces.*] Yes . . . yes . . . yes, sir. If we must, of course. Yes, sir. [*He lowers receiver.*]

QUATERMASS: Trouble?

LOMAX [*through his teeth*]: There'll be worse yet! [*He rattles the receiver rest.*]

QUATERMASS: How much longer is Gordon going to be attending that post-mortem.

LOMAX [*into phone*]: Get me the Information Room . . . Chief Inspector Lomax here. We're suspending the search for Victor Carroon—

QUATERMASS: What!

LOMAX [*into phone*]: Cancel the warning to patrol cars. All extra men to be called in.

QUATERMASS: This is mad!

LOMAX: Right away, please. [*He puts the phone down.*] Those are my orders. A national hero is not to be hunted through the streets.

QUATERMASS: Why didn't you try to explain?

LOMAX [*angrily*]: Explain what? That you believe he's in some way turning semi- or super-human? [*He taps papers on the desk.*] This is information from the Special Branch—on Walters and the others. They were known agents, trying to abduct him. Suppose he did kill two of them in self-defence? Wasn't that human enough? I'd have done the same myself!

There is a knock on the door. A uniformed Constable shows Briscoe in. His face is pale and drawn.

BRISCOE [*coming to join them*]: We've finished the post-mortem. On both bodies. [*To Lomax*] The official pathologists' report should be along in half an hour.

QUATERMASS: Well?

BRISCOE: A completely new form of death for the casebooks.

QUATERMASS [*grimly to Lomax*]: And *you've* called off the search!

LOMAX: You know why. I'll send out a general request for information. That's the most I can do. I'll draft it now.

He sits and starts scribbling on a pad. Quatermass turns away and speaks quietly to Briscoe.

QUATERMASS: Something that attacks the organic structure . . .

BRISCOE: Apparently able to break it down, to separate the basic constituents—and presumably gain energy in the process. A sort of digestion, in fact.

QUATERMASS: In these cases, yes.

BRISCOE: What d'you mean?

QUATERMASS: In the rocket it must have gone a lot further than that—the subjects were available to it so much longer. The process must have gone on to complete destruction and partial re-synthesis, of living organisms . . .

A voice from the deep chair makes them turn quickly.

JUDITH [*without moving*]: Go on.

BRISCOE: Judith—

QUATERMASS: She's awake? If I'd known she was listening—! [*To Judith*] We were talking a lot of nonsense. Try to forget you heard it—

JUDITH [*sitting up*]: I've been doing the same thing. Guessing and guessing and guessing.

BRISCOE: You mustn't let yourself—

JUDITH: Of course I must. Gordon, it's the only way . . . to try to keep crude fright off. At first I just couldn't face the implications . . . now I want to examine them . . . explore them.

QUATERMASS: She's right, of course. Judith—do you want to tell us what you've been thinking?

JUDITH [*slowly*]: We know the rocket wasn't near any other planet or asteroid. Could a form of life exist somewhere in space itself? Just drifting.

QUATERMASS: A sort of . . . plankton of the ether.

BRISCOE: It couldn't be remotely like life as we know it.

JUDITH: Does it have to be? Why not pure energy, without an organic structure? It's at least conceivable, isn't it? In some sense there might even be intelligence.

QUATERMASS: Think . . . it's never approached the Earth, any more than a deep-sea fish comes to Piccadilly Circus. But when the rocket goes *there* . . . it, whatever it is, finds on board . . .

JUDITH: Three living specimens. Cell organisms.

BRISCOE: And afterwards? After it invaded them?

QUATERMASS: To occupy the resultant structure—even by accident—might be the perfect means of acclimatization to life on Earth.

JUDITH: Yes. The resultant structure . . . oh, my God!

Lomax has stopped writing, is staring at them, appalled.

BRISCOE: And then once it got here—to encounter other basic forms of life.

JUDITH: Last night. In that little kitchen—

Lomax jumps to his feet.

LOMAX: How can you go on talking like this? There must be some sane, simple explanation—

QUATERMASS: Suppose this *is* the sane and simple one! Suppose that to try and think in any other way is liable to be—we don't know how dangerous! D'you want to be like Paterson—?

Cut to close shot of Paterson. He is with Fullalove in the now empty and silent newsroom of the Daily Gazette. *Both are unshaven, red-eyed. Fullalove is winding a sheet of paper into a typewriter, watching Paterson closely.*

PATERSON [*touchily*]: Afraid? Of course not. I'll put my name to the article.

FULLALOVE: A frontal attack on Quatermass?

PATERSON: Yes.

He feels in his pockets for a cigarette. Fullalove offers him one, lights one himself.

FULLALOVE: Mr. Paterson . . . I've landed more editors in trouble than I care to think about. Time was when I regarded damages for libel as merely the taxes on the trade, like a barrow-boy's fines. But now . . . I've gone soft. I've taken an idle fancy to the truth.

PATERSON: The truth. That's what I'm offering you, isn't it?

FULLALOVE: I hope so. After all, who's in a better position than you? You've watched all developments since the rocket landed. You've examined the records. You've watched Carroon—

PATERSON: That's right.

FULLALOVE: Yet we have this remarkable fact. That ever since I ran across you this morning in Fulham—apparently busy searching for the missing hero along with all the others—all you come out with is this old allegation about the crew's insufficiency.

PATERSON [*hotly*]: If you're not prepared to believe—

FULLALOVE: Oh, I'm prepared to believe anything! Absolutely anything. Just look at this typewriter, all ready to go. It wants to take down the real story. Which is . . . ?

Paterson's nervousness increases.

PATERSON [*haltingly*]: It wasn't wrong to . . . make the experiment. But it *was* wrong to go about it as Quatermass did. I'm sure that . . . with more extensive preparations . . . better selection of the crew members . . .

Fullalove tears the paper out of the typewriter and throws it away in a crumpled ball. Paterson stares as he gets up and comes close.

FULLALOVE: Mr. Paterson . . . *what* is Carroon?

A tense pause. Paterson gives an uncontrollable shiver. He gets clumsily to his feet.

PATERSON: I won't be subjected to—If you don't wish to print my views, I'll take them elsewhere.

He picks up his coat and goes abruptly, his footsteps echoing across the bare floor of the empty newsroom. Track in on Fullalove. Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to a large poster on a hoarding. Freshly-applied, it consists of a dramatic head of Fullalove accompanied by the caption: IS SPACE CONQUERED? READ JAMES FULLALOVE'S CHALLENGING SERIES IN THE DAILY GAZETTE. *Pan from the hoarding to the bombed site behind it . . . and across this to the almost levelled remains of buildings in the background. The small figure of a child is picking its way among them.*

Cut to the cellar where Carroon is lying, with open, expressionless eyes. It is late afternoon of the same day, and sunlight is slanting through the weeds. There is a sound nearby, of feet among the rubble. A small Boy appears, looking curiously down. He is eight or nine years old.

BOY: Who are you?

He waits for an answer. Getting none, he sits down and wriggles over the edge of the broken stonework. He drops into the cellar. He takes a step or two towards Carroon and stops, studying him. He is perplexed by the silence and stillness of the man.

BOY [*nervously*]: People don't come in here. Nobody ever has. [*No response. He tries again to discourage the intruder.*] My mother says it isn't safe. Sometimes stones fall down. They can fall on your head, I knew about a boy that was hurt like that. [*A pause.*] Don't you want to go away? [*Still getting no response, he gives up the attempt to persuade Carroon to go away, and crouches studying him.*] You're all dirty. Look at your clothes—they're torn . . . [*almost admiringly*] . . . torn like anything. Won't you get into a row? [*A pause. He moves closer.*] Are you sick? [*He puts out a hand towards Carroon, who instantly shrinks away.*]

CARROON [*thickly*]: No—!

The Boy is startled. He backs away doubtfully. After a moment he decides it is safe to do what he came for. He lifts a piece of rusty corrugated iron and pulls out a toy space-gun and space-helmet.

BOY [*feeling the necessity to explain the secret*]: I come here to play. By myself. [*Holding up the space-helmet.*] Do you know what this is? It's what the spacemen always have to wear. [*He puts it proudly on and looks for a reaction. Getting none, he hastily drags an ancient comic out of his trouser-pocket and holds it out towards Carroon, pulling it open.*] See? That's Captain Dallas. He's wearing one. [*He looks at the comic himself, his hand going doubtfully to his own helmet.*] Of course, his is real. [*Suddenly he drops the comic and grabs the space-gun. He has more assurance about the authenticity of this.*] And this is an obliterator-gun. You just point it at something and—it isn't there any more!

A pause. He points it quickly at Carroon and pulls the trigger. The gun flashes small sparks and buzzes faintly.

BOY: Now there isn't any you! [*Still no response. He sighs, squats on his haunches.*] D'you think I'm too old to play with these? [*He takes the helmet off.*] My mother says I am. [*He puts it away in its hiding place.*] That's why I keep this here. She'd burn it, I know she would . . . [*He looks at Carroon again, having suddenly understood.*] I know why you're here! You're hiding!

Obliterator-gun in hand, he approaches Carroon again.

BOY: I like hiding. I know a good place to go when I don't want anybody to find me for a long time. [*He looks round the cellar and admits.*] Really they know about this place . . . she knows . . . [*He stares at Carroon, making up his mind.*] Come on, I'll show you. It's better than an ordinary hiding place, because—because—Come on!

Carroon stirs. He drags himself to his feet, very slowly and stiffly.

BOY [*giggles*]: You've got your mac all tangled round your arm!

He runs off to lead the way.

Cut to a medium shot of the bombed site as the Boy scrambles up into view. He turns and beckons impatiently. After a moment Carroon appears, pulling himself up clumsily. The Boy runs ahead. He crouches behind a broken wall and aims his toy spacegun at the advancing, stumbling figure. Carroon seems not to notice him as he staggers past. The Boy jumps up and runs ahead again . . .

Dissolve . . . to the frontage of the Grand Cinema, a battered little fleapit. Pan to where two figures are approaching the rear of the building across waste ground . . . one small and running, the other planting clumsy feet and trailing a ragged raincoat. The Boy crouches behind a dustbin.

Cut to the side door of the cinema as a disgruntled-looking Patron comes out. The Boy jumps forward and grabs the door before the push-bar can re-engage itself. He beckons. Carroon comes stumbling into view. As if aware that the dim passage inside offers some sort of refuge, he lunges towards it, and in. The Boy follows. As the door swings shut beside them, pan to the poster on the wall beside it. It reads: 'In super-real 3-D! PLANET OF THE DRAGONS! *Cert. U.'*

Cut to the interior of the cinema. At this time of day the audience consists mostly of women—all wearing cardboard spectacles with dark, square filters in them, to see the stereoscopic effect. Most of the front seats are empty. Cut to the image on the screen. Against a background of moon-type craters and a jet black sky are two figures in fish-bowl perspex helmets and soft, elegant space-suits. These are the Space Lieutenant and the Space Girl. The Space Lieutenant is gripping an enormous 'paralyser-gun' at the ready, as he glares round the hostile landscape and growls:

No sign of Captain O'Casey. I guess he must have gotten his . . . from that dragon.

The Space Girl shudders:

How horrible!

Her companion goes on:

I reckon that's what happened. I saw it tail him into that dark ravine.

The Girl shakes her head:

Poor Captain O'Casey!

And the Lieutenant replies:

Yeah . . . he was a good guy!

Cut back to the audience. A Stout Lady with a shopping bag on her knee is eating an ice. So is her friend in the next seat.

STOUT LADY: Oh, my eyes are getting that sore . . . ! [*She takes her cardboard glasses off.*] I won't be able to see to cook the old man's kippers. [*She looks up at the screen again, and pulls a face.*] Ooh, it does look funny now . . . !

Cut back to the screen . . . showing the double image as she sees it without the glasses. The Space Girl is turning in fear to the Lieutenant, and putting her arm across his broad chest. She says:

Oh Chuck—I'm scared!

Bravely concealing his fear, the Lieutenant replies:

Why honey—everything's going to be okay. We're safe up here on the side of the crater.

Says the Space Girl:

It's so dark . . . and lonely.

Cut to where the Stout Lady, still without her glasses, is finishing off her icecream. The Boy comes into view along the row in front. He glances back, points to the empty seats. After a moment Carroon stumbles along the row and falls into a seat nearby. The Boy leans across and whispers:

BOY: It's in 3-D. We ought to have glasses for it really.

A VOICE: Ssh!

The Boy looks about him. He sees the Stout Lady bending down to dispose of her empty icecream carton under the seat. He takes her glasses from where she has parked them on the edge of the seat in front. He puts them on.

Cut back to the screen—normal now, as the Boy sees it through the glasses. The Lieutenant is raising his paralyser-gun to face some threat. The Space Girl clutches his arm and gasps:

What is it? Over there, among those rocks? Something moving . . . a sort of green colour. There—it's a dragon!

The Space Lieutenant takes aim and pulls the trigger. The paralyser-gun flashes, and from the distance comes a squawking death-cry. The Lieutenant lowers the gun and remarks:

I guess that fixed the brute! One for O'Casey.

The Girl clings to him gratefully. She says:

Oh, Chuck—let's get out of this, while there's still time.

The Space Lieutenant turns away, unhappily, jerking out his words:

Julie, I feel . . . I don't know how to explain this . . . kind of dedicated, I guess . . .

Cut back to the Stout Lady, searching vainly for her glasses.

STOUT LADY: Wherever did I put them special specs? Ethel, have you seen them? [*The Friend shakes her head, and a voice behind shushes her.*] I dunno which is worse, with them on or with them off . . . get a headache or be driven loopy trying to make it out . . .

Again the voice shushes her, and an Usherette comes into view, flashing her torch along the row.

USHERETTE: Have you lost something, madam?

STOUT LADY: Oh, it doesn't matter. We've nearly seen it round.

USHERETTE: Please be quiet, then. Other people wish to enjoy the film.

She takes a long look at the Boy before withdrawing up the aisle.

Cut back to the screen, where the Space Lieutenant's voice has turned unctuous:

When I got to being a Space Lieutenant, I was just an ordinary guy and I guess I didn't learn so fast, either. Like that time during the flight when I nearly slugged the Captain.

The Space Girl shakes her head inside her helmet:

Chuck, that was my fault—

The Space Lieutenant goes on as if he is not listening to her:

But now—I guess I've learned my lesson. I know what Captain O'Casey meant. Out here, a million light-years from Earth, there's work to do—

The screen suddenly blacks out, though the Lieutenant's voice goes booming on. After a moment a slide is thrown on to it—an old photograph of Carroon, smiling broadly. A caption beneath it reads: 'Have you seen this man? Victor Carroon, of the British Experimental Rocket Group, is missing, believed to be suffering from loss of memory. Will any person knowing his whereabouts please dial Whitehall 1212?'

The voice of the Space Lieutenant rumbles on in the darkness:

There's a new world waiting to be built right here, Julie. Some day . . . maybe on this very Planet of the Dragons . . . kids'll be able to sit down in a corner drugstore, same as back home. There'll be highways and motels and TV, same as back home. We'll build that new world, Julie . . . you and me and a lot of ordinary folks like us . . .

STOUT LADY [*puzzling it out*]: Carroon . . . that's the name of that feller, isn't it? You know, all that rocket business . . .

The Boy glances round—and Carroon's place is empty. Below the nearby exit sign, a slit of light is moving as the curtains sway, and a moment later there is a faint clatter beyond, from the push-bar of the side door. The Boy looks to the front again as the picture is restored. The Usherette comes quickly forward, suspicious of something. She stands studying the uncomfortable Boy, while the voices of the screen lovers continue. The Space Girl is saying, with awe in her voice:

Gosh, Chuck—all of a sudden it's as if there's something—I don't know—different about you.

The Space Lieutenant replies, choking with emotion:

Is there? Julie—Julie, I—

She asks him with sudden warmth:

What is it, Chuck?

USHERETTE [*suddenly*]: Have you got your ticket?

The Boy looks up at her in defiance. The Space Lieutenant says throatily from the screen:

I guess I—I love you, Julie.

And the pleased voice of the Space Girl answers:

Oh, Chuck—!

USHERETTE [*sharply*]: Did you come in at the same time as that man?

VOICE: Ssh!

STOUT LADY: Yes, he did.

USHERETTE [*points to the exit*]: Sneaked in through there, didn't you? [*She flashes the torch in the Boy's face.*] Oh, yes! I've caught you before on that lark!

Cut to the screen—where the Space Lieutenant and the Space Girl are locked in a partial embrace. He remarks ruefully:

I guess that's as close as we can get right now. If we opened our pressurized Zeider-helmets we'd lose consciousness in a few seconds.

The Space Girl says happily:

I'm unconscious now . . .

Cut to the audience, where the Usherette is dragging the Boy out of his seat. He is resisting strongly, holding on to the arms.

USHERETTE [a *frantic whisper*]: Come out of it, will you!

BOY: Let go of me!

USHERETTE: This time you're going to the manager!

STOUT LADY: And he stole my glasses too, the little wretch!

She helps the Usherette to free the Boy's clinging fingers. He is nearly crying.

USHERETTE: Come on now—we're going to see about this! [*She calls to a colleague, who is hurrying down the aisle to help.*] Valerie, give us a hand. Get his arm there!

BOY: Lemme go!

Between them, the two Usherettes drag him away, snivelling and protesting.

STOUT LADY [*to her friend*]: Well, did you ever!

VOICE: Sshh!

There is nothing but soft music from the screen.

Cut to the Manager's office. Like his doggedly-worn evening suit, it is dingy and too tight. Against the wall he has a tiny desk which just holds an ancient typewriter and a telephone. On the wall are small strip-posters of bygone films and a few throw-away photographs of film stars. The Manager, a meagre man, is typing out a letter with one finger when there is a rapid knocking on his door.

USHERETTE [*through the door*]: Mr. Jason! Mr. Jason!

MANAGER [*finishes a word, then turns on his swivel chair*]: What is it?

The door is thrown open and the Usherette pulls the Boy inside.

USHERETTE: Mr. Jason—I just caught this kid—come along, will you!—I just caught this kid getting in without a ticket! And he pinched a lady's viewing spectacles!

MANAGER: Oh, did he?

USHERETTE: Talk about struggle! Took all our strength to get him here, didn't it, Val? [*She appeals to her colleague outside the door.*]

MANAGER: How did he get in?

USHERETTE: Side door, of course.

MANAGER [*wearily*]: We'll have to do something about that.

USHERETTE: It wasn't just him, you know—there was two of them but the other ran out. [*To the Boy*] Who was that with you?

BOY: I don't know.

USHERETTE: Listen to the lies! It was a grown man. That's two and ninepence they dodged, Mr. Jason—apart from this half.

MANAGER [*to the Boy*]: Come on now, who was he? You'd better give me his name.

BOY [*miserably*]: I can't—I don't know—

USHERETTE: You'd better know, or Mr. Jason'll send for the police!

MANAGER [*irritably*]: That'll do . . .

BOY [*frightened*]: No—no, don't do that! I don't know who he was—I don't really! [*In a rush.*] He was in this bombed place and there was all dirt on him and he was looking for a place to hide, and I said why don't you come with me, I can show you somewhere, and—

MANAGER [*catches his arms*]: Wait a minute. Hiding?

BOY [*nodding*]: Don't tell the police. I never meant—

The Manager jerks his head in the general direction of the cinema auditorium.

MANAGER: You saw that slide—in there? Was that a picture of him?

BOY: He didn't smile like that.

The Manager looks at him for a doubtful moment, then reaches for the telephone.

USHERETTE: Mr. Jason—you don't mean—that was *him! [The Manager is busy dialling. Her hand goes to her face and she murmurs faintly.*] Oh, my Gawd . . . a real one!

MANAGER: Hello . . . police? It's about that missing man—

BOY [*suddenly shrieks*]: The police? You promised you wouldn't—you promised—

Crossfade to ringing telephone bell, keyed into the Boy's shriek, during dissolve . . . to Lomax's office. Lomax hurries to pick up the receiver.

LOMAX: Yes . . . yes, I'll hold on.

Quatermass jumps up from the deep chair, and Sergeant Best comes from the London wall map where he has been marking off sectors.

QUATERMASS: Definite?

LOMAX: We'll soon see. [*Into phone*] Right—put him on now. Hello? . . . What! Yes . . . yes . . . [*The other two move closer.*] Where are you? The Grand Cinema, Pimlico! [*They exchange glances—and Best hurries back to the wall map.*] How long ago? . . . Well, how many? Five? Ten? . . . Yes, keep the boy there. I'll be along immediately.

He slams the phone down, looks sharply at Quatermass.

QUATERMASS: He'd gone?

LOMAX: Two or three minutes. [*Pulling on his coat.*] If it was him. Best, shoot that through to the Information Room and follow us. Somehow this sounds like *it!*

He and Quatermass hurry out. Best picks up the telephone. Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to a small chemist's shop, Pimlico. The linking music crossfades into the tinkling of the shop bell as the door is opened. Track forward from the door, towards the counter, where a chink of bottles can be heard. The Chemist's bald head can be seen as he crouches to write a label out.

CHEMIST: You're lucky, sir. I'm really closed, you know. I'd just promised to get this prescription ready for a particular customer. [*He looks up—a genial little man with spectacles on his nose.*] But of course he hasn't turned up to collect it!

He moves round the counter—past Carroon, whose hand is still swathed in the ragged raincoat.

CARROON: You . . .

CHEMIST: Just a moment, sir—I'd better lock the door or we'll have someone else in. And then someone else. [*He shoots the lock on the shop door and turns a dangling sign to 'Closed'.*] At that rate I'd never get home tonight. [*He comes back, on Carroon's side of the counter.*] Now what can I do for you, sir?

Carroon stands mutely, staring past him at the jars and display cards.

CHEMIST [*less lightly*]: Aren't you well? Whatever it is, you needn't hesitate to tell me, you know. [*He notices the raincoat.*] Is it something to do with your arm? . . . If it's serious, you ought to see a doctor, of course, but . . . [*He reaches towards it. Carroon shrinks back.*] I shan't hurt it, I promise you. [*Unravelling the coat deftly.*] I'll just take a look—see if perhaps some ointment or medicated plaster—

His eyes widen. He staggers back clutching the raincoat, staring in horror at the hand. It is huge, grey, no longer human. There are spines on it. Pan with the Chemist as he totters back against the counter, sweeping bottles off it, and collapses in a dead faint.

Crash in end music. Fade to black.

PART FIVE

‘An unidentified species’

Fade in opening music.

Fade in . . . the chemist’s shop, Pimlico. Pan up from the unconscious Chemist on the floor, to where Carroon is shuffling forward like a sleepwalker into the dispensary behind the shop. For a moment, as he goes through the doorway, the monstrous hand shows in outline.

Cut to the dispensary as Carroon comes through. Here there are shelves full of bottles and jars, a bench with fitted sink, and glass apparatus, balance, measuring flasks, etc. . . . all the impedimenta for the preparation of medicines. Carroon comes forward, his right hand dangling half-hidden by the burst sleeve. With the other he clutches at the edge of the nearest shelf. His eyes go along it. As if failing to find what he seeks, he blunders past, sweeping bottles to the ground. He searches the adjoining wall, knocks more jars flying . . . then seizes one, a large, wide-mouthed jar of a crystalline substance. He holds it close to his face for a moment, puts it down on the bench: On another shelf he finds a large bottle of dark-coloured glass, and puts this beside the first. From the apparatus on the bench he selects a tall glass measure. Into this he empties some of the contents of the dark bottle—a pale liquid. Still using only his left hand, he manages to twist off the lid of the first jar, and pours a generous quantity of the crystalline substance into the measure. There is a violent reaction, and heavy vapour rises and spreads from the mouth of the measure. He seems to consider this, then turns to the shelf again and selects a small bottle of dark powder. He smashes it on the bench, throws some of the scattered contents into the measure. The bubbling mixture turns almost black. He picks it up, brings it steadily towards his mouth . . . and drinks.

Fade music and dissolve . . . to the manager’s office at the Grand Cinema, Pimlico. The tiny room is crowded to its limit. The Boy is in the Manager’s chair, his face tear-stained, while Quatermass questions him. The Usherette and Lomax are looking on. The Manager himself is crowded out, and forced to peer in through the doorway to satisfy his curiosity.

QUATERMASS [*exasperated*]: But exactly how did he look? D’you remember his face?

BOY [*hesitantly*]: It was a bit dirty.

From the desk, Quatermass picks up the slide that was shown on the screen. He holds it up in front of the Boy so that the light shines through it.

QUATERMASS: Are you sure it’s the same man?

BOY: I think so . . . I don’t know . . .

QUATERMASS: When you came across him in this bombed building—did he say anything?

BOY [*miserably*]: No, sir.

Quatermass glances across at Lomax and sighs. The Boy realizes his answers have been unsatisfactory and his voice rises in alarm.

BOY: I don’t know anything about him—I don’t really, sir! He never said anything! Even if—even if you send me away to one of those places, I couldn’t tell you—

QUATERMASS [*interrupting him*]: Send you away? Who said anything about—?

BOY [*pointing to the Usherette*]: She did! That’s what she said—she told him—[*He points in turn to the embarrassed Manager.*]

USHERETTE [*indignantly*]: Well, you got in without a ticket, didn’t you? [*To Lomax*] Both of them sneaked in without paying—

LOMAX [*sharply*]: All right, we’re not here for that!

USHERETTE [*crushed*]: Oh . . .

LOMAX [*to the Boy, pleasantly*]: Now, sonny, the only place you’ll be sent is home to bed. Your mother’s outside waiting for you.

BOY: Oh. Is she cross?

LOMAX [*grins*]: Yes. But don’t worry. Just tell him what he wants to know.

QUATERMASS: I’m not even a policeman. Just a professor. Now—you spoke to this man?

BOY [*encouraged, though still shy*]: Yes. I thought he was hiding and I said, I know a better place.

QUATERMASS: And then?

BOY: He got up.

QUATERMASS: How did he walk? Slowly? Fast?

BOY: Sort of . . . sleepy. Falling about, like. He kept tripping over the end of that old raincoat.

QUATERMASS: Raincoat?

BOY: He had it all wrapped round his arm.

Again Quatermass looks at Lomax, but this time it is sharply.

QUATERMASS: His arm . . . ! [*To the Boy*] Go on.

BOY: Then I showed him how . . . [*he looks doubtfully at Lomax*] . . . how to get in here the back way.

USHERETTE: There you are!

LOMAX: Oh, for heaven’s sake . . . [*He turns to her.*] Did *you* see anything. Miss—er—

USHERETTE: Hawkins. Well, I didn’t really notice him till he made that dart for the exit. It was just after the police notice came on the screen.

LOMAX: You didn’t see his face?

USHERETTE: Well, not so I could swear. When Mr. Jason guessed who it was, I was completely staggered. With us showing films about spacemen nearly

every week. Well, I mean, you can believe in Lassie or somebody like that—

LOMAX: Very well, thank you, Miss Hawkins. I won't keep you from your work any longer.

USHERETTE: Oh . . . [*She looks hopefully at Quatermass, then turns and pushes her way out past the Manager.*]

LOMAX: Right, sonny. [*To the Manager*] Take him to his mother, will you. Tell her he's helped us quite a lot.

The Boy gives a weak smile and follows the Manager out.

QUATERMASS: That *must* have been Carroon. [*Lomax nods.*] What are you going to do?

LOMAX: Keep looking for him. Quite a job . . . all those little streets out there . . . yards . . . workshops. All we know is that he didn't go back to the bombed site.

QUATERMASS: It's time for an all-out search! With everything you've got—auxiliaries—

LOMAX: I did my best! This afternoon I put the case for one as strongly as I could. It sounded pretty peculiar.

QUATERMASS: I should have gone along too.

LOMAX: It wouldn't have helped. No, there'll be action in a day or two, when all the reports have been considered.

QUATERMASS: Men have been killed—

LOMAX: While attempting the abduction of a national hero.

QUATERMASS: I know—I know—

LOMAX: That's what he still is—to fifty million people. If you're going to attack that belief, you've got to prove every word. Can you do that? In a hurry?

QUATERMASS: Lomax, I've never wished so desperately to find myself wrong—or been so sure I was right. I've been haunted by this—oh, ever since the rocket came down. I've destroyed my friends. Now I have to take away their moment of glory.

LOMAX [*after a moment*]: You know if Briscoe's got any further?

QUATERMASS: He's working on it.

LOMAX: Back at your place?

QUATERMASS: Yes.

The door opens. Sergeant Best comes in.

BEST: We've had a good look round the area. No sign, no reports from men on the beat. I suppose it was our man?

LOMAX: Seems to have been. Let's get cracking, then. [*To Quatermass*] Unless you'd rather stay and watch the last performance?

Quatermass shakes his head, smiling, and follows them out. From the auditorium comes a muffled uproar on the film's sound-track—the angry cries of dragons. Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to the Rocket Group laboratory. Close shot of two cacti, similar to Miss Wilde's plant. Pieces have been cut from them, some lying on the bench, others in flasks of liquid. The Assistant is boiling something, probably another such sample, over a bunsen burner. Pan to where Briscoe is peering into the eyepiece of the electron microscope . . . He sits back and turns to Judith.

BRISCOE: I don't know. It's all in terms of *if. If* what we found in the rocket was the residue of tissue that had undergone some transformation . . . and *if* the cellular structure of a plant like this could be subject to the same process . . .

JUDITH: Then there might be some sort of union between them?

BRISCOE [*unwillingly*]: It's . . . imaginable, that's all. I can't see *how,* and I can't reproduce that breaking down of the cell-matter. Plant and animal . . . it can't happen!

JUDITH: What's possible or impossible any more? Gordon, it's the final nightmare when you wake from it and find that it still goes on. You drug yourself into an hour or two of what was meant to be sleep, and just as you come out of it you think for an instant: 'It was only a dream.' Then you remember . . .

She buries her face in her hands. Briscoe comes close to her, holds her.

BRISCOE: Easy now.

JUDITH: I *am* afraid. [*The very admission produces a shiver of alarm. She presses against him.*] I've been afraid from the beginning, I think. There was so much we didn't know. We're creatures of this earth—we live by its terms and conditions. Those are all our minds are made to grasp. [*She straightens.*] While the rocket was lost, I kept wishing only one thing—that whatever happened to them, it should be clear and final. Even now, I'd rather believe that they were killed out there, and that what came out of the rocket isn't—isn't anything to do with—them.

The door opens. Paterson comes in. He is wearing a heavy mackintosh, the collar turned up, and has a grip in his hand. His face is set.

PATERSON: D'you know where Quatermass is?

BRISCOE: Still with the police.

PATERSON: Oh. Well, in case he wants to hand the sound-record over to them—it's still in the wagon. The rest of the gear I dismantled is safely in store. Tell him, will you?

BRISCOE: Why—what's the matter?

PATERSON: I'm leaving this place.

JUDITH: Leaving?

PATERSON: I find I can't stomach Quatermass's new-found tolerance for the impossible. [*He looks across at the bench.*] Judging by what I can see there, Briscoe, you're still faithful to the cause.

BRISCOE: If there's a possibility that he's right—

PATERSON [*acidly*]: I don't doubt you'll find it for him!

He is turning back towards the door when the telephone rings. Briscoe is quick to answer it.

BRISCOE: Lab . . . yes, Briscoe here. What? . . . when was this?

JUDITH: They've found him?

BRISCOE [*shakes his head, covers the receiver for a moment*]: Something about a chemist's shop. [*Into phone*] Yes . . . I'd better come straight there. Give me the address. [*He writes it down on a note pad.*] . . . As soon as I can. [*He puts the phone down.*]

PATERSON: What had they found?

BRISCOE: They're not sure—but it sounds as if he broke into this shop a couple of hours ago. It's only just been discovered.

JUDITH: They're sure it was—him?

BRISCOE [*shortly*]: There was a witness. Now I'd better get off.

JUDITH: Can I come with you?

BRISCOE: I think you'd better not. Paterson, can I give you a lift?

PATERSON: Thanks . . . I'm going my own way.

They shake hands and Briscoe hurries out. For a moment Paterson stands looking at the cacti on the bench . . . then at Judith. He swallows, and goes quickly.

Dissolve . . . to close shot of the Chemist, sitting in a chair near the counter of his shop. The floor is still littered with packets and small bottles that fell when he fainted. He now has a large strip of plaster applied to his bald head, and is much shaken by the experience.

CHEMIST [*touching the patch*]: That feels better. [*Looking up.*] I must have struck my head on the counter when I . . . slipped.

Pull back to take in Lomax and Quatermass. Sergeant Best is prowling about in the background, examining the damage to the premises.

LOMAX: And after that you were unconscious till a few minutes ago?

CHEMIST [*nods*]: I didn't know how long it was. I dialled 999 as soon as I came round.

QUATERMASS: What did you see him do?

CHEMIST [*his agitation returning*]: Well—he didn't speak, you know. That's what was odd. I thought he might be suffering from some injury—he had a coat wrapped round his arm—

LOMAX [*holding up the ragged coat*]: This one?

CHEMIST: Yes . . . that's it. I unrolled it and then . . . ! [*His eyes close. He points a shaky hand.*] On the counter there. Sal volatile . . . a little opened bottle. [*Quatermass finds it and passes it to him. The Chemist takes a substantial gulp.*] Thank you . . . I'm not quite myself yet. [*He gets uncertainly to his feet.*] Now . . . I want to show you the dispensary . . .

He leads the way.

Cut to the dispensary behind the shop as they enter, feet crunching on broken glass.

CHEMIST: Completely wrecked . . . [*he points round at the emptied shelves*] . . . wanton destruction. My balance . . . most of the stock . . .

LOMAX: Afterwards he seems to have got out the back way.

QUATERMASS [*at the bench*]: What's been in this measure?

Lomax and the Chemist come across to look. The measure contains a small quantity of black liquid.

Cut to the shop, where Sergeant Best is hurrying across to the outer door. He calls to the Policeman on duty outside.

BEST: All right—let him in.

Briscoe enters hurriedly, looking about. Best points.

BEST: They're in there, sir. At the back.

Briscoe makes for dispensary. Cut to it as he enters and the others turn from the bench.

QUATERMASS: Oh good—Gordon. Take a look at this.

LOMAX: Don't touch anything. There may be fingerprints . . . of a sort.

QUATERMASS: What could have been concocted from those?

He points to the two bottles and the jar now lying broken on the bench. Briscoe peers.

CHEMIST: I can assure you that if their contents were mixed in any order, the result would be highly poisonous.

BRISCOE: I think he's right.

CHEMIST [*hesitantly*]: Mightn't he have wanted to . . . make away with himself?

LOMAX: Yes. How long for this stuff to take effect?

CHEMIST: A few minutes, I'd say.

LOMAX: Then—we've got to start looking for a body. He couldn't have gone far in that time. Tragic, but there it is—probably the best way out of all this. I'll get Best on to it. [*He starts to the door.*] Best!

BRISCOE: Wait a moment—

Lomax stops. Best comes into the doorway behind him. Briscoe turns to Quatermass doubtfully.

QUATERMASS: Some other idea?

BRISCOE: Well . . . just a possibility. But we're dealing in enough wild guesses.

QUATERMASS: Say it.

BRISCOE: If this were needed to perform some essential function in a . . . biochemical change.

LOMAX: Change?

QUATERMASS: Some further change . . .

Lomax comes forward, beckoning Best.

LOMAX [*to the Chemist*]: Would you be kind enough to put as much as you can of that . . . black fluid in a clean bottle? The sergeant'll take it for analysis.

CHEMIST: A clean bottle . . . I'll do my best. Look at the place! He must have been a madman!

From the shop beyond comes the sound of voices raised in argument. The Policeman is shouting: 'No, sir—nobody's allowed in!' *And Fullalove's unmistakable voice answering:* 'I need some aspirin—a matter of life and death!' *Best hurries across to the intervening doorway and calls:*

BEST: Stop that disturbance! If you insist on trouble, sir, you'll get it—

Cut to the shop, where Fullalove is half-in, half-out of the outer door, restrained by the Policeman. He tries to peer through.

FULLALOVE: He *is* in there, isn't he? I mean Professor Quatermass.

BEST: Now, sir—

Quatermass appears beside him.

QUATERMASS: He might as well come in, if he's tracked us this far.

BEST [*doubtfully*]: You know who he is?

QUATERMASS: Yes.

Best nods to the Policeman, and Fullalove is admitted.

FULLALOVE: Thank you. Now sir—about twenty-four hours ago, you gave the press a statement. I rather suspect it wasn't the whole story even then—and events have evidently been moving since.

QUATERMASS: How much do you think you know?

FULLALOVE: Counter-question, since it's my job to ask them. What brings Professor Quatermass here? Nothing stolen, they say. What should anybody have wanted . . . or any thing?

Quatermass looks at him, saying nothing. Lomax comes through with a small bottle, and gives it to Best, who hurries out. Lomax shoots Quatermass a look of exasperation.

LOMAX: Surely you've done enough talking to the press!

QUATERMASS: Mr. Fullalove's been making some intelligent guesses. Before he starts rushing them into print, I intend to give him the entire facts as I know them.

LOMAX: Quatermass, I won't be a party to this—

QUATERMASS: And then trust to his sense of responsibility not to publish them, [*Fullalove looks at him in surprise.*] Come along—I'll tell you in the car.

Fullalove hesitates, then follows him and Lomax out to the street.

Dissolve . . . to Lomax's office, a short time later. Briscoe is doing the talking.

BRISCOE: The absorption of that solution by any normal human system would mean rapid death. But they still haven't found the body . . . and I don't believe that what went on in the chemist's shop was a blind impulse . . . to suicide or to plain mad destructiveness.

Pull back to include Fullalove listening keenly, and Quatermass.

FULLALOVE: Had Carroon much knowledge of chemistry?

QUATERMASS: None. But Charles Greene had.

FULLALOVE [*after a moment, slowly*]: Good God!

BRISCOE: That's the score.

FULLALOVE: You mean, those three men—

QUATERMASS: He looks like *one* of them, more or less. But if our theory's right, what's out there may represent the combined . . . experience and . . . scientific knowledge of the three.

Fullalove rests his chin on his hands.

BRISCOE: Now—suppose this new intercellular union—the one that started in Miss Wilde's house last night—

FULLALOVE: Referring to what happened to his hand?

BRISCOE: That's right. Suppose that process had failed to develop? Suppose it became aware that a chemical substance was needed—perhaps as a catalyst—to help the change on? Decided what the catalyst should be—

FULLALOVE: And went and got it!

QUATERMASS: So far, we've nothing like proof of all this. Only a framework of circumstantial facts and implications.

FULLALOVE: Implications . . . !

QUATERMASS: Well, are you going to go into print and frighten everybody, Mr. Fullalove?

FULLALOVE [*shaking his head*]: It's a story to be sure about.

The door opens and Lomax comes in.

LOMAX: The lab. people confirm that—[*He breaks off.*] Fullalove, you still here?

FULLALOVE [*rising*]: What a warm greeting! [*To Quatermass*] All right, Professor, I'll rewrite the story and hold it till I see you again—soon. [*He goes to the door, which Lomax is holding open, and says to him as he passes*] Thanks for the use of the chair.

Lomax closes the door behind Fullalove.

LOMAX: Think you can trust him?

QUATERMASS: It's the easiest way in the end.

LOMAX [*grunts*]: Now—the lab. confirm the stuff would kill in five minutes, maximum. Which gives him a radius of . . . about that . . . [*He turns to the wall map and traces with his finger a quarter-mile circle in the middle of the Pimlico district.*] Not much, and we've gone over it very thoroughly indeed.

QUATERMASS: So it's beginning to look as if he's not dead?

LOMAX [*non-committally*]: I'm extending the search. I'll discount the central part of Westminster . . . [*he indicates on the map the area between Piccadilly and Victoria Street*] . . . it's too open and too public to be worthwhile. I think our territory's back here . . . [*he points to the smaller streets on the Kensington side.*]

QUATERMASS: If Briscoe and I are right you'd better be ready for rapid developments. From any quarter, at any time.

LOMAX: Don't worry, we're used to it. We'll find him.

QUATERMASS: Him . . .

LOMAX: We had a perfectly clear description from the chemist.

QUATERMASS: All the same . . . [*He goes to the map and stares at it. He swings round to Lomax.*] Can you get reports on every incident in the area . . . and further afield? No matter how trivial? Anything at all noticed by men on duty?

LOMAX: We'd probably look ridiculous.

QUATERMASS: People do—when they no longer know *what* they're looking for.

Track in past him to the map . . . right in to the dark patch clearly labelled 'St James's Park'. Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to St James's Park. It is dusk, and lights from the surrounding streets are shining faintly through the bushes. Big Ben is striking the half-hour. There is a faint lapping of water from the lake, and the occasional quacking of ducks.

A young man and a girl come along the path, arms round each other. They are somehow clearly an engaged couple, perhaps because Janet is a serious girl, with her mind on serious business. Ted is more of a light-weight character. His name suggests, not popularity or ruggedness, but only that people cannot be bothered to call him Edward.

TED: Well, I don't know, Jan . . .

JANET [*quietly*]: My name's Janet.

TED: I'd just as soon all girls. [*Playfully*] I'm partial to girls. [*He kisses her.*]

JANET: Be serious, Ted.

TED [*changing the subject*]: The lake looks nice, doesn't it?

JANET: Same as usual. You said you wanted to discuss our future.

TED [*caught*]: So I do.

JANET: Go on then.

TED: Well . . . that's not a very bright thing to say, is it? 'Go on then, discuss our future'!

JANET: Before we get married, we should know exactly why we're doing it.

TED [*a last attempt at the playful*]: I thought you'd got the general idea, but still—

JANET [*firmly*]: I mean—how many, and when we have them.

Ted looks at her and works out that this ought to be a tender moment. He steers her to a seat and they sit down.

TED: Kid—

JANET: Don't call me kid, Ted.

TED: I don't think we ought to worry too much. You'll see, things'll all work out.

JANET: It's too easy to just say that.

TED: Well, I mean . . . when things are all right, let's not start worrying . . . just be happy. [*He looks dreamily across the dark water as a burst of quacking breaks out.*] Listen to those birds, for instance. They get on all right without a lot of worry. See what I mean, there's no natural need for it. They just—[*He breaks off, blinking as he peers into the dusk.*]

JANET [*after a moment*]: What's the matter, Ted? Are you cold? It was a bit chilly under the trees . . .

TED: You see something over there? [*He points.*] In the water—just by the island.

JANET: It's getting so dark . . . [*As a weird whooping cry rings out she catches some of Ted's uneasiness.*] What's that?

TED: Can't be . . . anything . . .

A Park Keeper comes quietly into view, startling them when he speaks.

PARK KEEPER: Queer noises those birds make, don't they?

TED: Yes.

PARK KEEPER: That was a whooper swan.

TED: Oh. Must have been what I saw. A big . . . bird.

PARK KEEPER: Or one of the pelicans. They can look quite eerie about this time, over there by the island.

JANET: Let's go, Ted.

TED: Yes. Goodnight.

KEEPER [*as they go*]: Goodnight. [*He looks across at the island, from which comes another burst of quacking, hooting, whistling . . .*]

Cut to Duck Island. The cries of the waterfowl are loud here, and close at hand there is a rustling among the undergrowth. Heavy, strained breathing . . . then through the leaves crawls the soaked figure of Carroon. He is half-naked, dragging himself along on his stomach. He lies for a moment, panting. What can be seen of his skin is dark grey, with raised, gnarled patches. His right arm trails.

Half a mile away, in another world, Big Ben starts striking the three-quarters, and at the sound Carroon looks about with his lost eyes, as if searching for some deeper shelter. He starts to move again, and as he does so swings his right arm up—a shapeless mass as big as a bush!

Dissolve . . . to Lomax's office, New Scotland Yard. Lomax is at his desk with a half-empty coffee cup in front of him.

LOMAX [*into phone*]: Information Room? Lomax . . . anything in yet? All right, let me know as soon as there is.

He puts the phone down. Close by, Big Ben is striking midnight. He turns to Best.

LOMAX: Great Scott—listen to it! Best, get home while you can. Back on the job first thing—there'll probably be a flood of nonsense reports to cope with. Quatermass must be mad . . .

BEST: You staying here?

LOMAX: And I must be a lot madder to agree! Yes, I am.

BEST: Goodnight, then.

LOMAX: 'Night, Best.

Best goes. Lomax pulls a report towards him and starts going over it again. His head slowly droops in exhaustion, supported by his hand.

Dissolve . . . to Duck Island, St James's Park. Big Ben is striking three . . . the only sound from a now dark and quiet London. Close at hand small uneasy croaks and quacks come from the water-birds . . . and a constant, steady rustling. In close shot is a mass of undergrowth which is all in gentle, swaying motion. It consists of small leaves with patches of a firmer, moss-like variety. Very, very slowly an eye opens among the leaves, as if someone is looking through. It moves forward. A second eye can be seen, dead and twisted. The mossy foliage comes forward with them. The effect is not unlike the 'Green Man' of mythology. As it moves slowly, shapelessly out of shot, the bird-cries rise in sudden, shrill alarm . . .

Dissolve . . . to Quatermass's office at the Rocket Group. It is the following morning. Quatermass is pacing angrily up and down. Briscoe is sitting on the desk, studying a newspaper laid open on it—not the Daily Gazette.

BRISCOE [*reading*]: 'I accuse Professor Quatermass! . . . by John Paterson, senior engineer, etc, etc. . . .' He's certainly done it. 'The British people have a right to know how a project vital to their country's future went astray . . .'

QUATERMASS: But look at it! All he's produced is the same string of false arguments he's been repeating to himself ever since it happened!

BRISCOE: Yes . . . 'Lack of preparation' . . . 'How the crew were chosen' . . . 'Did they fail in emergency?' . . . [*He looks up, puzzled.*] Why?

QUATERMASS: I don't know. Anything rather than start to believe—the other.

BRISCOE: But to go to this length—

QUATERMASS: Perhaps he feels that if he can make enough noise and shout it to the world, he'll be able to drown out what keeps ringing round his head.

BRISCOE: Of course he's a psychopath. Brilliant but unstable. That's why I would never pass him for any active . . . I suppose I'm in this too? [*He studies the article again.*]

QUATERMASS: You are.

BRISCOE [*finding it*]: Oh, yes . . .

QUATERMASS [*wearily*]: Oh, they're entitled to attack. Me, at any rate. It's just so stupidly on the wrong grounds. If only they'd said, Quatermass is a man who lets other people take the risks to satisfy his meddling curiosity—

BRISCOE: No, Bernard!

QUATERMASS: —which has resulted in, at best the loss of loyal and valuable lives, at the worst . . . [*He breaks off.*] Why doesn't Lomax ring! He must have something by now! [*He picks up the phone, rattles the receiver rest.*] Get me Scotland Yard, will you?

Cut to Lomax's office. He is at his desk, which is heaped with routine reports. He has one in each hand, and Best is coming into the room with others.

LOMAX: Not more of them! [*He sighs.*] None from the actual search area, I suppose?

BEST: Not a thing.

LOMAX: It's a complete waste of time! Here take a bunch and sit down. Perhaps you can spot something subtly significant—

The phone rings. He answers it.

LOMAX: Yes? . . . Speaking. Ah, Quatermass! I've had reports sent in from every station in nine boroughs. Every overnight incident. [*He picks at random among the sheets.*] Man beating up streetgirl, Piccadilly . . . drunks from all over . . . indecent exposure, Brompton Road . . . something about a lot of dead ducks . . . Obstruction caused by brewer's truck . . . Hello, yes? The ducks?

Best comes to his side as he finds it again.

BEST: That was one of the last in—took it down myself a few minutes ago.

LOMAX: Some poor flatfoot having to make a fool of himself . . . [*Into the phone*] D'you want me to read it?

Cut back to Quatermass's office, where Quatermass is handing over the phone to Briscoe.

BRISCOE: Go ahead. Yes . . . yes . . . there may be something in this. Will you go down there and investigate? We'll join you as soon as we can. [*Puts the*

phone down.] St James's Park!

Dissolve . . . to a framed plan of the Park, on actual location. Pan from this to the lake, where the water is sparkling in the morning sun. A small group is walking along the edge . . . Lomax, Best, a Park Keeper, and a uniformed Policeman. They are followed by a scatter of curious people, watching them from the nearby path.

Cut to a close shot as the Park Keeper points to small bobbing shapes a few yards out.

PARK KEEPER: There's two . . . no, three more. All wigeon, those. That's twenty-nine altogether, so far. I haven't come across anything like this all the time I've been here.

LOMAX: Some sort of poison in the water? Or pike?

PARK KEEPER: No, sir—we take better care of 'em than that. Some pretty rare varieties here, you know. The island there's a bird sanctuary. [*He points across to Duck Island.*] Besides . . . have a look at this.

He leads the way along the bank to where a second Keeper is crouched over a crumpled heap of feathers, a hooked pole at his side.

PARK KEEPER: Tom pulled this one in a few minutes ago. It's a bar-headed goose. Now that's a fairly big bird—but look at it!

Lomax does—and his expression shows he has seen this before.

BEST: Hardly anything but feathers . . . !

Lomax is looking round him . . . at the goggling bystanders a few yards away . . . at the breeze-stirred trees . . . the spires of Whitehall . . . the little bridge . . . the island.

PARK KEEPER: Any idea, sir?

LOMAX: The island . . .

PARK KEEPER: They call it that, but in fact it's a sort of . . . the word's peninsula, isn't it? It joins on to the far bank.

LOMAX: Of course . . . Best, look out for Quatermass and bring him along there as soon as he arrives.

BEST: Right. [*He hurries off towards the roadway.*]

LOMAX [*to the Park Keeper*]: I take it there's a security gate? Have you got a key? You'd better come along with me . . .

The Park Keeper hurries to keep up with him as he hurries along the bank.

Dissolve . . . to the entrance to Duck Island. The gate is opened from the inside by Lomax, who has just made a brief inspection. The Park Keeper is with him, more mystified than ever.

LOMAX: Here they come—

Cut to where the estate car is pulling up fast a few yards away on Horse Guards' Parade. Out of it scramble Quatermass, Best, and Dr. Briscoe, who is carrying two boxes of a type used to contain biological specimens. They make their way over the railing and across to join Lomax.

LOMAX: Hello, Quatermass. I'm glad you're here.

QUATERMASS: Found anything?

LOMAX: More dead birds. Did Best tell you—?

QUATERMASS: Yes.

LOMAX: That's all so far. But this seems to be the likeliest place . . .

He turns and leads the way.

Cut to the interior of Duck Island as the little party advance through the scrubby bushes and undergrowth. Feathers blow along the ground, under their feet. Lomax pulls a branch aside and points to a withered mound of feathers, ruffled by the breeze. Only the huge beak identifies it as the remains of a pelican. A little farther on are more shrivelled little duck-corpses. Briscoe opens one of his boxes and produces a pair of lazy-tongs to retrieve them. Lomax touches Quatermass's arm, points to stripped, leafless branches. Quatermass nods, moves cautiously on, peering about him. Suddenly he finds himself at the end of the tiny island, and looking out across the water towards the bridge. He looks about, frowning—then starts at a sudden cry from Briscoe. He starts quickly back to where he left him.

Cut to Briscoe, who is parting the leaves, peering through at something with horror in his face. As Quatermass and Lomax reach his side in a rush, he points.

BRISCOE: Down there, see? Tiny scraps of . . . whatever they are, they're moving!

He extends the lazy-tongs carefully through the leaves . . . Fade in linking music.

Dissolve . . . to the security gate of the island, as it is swung back and Quatermass and the others come hurrying through. Briscoe is carrying one of the specimen boxes, Sergeant Best the other . . . Hold music link.

Dissolve . . . to the Rocket Group laboratory, a couple of hours later. An incubation-apparatus has been set up on the bench, with oxygen pipes connected to storage cylinders, and controls for temperature and pressure inside it. Its contents can be examined through a flattened dome of transparent material, through which interior lighting strikes up at the faces of the observers . . . Quatermass and Briscoe. After a moment, Briscoe moves aside for Judith to peer through. She watches . . . and recoils.

JUDITH [*shakily turning away*]: Yes . . . it did move . . . ! I've never seen anything so horrible. Like grey moss . . . and alive.

QUATERMASS: It's stopped now. [*To Briscoe*] More oxygen?

Briscoe considers, opens one of the valves a fraction more.

JUDITH: You didn't find any . . . footprints? No sign of any . . . person?

QUATERMASS: No. Gordon, shouldn't we raise the temperature?

BRISCOE: It's as high now as we dare—

QUATERMASS: Another five degrees?

BRISCOE: No.

QUATERMASS: Why not?

BRISCOE: It's already at tropical heat inside there—and we don't know what we're dealing with. We can't even classify it as plant or—animal—

QUATERMASS: We've got to keep it alive!

BRISCOE: But the conditions we're producing may have the opposite effect—

QUATERMASS: Look, we found three of these . . . specimens . . . all in rapidly deteriorating condition. [*To Judith*] Lomax insisted in shooting two of them across to his lab because it was close at hand—

BRISCOE: And *they've* decided to maintain normal temperatures.

QUATERMASS: In their wisdom! So it's up to us to vary conditions on this one.

BRISCOE [*after a moment*]: Another five degrees, then. [*He adjusts the temperature control set in the base of the incubator.*]

JUDITH: What can they be? Actual . . . fragments?

BRISCOE: Probably.

JUDITH: So this time . . . the change did succeed.

QUATERMASS: That's what we're afraid of. Even Lomax was finally convinced. I think he'll really get some action now.

JUDITH: But not . . . knowing what he's looking for?

QUATERMASS: Up to now, that's the only evidence . . . [*Judith turns to look into the incubator again*] . . . of what to expect.

JUDITH [*after a moment*]: I thought I saw—[*She draws back.*] It did—it moved quite—strongly—

QUATERMASS [*going quickly to look*]: That pulsation again. Yes. [*To Briscoe*] You see? We *are* on the right lines!

All three bend their heads over the shining dome . . .

Dissolve . . . to Lomax's office. He is talking urgently on the telephone. Nearby a uniformed Superintendent and an Inspector are studying the wall map—where the Westminster section now carries all the signs of a planned operation—taped and flagged.

LOMAX [*into phone*]: Hello . . . hello? [*He rattles the receiver rest.*] I've been cut off—I was through to the B.B.C. . . . Hello? Yes, Lomax here again. About this architectural programme that's being televised from Westminster Abbey tonight—can you tell me what time your people are due to finish there? . . . It's—er—in connexion with a search we're making. We don't want to interfere unnecessarily, but . . . What time? . . . Seven-thirty. And they'll all be gone by when? . . . Right, thank you very much. [*He rings off, turns to his colleagues.*] I don't think we need worry about them—

SUPERINTENDENT: By that time, the big risk of the evening'll be over anyway. Victoria Station, seven o'clock.

INSPECTOR: These two chiefs from West Africa . . . surely they wouldn't mind if their reception was switched to Waterloo?

LOMAX: The Colonial Office minds on their behalf—it won't hear of any change in plans in case offence is taken and we lose another colony.

SUPERINTENDENT: There'll be a big turn-out to meet them.

LOMAX [*significantly*]: Which provides ample opportunity for . . . incidents.

SUPERINTENDENT: This description you've issued—it doesn't take us very far. 'Believed to be dangerous' is about the most definite part of it.

LOMAX: I know. I can't help that. All your men can do is watch for anything that excites suspicion—and they mustn't talk. We don't want any needless rumours started. Now . . . [*he goes to the map*] . . . I'll just run over the other tricky items we can expect tonight. About eight-fifteen Horseferry Road will be blocked for some time for delivery of a big factory boiler—

The door opens. Best looks in.

BEST: Excuse me, sir. That drunk and disorderly from Cannon Row—he's outside.

LOMAX [*annoyed*]: Oh, Lord—

BEST: Sounds as if there might be something.

LOMAX: Does it? All right, bring him in. [*As Best vanishes, he turns to the others.*] This won't take a moment. He was picked up about four this morning, and they've sent him along—

SUPERINTENDENT: One of your unusual incidents?

Best returns with the Drunk—a bedraggled regular visitor to the police courts. As he is hustled in front of the senior officers he looks up at them in alarm.

DRUNK: What's all this for? It's persecution—I never done anything—

LOMAX: All right. Sit down here, will you?

DRUNK [*sits doubtfully*]: Why can't I just have me one day inside same as usual. I might even pay the fine for a change—I got the five bob—

LOMAX: Now what was this story you told the officer on the beat?

DRUNK: Yes, well . . . he made out I was drunk, but it's my state of 'ealth, ye see.

LOMAX: So you weren't drunk?

DRUNK: No! [*As if stating the obvious.*] Well, I suppose I must 'ave 'ad a *drop,* but . . .

LOMAX: Just the usual?

DRUNK: That's right. No, the reason I was runnin' like that—I was frighted! I run an' run about 'alf a mile—I was *lookin'* for a copper! [*He looks round for some sign of belief and goes on indignantly.*] An' when I found one, the bastard wouldn't listen—e' just run me in!

LOMAX: What had frightened you?

DRUNK: Well, like I told 'im—it was this—it was this—[*he swallows*]—sort of rustlin' noise first of all.

LOMAX: Rustling noise?

DRUNK: Yes . . .

LOMAX: Do you know where you were at the time?

DRUNK: Lemme see . . . it was one of them back streets be'ind Parliament Square. I'd been sittin' in a doorway, see, 'cos I wasn't feelin' too bright . . . and then I seen . . . [*He frowns*] . . . I was sure I seen it.

LOMAX: What?

DRUNK [*hazily*]: At the end of the street . . . just for a minute an' I couldn' make out the shape proper. An' then it went round the corner . . . [*He remembers more clearly.*] oh my 'eavens . . . !

LOMAX: How was this figure walking? Slowly? Quickly?

The Drunk stares at him blankly for a moment.

DRUNK: Walkin'—'ow could it be? It was 'igh up on the wall! [*He looks round the staring faces in front of him and his voice shrinks to a mutter.*] I must 'a been cut . . . must 'a been . . .

Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to the Rocket Group laboratory. Close shot of Briscoe on telephone.

BRISCOE [*into phone*]: But you had *two* specimens . . . Both of them? . . . How long ago? . . . I see. No attempt to revive them was any use? . . . What was their final condition? . . . Withered and dry . . . ?

Pull back to take in the incubator. Quatermass is standing hunched over the inspection dome. Judith is beside him at the bench, busy with notebook and pencil.

QUATERMASS: They've lost them both? The fools!

BRISCOE [*into phone*]: No, the one we have here is alive . . . It's more than surviving—it's increased in size, very rapidly indeed during the last half-hour. And there's a kind of continuous pulsing movement throughout it . . . Of course, if you want. I'll keep you informed.

He puts the phone down.

QUATERMASS: What did they say?

BRISCOE [*joining him*]: They'd like to see it.

QUATERMASS: Oh, they're getting interested—at last! Gordon, I'm having no interference. What we're on to is too important. If these changes should be going on in the main organism—wherever it is—

BRISCOE: I'm convinced it's possible.

QUATERMASS [*significantly*]: Take a look now.

BRISCOE [*peering into the incubator*]: Yes . . . it's still spreading. Grey fronds . . . tiny tendrils . . .

QUATERMASS: I don't mean those. [*Pointing.*] There . . . see?

Briscoe looks, changes his position, then mutters sharply under his breath. He rubs a hand deliberately across his eyes and looks again.

BRISCOE: Sporangia! One . . . two . . . three . . . six . . . seven . . . ten of them!

JUDITH: What?

BRISCOE: Spore zones. [*He points them out to her.*] That's what they are, I'm sure of it! It's going into a reproductive phase.

QUATERMASS: It must be developing at enormous speed. A few hours ago it had almost perished.

JUDITH: Spores . . .

BRISCOE: Each of those patches might generate hundreds of thousands.

JUDITH: You think—there might be danger?

BRISCOE: I don't know. This is something so far outside experience—

He turns to Quatermass, who is staring at the floor.

QUATERMASS [*feverishly*]: What to do . . . what to do *first!* Gordon . . . the main . . . structure may not be in the same stage of development. It may have passed it, it may not have reached it yet—we shan't know until the thing's found. But the incubation may have put this ahead?

BRISCOE [*doubtfully*]: It may have . . .

QUATERMASS: Let's assume we've got the advantage—and make the most of it.

BRISCOE: How?

QUATERMASS: Test for the possibilities of infection. We'll do it in this incubator, so there'll be no chance of the spores escaping. Now we'll need subjects—rats, rabbits, guineapigs—

BRISCOE: I think we've some animals left in D block—

QUATERMASS: Right—then you'll handle it? [*As Briscoe hurries out, he turns to the telephone.*] I'd better try and get Lomax . . .

Dissolve . . . to the figure of a middle-aged Woman crashing to the ground unconscious. Faces turn. She is in the middle of a crowd. A man stoops beside her, then a Young Policeman comes pushing through. Cut—to Lomax and the Superintendent, who have also noticed the slight commotion and are making their way urgently through what can now be seen as a dispersing crowd on the Continental-arrival platforms at Victoria Station. As they reach the collapsed woman, she is stirring, her eyes opening again. The Young Policeman looks up.

YOUNG POLICEMAN: She's all right, sir. Only a faint.

An ambulance man arrives to take over and help the shaky woman away. The Superintendent turns to Lomax.

SUPERINTENDENT: Just one more faint. That's the fifth tonight. And each time I've thought—this is it!

LOMAX: What's the tally of men questioned?

SUPERINTENDENT: Three with hands bandaged or covered up, a few others behaving oddly or suspiciously. Two pickpockets arrested.

LOMAX: Nothing, in fact.

SUPERINTENDENT: That suits me. My God, what a crowd—I'd never have thought a couple of native chiefs could be so popular. I bet *they* didn't, either.

The crowd is dispersing rapidly now. The woman who fainted is being helped across to a nearby ambulance for further treatment. The Young Constable is hovering with his notebook in his hand.

LOMAX: That man want to speak to you?

SUPERINTENDENT: Eh?

He turns to the Young Policeman. Best comes to join Lomax.

BEST: Next item?

LOMAX: Nothing to bother about now till that traffic diversion at Horseferry Road . . . that might hamper us if anything happened.

The Superintendent rejoins them, as the Young Policeman salutes and goes.

SUPERINTENDENT: I think we can stand down the extra men in a couple of minutes.

LOMAX: What did that lad have to say?

SUPERINTENDENT: Oh—just showing his regard for duty. Something he'd noticed this morning, down by the Abbey. It's been haunting him because he didn't report it and he's been having second thoughts.

LOMAX: What?

SUPERINTENDENT: A little bit of stonework had fallen, that's all. Came down on the grass surround, but hadn't hurt anybody. [*Looking across the station.*] I'll take them off the barriers first—

BEST [*to Lomax*]: It couldn't possibly . . . could it? . . . have anything to do with us?

SUPERINTENDENT: Now, wait a minute—those pinnacles are a hundred feet in the air.

LOMAX [*thoughtfully*]: The drunk . . .

BEST: 'It was 'igh up on the wall . . .'

SUPERINTENDENT: That chap? But he *was* drunk.

The other two look at each other.

LOMAX: Let's take a look!

He and Best hurry off, leaving the Superintendent looking doubtfully after them.

Dissolve . . . to an exterior shot of Westminster Abbey. The pale twin towers shine in the dusk. Pan down to where a television outside-broadcast truck is parked near the entrance.

Cut to a closer shot of this scanner truck. The rear door is open. The Producer and Interviewer are smoking a last cigarette before the programme, and exchanging final notes. The Producer, a ready outdoor type, glances at his watch and nods. The Interviewer, neat and smooth, throws his cigarette away and starts for the Abbey entrance. The Producer gives him a thumbs-up sign as he goes, and turns to the door. He closes it behind him.

Cut to the interior of the scanner truck. The Producer takes his seat at the control panel, between his girl Assistant and a morose technical operations Manager. In front of them is a bank of monitors showing the pictures registered by the four cameras inside the Abbey. The flickering radiation from these is almost the only illumination.

PRODUCER: Let's hope Tommy can keep the old boy off the technical waffle.

ASSISTANT: It won't be easy. Look at him there—he's getting more nervous by the minute.

PRODUCER [*looking*]: Eminent architect, scared stiff, on Camera Two. Poor old creature, with his jargon. I think he takes refuge in it.

ASSISTANT: Funny, the things they do.

PRODUCER: Yes. [*Making his final check.*] Camera One on the North Aisle—he's got a very nice picture. Camera Two on the bods. Peter, brighten that screen for me would you? [*A Technician rises to do so.*] Just a shade. Thanks. Three on Poet's Corner . . . [*into microphone.*] Three, would you mind just showing me the pan up towards the Rose Window?

The picture on one of the screens moves obediently inwards over columns and arches.

PRODUCER: Yes, that's fine. Down again. Take it a little to the right—I want as much as possible of that statuary group. [*The screen obeys, and holds a shot near ground level.*] Fine, Three. That's your starting position. [*He peels his jacket off and loosens his tie.*] Warm evening.

ASSISTANT: Three minutes to go.

TECHNICAL MANAGER: Oh, did you warn Sir Vernon about jumping out of shot near the beginning? Remember what he did at the last run-through.

PRODUCER: Tommy's got a note of it. Leave it to him.

TECHNICAL MANAGER: It looked terrible.

PRODUCER: Um. [*He looks at the monitor screens.*] There's Tommy now—see if he reminds him.

On Camera Two's screen, two small figures are talking.

Cut to the actual scene inside the Abbey. Sir Vernon Dodds, a white-haired dewlapped man, has a bad case of the jitters as he waits by a fluted column for his first appearance on television. The Interviewer, carrying a hand-microphone, comes up to him. A few feet away, Camera Two has

its lens trained on them.

INTERVIEWER [*his voice echoing slightly*]: It's almost time now, sir.

SIR VERNON: Oh yes.

INTERVIEWER [*confidentially*]: You will remember not to turn your back on the camera, won't you?

SIR VERNON: Of course I shan't.

INTERVIEWER [*pleasantly*]: I know how easy it is.

SIR VERNON: I never turn far . . . just like this. [*He demonstrates, almost disappearing behind the column.*]

INTERVIEWER: Just a *little* less. Otherwise perfect.

SIR VERNON [*wretchedly*]: You don't have to bother about me.

Cut back to the interior of the scanner truck. The Producer gives a long sigh.

ASSISTANT: Poor old chap. [*A signal light is flashing.*] Oh—here we go.

PRODUCER: Sound up, please. [*An announcer's voice fades in, from a far-off studio.*] Opening announcement going out. Stand by, everybody . . .

Suddenly there is a knocking on the door behind them. They twist round to look.

PRODUCER: What the devil—!

ASSISTANT [*shocked*]: Somebody knocking on the door.

PRODUCER: Well, stop them—get them away—quickly!

The knocking is repeated as the Assistant hurries to the door. She throws the catch and opens it. Lomax is outside on the step.

LOMAX: I'm from Scotland Yard. Can I speak to the producer?

ASSISTANT: No, we're starting transmission in a few seconds—it's quite impossible—

LOMAX [*pushing past her*]: I must! It's about your people inside the Abbey—

PRODUCER: What about them?

LOMAX: I've reason to suspect there may be grave danger—

PRODUCER [*agitated*]: What are you talking about! Please go now, will you—we're practically on the air. [*He turns quickly back to his control panel.*] Coming to you, Two . . . Stand by to cue Tommy . . . [*He operates control knobs.*] On you, Two. Right, cue him.

Cut to the scene in front of Camera Two. The Interviewer and Sir Vernon Dodds.

INTERVIEWER: Good evening. Tonight we are going to look at just a few of the features of this famous and historic building. And here to describe them—and to explain their function and purpose in this magnificent structure—is Sir Vernon Dodds.

Camera Two is turned on the architect, who is almost visibly trembling.

SIR VERNON: Good evening.

INTERVIEWER: Now, Sir Vernon, perhaps you'd be kind enough to take us on a brief tour of the Abbey first of all, before you go into more detail.

SIR VERNON: I should be—I should be glad to. [*He turns his back on the camera.*]

Cut back to the interior of the scanner truck. All eyes are on the monitor screens . . . Lomax with a different purpose from the rest. Sir Vernon's halting voice comes through the loudspeaker:

First, the North Aisle. The majestic supporting piers can be . . . can be clearly seen . . .

PRODUCER [*pressing cut button*]: On you, One.

LOMAX [*leans forward*]: During the day—have any of your camera team noticed—

PRODUCER [*angrily*]: My dear chap, we're on the air! If you've got to stay, keep quiet!

Lomax half-turns to go—then is drawn back by the glowing screens. Sir Vernon's voice is gaining speed:

In these four bays erected during the reign of Edward the Third, the detached shafts of Purbeck marble surrounding the piers have additional shafts attached to them . . .

PRODUCER: He's well away now. Poets' Corner next. Coming to you, Camera Three . . .

Sir Vernon is gabbling now:

This is in contrast to the simpler pier formation in the sanctuary and transepts . . .

PRODUCER [*pressing cut button*]: On you, Three.

And as Camera Three's shot is punched up into the national network, Sir Vernon continues:

. . . Exemplified in this view the famous South Transept or Poets' Corner.

PRODUCER: Right, Three, start panning up.

As rehearsed, Camera Three's shot begins moving upwards very slowly from ground level. Sir Vernon goes on:

Here are the memorials of great English poets . . . Chaucer . . . Shakespeare . . . Spenser . . . Donne . . . Milton . . .

LOMAX [*a hand on the Producer's shoulder*]: You must listen to me. It may be dangerous to go on with this broadcast—can you cut it short?

PRODUCER [*turning sharply*]: I've had enough of this! We were promised the police search wouldn't interfere with us in any way—now you come bursting in here and try to upset the whole—

ASSISTANT [*screams*]: Look!

She grabs the Producer's arm, pointing to the monitor screen in front of them. Camera Three is reaching the top of its panning movement. And through the arches of the triforium, high above Poets' Corner . . . something is moving . . . a mass of grey leathery surfaces, all pulsating . . . tendrils that writhe downwards. Sir Vernon's voice peters out:

The painted glass of the Rose Window . . . Whatever is it? What's that up there?

The scanner truck is filled with alarm. Technicians' faces bob up to peer at the screens. The Producer stabs at a cut button.

PRODUCER: On you, Camera Two—I mean, One—

ASSISTANT [*mechanically*]: What is it?—what is it?—what is it?

Lomax dives for the door and shouts.

LOMAX: Best! Where are you! It's there—inside the Abbey! Quick!

He disappears into the darkness. The Producer is jabbering into his microphone.

PRODUCER: Keep your positions, everybody—we'll try and sort this out. Tell Tommy to keep talking—anything at all, but he mustn't stop till I give the word—

TECHNICAL MANAGER [*on another line*]: Presentation? Hello, Presentation?

ASSISTANT [*staring in terror at the monitor screen*]: It must be twenty feet across!

TECHNICAL MANAGER: Presentation? Listen—emergency!

Crash in end music and fade out.

PART SIX

‘State of emergency’

The eyes of all those in the scanner truck are glued on the monitor screen showing Camera Three’s shot—the monstrous shape that is inching down from the triforium arches. The Producer leans quickly across to speak to the distant studio.

PRODUCER: Hello, Presentation? Bob Whittaker here—at the Abbey. You saw the thing? The police are investigating now, but I think we’ll have to suspend the programme—Hold on a second. [*He turns as Lomax pulls himself back into the truck and points to the monitor.*]

LOMAX: Can you keep it in view on that screen?

PRODUCER: Yes, of course. [*Into microphone.*] Camera Three—hold that shot and lock off.

LOMAX: Can I speak to them? Do they all hear this?

PRODUCER: Yes.

LOMAX [*into microphone*]: Attention, please. This is the police. Will all those inside the building please leave their positions and move quietly to the nearest door. Don’t run. Don’t hurry. And don’t make a noise. [*He turns to the Producer.*] Your apparatus may be the only means we’ll have of keeping observation—

PRODUCER: You want us to stay?

LOMAX: If you will. You shouldn’t be in any danger out here.

PRODUCER: D’you know what it is?

LOMAX: At present—we’re still guessing.

PRODUCER [*looking at his colleagues*]: Well, if it helps . . . I suppose we stay?

LOMAX: Thank you. Thank you all. [*He hurries out.*]

TECHNICAL MANAGER: We’re off the air. Breakdown announcement going out . . .

A piece of stop-gap music is floating from the loudspeaker. The Producer glances at the others, sees the girl Assistant is paralysed with fright.

PRODUCER: Betty . . . have you got any of your sticky sweets?

She forces her eyes towards him and manages a ghastly smile. She fumbles clumsily in her handbag, but her eyes go back to the monitor screen.

ASSISTANT: It’s coming lower . . .

Cut to a side door of the Abbey, as two or three technicians come hurrying out. A moment later the Interviewer appears, supporting a shaken and dusty Sir Vernon Dodds.

SIR VERNON: I wasn’t running—I didn’t mean to run—I just couldn’t bear to be so near it—

Sergeant Best comes up and takes his other arm.

BEST: What happened?

INTERVIEWER: He fell. Steady now, sir. Rest here a moment.

Sir Vernon leans weakly against the wall. As Best goes towards the doorway, the Interviewer catches his arm.

INTERVIEWER: Don’t go in there, you fool—it’s supposed to be dangerous—

BEST: All right, I know about it.

He opens the door and peers in. Lomax hurries into shot and joins him.

LOMAX: Can you see it?

BEST: I can make out a movement . . . Christ, the size of it! [*He turns and whispers incredulously*] You mean that’s—what we’re looking for?

INTERVIEWER: What is it—how did it get in there?

SIR VERNON: I just looked up—I thought it was canvas covering repairs. And then it moved—!

LOMAX: How close were you?

INTERVIEWER: About fifty feet.

LOMAX: Did it make any sound?

SIR VERNON: No, I don’t think—

INTERVIEWER: Yes, there was. Very soft, a sort of scuffling.

There is a clatter close by, inside the building. Sir Vernon stumbles back in fright, and the others move quickly aside then a Cameraman appears, dragging a TV camera with him on its tripod.

LOMAX: What are you doing? I asked them to leave the camera in place—

CAMERAMAN: This is number One.

LOMAX: Three’s still in there? [*The Cameraman nods.*] What about the crews?

CAMERAMAN: All out now, as far as I know. I thought I’d better—try and bring this—

LOMAX: Best, give him a hand—I want this door kept clear and all the others tight shut.

The Young Policeman comes hurrying into shot.

YOUNG POLICEMAN: Chief Inspector Lomax?

LOMAX: Yes?

YOUNG POLICEMAN: I've been trying to find you, sir. Urgent message from a Professor Quatermass—he wants you to get in touch with him right away.

LOMAX: I was just going to, anyway. [*Chilled.*] An urgent message? I wonder what . . .

YOUNG POLICEMAN: There's a police box down the road there, sir.

LOMAX: Right. [*He hurries away, followed by the Young Policeman.*]

INTERVIEWER [*to Best*]: Did he say Quatermass?

SIR VERNON: But that's . . .

INTERVIEWER: The rocket man?

Best says nothing. He ushers them away from the doorway. Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to the Rocket Group laboratory. Close shot of the incubator. Quatermass is staring in through the dome, incredulity in his face. Pull back to take in Briscoe and Judith. In the foreground is a large cage which still has a couple of laboratory rats in it. Farther along the bench is a curious collection . . . leafy cuttings from different types of tree, some grass, pieces of kitchen vegetable.

QUATERMASS: It's terrifying—the sheer speed of development!

BRISCOE: There's hardly any interval between infection and the beginning of this breaking down. Every animal's gone.

QUATERMASS: Except one of the rats. You can just make out its shape still.

BRISCOE: How long did it take?

QUATERMASS: Since the spores started to disseminate . . . [*glances at his watch*] . . . seventeen and a half minutes!

BRISCOE: If I hadn't watched it happen—

QUATERMASS [*grimly*]: No time for the niceties of philosophical acceptance! Our minds can't keep up with this. It suddenly hit me as revolting when Judith remembered we should include plant life—

JUDITH: It was obvious.

QUATERMASS: I suppose it was—

BRISCOE: All the vegetable specimens had gone by twelve minutes.

JUDITH: Even the higher species. D'you think anything can be immune?

QUATERMASS: After this—no.

BRISCOE: Fungi . . . it took those first. Lichens, algae . . . even cultures of bacteria. Now there's nothing but this grey . . . pulsating . . .

QUATERMASS: Irresistible virulence.

BRISCOE: No living thing on earth could fight against it. There'd be no time to develop any natural defences—

The telephone rings. Quatermass hurries to answer it.

QUATERMASS: Yes . . . speaking. Lomax? I've been trying to get you . . . What! [*Turns to the others.*] They've found it! [*Into phone*] Where? . . . In the Abbey! Alive . . . ? How big? [*Briscoe comes close, and Quatermass holds the receiver so that both of them can hear.*]

BRISCOE: Thirty feet across—

JUDITH: Oh my God—

BRISCOE: Spore zones? Ask him!

QUATERMASS: Listen, Lomax—did you notice any dark nodular areas on it? . . . Of course. How close *could* you get? . . . Aha, just the pulsating movement and growing in size. [*To Briscoe*] You hear that?

BRISCOE: The growth stage. If he's right, there's still hope.

QUATERMASS [*into phone*]: We've been making tests here on that small specimen—the one that survived. Lomax, that thing's indescribably dangerous. While we're on our way, try to clear all channels for the most drastic action!

Cut to the Police Box near the Abbey, from which Lomax is telephoning. The door is open and the Young Policeman is hovering outside. Heavy traffic noise.

LOMAX [*into phone*]: Wait a minute—what sort of danger? . . . Infection? Then it can—can cause disease? . . . What d'you mean, worse? [*His eyes widen as he listens.*] Are you sure about this? How can you tell? [*He glances out through the door. Traffic noises are growing louder. Headlamps sweep across the Police Box.*] We're getting big crowds down here—hundreds of cars! Why? Because a million people saw it on their television sets! . . . Military action? But I—All right, I'll do everything I can.

He claps his hand down on the receiver rest. As he furiously considers his next move, he notices the Young Policeman staring in at him wide-eyed, evidently having heard every word.

LOMAX [*bawls at him*]: Get back on duty!

The Young Policeman hurries off. Lomax feverishly starts re-dialling.

Dissolve . . . back to the Rocket Group laboratory. Close shot of Briscoe connecting heavy electric cable to the underside of the incubator, which has now been stood clear of the bench, on two boxes. The Laboratory Assistant is just moving the disconnected oxygen supply clear. Quatermass comes into shot, pulling on his coat.

QUATERMASS: It must be certain. We can't take the chance of leaving that behind us alive.

BRISCOE: Electrocution should do it—a big charge through the floor plate.

JUDITH [*coming in*]: The wagon's here. D'you want to bring any special apparatus?

QUATERMASS: I can't think of anything. [*To Briscoe*] Are you ready? Hurry—get it done.

Briscoe turns to the switchbox he has connected into the circuit. One quick jerk of the wrist—and there is a blinding flash and crackle inside the incubator. Briscoe takes a torch and shines it through the dome. Smoke is swirling inside.

BRISCOE: Burnt right up. [*Quatermass nods.*] We might even use this method against the thing itself?

QUATERMASS: It isn't sealed helplessly in an oven like that. And you're forgetting something else. [*He starts towards the door.*]

BRISCOE [*following*]: What?

QUATERMASS: We're going to meet intelligence. Still at least partly . . . human.

As they go, fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to Westminster Abbey, an hour or so later. It is well after dark now, and only the paler stonework is picked out by the streetlamps. Pan down, past a mullioned window, past a poster appealing for funds . . . to where dense crowd is gathering. They are not alarmed, just curious and excited—and from the background comes the steady, angry hooting that signifies a traffic pile-up. Police are doing their best to keep the crowd in order. Somewhere on the perimeter a loudspeaker is barking, but its words are lost in the general uproar.

Pan to two dishevelled Policemen in the foreground, as one turns to the other with sweat streaming down his face.

POLICEMAN: Can you hear what it's saying? That speaker?

SECOND POLICEMAN: Trying to make 'em go home. What else?

POLICEMAN: They're not taking a blind bit of notice. [*Shouts*] Keep back there! Don't shove the people in front! [*To his colleague*] Why don't they use the horses?

SECOND POLICEMAN: They're all down Victoria Street. That's worse than this!

There is a commotion nearby, and a woman's voice cries out in pain.

POLICEMAN: Here, here! Stop that pushing, I said!

A white-haired but wild figure is elbowing his way along the front edge of the crowd. It is Sir Vernon Dodds. His neat tie is missing, his clothes torn.

SIR VERNON: I must—I must know what they're doing! Please let me through!

A BOWLER-HATTED MAN: Keep back—you heard the policeman—

SIR VERNON: Please—

POLICEMAN: I've got strict orders, sir—nobody past here! There's danger—

BOWLER-HATTED MAN: Wait a minute—this is the chap in the TV programme! [*To Sir Vernon*] That was you, wasn't it?

SIR VERNON: Yes.

A stir of new interest in the crowd.

BOWLER-HATTED MAN: Then you saw it up close—you must know what it is! Is it a fact it came out of the river?

SIR VERNON: I—I don't know. I can't tell you. Officer, I went away afterwards—I wasn't quite myself for a time. But now—I've got to know what they're doing!

POLICEMAN: Sorry, sir—

The bulky figure of James Fullalove comes scrambling over the railing. He waves at the Policeman.

FULLALOVE: Still press. Where's the nearest phone?

POLICEMAN: Up that way—if you can get through.

SIR VERNON [*catching Fullalove's sleeve*]: Can you tell me—what's going on in there?

FULLALOVE [*recognizing him*]: Sir Vernon Dodds! You must have been the first eye-witness—

SIR VERNON: Yes, yes! But has it done any damage? Why haven't they taken any action—where's this man Quatermass?

BOWLER-HATTED MAN: Quatermass . . . !

POLICEMAN: That's the rocket man. You're getting things a bit mixed, sir—

SIR VERNON: No, I'm not—they've sent for him. [*To Fullalove*] Is he here yet?

FULLALOVE [*quietly*]: He'll be arriving any minute. Now, Sir Vernon, perhaps we can have a few words together—

BOWLER-HATTED MAN: Hold on—what's this about Quatermass? Is it something to do with that rocket? [*To his neighbour*] There was all that mystery—two men missing when it landed. What have they got in there?

FULLALOVE: Keep your voice down!

But the word 'Quatermass' *and* 'the space rocket' *are already running through the crowd. People start moving uncertainly this way and that.*

BOWLER-HATTED MAN [*turns and yells over the heads of others*]: Liz—where are you? Get the kid away! I'll catch you up!

FULLALOVE [*savagely*]: D'you want to start a panic!

POLICEMAN: Stop that bawling! Keep it orderly now! [*As he pushes them back*] Why did they ever come here in the first place . . . ?

SIR VERNON [*in Fullalove's ear*]: D'you know what that creature is?

FULLALOVE: Approximately, yes.

There is a blast of klaxon hooting nearby . . . shouting . . . and the increasingly turbulent crowd parts. Best's voice is shouting: 'Stand back there! Make way!' *The police dive forward to help clear a passage as the Rocket Group estate car noses its way through with Best hanging on one side. It pulls up and Quatermass gets out, followed a moment later by Briscoe and the girl. Best jumps down.*

QUATERMASS: Where's Lomax?

BEST: I don't see him. Probably still over in Whitehall.

QUATERMASS: How long does he imagine we've got left? Is it still spreading?

BEST: Right down to ground level—that was ten minutes ago. [*Pointing.*] The only door we've kept open is over there—

QUATERMASS: Is that the closest view?

BEST: You'd get that in the TV truck, sir. They've still got a camera trained on it—they're just over here.

He leads the way. The policemen press the crowd back as they go. And in their wake alarm springs up afresh.

BOWLER-HATTED MAN: Hear that? It's growing! [*He yells.*] Liz—Liz, wherever you are, get out of it, and I'll find you! It's some kind of a space monster—!

He goes diving away through the crush, pummelling at those who obstruct him. His panic is infectious. There are wild yells on every side: 'A space monster!' 'Get moving in front there!' 'Get out of the way!' *There are cries of pain. Policemen shout. Whistles blast—*

Cut to the interior of the scanner truck. As Best closes the door behind the newcomers, it is quiet apart from a faint electronic hum. Quatermass and Briscoe are staring over the Producer's head. Judith is just behind.

JUDITH: The sheer size of it!

PRODUCER: At first we couldn't make out whether it was just . . . coming lower, which would have been unpleasant enough . . . or actually growing larger. Well . . . you can see it on two cameras now.

The screen of Camera Three shows an undulating mass of tendrils and thicker, trunklike forms that extend through the frame from top to bottom. On Camera Two's screen, tendrils can be made out writhing across the nave below . . . twisting round pillars.

QUATERMASS: Gordon?

BRISCOE [*leaning forward*]: Yes, they're present. No doubt about it. [*He points.*] The main concentration seems to be there, but . . . they're all over it.

PRODUCER: What are you talking about?

QUATERMASS: Spore-producing zones—as big as footballs! [*To Briscoe*] How long?

BRISCOE [*shakes his head*]: I can't take that responsibility.

QUATERMASS: You must! You're the only man who's able to do it!

Judith comes to Briscoe's side as he studies the screen.

BRISCOE: Have God knows what depending on my guess . . . I can't!

JUDITH: Go on.

BRISCOE [*after a moment*]: I'd say eighty or ninety minutes. Two hours as the outside limit.

A moment of silence. The television team are puzzled.

PRODUCER: What—what happens then?

QUATERMASS: Tell them! [*He turns to the door.*] I must find out what's being done—get hold of Lomax—

BRISCOE: I'd better go with him.

He follows Quatermass and Sergeant Best. The Producer turns helplessly to Judith.

PRODUCER: Tell us, then, for heaven's sake! What's this about two hours?

JUDITH [*looks at the monitor screen*]: Unless that can be obliterated . . . completely . . . the world as we know it is finished.

They are stunned. The girl Assistant jumps to her feet, her voice rising hysterically.

ASSISTANT: We're going to die! They kept us here and now it's too late! I could have been home by this time—home with Daddy—and all of them—but we're going to die—!

She clutches at Judith, clings to her and bursts into terrified sobbing.

PRODUCER: Is that what you're trying to say? It can kill?

JUDITH: Something worse. Those spores will spread by the million, wherever there's air and wind. In a few hours or days, every living thing on earth will have changed . . . [*she nods at the screen*] . . . to that.

PRODUCER: No . . . no!

The girl shudders and clings more tightly to Judith.

JUDITH [*a hand on her head*]: Home with Daddy—it wouldn't have made any difference.

Dissolve . . . to the side door of the Abbey, a short time later. Soldiers are busy piling sandbags to form an emplacement outside the door. Pan to a hard-faced Army Major who is in charge of the operation. Quatermass is with him, watching. The background of crowd noise has almost gone now. The police have been busy clearing the surrounding streets, and their whistles and loudspeakers sound faintly from a block or so away. But with these noises comes a distant shrilling, the stridency of a mass of panicking traffic, thousands of horns screeching alarm and frustration.

QUATERMASS: How long is all this going to take?

MAJOR: Just till my other trucks arrive. [*He glances at his watch.*] They were due before this.

QUATERMASS: Can't you do something about it? Contact your headquarters—see where they've got to—

MAJOR [*losing patience*]: They're on their way! Now sir—if I need to consult you I will. In the meantime—! [*He turns his back on Quatermass.*] Sergeant, it's too open on that side. Build it up there . . .

Quatermass turns away helplessly, to where Lomax is standing with a pale, worried man, a senior Permanent Official from the Home Office.

PERMANENT OFFICIAL: If you should turn out to be wrong, Professor Quatermass, I'm a broken man.

QUATERMASS: If only—!

PERMANENT OFFICIAL: This whole situation's come up at such a speed—why, the very first mention of it came only an hour or two ago.

LOMAX: We gave the facts at the earliest possible moment, sir.

PERMANENT OFFICIAL: And what facts! That's why I had to get down here myself as soon as I could. Oh, don't blame yourself! A weekend, the Home Secretary at the other end of the country—

QUATERMASS: What matters is that you took action.

PERMANENT OFFICIAL: And above all else—the Abbey! What ghastly chance could have led to—

QUATERMASS: It wasn't chance.

LOMAX [*surprised*]: Eh? You think there might have been intention behind this?

QUATERMASS [*nods*]: We mustn't let ourselves forget for a second that this thing still retains human intelligence and experience. Now that the military have taken over . . . [*he glares across at the unheeding Major*] . . . I hope they realize it. I've tried to make it clear. A single blunder at this stage—!

PERMANENT OFFICIAL: If they ever get their equipment here! Listen to that din—the streets must be jammed solid in all directions—

Judith comes into shot, and stands listening.

LOMAX: There was just no time to organize an evacuation.

PERMANENT OFFICIAL: I know, I know. You did all you could.

QUATERMASS: It would have been pointless in any case.

LOMAX: We might have been able to prevent *that!* [*He jerks a thumb in the direction of the distant screeching of klaxons.*] But—once the panic set in—we had men run down while they were trying to set up diversion barriers—

JUDITH: They're running from a rumour.

They turn as she comes forward.

QUATERMASS: Well? The facts are even worse.

JUDITH: That's right. That's why they must be told.

QUATERMASS: What?

JUDITH: Whatever this plan is that's being prepared, there's a chance it may not work?

QUATERMASS: There's only a chance that it *will!*

JUDITH: Then you've got to let people know what's ahead of them. So that they can face it—at least with understanding. Don't let it overtake them like the beasts and the plants and—

QUATERMASS: All right, but how?

JUDITH: That television truck's still connected to a transmitter.

Quatermass looks quickly at the others. The Permanent Official nods his agreement.

Dissolve . . . to the interior of the scanner truck, a short time later. The girl Assistant's place is empty. Most of the other technicians have left too. Only the Producer and the Technical Manager are at their posts. A flow of sombre fill-in music comes from the loudspeaker.

PRODUCER: The routine's simple. Tommy'll introduce him as soon as the Prime Minister's said his piece.

TECHNICAL MANAGER : From Downing Street?

PRODUCER: I don't know. They've tracked him down somewhere, given him a land-line. [*Slowly*] It's only a nightmare. Tomorrow morning I'll wake up in my bed and stretch and think: 'That was a decent ordinary show we did last night.' [*A pause.*] My wife's down at her sister's place for the weekend. They're not even on the phone. [*He sits up.*] Alec . . . [*he manages a smile*] . . . let's make a smooth job of this one. Outside broadcast of the end of the world. [*Into microphone*] Opening positions, everyone, please . . .

Cut to close shot of Camera One, near the Abbey wall. It is trained on the Interviewer, Quatermass is talking in an undertone to the Permanent Official. In the background, the soldiers' work has come to a standstill. The Major is conferring with Lomax and Briscoe, who is peering anxiously in through the Abbey doorway, using a pair of field-glasses.

INTERVIEWER [*to Quatermass*]: We're on the air in just over a minute, sir.

Quatermass turns to him.

PERMANENT OFFICIAL: Now remember—they'll have had a warning to expect the worst. Try to give some reassurance that'll temper it.

INTERVIEWER: D'you mind, sir—?

QUATERMASS [*to Permanent Official*]: No, I'll give the facts. Anything more than that people must find in themselves. They have the right. [*He turns to the Interviewer.*]

INTERVIEWER: About here, sir, if you please. Perhaps a little further in . . .

QUATERMASS: Why did you stay?

INTERVIEWER: I suppose—because some of the others did. And—well, you're quite right, sir. It's more bearable to know the worst.

The Major and Lomax have come up. The Major is talking in an urgent undertone to the Permanent Official. Quatermass turns quickly to them.

QUATERMASS: Is there any sign of that equipment?

PERMANENT OFFICIAL: Not a chance of the trucks getting through, apparently.

QUATERMASS: Good God!

MAJOR: They're doing their best to send it in by helicopter.

QUATERMASS: Doing their best . . . !

The Major hurries back to his position. The Interviewer touches Quatermass gently on the shoulder.

INTERVIEWER: Just about time. Sorry to start sounding professional, but—is there anything I can usefully say? A question sometimes helps.

QUATERMASS: No, thanks. This will be a—personal confession.

Cut to the interior of the scanner truck. An Announcer's voice comes from the loudspeaker:

You have just heard a special announcement by the Prime Minister . . .

The door opens and the girl Assistant comes in, bedraggled and shaken.

PRODUCER [*glancing round*]: Betty—

ASSISTANT: They've locked all the stations—there was no chance. I'd rather be with people I know when it—happens—

PRODUCER: All right, sit down. Stand by, all!

She slips into her place. A signal light is flashing, and the Announcer's voice picks up again:

Now this special broadcast on all vision and sound channels in this country, Europe, and America, will continue from Westminster Abbey.

PRODUCER [*into microphone*]: Coming to you, One. [*He presses the cut button.*]

Cut to the interview set-up outside the Abbey. The Interviewer lifts his hand microphone.

INTERVIEWER: Tonight, in the gravest possible circumstances, I have to introduce Professor Bernard Quatermass, of the British Experimental Rocket Group.

He holds the microphone before Quatermass, but Quatermass takes it out of his hand. Camera One pans to him, and Quatermass looks into its lens. For a moment or two he is unable to speak.

QUATERMASS [*hesitantly*]: Three days ago . . . I thought I had achieved a technical triumph for my country by directing the return of a fully manned rocket from space. It was the first time this had been done. When I say this . . . I am not trying to take the credit from those who shared in the enterprise. [*A pause.*] There is no question of credit now . . . only of guilt. I have . . . brought upon the earth what appears to be the most frightful thing ever known. [*The camera tracks in on him.*] What came out of the rocket was not a man. It had been . . . men. A human amalgam, possessed by the . . . being that had entered some million miles away and transformed them. It still has, I believe, their faculties and their knowledge. In these three days it has found the means of adapting itself to existence on this planet . . . means to ensure that it *only* shall exist. [*A pause.*] It has assumed an organic structure that you are now to see for yourselves . . . established only a few yards from where I am speaking, in the very structure of the Abbey . . .

Cut to the interior of the scanner truck, as the Producer presses another cut button.

PRODUCER: On Camera Three . . .

They look up at the screens. The Assistant gives a whimper. Both of them are almost filled with pulsating masses. The aisles are blocked, columns hidden by shifting, heaving surfaces. Tendrils twist and probe . . . The Assistant gives a whimper of terror as she watches. And Quatermass's voice continues, from the loudspeaker:

A plan is being carried out to destroy this. But if it should fail—or even if it should not wholly succeed—the organism will begin to infect the world through the distribution of microscopic spores. Life as we know it will cease to exist. It is virtually certain that every form of living creature and substance will give place . . . to this . . .

The Technical Manager covers his eyes.

Cut back to the interview point, as Quatermass looks straight into the lens of Camera One.

QUATERMASS: According to our calculations, there is rather less than one hour in which to act. To be effective, the means chosen must be very violent. I have told you the extent of the danger. If the worst should happen, I—[*he struggles for words*]—I ask for your—your forgiveness.

He turns away from the camera. Fade in linking music . . .

Dissolve . . . to close shot of a giant flame-thrower being manhandled into the emplacement by the side door of the Abbey. Other soldiers are struggling to set up a massive tripod mount to receive it, under the Major's close supervision. Briscoe is standing just inside the doorway, his fieldglasses trained on the danger points.

There is a droning clatter somewhere above. Cut—to two helicopters dropping down through the dark sky. Cut back to the Major as he grabs a walkie-talkie set and presses the key.

MAJOR: Calling position six . . . position six Sloane, your stuff's aboard the two that are coming in now. Grab it and set up immediately. Over.

An acknowledgement chatters briefly back and he puts the instrument down. The din from the helicopters drowns all else as they drop to the ground a short distance away, their blades sending dust whirling across the scene. Men can be heard running, shouting. Quatermass hurries across to the Major, the Official with him.

PERMANENT OFFICIAL [*above the noise*]: You've got everything you need now?

MAJOR [*nods*]: I'm setting up these heavy flame-guns at five points. [*He points to the weapon being set up behind him in the emplacement.*] Like that one. They're normally mounted in tank chassis—

QUATERMASS [*anxiously*]: But you've got portable machines as well?

MAJOR: Ten of them. [*Turns to the Official.*] And frankly, sir, I'd have thought that just a couple of those would do the job. To look at the thing, there seems no reason why I shouldn't just send in two or three of my boys to burn it out—

QUATERMASS: No!

MAJOR: Why not?

QUATERMASS: We've no idea what the reaction would be. It might withdraw—even a part of it might—into a position where you couldn't attack.

MAJOR: Couldn't?

QUATERMASS: Not in time. It's got to be a sudden attack, with everything you can put into it. Anything less than total destruction—

MAJOR: You can leave it to me!

He passes the Official a plan of the Abbey in a transparent map case. Arrows have been heavily marked on it to denote the lines of fire. Another cloud of dust sweeps across the scene as the helicopters take off again.

PERMANENT OFFICIAL [*studying the plan*]: You could hardly have more obstacles. All those columns—

MAJOR: I know. We're going to get a lot of splash. It's your Dr. Briscoe's advice—he's identified most of the spore zones as being on that side. [*He stabs a finger at the plan.*] About time I checked with him again . . . [*He jumps up and starts towards Briscoe.*]

Cut to where Sir Vernon Dodds is leaning weakly on the base of a flying buttress. There are tears in his eyes as he watches the preparations. Fullalove is with him.

SIR VERNON [*moans*]: No . . . no . . .

FULLALOVE: They've got to do it. It's the only possible way.

He turns at the sound of voices behind them. A policeman is just passing someone through. As this man comes up, he sees it is—

FULLALOVE: Paterson!

PATERSON: What are they doing?

SIR VERNON: They're going to burn it down! Devastate it! [*Wailing.*] If mankind has to destroy beauty in order to survive—perhaps it's better he shouldn't—

FULLALOVE: They're going to use flame-throwers. Setting them up now.

SIR VERNON: It's mad. There's nothing but burning—destruction! Madness—utter madness! Mad . . . mad . . . mad . . . !

He bows his head, sobbing. The sky roars and clatters again with the arrival of another helicopter. As Paterson starts forward—

Cut to the Abbey door, where the Major is shouting instructions.

MAJOR: Here's the last lot coming in! Sergeant—four men over there to collect.

SERGEANT: Sir! You two, and Daly and Parsons—at the double.

Soldiers go running. The Major takes the binoculars from Briscoe and looks through the doorway, Quatermass is at his side.

BRISCOE: Sure you can make them out? The dark nodular patches?

MAJOR: Yes.

BRISCOE [*turning to Quatermass*]: It's definitely stopped spreading. No change for the past twenty minutes—

QUATERMASS: That sounds bad.

Briscoe nods—then looks past Quatermass in astonishment.

BRISCOE: John!

Quatermass turns. Paterson is standing there, his face trembling—halfway between open fear and insatiable curiosity.

QUATERMASS: He's come to be convinced. Go on—look at it!

Paterson pushes past him into the doorway.

MAJOR: Use these.

He puts the binoculars into Paterson's hand. Paterson raises them . . . and starts.

Cut to close shot, as from Paterson's viewpoint through binoculars. Fibrous tendrils are curling round a baroque tomb, smothering a bewigged stone figure with hands upraised in prayer. Pan up . . . to thicker, trunklike parts of the Thing, swaying rhythmically . . .

Cut back to Paterson as he lowers the binoculars abruptly and turns back to Quatermass.

QUATERMASS: You could only believe in what you could see! Well, are you satisfied? That's what men can become.

PATERSON: I'm sorry—

QUATERMASS: Sorry?

PATERSON: For the attacks I made. I tried to discredit you—

QUATERMASS: As if that mattered! [*To Briscoe*] It's in the final stage?

BRISCOE: Yes. It's bound to happen in the next half-hour.

MAJOR: Stand back, there—let these men pass.

Quatermass pulls Paterson out of the way. White asbestos-suited figures, each equipped with portable flame-gun and walkie-talkie, move shapelessly to take up their positions inside. The Major flicks the key on his own instrument.

MAJOR: Stand by, all crews. Check your aim on the darker patches of the target area . . .

QUATERMASS: Remember—it must be hit from every position at once. If a single fragment escapes—

PATERSON: What are the chances of it breaking out—through here, for instance?

QUATERMASS: We've no idea. We don't know how it'll react—how vulnerable it'll be, or—Major, you've covered all possible line of retreat, haven't you?

MAJOR: Of course! Are you still questioning my handling?

PATERSON: Down in the crypt?

For the first time, the Major hesitates.

MAJOR: Great heavens—it won't get as far as that. There's a solid floor in between. [*He frowns.*] Hardly worth transferring a man—

PATERSON: Have you got a spare flame-gun?

MAJOR: I think so. Why?

PATERSON: Let me go down there.

QUATERMASS: What's this—another gesture!

PATERSON [*seriously*]: No. I can do it. [*To the Major*] They're a development of the old Lifebuoy, aren't they? I'm used to them—all through the Burma campaign. That was before I graduated to experimental rockets—

QUATERMASS: All right, let him go.

MAJOR: What the devil—

QUATERMASS: This is about the direst emergency there's ever been and you're short of men. Tomorrow there may not even *be* an Army.

MAJOR [*after a momentary hesitation*]: Sergeant—break out a spare ack-pack, quickly. [*To Paterson*] Go with him.

PATERSON [*hurrying after the Sergeant*]: Just that. I'll be better without the clobber . . .

Quatermass watches him go. Briscoe turns—and hurries forward with sudden dismay in his face. Cut to where Judith is standing as he reaches her.

BRISCOE: I thought you'd gone! Lomax said—

JUDITH: Would it have been any use?

BRISCOE: No, it's just that—[*He clutches her to him.*] Oh, why don't they hurry! I could be wrong about the time—I could so easily—!

Dissolve . . . to the group near the Abbey door a few minutes later. The Major is holding the walkie-talkie set, listening intently. Quatermass is with him, and behind, the flame-thrower crew wait for the word.

MAJOR: He ought to be down there by now . . .

There is a crackle and Paterson's voice comes breathlessly through:

Hello . . . this is Paterson. Are you receiving me? Over.

MAJOR [*flicks key*]: Receiving you. Over.

Paterson's voice replies:

I'm in the crypt now. It's dark . . . but I think another twenty feet or so ought to bring me about underneath the south transept. Over.

MAJOR [*pressing key*]: All right—

QUATERMASS [*leaning across to speak into it*]: Well done, John! Stay just where you are—

MAJOR [*taking over*]: Paterson, stand by. Over.

Paterson's voice comes through again.

Right . . . Hello? What did you say? One of you said something . . . No, it couldn't have been . . .

The Major looks sharply at Quatermass. Paterson's voice is filled with fear when it comes again:

I can hear . . . a kind of rustling . . .

QUATERMASS [*reaching to press the key down*]: John—get out! Get clear quick!

He clicks the key, and Paterson's voice is continuing:

It's down here, too! Yes, I can see something there—moving!

A moment's pause. A thin scream comes through the walkie-talkie. The Major jams the key down.

MAJOR: Paterson! Can you receive me? Paterson?

He clocks the key. There is no reply. Quatermass crouches stunned.

QUATERMASS: In the crypt!

MAJOR: He wasn't competent—I shouldn't have let him go—

QUATERMASS: Don't you see what this means? It's penetrated the stonework—creeping down there like the roots of a plant while we thought it was inactive!

MAJOR: I'll transfer some men. [*Shouts*] Sergeant—

QUATERMASS [*frantic*]: If it's spread that far, the entire plan's thrown!

MAJOR: What d'you mean?

QUATERMASS: Your fire can only reach part of the thing—

MAJOR: Have you any suggestion?

QUATERMASS [*tormented*]: More men—more weapons—I don't know—

MAJOR: I'm going to attack with what I've got! [*He turns away, calling.*] Sergeant, I'm transferring three men to the crypt area—

Quatermass stumbles away, past Judith and Briscoe as if hardly seeing them. He almost blunders into the Permanent Official.

PERMANENT OFFICIAL: Quatermass—what does this mean?

QUATERMASS: I think it's going to happen.

PERMANENT OFFICIAL: They can't stop it?

QUATERMASS: There's only the smallest chance now.

PERMANENT OFFICIAL: You must be mistaken! We've faced emergencies before—we can improvise, adapt, in the shortest possible time! We did it in

war and—

QUATERMASS: We've got no time at all.

He leaves the man staring after him. A few yards away Sir Vernon is slumped on a sandbag. Fullalove is there too and comes hurrying forward.

FULLALOVE: Paterson?

QUATERMASS: It killed him. It's spread everywhere.

SIR VERNON: Horrible . . . horrible . . . ! [*He buries his face in his hands.*]

FULLALOVE: Then we're for it?

QUATERMASS: Yes.

FULLALOVE: No use running?

QUATERMASS: It's as safe here as anywhere.

FULLALOVE: We're going to die . . . like the men in the rocket . . .

QUATERMASS: They're not dead. If only they were! They're the essential part of it—completely assimilated, body and mind.

SIR VERNON: Don't talk about it!

FULLALOVE: Why not? It makes it . . . a bit less terrible. That there are three human creatures already . . . impressed into the service of the enemy.

QUATERMASS [*as if something has struck him*]: The essential part of it . . . !

SIR VERNON [*pulling himself to his feet*]: Got to get away . . . get away . . . !

He staggers blindly off into the darkness. Quatermass looks across towards the doorway, where three abestos-suited figures are moving clumsily off towards their new position in the crypt, guided by the Sergeant. The Major is hurrying from position to position, giving last-moment instructions.

QUATERMASS: Waste of time . . .

FULLALOVE [*shivers*]: And there's not much to waste.

QUATERMASS: Fullalove—why did we do it? An idea in a few men's minds—the greed to do a new thing just because it was new—

FULLALOVE: This is the way the world ends . . . hardly even a whimper. Just like a missed appointment. No time for courage or sacrifice, nothing grand like that. Not even for a proper booze-up. [*He sinks down on the sandbag vacated by Sir Vernon, a stout young man with the shudders.*] I'm trying to grasp it. I can't. Just think of it as a story I won't be able to write . . . what a story! How poor Fifi would have enjoyed these bones. Sorry . . . an old joke in bad taste. It's hard to keep up . . . such a small amount of courage.

But Quatermass has gone. He is walking slowly back towards the Abbey door. Cut to him as he reaches the emplacement. There is a kind of half-formed determination in his face.

SERGEANT: Keep clear, sir, will you!

QUATERMASS: Just a last check-up.

SERGEANT: Well, make it quick.

Quatermass moves past the emplacement, where the nose of the flame-gun is aimed at the interior of the Abbey. He goes inside.

Cut back to Fullalove, who looks up as Briscoe hurries Judith through shot.

BRISCOE: Fullalove—get under cover!

FULLALOVE: What's the use—

BRISCOE: You may get burnt out here! Where's Quatermass? [*As Fullalove points towards the Abbey door, he frowns.*] What's he doing there! They're getting ready to fire! [*He hesitates.*] Get round the corner, both of you. Fullalove—take care of her—

He runs across to the emplacement, shouting.

BRISCOE: Sergeant—did he go inside?

SERGEANT: Said something about a check-up.

BRISCOE: You should have stopped him!

SERGEANT: If it had been anybody else—

BRISCOE [*pushes past the nose of the flame-gun*]: I can't see him. [*He shouts.*] Bernard! Bernard!

Cut to the scene outside. Judith pulls herself from Fullalove's attempt to hold her back, and runs after Briscoe. At the same time the Major comes hurrying across.

MAJOR: What the devil's this? Who went in there?

BRISCOE: Quatermass.

MAJOR: Is he raving mad? And he knows we're ready to fire!

BRISCOE [*shouts*]: Bernard! Where are you—it's nearly time! Come back! [*Turns.*] I'll see if I can find him—

JUDITH [*holds him by the arm*]: No!

BRISCOE [*suddenly quiet*]: There he is . . .

MAJOR: Where?

BRISCOE: Right in the middle of . . . the thing.

Cut to the interior of the Abbey. Quatermass can be seen only momentarily as vast glistening surfaces shift, blocking and unblocking the view. Huge trunklike forms sway quivering towards him, and tufted tentacles writhe. He is moving with great caution. Fear and amazement in his face. And the fronds and tendrils part, to close in behind him again.

From the direction of the doorway, Briscoe's voice can be heard calling slowly and distinctly:

Bernard, get away from there while you can. Don't move suddenly. Walk deliberately—back to us.

Cut back to the Abbey doorway, as Briscoe turns to the others.

BRISCOE: Didn't seem to hear me.

JUDITH: It'll kill him—he must know that!

MAJOR: He's out of his mind. [*He joins Briscoe in the doorway and calls.*] Quatermass! Come back! You're right in the line of fire! Quatermass, d'you hear me? [*He turns to Briscoe angrily.*] Well, you've both said we mustn't delay.

BRISCOE: That's right. [*Shouts.*] Bernard!

MAJOR: Am I to send men in there to drag him out?

BRISCOE: No—the commotion—they'd all be killed—

MAJOR: All right, we're firing as arranged! [*Turns.*] Sergeant—

BRISCOE [*staring through the binoculars*]: Wait!

JUDITH: What's he doing?

BRISCOE: Standing there, looking up . . . No, he can't be! [*After a moment.*] I saw his lips move, I'm sure. He's talking . . .

Cut to Quatermass. He has moved further in. Behind him, something can be seen of the memorials of Poets' Corner, now almost totally hidden by massive sections of the Thing. This part of the Abbey is like dense jungle—columns, shapeless with ponderous growths, huge boles dependent from high above, matted fronds—but all actively alive, throbbing, twisting, rustling. His eyes go fearfully from point to point as if expecting an attack at any moment.

QUATERMASS [*after a moment*]: I am here . . . Quatermass. [*More loudly.*] This is Quatermass.

A pause. A tendril dips towards his face, and he draws away. From the doorway both Briscoe and the Major are calling again, appealing and ordering. He glances back towards them, then looks up.

QUATERMASS: I am here alone.

The rustling increases.

QUATERMASS: Am I? Am I alone?

The rustling grows even louder. Leathery plate-like surfaces throb. Little fronds swing in towards him, as if probing.

QUATERMASS: You *do* know.

The rustling fades. The movement of the Thing lessens. Briscoe is yelling again in a final appeal, but Quatermass holds up a hand to silence him.

QUATERMASS [*quietly*]: Carroon . . . [*He looks about for any response.*] Reichenheim . . . Charles Greene.

The Thing stirs again. The fronds come weaving and Quatermass braces himself for their attack.

QUATERMASS: I am talking to you . . .

Cut to the Abbey doorway, where the Sergeant is scrambling from the flame-thrower emplacement.

SERGEANT: Let me go after him, sir—it was my fault—letting him through—

MAJOR: Get back to your position—

JUDITH: Quiet! [*She is looking through the binoculars.*] Gordon—he did! He used their names!

BRISCOE: What does he think he can possibly—! [*He turns to the Major.*] Hold everything for a moment, will you?

MAJOR: How can I? By your own advice—

BRISCOE: Till we see what he's trying to do!

Judith turns to Briscoe excitedly.

JUDITH: Suppose that what happened in the rocket wasn't quite as total as we thought—

BRISCOE: Just look at it!

JUDITH: Remember—remember Victor—in the early stages. When he seemed to be fighting to say things to us—to warn us!

BRISCOE: Muddled things with half a meaning—

JUDITH: But they *were* said!

Briscoe looks at her sharply. He takes the binoculars and trains them across the interior again.

Cut to a dense thicket of stems knotted with fungoid tufts, swaying round the shaft of a marble column. Quatermass is crouched against the column. He is breathing more quickly, his expression is more concentrated. When he speaks it is in an almost hypnotic tone, quiet and slow at first, growing gradually harder and more compelling.

QUATERMASS: I am not to be killed. That must not be done. Charles Greene . . . Ludwig Reichenheim . . . Victor Carroon . . . I am speaking to you now. There is . . . something else here . . . but I am appealing to *you.* I want you to remember. When you were in the rocket . . . at the farthest point from Earth. Remember!

Cut back to the group at the door. Judith catches Briscoe's arm.

JUDITH: The sound record of the flight!

BRISCOE: What about it?

JUDITH: When we used it to try and restore his memory—the effect it had! I made them stop it because he—[*Briscoe turns quickly.*] It's still in the wagon!

Briscoe scrambles out past the emplacement. Cut as he almost collides with Lomax.

LOMAX: You're the last. I've got a car waiting—

BRISCOE: Never mind that. Is our wagon still there?

LOMAX: I think so, but—

Briscoe goes running off into the darkness. Lomax turns to the emplacement. The Major looks at his watch again, then pulls the binoculars out of Judith's hands, and trains them.

Cut to one of the spore-zones. Darkly translucent membranes enclose clumps of spores, all trembling. The thin casing crackles tautly as the surface below it beats, like skin about to split.

Pan down to close shot of Quatermass. He remains quite still, only his eyes moving. His voice is little more than a whisper.

QUATERMASS: You *are* able to understand. Not to respond . . . yet . . . but to understand. Charles Greene . . . Charles, you *must* remember.

The rustling grows louder and he raises his voice.

QUATERMASS: We worked together for achievement. This is the time, Charles . . . this will be the achievement. [*Pause.*] Ludwig Reichenheim, this is no longer the unexpected. When the conditions are known, action can be taken. [*Pause.*] And Victor . . . remember now, in the rocket, you had heard something you did not recognize . . . something it was easy to ignore . . . or to fear . . .

Cut to the emplacement, as Briscoe comes quickly into shot with the recorder and sets it down on the sandbags, turning it so that its speaker faces into the Abbey.

JUDITH: He's still talking there . . .

Briscoe winds back the bulky wire spool for several turns, to a marked point near the end.

MAJOR: Briscoe, I don't know what you're trying to do! Those spore patches are ripe—I can see that myself—

Briscoe throws the switch and at maximum volume, the voice of Ludwig Reichenheim booms across the Abbey.

I think about another twenty-seven hours—right, Victor?

And Carroon's voice answers:

About that—till we find out if they can bring us down. Nice long wait!

Cut to Quatermass, as he takes in this change in the situation. But he makes no signal to those at the door, no movement at all.

QUATERMASS: Carroon . . . your voice!

Now the recording sends Greene's voice echoing through the building:

Don't think about it, that's the best way. The earth's almost ahead now—look, monitor two—

QUATERMASS: Charles Greene!

And Reichenheim's again:

Nearly a million miles away . . .

QUATERMASS: Reichenheim—now remember! This is where you heard it! [*The faint intrusive sound comes again on the record.*] There!

As if in agreement, Carroon's voice cries out:

There it is again!

And Greene:

Helmets on—routine precaution.

And Reichenheim:

It's only what we heard before—see, it doesn't affect the instruments.

QUATERMASS: But now . . . Reichenheim . . . you know.

The motion of the Thing all round is changing, throbbing to a new rhythm. Tendrils group and close on him, drawing back at the moment when it seems they must smother him. And from the loudspeaker the three voices go on, puzzled and anxious, of the men checking their instruments, and finding no explanation there.

QUATERMASS [*quickly*]: You thought only of the mechanical defects—you were afraid of accident—of meteor damage—loss of air pressure! *You—were—afraid!* And then it came!

The wailing from the recorder grows louder, shriller, blurring the voices of the crew.

Carroon's voice cries:

It's inside—in here with us! But there's nothing to see!

QUATERMASS: You can feel it again—the attack! Greene . . . Reichenheim . . . Carroon!

Carroon's voice cries again from the record:

What can we do?

And Reichenheim's:

Try to fight against it! Oh God, it's tearing me apart! [*Weakly.*] Fight it . . .

QUATERMASS [*exerting his whole will, eyes closed.*] You must! You must!

Greene's recorded voice echoes thinly:

Save me—save me—

QUATERMASS: Charles! Save yourself!

Reichenheim's terrified voice cries out in German. And Carroon's, in painful incoherence—shuddering with unspeakable cold.

QUATERMASS: You are not to submit! You're fighting this thing—resisting it—*now!* It shall not overcome a second time! You—must—be—free!

The shrilling sound screams to its climax, battering at the senses. Fronds are lashing wildly, the whole substance of the Thing in turmoil.

Cut to the emplacement as Judith glances down at the recorder and screams out:

JUDITH: The record's run out. That noise—it's the Thing itself!

The Abbey is shaking with the sound, which vibrates like a powerful, unendurable physical force, veering, swooping.

MAJOR: It's gone mad—he's set it off! Get back, all of you! Sergeant—[*He grabs the walkie-talkie and orders.*] All positions, on target—[*Briscoe suddenly grabs at the instrument.*] What are you doing!

BRISCOE [*manages to yell into it*]: All positions, hold your fire!

MAJOR: We'll all be killed—

Cut to where only part of the Thing, in violent motion, can be seen. Then it divides—and Quatermass is still there, his eyes closed tightly.

QUATERMASS [*through the screeching*]: You will overcome this evil. Without you it cannot exist upon the earth . . . it can only know by means of your knowledge . . . understand through your understanding. It can only exist through your submission. Victor Carroon . . . Ludwig Reichenheim . . . Charles Greene . . . you are resisting this thing. Now go further . . . go further! With all your power and mine joined to yours . . . you must dissever from it . . . send it out of earthly existence! You . . . as men . . . must die! Greene! Reichenheim! Carroon!

The screeching rises almost to the limit of audibility, and all of the Thing that can be seen settles into a steady rhythmic beating, as if moving to attack. Quatermass's eyes stay tightly shut. Sweat is pouring down his face. Suddenly the shrill note drops, broadens, loses its shattering concentration. It roars out into a 'mighty rushing wind'. Quatermass shudders as if in the grip of icy cold. The sound drops lower and lower in pitch . . . and slowly dies away.

Every part of the Thing is completely still. Quatermass opens his eyes and turns only then, not daring to move yet. A long pause. He raises a hand slowly towards an inert tendril a foot or so before his face . . . and touches it. There is no reaction. He closes his hand round it. It breaks off with a dry crack. He drops it, and it rustles lightly down. He glances at the spore-case near his head. The membranous walls have withered unopened. Slowly, he gets to his feet. Like falling leaves, tiny fragments of the Thing start to drift down.

Cut to the emplacement, where the others are watching in tense silence. Briscoe lowers the binoculars.

BRISCOE [*shaken*]: I think . . . it's dead.

A moment's silence. Judith bursts into long, tearing sobs of relief. Briscoe draws her to him. The Major turns to the flame-gun crew and signals them to turn it aside. He passes on the instruction through the walkie-talkie. Quatermass comes stumbling forward, his feet crunching through the drying husks of the Thing. He is clearly exhausted and seems to see no one. Reaching the emplacement he leans on it and looks out into the night sky.

Fade in final music.

Fade in caption 'THE END'.

Roll credits and fade to black.

CAST

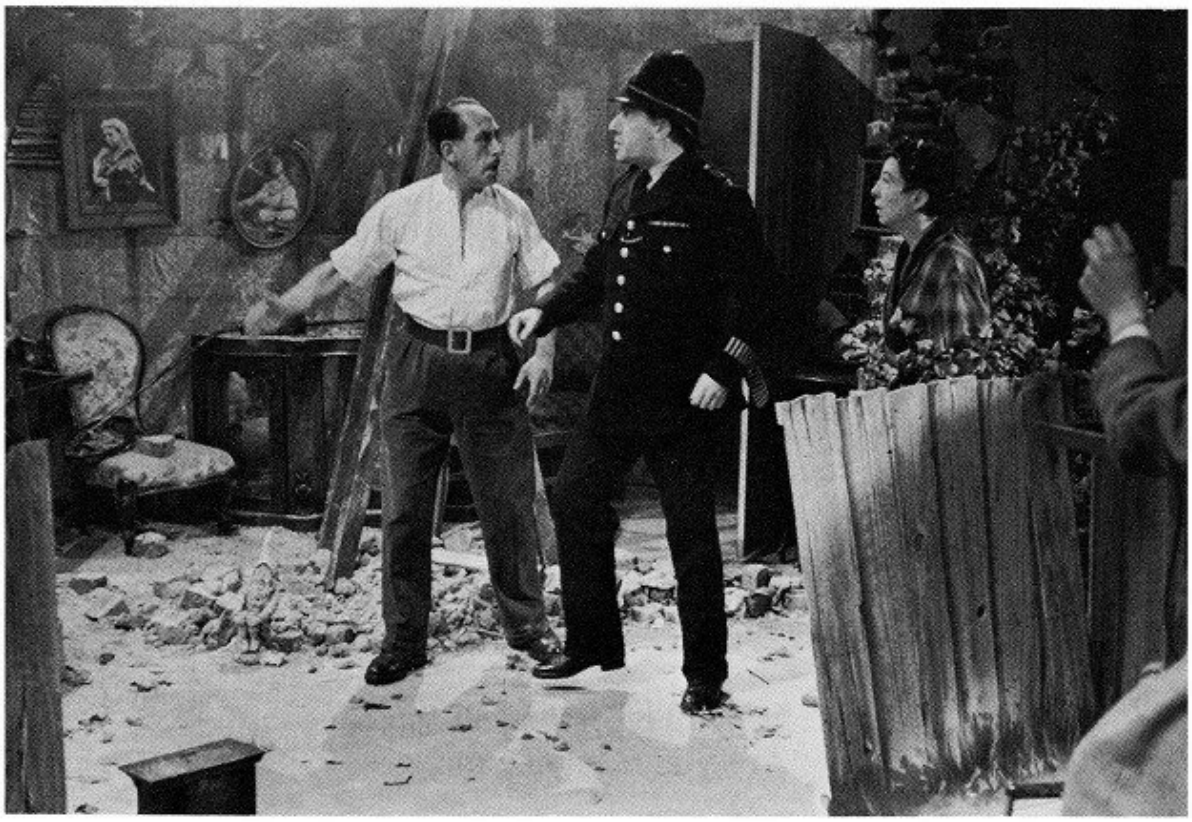
of the production by RUDOLPH CARTIER for B.B.C. Television
July–August 1953
(in order of appearance)

PROF. BERNARD QUATERMASS — Reginald Tate
JUDITH CARROON — Isabel Dean
JOHN PATERSON — Hugh Kelly
MARSH — Moray Watson
BLAKER — W. Thorp Devereux
LEN MATTHEWS — Van Boolen
MRS. MATTHEWS — Iris Ballard
POLICEMAN — Neil Wilson
MISS WILDE — Katie Johnson
NEWS EDITOR — Oliver Johnston
JAMES FULLALOVE — Paul Whitsun-Jones
FIREMAN — Colyn Davies
1ST REPORTER — Patrick Westwood
2ND REPORTER — Dominic le Foe
POLICE INSPECTOR, WIMBLEDON — Eugene Leahy
B.B.C. NEWSREADER — Nicholas Bruce
B.B.C. INTERVIEWER — Pat McGrath
TIPSY MAN — Denis Wyndham
VICTOR CARROON — Duncan Lamont
DR. GORDON BRISCOE — John Glen
CHIEF INSPECTOR LOMAX, C.I.D. — Ian Colin
DETECTIVE-SERGEANT BEST — Frank Hawkins
DR. LUDWIG REICHENHEIM — Christopher Rhodes
CHARLES GREENE — Peter Bathurst
LOUISA GREENE — Enid Lindsay
HOSPITAL SISTER — Stella Richman
AMERICAN JOURNALIST — Phil Vickers
INDIAN JOURNALIST — Edward David
WALTERS (SQUARE FACE) — Lewis Wilson
RAMSAY — Jack Rodney
A BOY — Anthony Green
'SPACE LIEUTENANT' — Keith Herrington
'SPACE GIRL' — Pauline Johnson
CINEMAGOER — Janet Joye
USHERETTE — Bernadette Milnes
CINEMA MANAGER — Lee Fox
CHEMIST — Richard Cuthbert
JANET — Christie Humphrey
TED — John Stone
PARK KEEPER — Frank Atkinson
POLICE SUPERINTENDENT — Reginald Hearne
DRUNK — Wilfred Brambell
TV INTERVIEWER — Neil Arden
TV PRODUCER — Tony van Bridge
TV ASSISTANT — Josephine Crombie
SIR VERNON DODDS — John Kidd
MAN IN BOWLER HAT — Arnold Diamond
POLICEMAN — Kenneth Midwood
MAJOR — Andrew Laurence

PERMANENT OFFICIAL — Keith Pyott

Sets designed by Richard R. Greenough and Stewart Marshall

'Those three men are there - in the front stage'

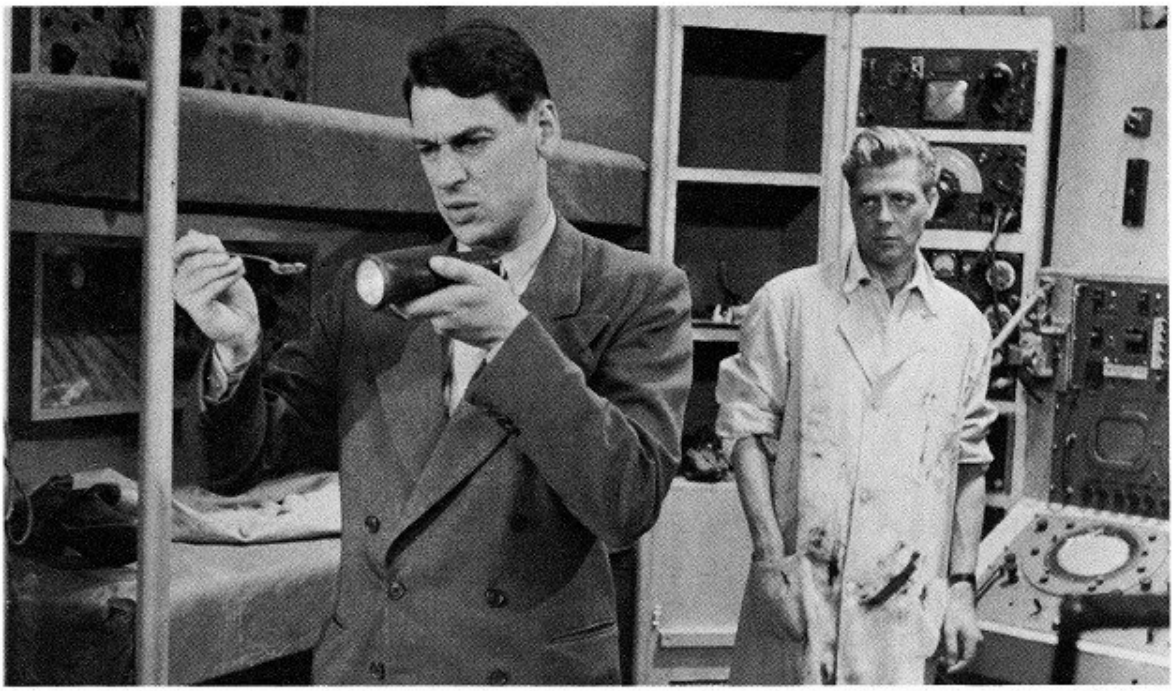


'It's one o' them *things* - they finally dropped one'

'Hello ... hello! This is Marsh speaking ...
Are you receiving me?'

'Victor, where are the others? What happened?'

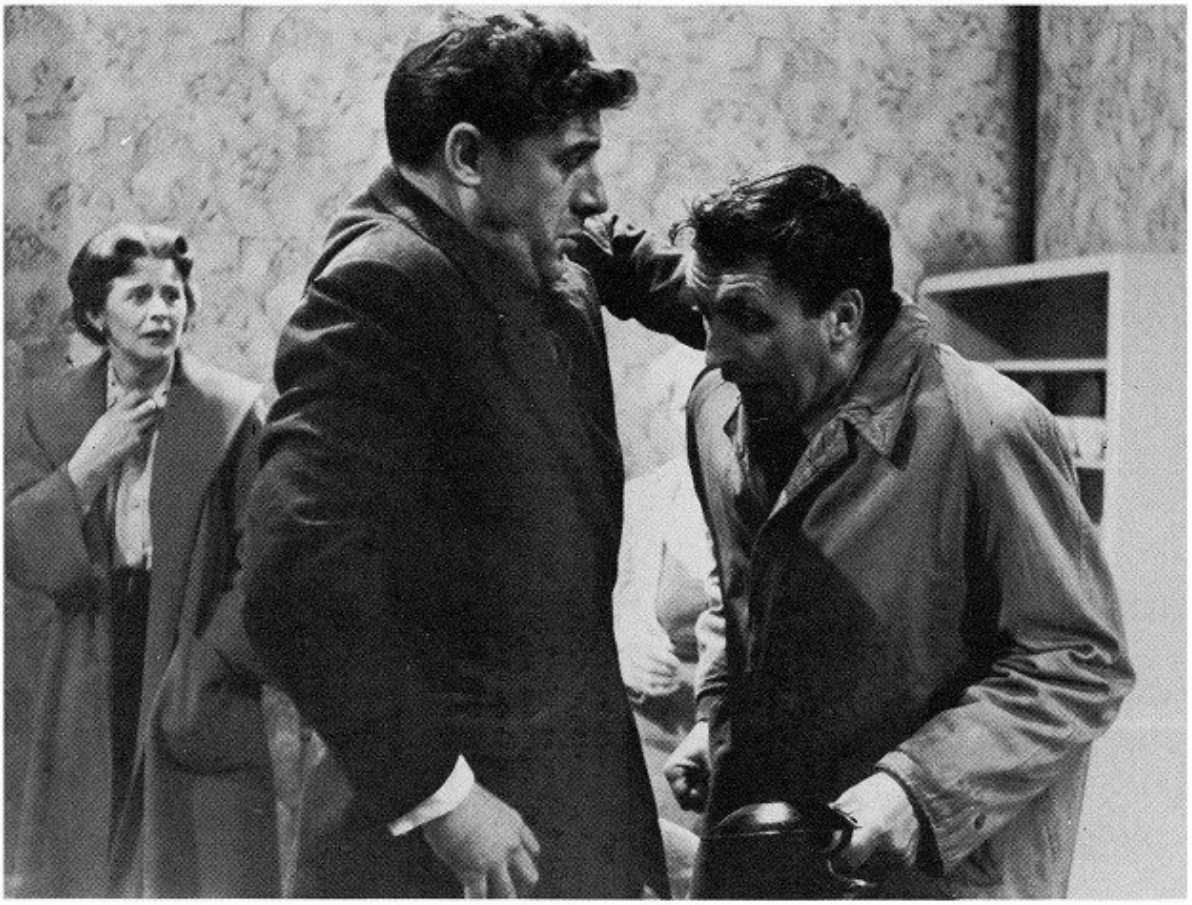
'Hurt? ... There was no hurt ...'



'That stuff's everywhere'

'D'you think it could be my cactus that's upsetting him?'

'Was it an ordinary cactus?'

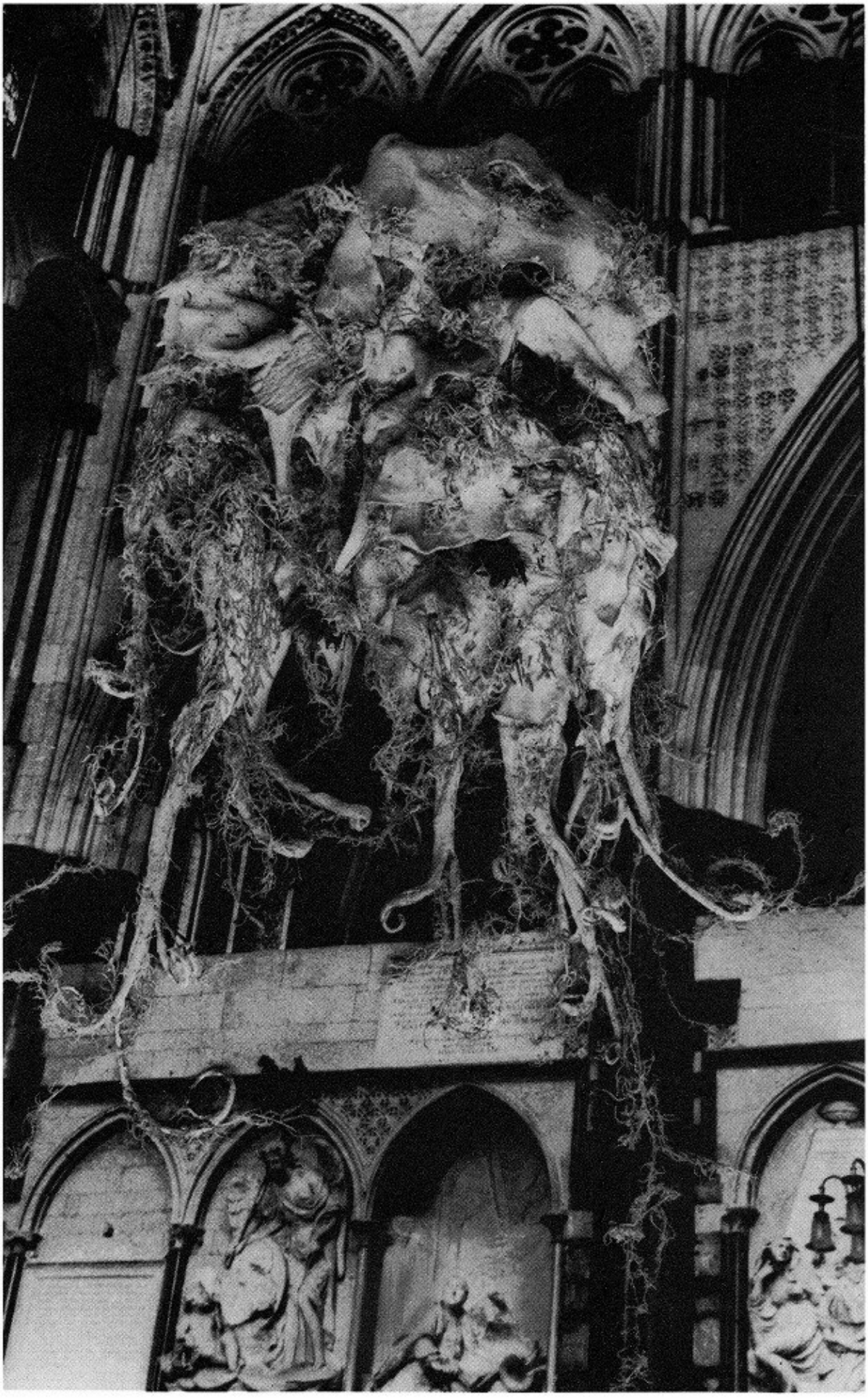


'Don't touch him!'

'Think they'll get him away tonight?'

'You see something over there? In the water - just by the island?'

On the island



The Thing in Westminster Abbey