

THE INVISIBLE MAN

HG WELLS



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THE STRANGER CAME EARLY IN FEBRUARY, ONE WINTRY DAY, THROUGH A BITING WIND AND A DRIVING SNOW. OVER THE DOWN HE CAME, FROM BRAMBLEHURST RAILWAY STATION, IN THE LAST SNOWFALL OF THE YEAR.

A FIRE!

IN THE NAME OF HUMAN CHARITY! A ROOM AND A FIRE!



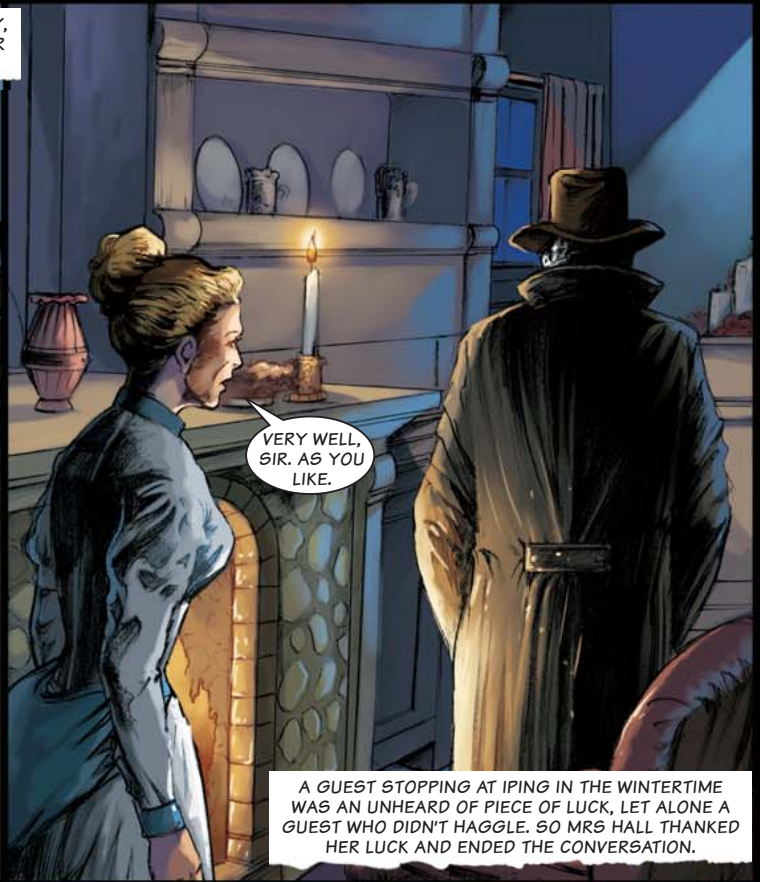
HE STAMPED AND SHOOK THE SNOW OFF HIMSELF IN THE BAR, AND FOLLOWED MRS HALL INTO HER GUEST PARLOUR TO STRIKE HIS BARGAIN. AND WITH THAT INTRODUCTION, HE TOOK UP HIS QUARTERS IN THE INN.

ALTHOUGH THE FIRE WAS BURNING BRIGHTLY, MRS HALL WAS SURPRISED TO SEE THAT HER VISITOR STILL WORE HIS HAT AND COAT.



CAN I TAKE YOUR HAT AND COAT, SIR, AND GIVE THEM A GOOD DRY IN THE KITCHEN?

I PREFER TO KEEP THEM ON.



VERY WELL, SIR. AS YOU LIKE.

A GUEST STOPPING AT IPING IN THE WINTERTIME WAS AN UNHEARD OF PIECE OF LUCK, LET ALONE A GUEST WHO DIDN'T HAGGLE. SO MRS HALL THANKED HER LUCK AND ENDED THE CONVERSATION.



IN A BIT, THE ROOM WILL BE WARMER.

HE DIDN'T RESPOND, SO MRS HALL WHISKED OUT OF THE ROOM.



SLAM

IN SPITE OF THE GUEST'S COLD BEHAVIOUR, MRS HALL PREPARED HIM A MEAL WITH HER OWN HANDS TO SHOW HERSELF WORTHY OF HER GOOD FORTUNE.



WHEN SHE RETURNED, HE WAS STILL STANDING THERE, LIKE A MAN OF STONE.

YOUR LUNCH IS SERVED, SIR.

THANK YOU.

PLACE IT ON THE TABLE, PLEASE.

I SUPPOSE I MAY HAVE THEM TO DRY NOW.

LEAVE THE HAT.

TURNING TOWARDS THE VISITOR, MRS HALL SAW HE HAD RAISED HIS HEAD AND WAS LOOKING AT HER. FOR A MOMENT, SHE STOOD GAPING AT HIM, TOO SURPRISED TO SPEAK.

HER NERVES BEGAN TO RECOVER FROM THE SHOCK, AND SHE PLACED THE HAT ON THE CHAIR AGAIN.

I SAID LEAVE THE HAT.

I-I... DIDN'T KNOW, SIR... THAT...

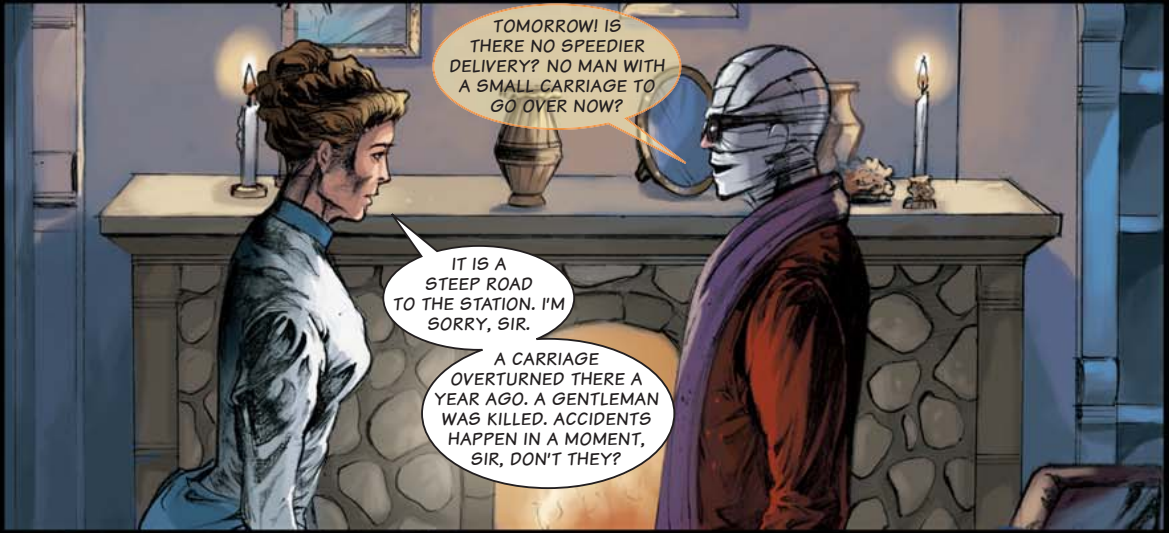
THE POOR SOUL HAS HAD AN ACCIDENT OR AN OPERATION OR SOMETHING. WHAT A TURN THESE BANDAGES GAVE ME, TO BE SURE!

THE VISITOR HAD THE STRANGEST APPEARANCE CONCEIVABLE. HIS MUFFLED AND BANDAAGED HEAD WAS SO UNLIKE WHAT SHE HAD ANTICIPATED THAT, FOR A MOMENT, SHE WAS RIGID.



I HAVE SOME LUGGAGE AT BRAMBLEHURST STATION. WHEN CAN YOU SEND SOMEONE TO GET IT FOR ME?

TOMORROW, SIR.



TOMORROW! IS THERE NO SPEEDIER DELIVERY? NO MAN WITH A SMALL CARRIAGE TO GO OVER NOW?

IT IS A STEEP ROAD TO THE STATION. I'M SORRY, SIR.

A CARRIAGE OVERTURNED THERE A YEAR AGO. A GENTLEMAN WAS KILLED. ACCIDENTS HAPPEN IN A MOMENT, SIR, DON'T THEY?



THEY DO!

BUT THEY TAKE A LONG TIME TO GET WELL. THERE WAS MY SISTER'S SON, TOM, WHO CUT HIS ARM WITH A SCYTHE. HE FELL ON IT IN THE HAYFIELD AND, BLESS ME, HE WAS IN BED FOR THREE MONTHS, SIR.

YOU'D HARDLY BELIEVE IT. IT'S GIVEN ME A DREAD OF SCYTHES, SIR. THERE WERE BANDAGES TO DO, SIR, AND BANDAGES TO UNDO.

IF I MAY BE SO BOLD AS TO SAY, SIR--

WILL YOU GET ME SOME MATCHES? MY PIPE IS OUT.

MRS HALL WAS INTERRUPTED SUDDENLY. IT WAS RUDE OF HIM, BUT SHE REMEMBERED THE MONEY HE HAD PAID AND WENT OUT FOR THE MATCHES.



THE VISITOR REMAINED IN THE PARLOUR UNTIL FOUR O'CLOCK WITHOUT GIVING ANY REASON FOR THEM TO INTRUDE ON HIM.

FOR THE MOST PART, HE WAS QUITE STILL DURING THAT TIME. IT WOULD SEEM HE SAT IN THE GROWING DARKNESS, SMOKING IN THE FIRELIGHT, PERHAPS DOZING.

ONCE OR TWICE A CURIOUS LISTENER MIGHT HAVE HEARD HIM AT THE COALS, OR PACING ABOUT THE ROOM, TALKING TO HIMSELF.

JUST THEN, WHEN MRS HALL WAS GATHERING UP HER COURAGE TO GO IN AND OFFER HER VISITOR TEA, TEDDY HENFREY, THE CLOCK JOBBER, CAME INTO THE BAR.

COME IN FROM OUT OF THE COLD!

MY GOODNESS, MRS HALL, THIS IS TERRIBLE WEATHER FOR THIN BOOTS!

NOW THAT YOU'RE HERE, MR TEDDY, I'D BE GLAD IF YOU'D GIVE THE CLOCK IN THE PARLOUR A BIT OF A LOOK.

IT IS RUNNING, AND IT STRIKES WELL AND HEARTY, BUT THE HOUR HAND WON'T DO ANYTHING BUT POINT AT SIX.

THE INVISIBLE MAN

'The stranger came early in February, one wintry day, through a biting wind and a driving snow.'

When the residents of Iping first see him, he is wearing an overcoat and goggles, and is covered from head to toe with bandages. His hidden identity and mysterious behaviour causes the locals to start asking questions. At first they assume he must have been involved in some kind of horrific accident. But the truth is far more alarming than that.

As the reality of the situation starts to become clear, only one thing is certain; the stranger is a troubled soul and can only deal with his personal fear by terrorising the people around him.

First published in 1897, *The Invisible Man* is HG Wells's warning to the world about the dangers of science without humanity.

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