

BOOK REVIEW

You all must have read the book *The Invisible Man*. Given below are two reviews of the book. Read the book reviews and write a review of the book as per the format that has been taught in the class.

Book Review: The Invisible Man by H.G. Wells

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The Invisible Man by [H.G. Wells](#) is a science fiction classic written in 1897. The novella was first serialized in Pearson's Weekly the same year it was published.

Griffin is a scientist who devotes himself to the field of optics. While working in his research Griffin discovers that he can change the body's refractive index to absorb all light and reflect none, which makes him invisible. The scientist uses himself as his first experimentation subject but fails to reverse the process. After his friend betrays him, Griffin decided to murder him and begins his own personal "reign of terror".

What if what you consider a blessing is also a curse? The Invisible Man by H.G. Wells touches on this very same question.

How many of us wouldn't like to be invisible? That's what the protagonist, Griffin, thought when he became invisible only to find it to be the bane of his existence. Yes, there are some positives aspects, but H.G. Wells concentrates mostly on the negative ones.

I thought Wells did a good job building up the eerie atmosphere that is prominent throughout the story. Actually, the atmosphere is the star of the book as none of the characters resonated with me and the storyline, which mainly consisted of wreaking havoc for havoc's sake, was not very inspired. The story itself is also quite funny, I thought and many of the scenes played in my mind as slapstick.

However, one could certainly tell that Wells is a master storyteller, and I find myself engrossed in the story for several chapters (mainly at the beginning and end). I also found the period details in the book very interesting.

The Invisible Man is the ultimate story of an insane anti-hero, before insane anti-heroes became popular. Griffin himself becomes more and more pathetic as the story progress and from the comical start Wells moves away to a darker, subtle satire of small minds in small towns can be just as dangerous as any psychopath.

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Book: The Invisible Man

Author: H.G. Wells

Country: United Kingdom

Language: English

Genre: Horror, Science Fiction novel

Published: 1897

Publisher: C. Arthur Pearson (UK), Edward Arnold (US)

Media type: Print (Hardback & paperback)

Pages: 149

The Invisible Man is a science fiction novel by H. G. Wells. Originally serialized in *Pearson's Weekly* in 1897, it was published as a novel the same year. The Invisible Man the title refers to is Griffin, a scientist who has devoted himself to research into optics and invents a way to change a body's refractive index to that of air so that it neither absorbs nor reflects light and thus becomes invisible. He successfully carries out this procedure on himself, but fails in his attempt to reverse it. An enthusiast of random and irresponsible violence, Griffin has become an iconic character in horror fiction.

While its predecessors, *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, were written using first-person narrators, Wells adopts a third-person objective point of view in *The Invisible Man*. The novel is considered influential, and helped establish Wells as the "father of science fiction".^[1]

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Plot summary

A mysterious man, Griffin, arrives at the local inn owned by Mr. and Mrs. Hall of the English village of Iping, West Sussex, during a snowstorm. The stranger wears a long-sleeved, thick coat and gloves; his face is hidden entirely by bandages except for a fake pink nose; and he wears a wide-brimmed hat. He is excessively reclusive, irascible, unfriendly, and introverted. He demands to be left alone and spends most of his time in his rooms working with a set of chemicals and laboratory apparatus, only venturing out at night. While Griffin is staying at the inn, hundreds of strange glass bottles arrive. Many local townspeople believe this to be very odd. He becomes the talk of the village with many theorizing as to his origins.

Meanwhile, a mysterious burglary occurs in the village. Griffin is running out of money and is trying to find a way to pay for his board and lodging. When his landlady demands that he pay his bill and quit the premises, he reveals part of

his invisibility to her in a fit of anger. An attempt to apprehend the stranger is thwarted when he undresses to take advantage of his invisibility, fights off his would-be captors, and flees to the downs. In the process, he arms himself with an iron pipe; when a man follows the "floating pipe" and accidentally forces the Invisible Man into thorn bushes, the Invisible Man commits his first murder. There Griffin coerces a tramp, Thomas Marvel, into becoming his assistant. With Marvel, he returns to the village to recover three notebooks that contain records of his experiments. When Marvel attempts to betray the Invisible Man to the police, Griffin chases him to the seaside town of Port Burdock, threatening to kill him. Marvel escapes to a local inn and is saved by the people at the inn, but Griffin escapes. Marvel later goes to the police and tells them of this "invisible man," then requests to be locked up in a high-security jail. Griffin's furious attempt to avenge his betrayal leads to his being shot. He takes shelter in a nearby house that turns out to belong to Dr. Kemp, a former acquaintance from medical school. To Kemp, he reveals his true identity. Griffin is a former medical student who left medicine to devote himself to optics.

Griffin tells Kemp the story of how he became invisible. He explains how he invented chemicals capable of rendering bodies invisible, which he first tried on a cat, then himself. Griffin burned down the boarding house he was staying in, along with all the equipment he had used to turn invisible, to cover his tracks, but he soon realised that he was ill-equipped to survive in the open. He attempted to steal food and clothes from a large department store, and eventually stole some clothing from a theatrical supply shop on Drury Lane and headed to Iping to attempt to reverse the invisibility. Having been driven somewhat unhinged by the procedure and his experiences, he now imagines that he can make Kemp his secret confederate, describing a plan to begin a "Reign of Terror" by using his invisibility to terrorise the nation.

Kemp has already denounced Griffin to the local authorities and is waiting for help to arrive as he listens to this wild proposal. When the authorities arrive at Kemp's house, Griffin fights his way out and the next day leaves a note announcing that Kemp himself will be the first man to be killed in the "Reign of Terror". Kemp, a cool-headed character, tries to organise a plan to use himself as bait to trap the Invisible Man, but a note that he sends is stolen from his servant by Griffin.

Griffin shoots and wounds a Scotland Yard Inspector who comes to Kemp's aid, then breaks into Kemp's house. Kemp bolts for the town, where the local citizenry come to his aid. Griffin is cornered, seized, and savagely beaten by the enraged mob, with his last words being a desperate cry for mercy. Despite Griffin's murderous actions, Kemp urges the mob to stand away and tries to save the life of his assailant, though it is not meant to be. The Invisible Man's battered body gradually becomes visible as he dies, pitiable in the stillness of death. A local policeman shouts to have someone cover Griffin's face with a sheet.

In the epilogue, it is revealed that Marvel has secretly kept Griffin's notes and—with the help of the stolen money—has now become a successful business owner, running the "Invisible Man Inn". However, when not at work running his inn, Marvel sits in his office trying to decipher the notes in the hopes of one day recreating Griffin's work. Because several pages were accidentally washed clean during Marvel's chase of Griffin, since the remaining notes are coded in Greek and Latin, and since Marvel has no comprehension of even the basic mathematical symbols he sees in the notes, he is completely incapable of understanding them.

Legacy

Further information: The Invisible Man in popular culture

The Invisible Man has been adapted to, and referred to, in film, television, and comics. Allen Grove, professor and chair of English at Alfred University states,

The Invisible Man has a wealth of progeny. The novel was adapted into comic book form by *Classics Illustrated* in the 1950s, and by Marvel Comics in 1976. Many writers and filmmakers also created sequels to the story, something the novel's ambiguous ending encourages. Over a dozen movies and television series are based on the novel, including a 1933 James Whale film and a 1984 series by the BBC. The novel has been adapted for radio numerous times, including a 2017 audio version starring John Hurt as the invisible man. The cultural pervasiveness of the invisible man has led to everything from his cameo in an episode of *Tom and Jerry* to the Queen song *The Invisible Man*.^[6]

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