

Dead London

Jeff Wayne

There were a dozen dead bodies in the Euston road, their outlines softened by the black dust. All was still, houses locked and empty, shops closed, but looters had helped themselves to wine and food, and outside a jewellers some gold chains and a watch were scattered on the pavement.

Martian: Ulla!

I stopped, staring towards the sound. It seemed as if that mighty desert of houses had found a voice for its fear and solitude.

Martian: Ulla!

The desolating cry worked upon my mind. The wailing took possession of me. I was intensely weary, footsore, hungry and thirsty. Why was I wandering alone in this city of the dead? Why was I alive when London was lying in state in its black shroud? I felt intolerably lonely, drifting from street to empty street, drawn inexorably towards that cry.

Martian: Ulla!

I saw, over the trees on Primrose Hill, the fighting machine from which the howling came. I crossed Regent's Canal. There stood a second machine, upright, but as still as the first.

Martian: Ulla!

Abruptly, the sound ceased. Suddenly the desolation, the solitude, became unendurable. While that voice sounded London still seemed alive. Now suddenly there was a change, the passing of something, and all that remained was this gaunt quiet.

I looked up, and saw a third machine. It was erect and motionless, like the others. An insane resolve possessed me: I would give my life to the Martians, here and now.

I marched recklessly towards the titan and saw that a multitude of black birds were circling and clustering about the hood. I began running along the road. I felt no fear, only a wild, trembling exultation as I ran up the hill towards the monster. Out of the hood hung red shreds, at which the hungry birds now pecked and tore.

I scrambled up to the crest of Primrose hill, the Martian's camp was below me. A mighty space it was, and scattered about it, in their overturned machines, were the Martians, slain after all.

l man's devices had failed by the humblest creatures on the earth: bacteria. Minute, invisible, bacteria.

Directly the Invaders arrived and drank and fed, our microscopic allies attacked them. From that moment - they were doomed!