

**АНГЛИЙСКИЙ В АДАПТАЦИИ:
ЧТЕНИЕ И АУДИРОВАНИЕ**

ГЕРБЕРТ УЭЛЛС • HERBERT WELLS



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Великому ученому удастся совершить настоящий научный прорыв! К чему привело его открытие? Теперь прочитать историю человека-невидимки смогут даже те, кто пока не очень уверенно читает по-английски.

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Книга предназначена для изучающих английский язык на продолжающем уровне.

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Herbert Wells



The Invisible Man

CHAPTER I

The Strange Man's Arrival

The stranger came early in February, one wintry day, through a biting wind and a heavy snow, the last snowfall of the year, walking from Bramblehurst railway station, and carrying a little black suitcase in his gloved hand. He was dressed warmly from head to foot, and his soft hat hid every inch of his face but the shiny tip of his nose; the snow fell on his shoulders and chest, and also on the suitcase he carried. He entered the 'Coach and Horses' more dead than alive, and threw his suitcase on the floor. 'A fire,' he cried, 'in the name of human charity! A room and a fire!' He shook the snow from off himself in the bar, and followed Mrs. Hall into her guest room to check in. And after a short conversation, and a couple of sovereigns¹ thrown upon the table, he settled in the inn.

Mrs. Hall lit the fire and left him there while she went to prepare him a meal with her own hands. A guest to stop at Iping in the wintertime was an extraordinary piece of

¹ Sovereign — соверен, золотая монета в Великобритании, равная 20 шиллингам.



luck, moreover a guest who didn't argue about the price,' and she decided to show herself worthy of her good fortune. As soon as the bacon was prepared, and Millie, her aid, had been quickened a bit by a few smartly chosen expressions, she carried the cloth, plates, and glasses into the guest room and began to lay them with particular care. Although the fire was burning up brightly, she was surprised to see that her visitor still wore his hat and coat, standing with his back to her and looking out of the window at the falling snow in the yard. His gloved hands were clasped behind him, and he seemed to be lost in thought. She noticed that the snow that still lay on his shoulders melted and dropped upon her carpet. 'Can I take your hat and coat, sir?' she said, 'and give them a good dry in the kitchen?'


'No,' he said without turning.

She was not sure she had heard him, and was about to repeat her question.

He turned his head and looked at her over his shoulder. 'I prefer to keep them on,' he said, and she noticed that he wore big blue glasses, and had a side-whisker over his coat-collar that fully hid his cheeks and face.

'Very well, sir,' she said. 'As you like. In a moment the room will be warmer.'

He made no answer, and had turned his face away from her again, and Mrs. Hall, feeling that the conversation was over, quickly laid the rest of the table things and left the room. When she returned he was still standing there, like a man of stone, his back bended, his collar turned up, his wet hat-brim turned down, fully hiding his face and ears. She put down the eggs and bacon with an



emphasis, and called rather than said to him, 'Your lunch is served, sir.'

'Thank you,' he said at the same time, and did not move until she was closing the door. Then he turned round and came up to the table with a certain quickness.

As she went behind the bar to the kitchen she heard a sound repeated at regular intervals. Chirk, chirk, chirk, it went, the sound of a spoon rapidly hitting a bowl. 'That girl!' she said. 'There! I surely forgot it. It's her being so long!' And while she herself finished mixing the mustard, she gave Millie a few verbal punches for her slowness. She had cooked the ham and eggs, laid the table, and done everything, while Millie (help indeed!) had only delayed the mustard. And he was a new guest and wanted to stay! Then she put the mustard into the pot, and carried it into the room.

She knocked and entered. As she did so her visitor moved quickly, so that she could only notice a white object disappearing behind the table. It would seem he was picking something from the floor. She put down the mustard pot on the table, and then she noticed the overcoat and hat had been taken off and put over a chair in front of the fire, and a pair of wet boots on her steel fender that could cause rust. She acted decisively in this situation. 'I suppose I may have them to dry now,' she said in a voice that meant no denial.

'Leave the hat,' said her visitor, in a muffled voice, and turning she saw he had raised his head and was sitting and looking at her.

For a moment she stood looking at him, too surprised to speak.




He held a white cloth — it was a napkin he had brought with him — over the lower part of his face, so that his mouth and jaws were completely hidden, and that was the reason of his muffled voice. But it was not that which frightened Mrs. Hall. It was the fact that all his forehead above his blue glasses was covered by a white bandage, and that another covered his ears, leaving not a piece of his face visible excepting only his pink, pointed nose. It was bright, pink, and shiny just as it had been at first. He wore a dark-brown velvet jacket with a high, black collar turned up about his neck. The thick black hair, escaping as it could below and between the cross bandages, made curious tails and horns, giving him the strangest look possible. This muffled and bandaged head was so unlike what she had expected, that for a moment she stood still.

He did not remove the napkin, but remained holding it, as she saw now, with a brown gloved hand, and looking at her through his blue glasses. 'Leave the hat,' he said, speaking very clearly through the white cloth.

Her nerves began to recover from the shock they had received. She placed the hat on the chair again by the fire. 'I didn't know, sir,' she began, 'that — ' and she stopped confused.

'Thank you,' he said drily, looking from her to the door and then at her again.

'I'll have them nicely dried, sir, at once,' she said, and carried his clothes out of the room. She looked at his white-bandaged head and blue glasses again as she was going out of the door; but his napkin was still in front of his face. She shivered a little as she closed the door behind her, and



her face expressed her surprise and confusion. 'I never,' she said quietly. 'There!' She went quite softly to the kitchen, and was too busy to ask Millie what she was doing then, when she got there.


The visitor sat and listened to her while she went away. He looked with interest at the window before he removed his napkin, and continued his meal. After a spoon he looked suspiciously at the window, took another spoon, then rose and, taking the napkin in his hand, walked across the room and pulled the curtain down to the top of the white muslin that covered the lower part of the window. This left the room in a twilight. This done, he returned with an easier air to the table and his meal.

'The poor soul's had an accident or an operation or something,' said Mrs. Hall. 'Such horror to look at him in all these bandages, I should say!'

She put on some more coal, placed the clothes-horse, and put the traveller's coat upon this. 'And those glasses! Why, he looked more like a diving helmet than a human man!' She hung his scarf on a corner of the horse. 'And holding that napkin over his mouth all the time. Talking through it! ... Perhaps his mouth was hurt too — maybe.'

She turned round, as one who suddenly remembers. 'Good God!' she said, as if had suddenly remembered something; 'haven't you done the potatoes yet, Millie?'

When Mrs. Hall went to clear away the stranger's lunch, her idea that his mouth must also have been cut or deformed in the accident she supposed him to have suffered, was confirmed, for he was smoking a pipe, and all the time




that she was in the room he never took off the silk scarf he had wrapped round the lower part of his face to put the pipe to his lips. Yet it was not absence of mind, for she saw he looked at it as it burned. He sat in the corner with his back to the curtain and spoke now, having eaten and drunk and being comfortably warmed through, with less aggressive tone than before. The reflection of the fire lent a kind of red animation to his big glasses they had lacked before.

‘I have some luggage,’ he said, ‘at Bramblehurst station,’ and he asked her how he could have it sent. He bowed his bandaged head quite politely in gratitude for her explanation. ‘Tomorrow?’ he said. ‘There is no speedier delivery?’ and seemed quite disappointed when she answered, ‘No.’ Was she quite sure? No man with a carriage who would go over?

Mrs. Hall quite willingly answered his questions and continued a conversation. ‘It’s a steep road to the station, sir,’ she said in answer to the question about a carriage; and then added, ‘It was there a carriage was overturned, a year ago and more. A gentleman killed, besides his coachman. Accidents, sir, happen in a moment, don’t they?’

But the visitor was not to be involved so easily. ‘They do,’ he said through his scarf, eyeing her quietly through his dark glasses.

‘But they take long enough to get well, don’t they? ... There was my sister’s son, Tom, accidentally cut his arm with a scythe, fell on it in the field, and, bless me! He was three months tied up sir. You’d hardly believe it. Since then I’m afraid of a scythe, sir.’



'I can quite understand that,' said the visitor.

'He was afraid, one time, that he'd have to have an operation — he was that bad, sir.'

The visitor laughed sharply, a bark of a laugh that he seemed to bite and kill in his mouth. 'Was he?' he said.

'He was, sir. And I had so much trouble helping him, — my sister was busy with her little ones so much. There was bandages to do, sir, and bandages to undo. So if I may ask you a question, sir —'

'Will you get me some matches?' said the visitor, quite sharply. 'My pipe is out.'

Mrs. Hall was interrupted suddenly. It was certainly rude of him, after telling him all she had done. She kept silent for a moment, and remembered the two sovereigns. She went for the matches.

'Thanks,' he said briefly, as she put them down, and turned his shoulder upon her and looked out of the window again. It was altogether too confusing. Evidently he was sensitive on the topic of operations and bandages. She did not 'make so bold as to say,' however, after all. But his snubbing way had irritated her, and Millie had to deal with it that afternoon.

The visitor remained in the room until four o'clock, without giving the slightest intention to go out. 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 sleeping.

Once or twice a curious listener could possibly hear him at the coals, and for five minutes he was walking the room. He seemed to be talking to himself. Then the arm-chair creaked as he sat down again.



CHAPTER II


Mr. Teddy Henfrey's First Impressions

At four o'clock, when it was fairly dark and Mrs. Hall was pulling together to go in and ask her visitor if he would take some tea, Teddy Henfrey, the clock-maker, came into the bar. 'Oh, Mrs. Hall,' said he, 'this is terrible weather for thin boots!' The snow outside was falling faster.

Mrs. Hall agreed, and then noticed he had his bag with him. 'Now you're here, Mr. Teddy,' said she, 'I'd be glad if you'd give the old clock in the guest room a bit of a look. It is going, and it strikes well; but the hour-hand won't do nothing but point at six.'

And leading the way, she went across to the guest room door and knocked and entered.

Her visitor, she saw as she opened the door, sat in the armchair before the fire, maybe sleeping, with his bandaged head hanging on one side. The only light in the room was the red glow from the fire — which lit his eyes like railway signals, but left his face in darkness — and the last beams of the day that came in through the open door. Everything was reddish, shadowy, and vague to her, the more so since she had just been lighting the bar lamp, and her eyes were blinded. But for a second it seemed to her that the man she looked at had a huge mouth wide open — a large and incredible mouth that swallowed the whole of the lower



part of his face. It was the feeling of a moment: the white-banded head, the monstrous glasses in the place of eyes, and this huge mouth below it. Then he moved, started up in his chair, put up his hand. She opened the door wide, so that the room was lighter, and she saw him more clearly, with the scarf held up to his face just as she had seen him hold the napkin before. The shadows, she thought, had tricked her.

'Would you mind, sir, this man coming to look at the clock, sir?' she said, coming to herself after a momentary shock.

'Look at the clock?' he said, looking round in a sleepy manner, and speaking over his hand, and then, getting more fully awake, 'certainly.'

Mrs. Hall went away to get a lamp, and he rose and stretched himself. Then came the light, and Mr. Teddy Henfrey, entering, met nose to nose this bandaged person. He was, he says, 'shocked.'

'Good afternoon,' said the stranger, watching him — as Mr. Henfrey says, with a lively sense of the dark spectacles — "like a lobster."

'I hope,' said Mr. Henfrey, 'I don't disturb you.'

'Not at all,' said the stranger. 'Though, I understand,' he said turning to Mrs. Hall, 'that this room is really to be mine for my own private use.'

'I thought, sir,' said Mrs. Hall, 'you'd prefer the clock —'

'Certainly,' said the stranger, 'certainly — but, as a rule, I like to be alone and undisturbed.'

'But I'm really glad to have the clock seen to,' he said, seeing a certain indecision in Mr. Henfrey's manner. 'Very glad.' Mr. Henfrey had intended to apologise and leave, but