

Chapter Four: The Cylinder Opens

The end of the cylinder was being screwed out from within. Nearly two feet of shining screw projected. Somebody blundered against me, and I narrowly missed being thrown onto the top of the screw. I turned, and as I did so the screw must have come out, for the lid of the cylinder fell upon the gravel with a ringing concussion.

I think everyone expected to see a man emerge - possibly something a little unlike us terrestrial men, but in all essentials a man. I know I did. But, looking, I presently saw something stirring within the shadow: greyish billowy movements, one above another, and then two luminous disks--like eyes. Then something resembling a little grey snake, about the thickness of a walking stick, coiled up out of the writhing middle, and wriggled in the air towards me--and then another. 5 10

A sudden chill came over me. There was a loud shriek from a woman behind. I half turned, keeping my eyes fixed upon the cylinder still, from which other tentacles were now projecting, and began pushing my way back from the edge of the pit. I saw astonishment giving place to horror on the faces of the people about me. I heard inarticulate exclamations on all sides. There was a general movement backwards. I found myself alone, and saw the people on the other side of the pit running off, Stent among them. I looked again at the cylinder, and uncontrollable terror gripped me. I stood petrified and staring. 15

A big greyish rounded bulk, the size, perhaps, of a bear, was rising slowly and painfully out of the cylinder. As it bulged up and caught the light, it glistened like wet leather. Two large dark-coloured eyes were regarding me steadfastly. The mass that framed them, the head of the thing, was rounded, and had, one might say, a face. There was a mouth under the eyes, the lipless brim of which quivered and panted, and dropped saliva. The whole creature heaved and pulsated convulsively. A lank tentacular appendage gripped the edge of the cylinder, another swayed in the air. 20 25

Those who have never seen a living Martian can scarcely imagine the strange horror of its appearance. The peculiar V-shaped mouth with its pointed upper lip, the absence of brow ridges, the absence of a chin beneath the wedgelike lower lip, the incessant quivering of this mouth, the Gorgon groups of tentacles, the tumultuous breathing of the lungs in a strange atmosphere, the evident heaviness and painfulness of movement due to the greater gravitational energy of the earth--above all, the extraordinary intensity of the immense eyes--were at once vital, intense, inhuman, crippled and monstrous. There was something fungoid in the oily brown skin, something in the clumsy deliberation of the tedious movements unspeakably nasty. Even at this first encounter, this first glimpse, I was overcome with disgust and dread. 30 35

Suddenly the monster vanished. It had toppled over the brim of the cylinder and fallen into the pit, with a thud like the fall of a great mass of leather. I heard it give a peculiar thick cry, and forthwith another of these creatures appeared darkly in the deep shadow of the aperture.

I turned and, running madly, made for the first group of trees, perhaps a hundred yards away; but I ran slantingly and stumbling, for I could not avert my face from these things. 40

Q1

Read again the first part of the source, lines 1 to 10.

List **four** things from this part of the text about the cylinder and its contents.

A

B

C

D

[4 marks]

Q2 [AO2 - language]

Look in detail at this extract from lines 11 to 18 of the source:

A sudden chill came over me. There was a loud shriek from a woman behind. I half turned, keeping my eyes fixed upon the cylinder still, from which other tentacles were now projecting, and began pushing my way back from the edge of the pit. I saw astonishment giving place to horror on the faces of the people about me. I heard inarticulate exclamations on all sides. There was a general movement backwards. I found myself alone, and saw the people on the other side of the pit running off, Stent among them. I looked again at the cylinder, and uncontrollable terror gripped me. I stood petrified and staring.

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How does the writer use language here to describe how the narrator feels?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

[8 marks]

Q3

You now need to think about the **whole** of the **source**.

This text is from the opening of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the extract develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks]

Q4 [AO4 - evaluate with reference]

Focus this part of your answer on the second half of the source, **from line 19 to the end**.

A student, having read this section of the text said: "The writer brings the horror of the creature's appearance to life for the reader. It is as if you are there with the narrator."

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you should:

- write about your own impressions of the creature
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with quotations from the text.

[20 marks]

- AO1
 - Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas.
 - Select and synthesise evidence from different texts.
- AO2
 - Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.
- AO3
 - Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts.
- AO4
 - Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.