

**Reflections:**

*A Student Response Journal for...*

# *The Invisible Man*

*by H. G. Wells*

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## **I. The Strange Man's Arrival**

1. *The Invisible Man* was written in 1897. There are many clues in this chapter which confirm this. We see that horses are the only means of transportation, candles are used for lighting, and heating comes only from fireplaces and non-electric stoves. Suppose you were told that you would be required to live without electricity, cars, and central heating for one year. Write an article for a magazine that would describe how different your life for that year would be than what it is now. In the article, list all the things you would *not* be able to have in your life without electricity, cars, and central heating. The title of your magazine article would be "If I Were a 1900's Teenager."
2. The setting for *The Invisible Man* is England. As you can see from the dialogue, the dialect spoken differs in many ways from standard English. Mrs. Hall's dialogue on page four is a good example of this. Copy down three of Mrs. Hall's complete sentences. Below them re-write each in standard English, making sure you correct all of the spelling and grammatical errors which Mrs. Hall made.

## **II. Mr. Teddy Henfrey's First Impressions**

3. In this day and age, when clocks are very inexpensive and certainly not made by hand, this chapter's emphasis on the repair of a clock in the stranger's room may seem odd. Many modern people feel their lives are run by alarms, clock, and schedules. Imagine a situation in which you had no time restrictions. Describe one day in this type of world. What would you do? Why? How would you feel?

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4. The title of this chapter makes reference to “first impressions.” From this account, the stranger coming into Mrs. Hall’s guest house definitely did not make a good impression. Every day in our own lives we meet people for the first time. Complete the following dialogue you might have with your best friend in which you describe a person you met:

**You:** Yo, my friend. You will *not* believe the person I met today

**Friend:** Tell me.

**You:**

### **III. The Thousand and One Bottles**

5. There is some interesting vocabulary in this novel. Below is a list of words from this chapter. Copy down the list of words and beside each write whether it is an adjective, a verb, or a noun. Following that, use each in a sentence of your own that has something to do with your life.

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. infinity      | 4. incomprehensible |
| 2. dilettante    | 5. fatuities        |
| 3. indeterminate | 6. chiffonier       |

6. In this chapter, you will find examples of the stranger’s rude remarks. “Put it down on the bill,” snapped her visitor. “For God’s sake don’t worry me...” is a remark he makes to Mrs. Hall as one example. Unfortunately, even today, people are rude to one another. Relate an example of rudeness that has remained in your memory either from an experience you or someone close to you has had.

## **IV. Mr. Cuss Interviews the Stranger**

7. Because the stranger is so odd in his appearance and behavior, he does, of course, cause quite a bit of speculation among the townsfolk. He is thought to be various things, such as an Anarchist, a man on the run from the police, or even just “a harmless lunatic.” Even in our own lives, if a stranger comes among us in our school or in our neighborhood, we speculate about him or her until we know all the facts about the person. But let us reverse the situation. You and your family have just moved to another town and it is your first day at your new school. You are the stranger. Write the email you might send to your best friend from your old town telling him or her what you think the new people you have met said about you. Your email might begin:

Hi,

Well, today was The Big Day, and I thank all the stars in the heavens that it's over! I just know that everyone ...

8. For all the menace and mysteriousness in the novel *The Invisible Man*, you will notice that there are incidents of humor also. The pages of Dr. Cuss' narration to the vicar of his encounter with the stranger are really quite funny, especially about having his nose nipped. Submit an entry for a writing contest at your school. The title of the submitted piece of work is “The Funniest Thing That Ever Happened to Me.” Make sure to write in complete sentences and proofread your work for spelling errors.
9. Wells writes two paragraphs in this chapter that summarize the appearance, actions, and characteristics of the stranger quite well. Re-read those paragraphs and make a list of each of the characteristics of the stranger that H.G. Wells describes. Then, make a second list of six things about the stranger that you still do not know.

## **V. The Burglary at the Vicarage**

10. The stranger enters the vicarage at four o'clock in the morning to rob it, awakening the vicar and his wife as he does so. They hear the activity, the sneeze of the stranger, and discover the gold kept in a drawer is gone. They are astounded that they see no one, even as the back door opens and closes. Suppose you and your best friend were having a discussion about whether or not this scene was believable. Complete the following dialogue:

**Friend:** I know this is a science fiction novel, but, hey, this stealing the gold right in front of the old folks seems a little far out. I mean, wouldn't they have gone screaming out of the vicarage?

**You:** You've got to understand...

11. The vicar and his wife certainly do seem like a sweet old couple. Think about some of the couples you know over age sixty. Choose one you have a particular fondness for whether in real life or that you know of from a television program. Suppose that they are involved in a car accident and both are in the same room at the hospital. Write them a letter telling them of your hopes that they get well soon and also how much you admire them and why.

## **VI. The Furniture That Went Mad**

12. One of the previous questions dealt with humor in this novel. This chapter goes beyond the quiet humor of Dr. Cuss' tale. Here we have comic activity of a high level as the furniture in the stranger's room, seemingly of its own accord, flies around the room. Even the bedclothes take on a life of their own. This kind of humor goes by the name of slapstick comedy. There is a good deal of this kind of comedy to be found in television programs; re-runs of "The Three Stooges" is a good example. Choose one television program which has remained in your memory as containing a lot of slapstick humor. Describe the plot of the program and as many of the slapstick antics in it that you can remember.

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## *The Invisible Man*

13. As has been mentioned, *The Invisible Man* is a novel of the science fiction genre, the type of writing which combines scientific knowledge with imagination. Perhaps the most famous science fiction film of all time is “Star Wars.” Suppose you are having a conversation with your best friend about having recently seen “Star Wars” again. Your friend asks you who your favorite character in the film is. What you would answer your friend? Also include the reasons why you feel that way.

## **VII. The Unveiling of the Stranger**

14. Mrs. Hall certainly shows no fear of the stranger in this chapter. She refuses to serve him his meals, tells him she will not wait for her overdue rent, and questions where he has found the money he is in possession of. Suppose you are Mrs. Hall’s best friend who knows all about her confrontation with the stranger, and you are writing to your brother in America telling him about Mrs. Hall’s troubles. In your letter, describe Mrs. Hall as you imagine her to be and about your worry concerning the frightening stranger on her premises.
15. In this chapter, we learn of the shock Mrs. Hall experiences when the stranger shows her that he has no face. For all its horror, there is still a bit of humor in the description of what happens next in the bar. Using the action in the bar as written by H. G. Wells, write up a version of it in your own words as if it were a summary of a scene you were going to film for television sit-com.
16. The Invisible Man is full of rage. As we now see quite clearly, he is a man who has set himself apart completely from all other people. Even though he is living among normal society, he is an “outsider,” and as we are now learning, one who does not hesitate to act outside of the law. There are many examples of this type of person in our own society, though not, of course, one who has become physically invisible. Think back to examples in our society of a man (or woman) who has chosen to live outside the law. Write a description of that person, his or her deed(s), and what your opinion is of the effect on the society in which we live.