FABER has published children's books since 1929. T.S. Eliot's Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats and Ted Hughes' The Iron Man were amongst the first. Our catalogue at the time said that 'it is by reading such books that children learn the difference between the shoddy and the genuine'. We still believe in the power of reading to transform children's lives.

CHRIS MOULD'S WAR OF THE WORLDS

A GRAPHIC NOVEL

INSPIRED BY THE H.G. Wells CLASSIC

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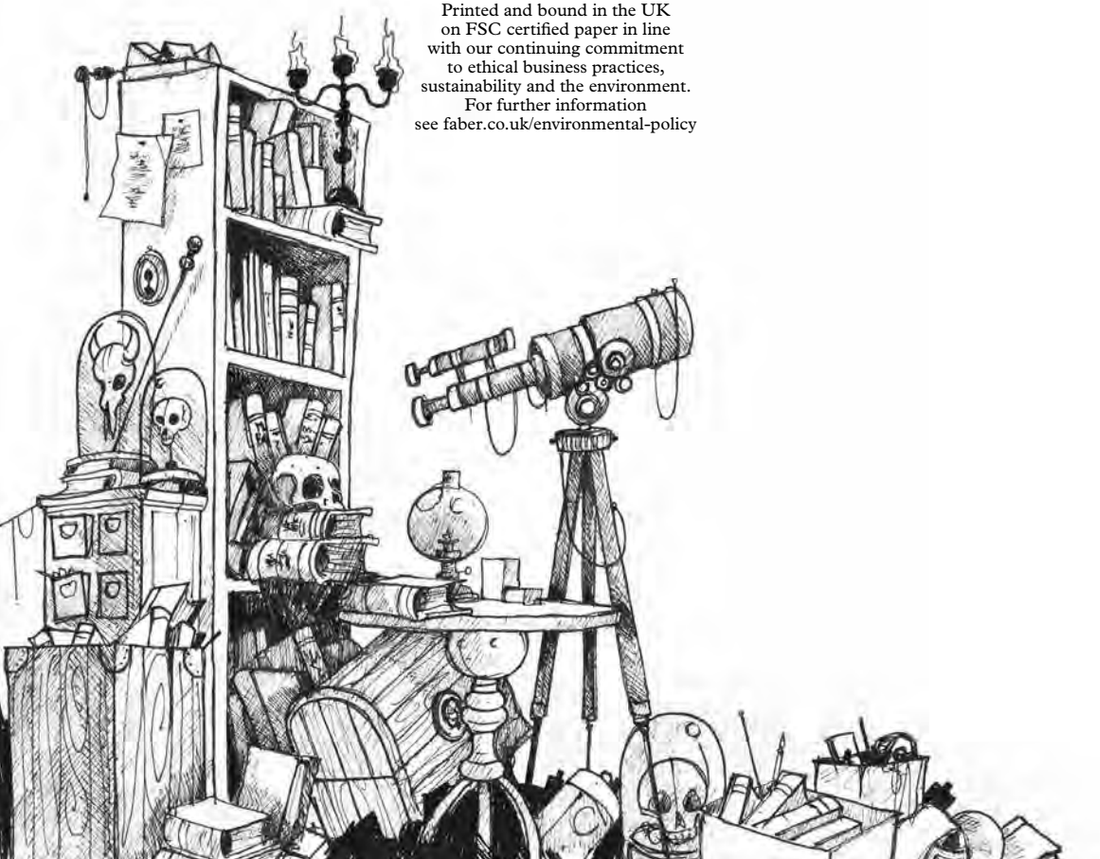
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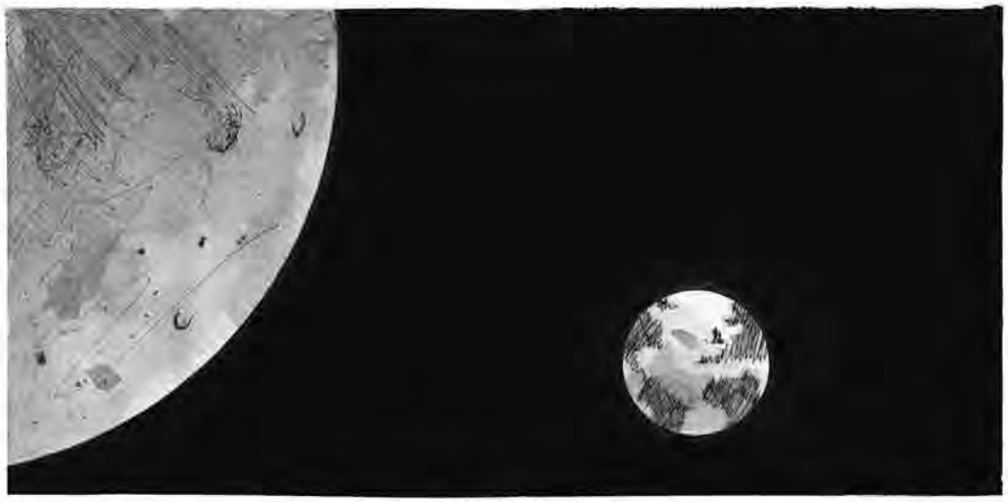
For Alfie, with love C.M.



CHRIS MOULD has illustrated the gamut, from picture books and young fiction to theatre posters and satirical cartoons. As well as writing his own fiction and illustrating Ted Hughes' *The Iron Man* to much critical success, he has teamed up with author Matt Haig for the bestselling *A Boy Called Christmas* series. He lives in Yorkshire with his wife, has two grown-up daughters, and when he's not drawing and writing, you'll find him . . . actually, he's never not drawing or writing.

H.G. WELLS (1866–1946) was an English novelist, journalist, sociologist and historian best known as the 'grandfather of science fiction' for the impact of his novels including *The Time Machine*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *The War of the Worlds*. *The War of the Worlds* is known for being one of the first novels to depict a war between aliens and humans. Wells was at one time a science teacher and used his ability to explain scientific concepts simply in his work.













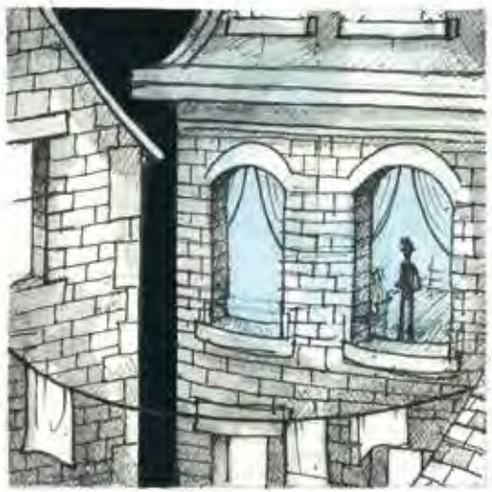




















Chapter One

Where We Began

FOR AS LONG AS I STARE INTO THE BEYOND, the world seems to keep on turning, as if nothing ever happened. We are, all of us, still here. It feels safe for now. But when darkness comes, I look anxiously into the night until sleep overtakes me. It has needed so much time to return to what we once knew and we are always aware of the chance that they might come again.

My name is Leon. Let me tell you my story. I must take you back to the mid 1890s, just ahead of a long dry summer that would be sure to test our tolerance to the heat.

Until they came, I worked long hours as a clerk in the city hall. The days dragged themselves through the week. More often than not, my imagination would set me adrift. I had always made attempts to escape reality – in the books

I read, in the stories I imagined, and in the drawings I made. Surely we were not the only ones who existed within this vast galaxy that engulfed us? How could it be that ours was the only world from which life had emerged? There was so much around us that remained unexplored. And so it was often that I found solace in my own search for what may be. I drew endlessly and dug deep into my mind for what might exist somewhere else. Strange places and beings. Landscapes unknown to us.



I had met Anya at the laboratory at Ottershaw, where she worked, uncovering the secrets to disease and infection. I was fascinated by her studies under the microscope and the way she made sense of the things I knew I could never understand. And above her workspace was the observatory that held the answer to the worlds beyond ours.

In her free time Anya helped her good friends Orla and Ivan to look after the children at the orphanage. She would play with them and teach them, and they grew close.

We spent all our time together, except when work took her far north on long trips where she would give lectures on her findings. I missed her greatly, as did the children. Anya would always say that missing people was a good thing: 'It means that you are fortunate enough to have those who mean so much to you.'

When time allowed, I would join her and the children at the orphanage, and in good weather we'd parade to the park. We packed food and games, and I drew the birds with Esme, the youngest child. On one occasion we spotted a nightingale hiding in the thickets.

'He has a beautiful song, but when he sings at night, he warns of danger,' I told Esme.

'Is that true?' she asked.

'Perhaps it is,' I said. 'I don't know for sure.'

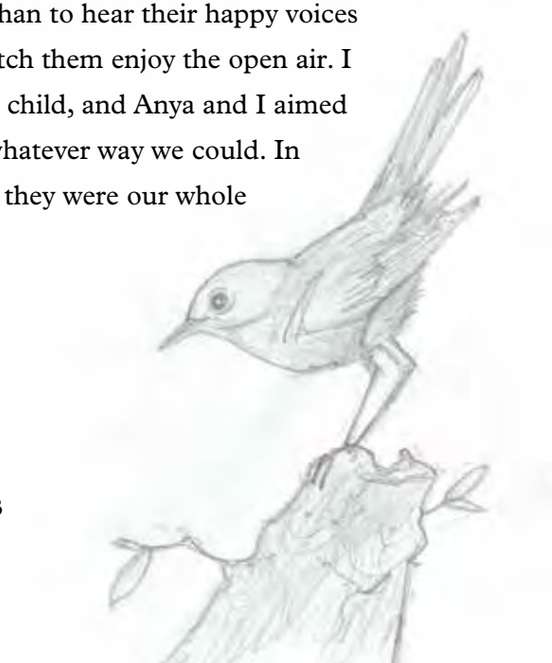
'Why don't you know?'

'I don't know everything.'

And we would watch him hop around until he spotted us and flew away.

Anya adored the children. Often, I would listen to their exchanges. How Esme would quiz her endlessly. 'Where are we going now?' 'Who will be there?' 'How long will we be?' Esme worried about most things and didn't like change in her routine. She would cling to me until the others made her play.

There was no greater sound than to hear their happy voices – and no better sight than to watch them enjoy the open air. I had never known happiness as a child, and Anya and I aimed to make life better for them in whatever way we could. In the years before it all happened, they were our whole life and we were theirs.













However, still I dreamed of other worlds and, whenever the opportunity arose, I spent hours with my head buried in elaborate maps and fantastical drawings. I obsessed over the curiosities housed in the museums and galleries of London, and I studied the works of great artists from the past. I was enthralled by the mysterious beasts and creatures that dwelled in paintings hundreds of years old.



Worlds beneath and above our own, filled with every detail imaginable. Alien landscapes marked with symbols and hidden meaning. All deemed to be works of fantasy.

Did those artists somehow know more than us? What had we yet to discover? Were they warning of things to come?



In the observatory at Ottershaw, I met an astronomer who showed me comets and shooting stars, and I saw the moon so closely that I felt as though I was standing on its very surface. Surely there was life right there, just as here?

I had yearned for so long to learn of the mysteries of other realms, of their strange lands and inhabitants.

Perhaps I had wished too hard.

