

H. G. WELLS

THE
INVISIBLE MAN
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Contents

About the Author	6
About the Book	7
FACT FILE Mary Shelley's Frankenstein	8
FACT FILE What are you looking at?	10
Characters	12
Before Reading	14
1 The Strange Man's Arrival	19
2 Mr Teddy Henfrey's First Impressions	23
3 The Thousand And One Bottles	25
4 The Burglary At The Vicarage	28
5 The Furniture That Went Mad	31
6 The Unveiling Of The Stranger	33
7 Mr Thomas Marvel	38
8 Mr Marvel's Visit To Iping	41
9 The Invisible Man Loses His Temper	43
10 The Man Who Was Running	45
11 Dr Kemp's Visitor	49
12 Certain First Principles	51
13 The House In Great Portland Street	53
14 The House In Drury Lane	59
15 The Plan That Failed	63
16 The Hunting Of The Invisible Man	66
17 The Siege Of Kemp's House	68
18 The Hunter Hunted	73
The Epilogue	78
After Reading	79
LIFE SKILLS Technology at work	90

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Herbert George Wells (or H. G. Wells) is considered, along with the French writer Jules Verne, to be the father of science fiction. He was born in Bromley, near London, in 1880, to a modest family. When he was eight, he broke his leg and was confined to bed for a long time. His father brought him books from the local library and he became a keen reader.

Due to his family's economic situation, Wells could not go to school, but he read and studied on his own. He became so proficient that a school offered him the position of student-teacher. This meant that he was able pay for his own education by teaching younger pupils. He then went to Imperial College in London to study biology, and graduated in zoology at the University of London.

His novels have been hugely popular since their publication, and some of them have become films. He invented themes that became classic in science fiction. He also predicted technological developments that became reality, like space travel. A crater on the dark side of the Moon is named after him. Some of his stories are very realistic: Orson Welles' radio adaptation of his novel *The War of the Worlds* convinced people that an invasion from Mars was really happening in New Jersey. He also wrote about social justice and human rights.

H. G. Wells died in London in 1946, probably from a heart attack.

- **confined to:** had to stay in
- **crater:** hole in a planet, moon or star made by a comet
- **human rights:** basic rights every person should have
- **invasion:** (of an army) attempt to take control of an area by force
- **keen:** (here) very interested
- **proficient:** very good at something
- **science fiction:** stories about life in the future on other planets
- **social justice:** concept that all people should have equal rights to wealth, justice, health, etc.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* says that everyone has the right to the protection of the law against interference with their privacy or attacks on their privacy. This includes their family, home, correspondence and also their reputation*.

SURVEILLANCE • SOCIETY

An old legend tells the story of a man who knew what other people were thinking. He could read other people's minds and was unhappy as a result. He was lonely because nobody knew him the way he knew everybody else. One day he met another man who could read other people's minds. They instantly hated each other.

This is a reflection on the idea that we all want someone who understands us completely, but we also need privacy*. We need to be free to choose who has information about us and what they know about us. We need people to trust us even if they don't know everything about us. We feel uncomfortable when we know people are watching us. We need some 'invisibility'. These are some of the reasons why privacy is a basic human right.

- **CCTV:** closed-circuit television; cameras in public places that film everything that happens there
- **logged:** recorded
- **personal data:** information about people and their lives
- **privacy:** space alone without other people seeing or hearing
- **reputation:** what people think about you
- **store:** keep for use in the future
- **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights** is an international document that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948. It states the basic human rights of all human beings.

SO HOW MUCH PRIVACY DO YOU HAVE TODAY?



CCTV

Every time you go into a shop, public building and many private buildings, and when you move through the streets of your town or city, you are filmed by CCTV cameras.

SOCIAL MEDIA

If you have a social media account, you probably use it to share a lot of private information about yourself: your photos, where you are, what you are thinking, who you are with, what you are doing, other people's posts, who you follow and everything you 'like' or react to. Your personal data and all these activities are recorded and sold to data analysts. They produce a secret profile that describes you. How did you set your privacy settings? Can people you don't know see your page? Who can see your data? What do they do with your data? Who can see your secret profile? Do you know what that profile says about you?

YOUR MOBILE PHONE

You are probably terrified by the thought of losing your mobile phone, because so much of your 'life' is in it. However, how private is all that life you store in your phone? Your location, every text message, every phone call, every app you use and every website you visit are logged. Do you know what happens to these logs? Do you know who can access them?

Which of these types of surveillance are acceptable to you? Why? Which of them are not? Why?

Coach
and
Horses

Mr Hall

Mrs Hall

Dr Kemp

Colonel Adye

The Invisible Man

The Invisible Man

Mr Teddy
Henfrey

Mr Bunting

Mr Jaffers

Mr Thomas
Marvel





1 THE STRANGE MAN'S ARRIVAL

1 The stranger came to Iping on the 29th of February, through a cold wind and snow storm, walking from Bramblehurst railway station with a large suitcase. He was wrapped up from head to foot, with big blue goggles, a scarf and a hat that together hid every bit of his face except the tip of his nose. There was snow on his shoulders and chest. He staggered into the Coach and Horses more dead than alive and dropped his suitcase.

'A fire,' he cried, 'Please! A room and a fire!'

He followed Mrs Hall, the landlady, into the guest sitting room. She lit the fire and went into the kitchen. She started cooking the bacon, then went back into the sitting room to lay the table. Although the fire was burning nicely, she was surprised to see that the stranger was still wrapped up.

'Can I take your hat and coat, sir?' she said, 'and give them a good dry in the kitchen?'

'No,' he said looking out of the window. 'I prefer to keep them on.'

'Very well, sir,' she said. 'In a bit the room will be warmer.'

He didn't answer. Mrs Hall laid the table quickly and left the room. When she returned, he was still standing there. She put down the eggs and bacon noisily, and said loudly, 'Your lunch is served, sir.'

'Thank you,' he said, and did not move.

• goggles:



• landlady: (here) woman who owns a pub or an inn

• staggered: walked unsteadily

• stranger: person who is not known in a particular place

• wrapped up: covered with clothes

When Mrs Hall went back, she knocked and entered without waiting for an answer. The stranger was sitting at the table and moved quickly to pick something up from the floor. She noticed his coat and hat on a chair in front of the fire. She looked at them and said, 'May I take them to dry now?'

'Leave the hat,' said her visitor, in a muffled voice. She turned and for a moment she was too surprised to speak.

He was still wearing his gloves and he was holding a white cloth over the lower part of his face. That was the reason for his muffled voice, but it was not what startled Mrs Hall. It was the fact that all of his head above his blue goggles, including his ears, was covered by a white bandage. The only visible part of his face was his pink nose. He was still wearing his scarf, and strands of thick black hair were coming out between the bandages.

She put the hat back on the chair. 'I didn't know, sir...' she began.

'Thank you,' he said.

'I'll have it dried, sir,' she said, and took his coat and left.

'The poor man has had an accident or an operation that disfigured him,' thought Mrs Hall as she put his coat in front of the kitchen fire.

MRS HALL

Why does Mrs Hall think the stranger has had an accident?

- **accident:** unexpected event that hurts someone
- **bandage:** 
- **cloth:** piece of material used for clothes 
- **disfigured:** changed his appearance in an unpleasant way
- **muffled:** unclear and quiet
- **startled:** surprised
- **strands:** long pieces

When she cleared away the stranger's lunch, he said that his luggage was at Bramblehurst station.

'Can I have it sent here?' he asked. Mrs Hall said a cart[•] could go there the next day.

'Not earlier?'

Mrs Hall saw the opportunity to find out the reason for her guest's appearance. 'It's a steep[•] road, sir,' she said. 'A cart lost control there about a year ago. Two men died. Accidents, sir, happen in a moment, don't they?'

'They do.'

'But people take a long time to get well again, don't they? My sister's son, Tom, cut his arm at work, and he was bandaged for three months. My sister had to do his bandages, and then undo them. So if you don't mind, sir, could I ask...?'

He interrupted her. 'Will you get me some matches? My pipe[•] is out.'

His rudeness[•] upset Mrs Hall. She stared[•] at him for a moment, then she went for the matches.

'Thanks,' he said, turning his back to her to look out of the window.

'He's very sensitive on the topic of accidents and bandages,' thought Mrs Hall. But his rudeness irritated her. He remained in the sitting room for the rest of the day.

THE STRANGER

What is unusual about the stranger?

Why do you think the stranger is rude?

If someone is rude to you, what do you do or say?

 Tell a partner.



- **rudeness:** way of behaving that is not polite
- **stared:** looked directly
- **steep:** (of a hill) that goes up or down very quickly

AFTER READING COMPREHENSION

1 Read the sentences and tick (✓) T (true) or F (false). Correct the false sentences.

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a Iping is an important town that attracts a lot of tourists. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b Griffin becomes part of the community in Iping. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c Griffin has a lot of money. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d It is difficult for people in Iping to trust Griffin. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e Whit Monday is a big community event in Iping. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f Mr Marvel is happy to help Griffin. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g Griffin learns that invisibility has fewer advantages than he thought. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h Griffin cannot carry anything without revealing his presence. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i Griffin wants to use his invisibility to become rich and then become visible again. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j Griffin thinks Kemp will help him because they are both scientists. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2  Work with a partner and explain the part that the following things play in the story.





3 Tick (✓) all the things that can reveal Griffin's presence when he's alive and naked.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> snow | <input type="checkbox"/> breathing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> his shadow | <input type="checkbox"/> his hair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> rain | <input type="checkbox"/> sneezing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fog | <input type="checkbox"/> dust |
| <input type="checkbox"/> his eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> undigested food in his stomach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> his strength | <input type="checkbox"/> the blood in his veins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dogs | <input type="checkbox"/> his footprints |

4  Read the text and answer the questions. Then share your answers with the class.

A calendar year is 365 days, but the Earth takes $365 \frac{1}{4}$ days to revolve around the Sun. So every four years a day is added to the calendar. The extra day, called Leap Day, is February 29th, and the year is called a Leap Year. Hundreds of years ago, the Leap Day was not recognised in British law. As the day had no legal status, people decided they were allowed break from tradition on that day so, for example, it is the day in which women can propose marriage to men. There are many myths about the Leap Year in different countries: it's considered very unlucky in some, very lucky in others, bad for farming, bad for getting married, and some people believe that more people die in a Leap Year than in other years.

- The story begins with Griffin's arrival in Iping during a snow storm on February 29th. What is Wells telling us by choosing that date?
- Are there any traditions or myths about the Leap Year in your country? If so, what are they?
- Do you know anybody who was born on February 29th? If so, when do they celebrate their birthday in non-leap years?



TECHNOLOGY

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THE LUDDITE REBELLION*

Today, the word Luddite is generally used to mean someone who is too old-fashioned to like and use technological innovations. However, the origins of the word mark the beginning of a conflict* that started with the Industrial Revolution* and continues today. The Luddites were a social movement* which started in the British Midlands in 1811. The name comes from a probably fictional story about a young worker called Ned Ludd, who smashed a textile* machine. The Luddites were skilled textile workers who, during the Industrial Revolution, found themselves unable to earn a living and feed their families. This was because industrialists and factory owners were

replacing the skilled workers with machines that could be operated by cheap unskilled workers. The result was that skilled workers became unemployed and unskilled workers worked long hours for very low pay, while the industrialists became increasingly rich. The Luddites organised protests and often smashed the machines. In fact, they weren't against the machines. They wanted better pay and skilled workers to work the machines. Their movement was so strong and so many people supported them that the army was sent to stop the rebellion. After a trial in the city of York in 1813, seventeen men were executed*.

AT WORK



THE AGE OF ROBOTS

Since then, the desire to maximise profits has encouraged the invention of technologies that speed up production and reduce the need to use people to do work.

In developed countries, some of this technological innovation has become part of a lot of people's everyday lives — most of us cannot imagine our lives without our smartphones, tablets and home computers. In other words, society has accepted these things by buying them. However, the digital revolution is also having other effects. As more and more jobs are done by robots, fewer and fewer people are needed to operate the machines. And the jobs that are taken by robots are not being replaced by other “human” jobs. In other words, there are fewer jobs in general. Now, in the twenty-first century, we are entering a new phase of automation. Driverless cars, robots and delivery drones are increasingly replacing people in the transport and distribution industries. Will workers protest against automation as they have done in the past?

Or will new technology bring more advantages than disadvantages?

Luddite

/ˈlʌdɪt/ noun [C]
a person who is opposed to new technology or ways of working

Look at your answers to Exercise 5 on page 89. Are any of the themes relevant to the Luddites' rebellion? Are any of the themes relevant to the automation of today's jobs?

- **automation:** when things are run by machines, not people
- **conflict:** fight
- **executed:** killed as a punishment
- **Industrial Revolution:** period of time when machines, steam power and factories were developed
- **maximise:** make as large as possible
- **movement:** group of people working together to make their shared ideas happen
- **rebellion:** situation when people fight authority or the normal way of doing something
- **textile:** material

H. G. WELLS

THE INVISIBLE MAN

Adapted by Donatella Velluti

“The Invisible Man is coming!”

One night, during a snow storm, a mysterious stranger staggers through the doors of a pub in a small English village, wrapped up from head to foot.

The people in the village have a lot of questions. Who is the stranger?

What is in his suitcase? Why has he come to the village?

And why won't he let anyone see his face?

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	5	B1	B1 Preliminary	5, 6

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