

## The Thing From Mars



*No one knew the terrible thing that was heading toward Earth.*

- Preview:**
1. Read the name of the story.
  2. Look at the picture.
  3. Read the sentence under the picture.
  4. Read the first two paragraphs of the story.
  5. Then answer the following question.

You learned from your preview that the author and his friend Ogilvy noticed a bright flame on Mars for

- a. three nights.
- b. four nights.
- c. ten nights.
- d. six nights.

*Turn to the Comprehension Check on page 10 for the right answer.*

**Now read the story.**

Read to find out what falls to Earth from the sky.

# The Thing From Mars

No one would have believed in the last years of the 1800's, that someone was watching us. Surely, we on Earth did not know it. We did not even believe there was life on Mars. From far away, the Martians were watching us and making their plans.

It was six years ago that the war came upon us. One night my friend Ogilvy and I noticed a bright flame on Mars. Many others saw it, too. The next night there was another flame, and the next night another. Each night for ten nights we saw the same strange kind of flame. Nobody knew what it was. We did not know the terrible thing that was heading toward us through the darkness of space. It was already on its way, and it was getting nearer all the time.

One night I went for a walk with my wife. As we looked at the sky, I pointed out Mars to her. Many people were watching it and wondering what the flames might be. But we felt safe and had no thought of war.

Then came the night of the first falling flame. It was seen early in the morning, a line of green fire across the sky. I was writing near my window, yet I did not see this strange thing that came to Earth from space.

Ogilvy had seen the flame

and thought it was a meteorite. He got up early with the idea of finding it. Find it he did, in a deep hole it had made when it landed. The grass near it was on fire, and blue smoke climbed toward the sky.

The Thing itself was very large. Ogilvy could see only part of it, but he was surprised at how large it was. He was also surprised to see that it was long and round, like a giant tree trunk. He had never seen a meteorite like this before.

Then he saw that the top of the Thing was beginning to move. He heard a strange sound. The end was turning like the top of a bottle. Something inside was opening the top!

"Good heavens!" said Ogilvy. "There's someone in it, trying to escape!" With a sudden flash, he got the idea that the Thing had something to do with the flame on Mars.

Wild with excitement, Ogilvy ran toward town to tell what he had found. At a little before nine that morning, I heard from my newspaper boy about the "men from Mars." I was startled and lost no time in getting to the scene.

I found a crowd of people around the hole in which the Thing lay. The top had stopped turning. I went

closer to it and saw that the color was not like any on Earth. I felt sure that the Thing had come from Mars, but I did not think there was any living thing inside. After a while, as nothing seemed to be happening, I went home.

The newspaper that afternoon said this:

## A MESSAGE

### RECEIVED FROM MARS

Later I returned to the scene to find some men in the hole with the Thing. A bit of smoke still came from the grass. One of the men called, "Keep back!" The top of the Thing was turning again.

Then the top fell upon the ground with a ringing sound. I think everyone imagined we would see a man, or something more or less like a man. But what appeared was a round gray thing about as big as a bear. It had a kind of open mouth, like a V, with many long arms waving around it. It was the most terrible and frightening thing I had ever seen.

When another one began to climb out, I turned and ran madly. But then I stopped. Hiding in some bushes, I waited to see what would happen next.

# The Thing From Mars

## COMPREHENSION CHECK

Choose the best answer.

1. This story takes place in the last years of the  
 a. 1800's.  
 b. 1700's.  
 c. 1600's.  
 d. 1500's.
2. No one on Earth  
 a. saw the flames on Mars.  
 b. ever looked up at the sky.  
 c. believed in Mars.  
 d. believed there was life on Mars.
3. The first falling flame was seen  
 a. in the early evening.  
 b. in the early morning.  
 c. late at night.  
 d. at dinner time.
4. When the first flame came to Earth  
 a. it made a lot of noise.  
 b. it landed quietly.  
 c. it made a deep hole in the ground.  
 d. it made a soft landing.
5. Ogilvy thought the flame that landed  
 a. was a meteorite.  
 b. was an airplane.  
 c. was a machine from space.  
 d. was a burning tree branch.
6. When Ogilvy saw the top of the Thing opening up,  
 a. he ran home to tell his wife.  
 b. he ran home to tell his mother.  
 c. he ran back to town to tell everyone.  
 d. he left the country.
7. The newspaper story  
 a. sent many curious people to the crash scene.  
 b. caused many people to leave town.  
 c. made everyone laugh.  
 d. was believed by no one.
8. The things that came climbing out of the craft were  
 a. friendly looking.  
 b. very frightening.  
 c. very small.  
 d. nice to look at.
9. Another name for this story could be  
 a. "A Strange Kind of Dream."  
 b. "Our Friends From Mars."  
 c. "The Martians Have Landed."  
 d. "Flames in the Sky."
10. This story is mainly about  
 a. other beings that have come to Earth from space.  
 b. a good newspaper story.  
 c. flames falling from the sky.  
 d. life on Mars.

**Preview Answer:**

c. ten nights.

Check your answers with the key on page 67.

This page may be reproduced for classroom use.