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# The Invisible Man



ADAPTED BY:  
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ILLUSTRATED BY:  
**Eric Scott Fisher**

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# Table of Contents



CHAPTER1 : The Strange Man's Arrival .....	4
CHAPTER2 : Mr. Henfrey's Suspicions .....	12
CHAPTER3 : Dr. Cuss Interviews the Stranger .....	20
CHAPTER4 : An Odd Burglary.....	27
CHAPTER5 : The Bandages Come Off .....	33
CHAPTER6 : Mr. Thomas Marvel.....	42
CHAPTER7 : Return to the Coach and Horses Inn .....	47
CHAPTER8 : Floating Money.....	53
CHAPTER9 : A Daring Escape .....	58
CHAPTER1 0: Kemp and Griffin Meet Again .	63
CHAPTER1 1: The Invisible Man's Tale .....	71
CHAPTER1 2: A Man Becomes Invisible .....	78
CHAPTER1 3: Freedom Brings Problems.....	84
CHAPTER1 4: A Betrayal.....	89
CHAPTER1 5: An Innocent Victim.....	93
CHAPTER1 6: A Reign of Terror Begins .....	98
CHAPTER1 7: Invisible No More .....	106
CHAPTER1 8: Epilogue .....	111



## The Strange Man's Arrival



The stranger arrived early on a wintry February day. He trudged through the snow carrying a small black bag in his gloved hand. The journey from the Bramblehurst railway station to the Coach and Horses Inn in southern England was a long one.

Although he was wrapped up from head to foot, the cold air stung his body. His long black coat and thick gloves did little to protect him from the biting wind. The brim of his hat hid every inch of his face except the shiny tip of his nose.

The snow fell heavily as he staggered into the inn. He appeared more dead than alive as he flung his bag onto the ground.

“A fire!” he cried. “In the name of mercy, a room and a fire!” He stamped and shook the snow off himself.

The innkeeper, Mrs. Hall, greeted him at the bar. After he threw some money at the woman, she showed him to a room upstairs.

Mrs. Hall lit a fire for him in his room. Then she left him alone while she went to prepare him a meal. A guest that found himself in Iping in the dead of winter was a piece of luck. And one who didn’t argue at the price of the room? A blessing! Mrs. Hall promised to show herself worthy of his stay.

While the bacon cooked, she returned to the visitor’s room with a tablecloth, plates, and glasses. Although the fire raged on, she was surprised to see the man still dressed in wet clothes. He stood with his back to her, staring out the window. His hands were clasped behind him and he seemed lost in thought.

“Can I take your hat and coat, sir? I’ll get them dry in the kitchen,” Mrs. Hall said.



"No," he said without turning around. He glanced over his shoulder. "I prefer to keep them on."

Only then did Mrs. Hall notice that he wore blue glasses that covered most of his face. His coat collar was turned up and covered his neck.

"Very well," said Mrs. Hall. "As you wish. In a bit, the room will be warmer."

Hearing no reply, Mrs. Hall left the room. Minutes later, she returned with bacon and eggs. "Your lunch is served, sir."

"Thank you," said the man without looking at her.

Mrs. Hall would have liked to ask his name, but he was short with her. *A man with no manners*, she thought.

When Mrs. Hall returned to the kitchen, she heard a *chink, chink, chink*. It was Millie, her helper, stirring the mustard.

"Millie!" Mrs. Hall gasped. "How could I forget the mustard? Surely he'll be looking for





the mustard jar.” She quickly filled the mustard pot and carried it upstairs.

Mrs. Hall knocked and opened the door. The visitor moved quickly—so quickly that she only got a glimpse of a white object disappearing behind the desk. It was as if he were picking something up off of the floor.

She placed the mustard jar on the table and noticed the overcoat and hat on a chair in front of the fire. She reached for them. “I suppose I can take these to dry in the kitchen.”

“Leave the hat,” said a muffled voice. When she looked, he was still crouched behind the desk but had raised his head to speak.

Mrs. Hall was too surprised to speak. The man was holding a white napkin over the bottom portion of his face. It covered his jaw and mouth. But that’s not what startled her. It was the fact that his forehead above his blue glasses was covered by a white bandage. Another bandage covered his ears. Not a scrap of his face, except his pink nose, showed.

He wore a dark brown velvet jacket with a high black collar turned up about his neck. His thick black hair, escaping between the crossed bandages, projected in curious curls. Mrs. Hall wasn't prepared to see such an odd sight.

The man remained holding the napkin. She noticed his brown gloved hand. "Leave the hat," he repeated through the napkin.

Her nerves started to recover. She placed the hat by the fire "I didn't know, sir," she began, "that . . ." She paused a bit embarrassed.

"Thank you," he said quickly. He glanced from her to the door and at her again.

"I'll have them nicely dried," she assured him. As she scooted out of the room, she took one last look at the blue goggles and white bandages before closing the door.

The visitor sat listening to her retreating feet. Finally, he lowered his napkin and resumed eating.

Mrs. Hall returned to the kitchen. "Millie! That poor man. He's had an accident of some

sort. Maybe operations. His bandages scared me.”

Mrs. Hall unfolded his coat and set it by the fire. “Those goggles! And holding that napkin over his mouth. How odd. Perhaps his mouth was hurt, too.”

She thought of the strange man all evening. When she returned to his room to get the dishes, he was sitting in the corner with his back to the window.

“I have some luggage at the station. Can it be brought here now?” he asked.

“Tomorrow, sir. No one can fetch it until then. The roads are steep there and accidents happen. Men have been killed in such weather. The morning light is better.”

He started to protest.

“You wouldn’t want a man to get hurt, now would you?” she asked. “If you did, it could take him a long time to recover. Don’t you agree, sir?”

She continued on, hoping he'd take the bait. "My nephew got hurt and had to have some operations."

"Did he?" said the stranger sounding amused.

"Yes. He did. He had many bandages that needed caring for. Sir, if I may be so bold as to ask—"

He cut her off. "Please get me some matches. My pipe is out."

Mrs. Hall blushed, annoyed. *How could he ask for matches when I'm telling him about my nephew?*

Mrs. Hall left the room and returned to the kitchen. Once or twice she heard him get up and tend to the fire. He often spoke to himself, but she couldn't make out his words.

*What a strange visitor, she thought. What a strange visitor indeed.*



## Mr. Henfrey's Suspicions



Mr. Teddy Henfrey, the clock repairman, entered the inn's bar at four o'clock. It was then that Mrs. Hall got an idea.

"Why don't you repair the clock in one of my guest rooms?" she suggested, leading him upstairs.

After knocking, she opened the door to see the stranger sitting by the fire. It appeared he had been sleeping. "Would you mind this man coming to fix the clock?"

The visitor stirred. "Certainly," he said. "You may fix the clock, but I wish to be left alone. And when the clock mending is over, I would like some tea." He sat up a bit straighter. "Any news of my packages?"

“Tomorrow. That’s the earliest.”

“You are certain?” he asked. “I should explain that I’m a scientist.”

“Oh!” said Mrs. Hall. She was impressed. Henfrey was not. He moved about the room and set his tools down.

“My bags contain important instruments I need,” said the visitor. “I’m anxious to get them. The reason I came to Iping was to work in solitude. In addition to my work, an accident . . .”

Mrs. Hall shook her head. “I thought so!”

“My eyes are weak and painful. I need to be in darkness for hours at a time. The presence of anyone in my room is stressful for me. I need to work. When I’m not working, I need rest.”

Mrs. Hall took a deep breath. “If I may be so bold as to ask—”

“That is all,” said the stranger ending the conversation.

Henfrey was slow to fix the clock. He found the stranger curious and hoped to learn more about him.



“Why don’t you just go?” said the stranger.  
“You should be done by now.”

Henfrey gathered his tools. He was annoyed. As he trudged through the village snow, he muttered, “Can’t a man just look at him? Is he that ugly? Maybe the police are after him! If they wanted to find him, his bandages would hide him well.”

As he turned a corner, Henfrey saw Mrs. Hall’s husband.

Mr. Hall waved. “How are you, Teddy?”

“You have an odd character at the inn,” said Henfrey. He proceeded to give a detailed description of the stranger.

“Looks like a disguise,” he said. “I think I’d insist on seeing a man’s face if he stayed at my place. But women are trustful. He took a room and didn’t even give a name. Ain’t right.”

“You don’t say!” said Mr. Hall.

“I do say,” said Henfrey. “He’s here by the week so you won’t be getting rid of him anytime soon. He’s got luggage coming tomorrow.



“My aunt was once swindled by a man coming through town with boxes,” Henfrey said. “He sold them to her promising great riches inside. But when she finally opened them, there was nothing but stones inside.”

When Mr. Hall voiced his concern to his wife back at the inn, she refused to listen. “Mind your own business,” Mrs. Hall said. “You know nothing about him. Don’t be listening to what others say.”

But Mrs. Hall was worried. She woke up in a sweat at three o’clock in the morning. She

had been awakened by a strange dream that huge, white turnip heads with black eyes were chasing her. Being a sensible woman, she rolled over and went back to sleep.

The amount of luggage that arrived the next day was astounding. Besides two great trunks, there were boxes and boxes of books. In addition to the books were a dozen crates and cases carrying objects packed in straw. Most were glass bottles.

The stranger, covered up in a hat, a coat, gloves, and glasses, rushed outside to meet the cart. "Bring the boxes inside. I've been waiting long enough."

As he walked down the trail to the back of the cart, a dog caught sight of him. It growled and barked before nipping at the stranger's hand.

The cart driver snapped his whip. "Lie down!" The dog ignored the command and lunged for the stranger's trousers. A ripping sound could be heard. It was over in a minute.

The cart driver whipped the dog and loaded him in the cart.

The stranger glanced down at his leg and rushed inside.

Mr. Hall was worried. "He was bit on the leg. I better go see if he's alright." He walked inside, up the stairs, and opened the door to the stranger's room.

It was dim inside, which made it difficult to see. When his eyes adjusted, he caught sight of a strange thing. It looked as if the arm of the man's coat was waving at him but without a hand! What seemed like a handless arm and a face with three huge black spots where the nose and eyes should be rushed toward him.

The handless arm reached out and struck Mr. Hall violently in the chest. He was hurled back into the hallway. The door slammed in his face. The lock clicked. It all had happened so fast that Mr. Hall could barely comprehend what had happened.

A few minutes later, Mr. Hall joined the group of people that had formed outside of the inn. Being a simple man, he didn't know exactly what had happened. Therefore, he decided not to bother trying to describe it.

"He just wants his bags," said Mr. Hall. "He ain't hurt."

Seconds later, the dog stood and growled again.

"Come along," said an angry voice in the doorway. Everyone turned to see the stranger with his collar turned up and his hat brim bent down. He had changed clothes.

"I need my belongings. Too much time has been wasted. Bring them upstairs at once."

When the crates were set down in his room, the stranger opened them up at a furious pace. Straw flew everywhere.

When Mrs. Hall took him his dinner, he was so engrossed in his bottles that he didn't notice her come in. When he heard her sweeping up the straw, he quickly put his glasses on.

“I wish you’d knock before entering,” he said rudely.

Mrs. Hall sighed. “I did knock. You didn’t answer. You can lock the door, you know. Any time.”

Mrs. Hall picked up a clump of straw. “This floor is a mess.”

“Put it on my bill,” said the stranger. “If you must. Put down a shilling. That should be enough.”

Satisfied with earning an extra shilling, Mrs. Hall left the room. The man remained locked in his room all evening. Every once in a while, Mrs. Hall heard him shout. Bottles crashed. Books dropped.

She crept to the door to listen. Afraid of getting caught, she reluctantly went away. Although Mrs. Hall secretly shared some of Mr. Henfrey’s suspicions, she overlooked them as long as the stranger kept giving her extra shillings.



## Dr. Cuss Interviews the Stranger



The stranger seldom left the house in the next few months. Mr. Hall wanted him to find another inn but Mrs. Hall wouldn't hear of it.

"We never have visitors this time of year," she protested. "Especially ones that give us so many extra shillings. Wait until the artists come during the summer. We'll ask him to leave then."

Although Mrs. Hall rarely had a conversation with the stranger, she observed him each day. Some days he would work and talk to himself every waking moment. Other days she'd hear him pacing the floor and smashing bottles.



He never ventured out at daylight. But when twilight came, he would often go for a walk. His path of choice was the loneliest roads and deserted paths. Those who happened to come upon him would rush home and tell their families of the strange sight they had seen.

He became the topic of conversation in the sleepy town of Iping. Mrs. Hall felt sorry for the man and was certain he suffered great tragedies.

However, most people believed he was a criminal. A criminal who was wrapping himself up so he could hide from the police. This was the story Teddy Henfrey believed and the story he often told.

Some didn't know what to think. No matter what was thought of him, all agreed that they disliked him. He proved irritable and often displayed frantic gestures when spoken to.

One villager had a particular interest in the stranger. The town doctor, Dr. Cuss, wondered, *What was wrong with this man that he required bandages from head to toe?*

When his curiosity got the best of him in May, he set out to pay the stranger a visit.

"I'd like to see your visitor, Mrs. Hall. What's his name?" Cuss said.

"He doesn't like visitors. He wants his privacy." She rubbed her chin. "I didn't quite hear his name when he told me."

The truth was, he never offered a name and she never asked. Standing there with the doctor now and not being able to give a name to the stranger made her feel foolish.

Cuss walked upstairs past Mrs. Hall and knocked on the stranger's door. He opened the door and walked inside.

"Pardon the intrusion," Cuss said.

Mrs. Hall placed her ear to the door but could only hear muffled voices. Suddenly she heard a cry of surprise, a crashing chair, a bark of laughter, and the door swung open.

Dr. Cuss appeared with a look of horror on his face. He rushed past Mrs. Hall. When Mrs. Hall peered inside the room, she saw nothing.



Although she saw nothing, the sound of soft laughter could be heard. Before she had a chance to step inside, the door slammed and the place was quiet again.

Cuss ran straight to the home of Reverend Bunting. He burst into his kitchen and asked, "Am I mad? Do I look insane?"

Reverend Bunting tried to settle Cuss down. "What happened? Start at the beginning."

"I went in to see the stranger at the inn. I pretended to ask for a donation to the nurses' fund. When I opened the door, he shoved his hands into his pockets. He sat in his chair and sniffed a few times. He obviously had a cold.

"As I spoke to him about the fund, I looked around the room. There were bottles and test tubes everywhere. I kept talking, all the while trying to observe every inch of the room.

"Will you donate?' I asked. He said he'd think about it. Then I asked him if he was working on a secret project. He became quite cross. But I pushed on with my questions.

"He became furious. 'What are you trying to find out?' he demanded. As he rose, one of his papers lifted in the air and carried itself to the fireplace. As he reached for it, his hand shot forward. But you see, that's just it, there wasn't a hand! I don't think there was an arm either. Just a sleeve. An empty sleeve."

Reverend Bunting pulled his chair closer and raised his eyebrows.

“Although surprised, I figured he had a fake arm and had removed it,” Cuss continued. “But when I looked again, I realized that there wasn’t anything holding up the sleeve. I could see straight in. I tell you, nothing was there.

“‘Good God,’ I said, staring at his sleeve. The stranger stopped and stared at me with his blue goggles. Then he looked at his sleeve.”

“Then what happened?” asked Bunting.

“That’s all! He never said a word. He just glared and put his sleeve back into his pocket. I was almost speechless. But my words finally came to me. ‘How can you put an empty sleeve like that into your pocket?’

“‘An empty sleeve you saw, did you?’ he asked.

“‘Certainly,’ I said.

“Then very quietly, he pulled his sleeve out of his pocket again. He raised it toward me as though he would show me once again. He did it very, very slowly. I looked at it.

“‘Well,’ I said clearing my throat. ‘There’s nothing in it!’ I had to say something as I was feeling frightened.

“He extended it slowly until the cuff was six inches from my face. I can assure you it’s a very odd thing to have an empty sleeve come at you. And then, something—a finger or a thumb—nipped my nose! Tweaked it.”

Bunting started to laugh.

“You must believe me,” said Dr. Cuss. “There wasn’t anything there. You can laugh but I assure you it was real. And terrifying at that.

“I was so startled that I hit his cuff hard and ran out of the room.” Cuss took a sip of water. “I tell you it felt exactly like hitting an arm. But that’s just it. There wasn’t an arm. None at all!”

Reverend Bunting thought it over. He looked wise and grave indeed. “That is the most remarkable story,” he said. “A most remarkable story indeed.”



## CHAPTER 4

# An Odd Burglary



A few weeks later, someone robbed the home of Reverend Bunting. Mrs. Bunting woke up suddenly after hearing a door open and close. She shook the reverend and whispered, "Someone is in our house. Listen."

The reverend sat up and rubbed his eyes. Just then, they heard a violent sneeze. The reverend jumped out of bed and grabbed the poker from the fireplace. Cautiously, he went down the stairs. Mrs. Bunting stayed close behind him.

As they approached the study door, they heard a drawer open. Then, the papers rustled. Reverend Bunting could see the desk with its drawer open. As they moved closer, they heard the clink of money. The robber had found their gold!



“No way is anyone stealing our gold!” said Reverend Bunting as he rushed into the room. “Surrender!” Then he stopped, perplexed. The room was empty!

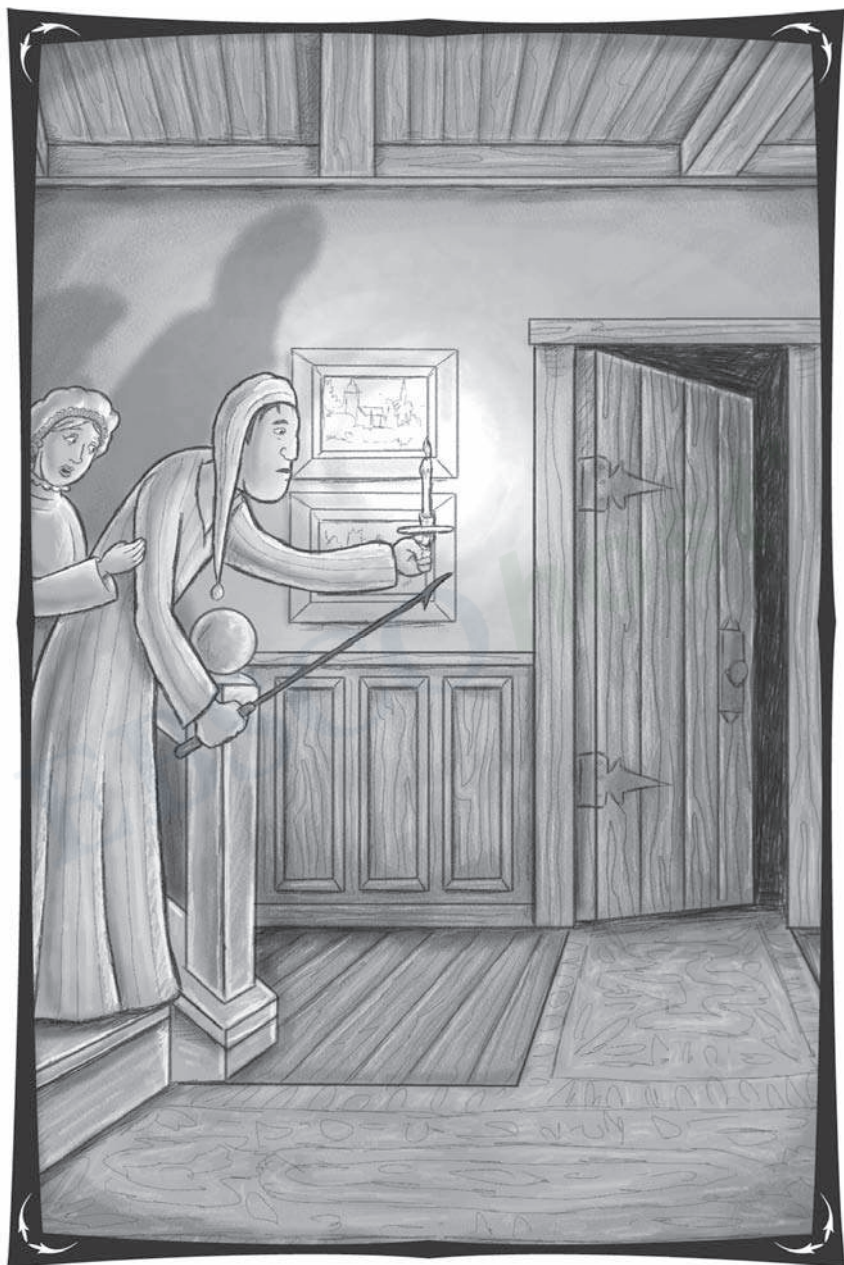
“I can still hear someone,” said Mrs. Bunting. “Or something. But I don’t see anyone. Or anything.” Then she pointed to the candle. “Who lit that?”

Reverend Bunting closed the drawer. “And who took our money?”

As they stood in confusion, they heard another violent sneeze. A minute later, they heard the faint sound of the kitchen door. They rushed in just in time to see the door slowly open and then slam a few seconds later.

The Buntings were terrified. Hours later, they were still frozen with fear in the exact spot. They were too afraid to move or speak.

That very same morning, Mr. and Mrs. Hall awoke early to work down in the cellar. As they made their way downstairs, Mr. Hall was surprised to see the stranger’s door open.



When Mr. Hall continued on and saw that the latch on the back door had been pulled back, he became curious. *Did the stranger go for a walk this early in the morning?* He knew he had locked the door before going to bed. Who else could have unlocked it?

He called Mrs. Hall to the stranger's door and knocked lightly. When no reply came, he pushed the door open. The room was empty! Just as he thought it would be!

"George, look on the desk! All the man's bandages are there. His pants, hat, and gloves are here as well. How can he be out and about without his clothes?"

As they started to look around the room, they heard someone sneeze on the staircase. Mrs. Hall peered outside but no one was there.

"Must be my imagination," she said. She walked back into the room and approached the bed. She felt the sheets. "They're cold. He must have been gone at least an hour by now. Where could he have rushed off to so early?"

Then the most extraordinary thing happened. The sheets gathered themselves together and bunched up into a peak. Seconds later, they jumped and danced about the room. Then the stranger's hat hopped off of the bedpost and whirled through the air. It headed straight for Mrs. Hall's face!

At the same time, the sponge from the washstand rose into the air and came rushing toward Mr. Hall. The chair, flinging the stranger's coat onto the floor, turned itself up with its four legs pointing to Mrs. Hall. It took aim and charged her! Gently, but firmly, it pushed up against her back and nudged her out the door.

Mr. Hall chased after the chair, which turned and pushed him out the door. When both Mr. and Mrs. Hall had fallen onto the floor, the door slammed and locked behind them.

"Spirits!" said Mrs. Hall. "He's brought spirits into our inn. Tables and chairs leaping and dancing? We must lock him out. I should have

known," she mumbled. "The bandages. The goggles. Never going to church on Sundays. He's put spirits into my good furniture. Perhaps Henfrey's suspicions were correct after all."

Mr. Hall scratched his head. "Let's have some tea and think this over." He led Mrs. Hall down the stairs and into the bar. As the two made some tea to calm their nerves, a voice boomed.

It was the bandaged stranger glaring angrily at them from behind his goggles! He was standing outside his room. "You had no business going into my room. I was promised privacy. Stay out and leave me alone." With that, he slammed the door shut.

"How can that be?" whispered Mr. Hall. "Are my eyes playing tricks on me? No one was in that room a few minutes ago."

Mrs. Hall felt faint. "If your eyes are playing tricks, so are mine." She took a long sip of her tea. "He's the devil, I tell you. The devil in our very inn."



## CHAPTER 5

# The Bandages Come Off



It was only five-thirty in the morning when the stranger locked himself into his room. He stayed there until mid-afternoon.

At two-thirty, he rang the bell three times to summon Mrs. Hall. She refused to go to her guest. She and Mr. Hall were too busy telling the visitors to the bar what had happened earlier.

When the stranger finally emerged from his room, he found the bar and hallway filled with curious guests. "Mrs. Hall, may I see you please?" he said politely.

Mrs. Hall was waiting for this moment. She had prepared his bill and placed it on a tray. She picked the tray up and walked toward the stranger. "Is it the bill you're wanting, sir?"

“My bill?” he asked. “Why no, you fool. It is my food! Why haven’t you given me breakfast? Where’s my lunch? A man cannot survive without food.”

Mrs. Hall took a deep breath. “Why haven’t you paid your bill?”

“I told you three days ago I was waiting for money.”

“And I told you two days ago I would wait no more. How can you grumble about waiting for your breakfast when I’ve been waiting five days for your money?”

The stranger screamed and swore. Some men from the bar rose and approached the stranger. “There’s no need for that talk. Pay your bill.”

The stranger was angrier than ever. But he forced himself to appear calm. “Look here, my good woman,” he began.

“Don’t ‘good woman’ me,” said Mrs. Hall.

The stranger reached into his pocket. "I just happen to have the money now."

"I thought you had no money. How is it that you suddenly have it now?" asked Mrs. Hall.

The rest of the men in the bar leaned forward to hear his answer. Word had spread about the robbery at the reverend's house hours ago.

"I found some more."

"You found it?" said Mrs. Hall, thinking of the reverend. "How interesting." She turned to her husband. "He found money."

Mr. Hall suddenly felt brave. "You found it, did you? Ha! By chance did you find it in someone's house this morning?"

The stranger exploded. "You don't understand who I am or what I am!" His voice was so loud, everyone jumped back. Then the stranger started to laugh. "No, none of you understand. I'll show you all! I'll show all of you who I am and what I'm capable of doing."



Stepping toward Mrs. Hall, he put his gloved palm over his face and lifted it away. "Here," he said dropping something into her hand. "A gift for you!"

Mrs. Hall looked into her hand and screamed as she dropped the item onto the floor. "It's his nose. He took his nose off!"



Sure enough, when Mr. Hall rushed toward the stranger, a black cavity was where his nose used to be.

Next, the stranger removed his goggles and everyone at the bar gasped. Soon after, he whisked away his hat and tore at his whiskers and bandages. As they unraveled, women screamed and men shouted.

It was worse than anyone could have imagined. All were prepared for scars but no one was prepared to see nothing. Nothing at all!

Millie was the first to dash for the door. Her screams could be heard all the way down the path. The villagers came to see what was happening. When they got to the door of the inn and looked inside, they saw a headless man.

“It’s the devil in disguise,” said Mrs. Hall.

“It must be a magician’s trick,” said Mr. Hall.

The only calm one about was Mr. Jaffers, the town constable. “What’s going on? What’s the fuss about?”

They all talked of the stranger with no head.

"He must be arrested at once," said Mr. Jaffers. He marched toward the inn. When he looked inside, he saw a headless man holding cheese in one gloved hand and crusty bread in the other.

"That's him!" shouted Mr. Hall. "Arrest him!"

The headless man spoke. "What's the meaning of this?" he backed away and threw off a glove. There was nothing underneath the glove!

Jaffers lunged toward the stranger and grabbed his handless wrist. The other glove flew across the room as Jaffers reached up and put his hands around the invisible neck.

"I have his neck! Grab the feet!" he ordered.

Men rushed forward and reached for the feet. As they did, the stranger's shoes were kicked off and flew across the floor. Despite the absence of shoes, the men held his legs.

“I surrender,” said the stranger. “It’s no use.”

To all that were there, it was the strangest thing to hear a voice come from a mouth they couldn’t see.

Jaffers ran his hand over the invisible face.

“Ouch!” said the stranger. “You poked my eye. I can assure you I’m all here even if you can’t see me.”

Suddenly, the buttons to his coat came undone and the coat came off. Only pants remained on the Invisible Man.

Jaffers walked around the stranger. “This is amazing. But I don’t understand.”

The villagers started to gather around Jaffers.

“You may not understand, but is that reason to arrest me? What have I done wrong? Is my crime that you cannot see all of me?”

Jaffers said, “Your invisibility is strange but it’s not why I’m arresting you. There was a burglary today. Money was stolen. The evidence points to you.”

"I can assure you," said the Invisible Man, "that I am innocent. But I will come with you to clear my name."

The body with pants sat down and continued talking. "Clearly, I want to save my name." Then, he jumped up and started to wiggle out of his pants. Soon, one pant leg was dragging on the floor and another was dropping toward the ground.

"Stop him," said Jaffers. "Once those pants are off, we won't be able to see him."

But it was too late. With pants gathered in a heap, the stranger was now completely invisible.

"Where is he?" shouted Mrs. Hall. "Get him!"

What a sight it was to see everyone punching the air.

"Close the door!" shouted Mr. Hall as he fell to the ground. "He's here. He just kicked my shin and pushed me down."

Jaffers made one last reach for the Invisible Man. “I have him! I have—” But he didn’t finish. Instead, he was shoved backward and hit his head on the floor.

As everyone stopped and stared, the door opened and a woman standing on the other side was pushed aside. A dog in the street barked into the air and growled. A second later, the dog yelped and ran off as if it had been kicked.

The invisible man escaped. He was free.



## Mr. Thomas Marvel



About a mile out of Iping, a tramp sat in a ditch. He wore a furry silk hat that was too big for his head. His fingers fumbled with tying the twine on his faded blue jacket. The twine had long ago replaced the missing brass buttons.

In his hands, he held two pairs of boots. His feet were bare. “Hmmm. Which pair would best suit my feet?”

One pair was too large while the other fit but had flimsy soles. He hated shoes that were too big, but he also didn’t like to walk on shoes that wore out quickly. He set them up on a patch of dirt and studied each pair.

“Both are ugly,” said a voice behind him.

“And charity boots at that,” laughed Thomas Marvel. “I’ve worn worse. In fact, most times

I've had none to wear." He turned his head around but didn't see anyone there.

"Where are you?" said Marvel. He stood in the trench and twirled in all directions. He looked up in the trees. "I don't see you. Maybe my imagination is playing tricks on me."

"I'm right here. It's not your imagination. Don't be alarmed."

Marvel turned to the voice. "I am alarmed. I hear a voice but I don't see a body to go with it." Marvel rubbed his eyes. "Are you buried?"

No response.

Marvel said, "I could've sworn I heard a voice."

"You did," said the Invisible Man. He took Marvel by the collar and shook him. Marvel's eyes grew wide. "Let me go."

"Don't be foolish," said the Invisible Man. "I'm not your imagination. Would your imagination throw rocks at you?" Seconds later, pebbles were hitting Marvel.

Marvel took off running but tripped over an unseen obstacle and landed on his face. He



sat up and cried, "I don't understand! Stones throwing themselves? Something that's not there tripping me?"

"What's not to understand?" said the voice. "I'm an invisible man. I need you to understand that."

"Where are you? I can't see you," said Marvel.

The voice laughed. "Because I'm invisible, you fool. I'm a human being who needs food and drink and clothes for covering. But I am invisible. Invisible to you and to everyone else."

"Let me feel your hand," said Marvel. When the hand reached out to touch him, he jumped back. "You don't have to grab me so hard."

Marvel took his other hand and ran it up the invisible arm that gripped his. He let his hand travel all the way up to the man's face.

"Amazing," Marvel declared. "I can't see you. You're completely invisible except . . ." He bent over toward the voice's stomach. "Have you been eating bread and cheese?"

"Indeed I have," said the voice.



“I don’t understand,” said Marvel. “How did you do it?”

The Invisible Man ignored the question. “I need your help. Keep in mind that I am picking you to help me. I could have picked anyone, but I chose you. You didn’t know I was here next to you. I could have murdered you. But instead, I am asking for your help.”

Marvel was confused. “Why do you need my help? What can I do?”

"I want you to get me clothes. I'll need you to do some other things for me, too." Then the voice laughed. "Many, many more things!"

Marvel stood and pointed to the land before them. "I must get going. I need to move on. I'm sure you can find someone else to help you."

The voice screamed. "You don't understand. I'm not asking for help. I'm telling you that I picked you to help me. You have no choice. None at all. If you refuse, then I will kill you. It's quite easy to understand that, isn't it? Or are you a bigger fool than I thought?"

Marvel jumped back but was steadied by the man's invisible hand. "No need to be scared. As long as you do what I say, you'll be safe. I can do great things for you. Think of how powerful an invisible man is." He sneezed. "But if you betray me . . ."

"I won't," said Marvel shuddering. "Just tell me what you need me to do and I'll do it."

Marvel bit his lip and wiped the sweat from his brow. What choice did he have?



## CHAPTER 7

# Return to the Coach and Horses Inn



It was mid-afternoon when Marvel made his way to Iping. As he passed the villagers gathered on the streets, he overheard them talking of the day's events. Some people spoke of the Invisible Man with fear. Others laughed at the mention of such a man.

Marvel walked straight into the Coach and Horses Inn. Without looking around, he walked past the crowded bar and headed up the steps. Once upstairs, he opened the door to the Invisible Man's room.

Two men were looking through a set of notebooks. They jumped at the sound of the creaking door.

“Who’s there?” asked Dr. Cuss. He had been searching through the stranger’s belongings with Reverend Bunting. When he saw the tramp, he looked relieved.

“I thought you were the Invisible Man coming back to get us,” Cuss said. “Who are you? Are you looking for a drink? That would be down the steps.”

Marvel smiled. “Yes, it’s a drink I’d be wanting.” He lifted his hat, backed out of the room, and gently closed the door behind him. Once outside, he hurried to the window below the room he was just inside.

Up in the room, Cuss and Bunting talked. “These notebooks don’t make sense. I can’t understand anything in them,” said Cuss.

“There are no diagrams or illustrations to help us,” said Bunting. “The symbols are confusing. It looks like they’re written in a secret code.”

“I suspect they’re written in a different language,” said Cuss. “This here looks like

Greek. And this here,” he said pointing to a different book, “looks like it could be . . .”

But the doctor didn’t finish his sentence. Something forced his head upon the table. As he tried to lift it, he caught a glimpse of Reverend Bunting in the same position.

“What’s going on here?” demanded the reverend.

A voice whispered, “Don’t move or I’ll murder both of you.” It was the Invisible Man!

The men heard a sniff followed by a sneeze. “I’m sorry to handle you so roughly but I have no choice. You have invaded my room. Where are my clothes?” He could feel the men shaking. Neither could speak.

“Look,” said the Invisible Man, “I didn’t expect to find you here. I came for my books and my clothes. But I can see that you men have my books and my clothes are gone.”

He plucked the books out of the men’s hands. They watched the books move through the air.

“Since I need clothes for protection, I must ask each of you to give me yours at once.”

The reverend found his voice. “Never! I shall never give you the clothes off my back.”

At that moment, the reverend’s head rose up a bit and then crashed into the table at full force.

“Can’t you see you have no choice in the matter?” said the Invisible Man. “Your clothes or your life!”

“It’s disgraceful,” said Cuss. “But what choice do we have?”

“You’re wise to obey me,” said the Invisible Man. He allowed them to sit up and undress. He snatched the suspenders from Cuss, wrapped them around his notebooks, and walked to the window. He opened the window and dropped the notebooks to Marvel, who waited below. He then bundled up some clothes and passed them down as well.

Across the road from the inn, Mr. Huxter, a tobacco shop owner, saw the books land in Marvel’s hand. “Stop thief!”







Huxter's cries brought everyone out of the Coach and Horses Inn. Everyone except Mrs. Hall, of course. She stayed behind to protect her money in the register. She heard a commotion on the steps. When she looked up, she saw Dr. Cuss and Reverend Bunting half dressed coming down the stairs.

Outside, Mr. Huxter suddenly tripped and fell. Chaos followed! The Invisible Man punched, kicked, and pushed people aside as he made his escape. Everyone panicked and screamed. Women fainted. Brave men suddenly ran away from their loved ones.

Running behind many of them was the Invisible Man. He destroyed anything in his path. He started by breaking every window in the inn. Then, he smashed every glass bottle in Dr. Cuss's office and cut the telegraph wire that led out of Iping.

It was the last time anyone in Iping heard, saw, or felt the Invisible Man again.



## CHAPTER 8

# Floating Money



Thomas Marvel marched away from Iping carrying the notebooks and a bundle of clothes. His eyes darted all about as he searched for a way to escape the Invisible Man.

“Don’t think of trying to escape me,” said the voice. “If you try, I will kill you.”

Marvel shuddered. “I won’t run. I’m here to help you. Ouch! Stop pulling at my shoulder. You gave it quite a bruise.”

“I can’t trust you,” said the Invisible Man. “I think I’ll keep my hand on your shoulder so you know I’m always here. Just keep looking after those books, will you? I don’t want you running away with them.”

“I don’t think I have the nerve to help you,” said Marvel, shaking.

“You can help and you will help,” said the Invisible Man. “It’s bad enough that the people of Iping know all about me. You can’t escape me and reveal my secrets. To prove how you can and will help me, look at that bank over there.”

Marvel looked to the right and saw it.

“Go up the path a way and soon you’ll know how you’re going to help me. Won’t take but a few minutes.”

Mr. Marvel sighed and continued walking with heavy burdens on his mind. Suddenly, he saw money floating through the air.

“Take this money and put it in your pocket,” the Invisible Man said. “Those poor men had no idea someone was stealing from them. I’m rich! You can be rich too if you help me.”

Marvel stuffed the money into his pocket. That night while the Invisible Man rested, Marvel tried to think how he could escape with the money. Anytime he moved, the Invisible Man would remind him that he would kill him if he tried to escape. Marvel felt trapped.

At ten o'clock the next morning, Marvel sat on a bench outside a small inn near Port Stowe. To anyone passing by, he looked worn and tattered. He appeared a bit odd sitting next to a stack of books. After an hour, a man came out of the inn and sat down beside him.

"Pleasant day, isn't it?" asked the man.

"Very pleasant," said Marvel as he fumbled with the coins in his pockets.

"I see you have a pile of books there. You can read all sorts of interesting things in books," said the man. He folded his newspaper in half. "Newspapers, too."

Marvel nodded but didn't speak.

"Take this for instance," said the man. It says in this paper that there's an Invisible Man loose around these parts."

"An Invisible Man!" said Marvel. He laughed. "You don't believe in those types of things, do you, sir?"

"It says here that a doctor and a reverend are witnesses in Iping. They say the Invisible

Man came into an inn wearing bandages and goggles. When he became angry, he took them all off and no one could see him. He hurt a lot of people. It mentions he hurt a police officer, too.” He held the paper out for Marvel to see. “It says it all right here. Look for yourself.”

“Does it say if he has anyone helping him?” asked Marvel.

“Doesn’t mention that. But it does say that he was headed on the road to Port Stowe.” The man laughed as he looked around nervously. “He could be right next to us and we wouldn’t know it.”

The man scratched his head. “It might explain the odd story my friend told me today. Said he saw money floating in the air. I thought he was crazy at the time. But maybe it was the Invisible Man.”

Marvel leaned forward and tried to hear if the Invisible Man was still around him. He heard nothing. He didn’t see anything moving.

Marvel whispered in the man's ear, "Truth is, I do know something about the Invisible Man. He's— OUCH!" shouted Marvel as he grabbed his jaw. "Ouch!" he shouted even louder as he rubbed his chin.

"Why are you screaming?" asked the man.

"Toothache," said Marvel as he was pushed forward by an invisible hand.

Marvel heard the Invisible Man whisper one word: "Hoax."

"It was all a hoax," said Marvel to the man. "I know the man who started the Invisible Man rumor. Don't believe a word of it."

The man looked Marvel up and down.

"Ouch!" shouted Marvel again as he jumped on one foot. An invisible foot had kicked him in the shin.

"I have a cramp. Must be going," he said.

The man watched as Marvel was quickly pushed and pulled along the road with rough jerks by an invisible hand on his arm.



## A Daring Escape



In the early evening, a man sat in his study in a small house overlooking the town of Burdock. Bookshelves and journals filled the room, which had a desk, a chair, and a work area.

The room belonged to Dr. Kemp, a scientist. He was tall and slender and had a mustache. He often looked out the large window in his study to give his eyes a rest from the microscope.

It was on one such break that he looked outside only to see a man running. The small man waved his arms about.

*Another fool*, thought the doctor. It reminded him of the fools he had met earlier in the day. On his way to town, he passed by several men who spoke about an Invisible Man.