



## CHAPTER - II

### THE KRAKEN WAKES



## CHAPTER - I I

## THE KRAKEN WAKES

Like any other christine writer Wyndham also had a very keen interest in the search for the unknown. And he had a belief in the other world.

Wyndham was not interested in portraying effective characters like Charles Dickens. But like Dickens he liked to deal with the social problems. And so we don't see any evolution in his characters and they are static throughout the novel.

He did not write a very serious story which had a hero, heroine and a villian, but he wrote about one particular social problem, where the ordinary pople struggled for survival in that horrible condition and overcame the problem.

Actually most of Wyndham's work was regarded as science fiction. But The Kraken wakes is mainly a serious fiction which has some elements of science fiction.

This particular name 'kraken' is taken from Tennyson's poem and Wyndham calls this dangerous Cilia as kraken, which had been happily living under water and one fine morning it suddenly woke up causing a lot of tension for the people both

on the water and on the land. Thus he has given the title The Kraken wakes.

Wyndham got this idea from the condition between the two world wars. The growth of mass production methods in the industry was like a threat to the craftsmanship. According to him the growth of mass production was the cilia and the craftsmanship was the mankind, which was suffering to find a proper solution for the sever problem they were experiencing.

Michael Watson - Mike, a Radio scriptwriter and his wife Phyllis were working for the E.B.C. English Broadcasting Company. They had gone for their honeymoon and they were on the ship. Once when they were just relaxing on the ship they saw something shining very brightly. They took it to be the planet Mars, then it goes on growing bigger and bigger. At the same time they noticed another four of such planets and all the five planets fall into the sea one after the other. Then these two start wondering what it could have been.

According to George Guffy,

the perspective of most science fiction is cosmic rather than anthropocentric, focussing more steadily on the stars than on human beings.<sup>1</sup>

Mike was appointed by the government to investigate the problem. And all these experiences narrated here are all

Wyndham's experiences, which Mike narrates in the form of this novel.

In the beginning the problem was not all that serious but gradually it reaches the peak when the things i.e. the cilia starts coming out of sea and attacking people.

According to the narrator's information cilia is a cigar shaped cylinder, disc ovoids and inevitable saucer. It had tentacles and was amoeba like. It was lighter coloured than the metal and a kind of white semi opaque substance and it glittered viciously under the floods.

But none of the people had seen this horrible creature and they did not even know the proper name for that thing, and so they all called it thing. They called it by various other names like Cilia, fireballs, Bathics. But later on Phyllis discovers the particular name for it "millibrachite tentacular coelonterates".

No one - one can describe these creatures - if creatures they are; no one, so far as he knows, has ever seen them.

To us here in the sunlight, these creatures of the darkness and the depths are still anonymously and amorphously, "those things down there"<sup>2</sup>

He actually saw those creatures in Phase two when they attack Phyllis. He also sees how it grows and then attacks a human being.

It used to grow as one watched it. It could expand about two feet and six in diameter and sometimes it used to swell upto five feet in diameter. And when it stopped growing, it was like a huge; repulsive bladder. a tremor and a shake passed through it. It shuddered like a jelley, got detached and wobbled into two air like an uncertain overblown bubble.

Mike and Phyllis were watching it very shocked and flabbergasted.

In a lurching, ameobic way it ascended for ten feet or so. There it vacileated, steadying into a more stable sphere. Then suddenly, something happened to it. It did not exactly explode. Nor was there any sound. Latter, it seemed to split open, as if it has been burst into bloom by a vast number of white cilie which rayed out in all directions. (pp. 139, 140).

Just then four or five of the cilia like long white white whiplashes dropped on the floor. Next minute they began to contract and withdraw. Unfortunately one had fallen on Phyllis forearm and was pulling her towards the window. And soon Mike rescued her from that horrible creature.

The Cilia was a peculiar thing because whenever it was shot it used to change into a big white puff. If a red dot was seen then it meant that the fireball had descended.

The fireballs were seen occasionally and none of them seemed to be descending on the land but only in the areas of deep water. Their appearance caused chaos i.e. the people used to scream, shout and run away from that place.

No one knew exactly how many of them were present in the sea and where exactly they lived. But Phyllis said :

'... there must be bloody thousand of the bastard a - crawling' all over the bloody sea bottom.' (P.172)

Mike was investigating the problem with full devotion. He tried to take the help of those people on the ship as they all had witnessed that incident. But each and every person had a different version of the story, which again led him to confusion.

The psychology of every person differs and thus their way of looking at a particular thing also differed.

Later on he discussed with his captain, who gave him an altogether different picture, he said it could have been an aircraft of some different kind.

But then the question arises as to what could have been done if they had sensed the danger in advance, because -

Recognition and prevention don't necessarily go hand in hand. (P.16)

There was no guarantee that the moment they recognise the problem they could prevent it. Even when the danger of atomic fission was recognized immediate action could not be taken.

The reaction to this problem was shown in altogether different way by different countries.

The Swedes announced, with careful lack of particularizing that they would take action against any similar violation of their sky, whoever might be the violator. The British papers suggested that a certain great power was zealous enough in guarding its own frontiers to justify others in taking similar measures to protect theirs. American journals said that the way to deal with any Russian aircraft over U.S. territory was to shoot first. The Kremalian apparently slept. (P.22)

Mike was carrying on the work of investigation with full devotion. But at the same time we did not neglect his family life and he was never away from his wife unnecessarily. He had lots of love and consideration for his wife. He praised and appreciated his wife for her good scripts.

'Why not praise one's wife?' )P.39)

Mike had lot of regards for his wife because he said it was only because he had married her, he had had the sense of

joining such a good company. He was always used to having her around him.

He showed his sociableness but he never interfered with her plan of campaign. And the rest of the time he watched and admired her. According to him, her moves were very unexpected, like a chess player and she rarely lost the game.

This couple shared a lot of love for each other and had a good mutual understanding between each other. Very rarely they fought and mostly it was Phyllis who picked up a quarrel and she even went to the extent of saying -

I often wonder why I married you. (P.133)

As they were working happily, Phyllis gave birth to their son Williams, but unfortunately eighteen months later he died. That incidence was a wild blow to that couple which disturbed them completely. Both had lost interest in their work. But Mike got over the shock and helped his wife to start writing again, which shows concern for each other.

Mike was very brave and optimistic and he knew how to console his wife in a right way.

Darling, If I happen to mention that as a process autumn follows summer, it does not follow that I am all for getting a ladder and pulling the leaves of the trees. (P.81)



Here he means, every night is followed by a day. And all the things should happen naturally and they should not be forced to happen. He says gradually everything will be alright.

But one notices that basically Phyllis is a weak person. When there was so much disturbances all around she lost hope and she did not stay patiently with her husband who was busy with his work. But she became panicky and she wanted to run away from that terrible place. As she says

'All my life I have been surrounded by things I'd rather not know too much about, so I have come to feel the truth made naked without purpose is really a wanton. (P.88)

If one gets to know too much about a particular thing, then he gets to know the naked truth and thus realises the filth hidden in it.

Phyllis was not ready to face the problem but she wanted to run away from it. She flatly told Mike that she cannot become tough and she cannot bear it any longer. This shows how weak man is and though he had strength to endure anything, it had a certain limit. Here we see the escapist tendency.

She further said she did not want to stay in that place.

"I can't stay in this cemetery any longer.

I can't. (P.229).

She called it a cemetery because there was no hope of people surviving and soon the whole city was going to look like a cemetery. With so much of suffering she had lost hope in life and had become very pessimistic.

She kept on asking Mike what had they done to deserve, so bad days. Human mentality to prove oneself faultless and very same.

She further threatens Mike that she'll go mad.

'I can't stand it here any more, Mike. I shall go mad if I have to sit here doing nothing any longer while a great city dies by inches all round me. It'd be different in Cornwall, anywhere in the country. I'd rather have to work night and day to keep alive than just go on like this. I think I'd rather die trying to get away than face another winter like last. (P.230).

She wanted to run away from the problem. She wanted to work only for herself and only if she was to gain anything out of it, she was ready to die in the efforts of getting away, but she was not ready to sit there waiting for death. Death though is the ultimate end, everybody is scared of death.

But unlike Phyllis, Mike was brave and very firm. In spite of so many problems he was optimistic and patient, and was very quietly investigating and trying to solve the problem. And at

the same time he was also consoling his impatient and troubled wife.

When they both saw cilia for the first time, Phyllis acted in a very usual way, she pressed her back on the door and she tried hard to stop Mike from going out of the room. But Mike tried to convince her that his going out was important, even then she does not listen, which makes Mike wild and he shouts.

'But, Phyl - it's the job - It's what we've  
here for (P.135)

What Mike meant was that they had gone there for the work and they should do the work and not sit inside as they had to go back and give a report.

He grabbed the keys and rushed out, Phyllis very angrily followed him shouting :

'It's what Freddy said - the point of our coming at all is that we should be able to go back and tell them about it. (P.136).

Her counter argument to his argument was she agreed they had come there for work. But she said they should not take any risk and they should be in a state to go back and give the report.

The whole team was doing the investigation, finding facts but they sometimes felt terribly bored. So many times they wanted to leave the problem there and run away or the problem should come to an end on its own. And they would be there only

to sympathies with the creatures underwater.

I should be a lot happier if I were to hear that the things down there had simply drowned themselves ... (P.85).

Mike was so much occupied with the thought of the problem that even in his sleep he used to speak about the problem, he dreamt and thought about it in such a way, as though it was his personal problem. He was like the modern man who had a problem in himself and thus was fighting with himself.

Mike knew that something was wrong with him because he saw a very peculiar dream.

... that it was more often Phyllis than Muriel that I saw being dragged along by her hair, and more often her than an unknown man that I saw being pulled to pieces. (P.165).

This shows the intensity of his suffering and the whole hearted involvement in the work, which haunted him even in his sleep and had led him to such a psychological problem.

Phyllis also saw these deadly creatures in her dream they looked as though they were -

... lying down in those deep dark valleys, and sometimes they look like monstrous squids or huge slugs, other times as if they were clouds of luminous cells hanging there in rocky chasm. (P.230)

For Phyllis there was a confusion regarding the appearance of these things, cilia. But she does not underestimate them by passing a very casual statements, but she called them intelligible forces. One thing we notice that in Wyndham's fictions according to him his trouble creators are intelligible forces.

... but whatever it is, they are all the time, thinking and plotting, what they can do to finish us right off so that everything will be theirs. (P.230)

According to Phyllis these horrible creatures never sat down their idle, they had been always plotting and thinking, how to destroy the mankind, because if the mankind was wiped out they would be the rulers of everything. So she does not think of their enemy as some weak force.

Soon Phyllis realised that she had not found any solution for her problem. So she said that they should catch hold of one of those creatures examine it and then invent an effective weapon to destroy it.

She finally became successful in her dream. When she woke up she had to face the same old problem. Then she consoled herself that, if she had not destroyed them in the real life, atleast she had done so in her dream.

Since the problem was underwater the oceanographer was the right person to consult. So Dr. Malet the the oceanographer was introduced by Wyndham who was trying his best to save the mankind.

Dr. Malet was a man with a large frame. He had a tanned and high forehead. His head was like a dome which had a hedge of wiry grey hair around. He had bright eyes and a prominent Roman nose. He had a large mouth and a cleft chin with all these heavy things he stooped a bit. Wyndham had a very beautiful way of describing his character and his novels were mainly male dominant.

Dr. Malet is a person who comes here to save the mankind. He was a very confident and hardworking person. He had a lot of concern for the people around and a lot of devotion for the work he had taken up. But there was no over involvement in his work like Mike. He was shrewd and then he knew how to keep distance with his work. That point was very clear when Phyllis asked him.

'Tell me this, Dr. Malet she asked. Do you think it is serious - I mean is it a thing that worries you?

He smiled at her, 'it doesn't keep me awake at night, if that's what you mean. (P.71)

He was a very cool, calm, collected kind of person.

According to him their first duty was to go to people and tell them that the danger was not understandable. They were doing their job and so they should tell the people to stop panicking in that silly manner, and to help them do to the necessary investigation.

He said it was true that they i.e. the danger came unpredictably and from unexpected direction, but even then they would find some solution for it. To calm them down he said that it was something like finding a proper opposition to a new kind of weapon.

The condition of the sea kept on varying from time to time. But usually there used to be temporary disturbances on the sea .

The bottom of the sea was described as dark and cold place.

it is a eerie place, an awful place, death's own place, for the floor, the rockshelves, everything but the perpendicular faces of the cliffs is drifted deep with the mortal remains of untold billions millions of minute creatures. 'Nothing' you would say, 'absolutely nothing could live here. This is beyond the reach of life: the ethermost pit.(P.84)

When nothing could live there and grow, that meant that the place was barren and infertile to produce anything.

But then there was a counter argument to this by Bocker,

"...- is this, the most secret bomb in the world, not barren, after all?"(P.84)

According to him this is a secret momb, where unknown things can be born and thus it is not barren. He further argued

"Is a new form of life-and not only of life, but of intelligent life-about to emerge from there depths, from thin slime, and struggle up through the miles of water to the sunlight, perhaps to challenge the supremacy of man himself? Million of years ago our own ancestors crawled from the sea on to the land-"(P.84)

Millions of years ago our ancestors came from the sea onto the land, which proved its power to create. Here again there is a reference to the origin of man.

These sea bottoms had haunted Phyllis' dream also. She saw the great wide plain, it always rained teeths, scales, bits of bones, shells, millions and million tiny plankton creatures down there. This show Wyndham's fertile imagination as he could make Phyllis dream things she had never seen before.

When the danger was sensed in the sea all the vessels were strictly warned not to cross the deep water. They were specially advised to keep away from the areas where the depth was 2000 fathoms.

Bombs were laid in the sea wherever there was danger. So each and every ship on the sea was using every bit of power it had in order to get away from that particular area, before the bombs went off.

When the bombs were being dropped in the sea, the water was getting poisoned, so the fishes started migrating to safer place. Totally all the life on the land, on the sea and in the sea was disturbed.



The novel begins on the sea and ends on the sea. When all of them got rid of the problem, they all celebrate their victory and they cannot help thinking about the problem and how a safe sea them.

'Here's to empty Deeps and free sea again(P.240)

Commencing the people that the investigation was going on had become one more problem each and every person thought in his own way, and they were all under the impression that nothing was being done, so they demanded explanation.

"If this thing is so serious, why had nothing been done, and why have we been hoodwinked ?" well, why?(P.92)

The people of the west were expected to have reacted in a very favourable way. But the reaction of the more emotional and excitable people was less predictable.

Though the appointed team for investigation was carrying on it's work. The common people also investigating in their own way and trying to find a solution, for that problem. They used to give several suggestions as a solution to the problem. One suggestion was to poison the ocean in order to put an end to the problem. But then another person said:

'Well, damn it, the sea's big enough. It'll get over it. Anyway you could use H.E. too'. he suggested.  
(P.95)

Taking the size of the sea into consideration it was difficult, but they could have used H.E. (high explosives). But again.

... indeed there was an awful lot of it for games of blind man's buff. (p.95).

If the problem was really down in the deeps they thought why did not they go over to it and smashed it up.

But someone in the crowd spoke and made it clear that going down in the deeps was not all that easy, it was a very dangerous work, because those who had gone down investigating had lost their ships. The yanks had lost their ships, the Japanese had lost ships, but the Russians had not lost any ships. So the question arises, why had not Russians lost any ships. Suddenly a voice came from the crowd, the Russians did not lose any ships because they do not have many ships. Wyndham's use of irony is reflected here when he makes his character say Russians do not have many ships.

But at last they console each other by saying that the investigation was going on well.

The struggle for survival was so severe that the people forgot what was humanity. After the snow had melted there had been floods everywhere which had resulted in shortage of food. So those territories were strictly guarded to avoid

any person sneaking in. And if any person was caught sneaking in then he used to get a very horrible treatments because that person was counted as another month to be fed. *m*

Wyndham's science fiction elements here was the under water cilia which was described in a very horrible way. Its way of attacking and its appearance was very unusual. Our blood curdles when we think of such a tiny creature attacking such a big animal i.e. the human being. A small creature had scared the life out of the mankind, and had made them restless.

Another science fiction element is seen in Mars planet, which never grows, but is seen here as though it is growing bigger and bigger which was very unusual. The growing of the planet was regarded as an omen by the people of 1950s. And further on the planets were seen dropping down into the sea.

Wyndham presented an imaginary character here called St Elmo and his fire. He had made two of his minor characters discuss St Elmo and his fire religiously in their conversation with reference to the Bible.

He also invented an imaginary company called E.B.C., English Broadcasting Company, where Micheal Watson and Phyllis were working. Wyndham was not a realist, so we see a lot of fantastic ideas in his fiction. */?*

Wyndham had a very effective way of comparing things, he compared Phyllis appearance to an angel except for her confused behaviour.

'She looked rather like a reverse angel barring a road, except that angels are assumed to wear respectable cotton night dresses, not nylon.  
(P.135)

Actually she was a contrast to an angel as she was preventing Mike from doing his job, where as an angel would have persuaded an ordinary man to do his job.

Here Wyndham speaks ironically about Phyllis' appearance and her dress.

Wyndham ridiculed those people who had blind faith in prints and he hated superstition. In phase two the incidence when Phyllis was attacked by the horrible creatures, all the people around were so scared that they were screaming and shouting and running away from that place in order to save their lives from those dreadful creatures.

Just then the door of the church had opened and a priest in a black robe came out. And suddenly all the helpless people ran and knelt before him and he had stretched out his hands as though he was the one who could save them from the danger.


Wyndham feels that each and every person should learn to face the problem and solve it on his own. He should not wait for any other person like a priest to come and create some miracle.

While they were all discussing about the horrible incidence Mr. Bocher said :

'You know I think that if I believe in God I should now be a very frightened man. Luckily however, I am rather old fashioned. So I don't thank God'. 'why'? she said. 'I mean, why would you be frightened?'

Because I should be a superstitious men - and superstitious men are always frightened when they are out of their depth with something new. (P.148)

He felt that probably God was planning to teach them a lesson and so He was saying :

"H'm, You think you're so clever, little gods yourselves with all your atom-splitting and microne conquering (P.148). 

God felt that the human beings thought that they rules the world as well as the heaven. But even then there were a lot of things which the human beings did not know about life and nature. So He wanted to clear up all their confusion. Wyndham feels that the human beings are very egoistic.

Bocher further said that though now the human beings

think they are the Lords of the earth, before them there were the great variety of dinosaurs which were the Lords of the earth. When those huge enormous creatures failed to survive, it was highly impossible for the human beings to survive, because compared to the earlier lords i.e. the dinosaurs the human beings were just one basket full.

Wyndham then discusses the idea of death. All of them i.e. his character were discussing about the sinking of the big ship Yatshirsho, and they were all quite shocked about the death of seven hundred people who were drowned in the sea. Some died in the road accidents and a lot would be killed that particular day. But talking about the death, human being believes in.

As a race', I said, 'we have allowed ourselves to become accustomed to the idea that the proper way to die is in bed, at a ripe age. It is a delusion. The normal end for all creatures comes suddenly. (P.78)

Though death is inevitable, it is an ultimate end to ones life, One has to face it ~~when~~ that time comes and one has no choice regarding the type of death he wants. But majority of the human beings accept the idea of death but in the old age only.

Wyndham expected the people to learn to think about the problem around and find a proper solution on their own. He did not like to see them sitting quietly without reacting.

'That is a word so little to our taste that many think it a virtue to claim that they never admit it.(P.197)

It is blind stupidity not to admit it, blindness can never be called a virtue, actually it is a weakness which is marked by a false optimism.

Actually one should never ~~take~~ things for granted, one has to think and question and never say that everything will be alright on its own.

But inspite of all these things William says that for over five years the best and the most inventive brains had tried hard to find an appropriate solution for this problem. The question was how to fight the enemy but they had failed and had no hopes of having the sea in peace again. A man can be disheartened for sometime but finally he gets over it. Thus all the people there go on struggling to locate the deep root of the problem and destroy it.

All his characters have been seen thoroughly slogging for survival, that is what he exactly wanted to present before us. He has added a sad song here and there to show the intensity of the sorrow of their suffering.

He has divided this novel into three phases. Though these phases are not properly connected, they are effective. His style of narration is so clear that he is very successful in giving a very clear picture of the incidents he narrated.