



Worksheet: 1.4 The Cylinder Opens

When I returned to the common the sun was setting. Scattered groups were hurrying from the direction of Woking, and one or two persons were returning. The crowd about the pit had increased, and stood out black against the lemon yellow of the sky—a couple of hundred people, perhaps. There were raised voices, and some sort of struggle appeared to be going on about the pit.

As I drew nearer I heard Stent's voice:

“Keep back! Keep back!”

A boy came running towards me.

“It's a-movin',” he said to me as he passed; “a-screwin' and a-screwin' out. I don't like it. I'm a-goin' 'ome, I am.”

I went on to the crowd. There were really, I should think, two or three hundred people elbowing and jostling one another, the one or two ladies there being by no means the least active.

“He's fallen in the pit!” cried some one.

“Keep back!” said several.

The crowd swayed a little, and I elbowed my way through. Everyone seemed greatly excited. I heard a peculiar humming sound from the pit.

“I say!” said Ogilvy; “help keep these idiots back. We don't know what's in the confounded thing, you know!”

I saw a young man, a shop assistant in Woking I believe he was, standing on the cylinder and trying to scramble out of the hole again. The crowd had pushed him in.

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 pitched 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 sound. I stuck my elbow into the person behind me, and turned my head towards the Thing again.

Quick Check: True or false

1. The narrator returns to find a peaceful scene.
2. The crowd is silent.
3. A boy is scared by what he has seen
4. Two ladies have fallen in the pit..
5. Ogilvy is trying to unscrew the cylinder.
6. The narrator falls in the pit.

Writing/Comprehension (max 50 words)

1. Describe the changes that the narrator sees when he returns to the common. How does the narrator convey the change in atmosphere?