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The Massacre Of Mankind: Sequel To The War Of The Worlds



Synopsis

A sequel to the H.G. Wells classic THE WAR OF THE WORLDS, brilliantly realized by award-winning SF author and Wells expert Stephen Baxter. It has been 14 years since the Martians invaded England. The world has moved on, always watching the skies but content that we know how to defeat the Martian menace. Machinery looted from the abandoned capsules and war-machines has led to technological leaps forward. The Martians are vulnerable to earth germs. The Army is prepared. So when the signs of launches on Mars are seen, there seems little reason to worry. Unless you listen to one man, Walter Jenkins, the narrator of Wells' book. He is sure that the Martians have learned, adapted, understood their defeat. He is right. Thrust into the chaos of a new invasion, a journalist - sister-in-law to Walter Jenkins - must survive, escape and report on the war. The Massacre of Mankind has begun.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've been wanting to check out Stephen Baxter, and I'm a huge fan of "The War of the Worlds", so this should be a perfect place to start, right? Well, I've heard enough good things about Baxter that I'll try again, but this book won't probably inspire too many new fans. And it's a shame. There's

certainly a lot to admire about this book. The tone fits the period very well, and there's a huge amount of intelligence and creativity on display in the alternate histories and new technologies and the imagined social consequences of living after the initial, and during a new, Martian invasion. Really cool stuff! But...it really just falls apart as a compelling narrative. The allusions to the original story can be clever - and it seems like all of the characters from the first book, no matter how trivial, are present in this sequel or at least discussed in some detail. But after a while, the repeated allusions and explicit discussion of the first book - which exists within *this* book as a non-fiction bestselling account of the First Martian War - starts to feel like "fan fic", especially parts that amount to defenses of the literary qualities of original story. Also, some of the interesting subtext of the first book - the role reversal of British Imperialists being outgunned by a technologically superior invading force - is rather hamfistedly on the surface here. The pacing of this is all over the place, and just as the narrative momentum starts to build, Baxter frustratingly loses the thread, and starts introducing a multitude of new settings and new characters while over 85% of the way through the story, just as the reader is revved up for the climax! I think I understand that the author is trying to show how far and wide the consequences of the ongoing war extend across the globe. But, far from introducing suspense, it's enormously tedious to be briefly introduced to wave after wave of new characters that have played no part in the story so far and play little-to-no role in the remainder of the story! And the climax, when it comes, is...underwhelming. I'm not sure I buy the immediate effects of the plans that are undertaken, or that our protagonist could have predicted them. Still, there are a lot of things along the way to like - I especially like how Baxter sticks with the sometimes outdated astronomical theories of Wells's day, and extends them to interesting effect. Enough that I'll give it a middle-of-the-road 3-star rating.

I liked this book well enough to finish it, but I don't know if I can recommend it to everyone. It is written in the form of a narrative by a journalist who is associated with the original narrator of the first war of the worlds. The author has a chance to match the pace and style of the original English writer HG Wells. This is usually a plus, but it also means that occasionally the novel bogs down in its pace. There are points, particularly in the first couple of chapters, where you need to exercise some patience as a reader. I like the action scenes during the battles with the Martians. I thought that these were very good, and also matched the style (slightly updated) of the original. Additionally, the author did not toss in a bunch of new science that we have at our access that was not accessible to HG Wells. This means that much of the action depends on astrophysics that we know to be incorrect today. In my opinion, this is OK. Your mileage may vary. In the course of the novel, there

are various low spots that are requiring more patience. I believe this is to help reflect the main characters needing to have patience as well. However, it was a little slow for me in spots. To me, the big letdown is the last part of the book. The conclusion is in my opinion a bit weak. Overall, if you are a big HG Wells fan and what is the sequel to the war of the worlds, but this is a great book for you. If you are looking for a separate summer read I don't want to go back and revisit earlier works, then you may want to move on.

This novel was commissioned by the HG Wells Society to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the release of *War of the Worlds*. This novel, authorized by the H. G. Wells estate, very closely approximates the tone and language of the original novel. Utilizing some of the characters featured in *The War of the Worlds*, from narrator Walter Jenkins, this time in a secondary role, to Julie herself, the story has a much vaster sweep. America is also invaded and though their reaction is somewhat different from the British, the plight and resistance of those on the other side of the pond is no less spectacular. Alternating between Julie's first person narrative and those of her ex-husband, her American friend, and others involved in the fight, a complete picture of the devastation of the world, as well as the plight of individuals is depicted. Ranging from outright heroism to apathy, from self-sacrifice to collaboration, all facets of the human condition during wartime are revealed. Though some readers may consider some paragraphs ultra-verbose in their exposition, even somewhat tedious because of the lack of dialogue, author Baxter has closely approximated the literary tone of the first novel. The only criticism is the use of a deus ex machina, and not human ingenuity, as a savior. Reading the original story and then following it with its sequel would be an extended but entertaining prospect. *The War of the Worlds* is a classic of early science fiction. *The Massacre of Mankind* will no doubt soon find itself alongside that timeless tome on bookshelves. This novel was supplied by the publisher and no remuneration was involved in the writing of this review. This excerpt is taken from the full-length review written for the New York Journal of Books Online.

Stephen Baxter has created a treat for all sci-fi fans --- a sequel to H.G. Wells' *WAR OF THE WORLDS*. *THE MASSACRE OF MANKIND*, as the title states, predicts that our one-time alien invaders have found a way to return to earth to terrorize us again. Their prior visit was thwarted by the alien's inability to exist in our atmosphere. They have found a way past that and now may be unstoppable. The story is set 14 years after the first story and the Martian space crafts have launched from their planet and making a bee-line for ours. Intense, well-written and a lot of fun!

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