



## HERBERT GEORGE WELLS

Herbert George Wells (H.G. Wells, 1866-1946), the famous English novelist, is best known for his science fiction novels, such as *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The War of the Worlds* (1898), and comic books *Tono-Bungay* (1909) and *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910). Wells was not only a writer of rich imagination and extraordinary ideas, but a journalist and a sociologist.

Despite the constant threat of poverty in his youth, Wells won a scholarship to study biology at the Normal School of Science (later the Royal College in London) and in 1888 graduated from London University to become a science teacher. His early masterpieces of science fiction combine fantasy, science and reality.

Wells was a socialist by his convictions, and in his works he treated people from unprivileged backgrounds with great sympathy and understanding. They do not have the false sense of superiority that Griffin or Dr. Kemp have in the novel *The Invisible Man*. This novel about an ambitious young scientist has unexpected plot twists and poses many moral questions to readers. It is not surprising that it has been enormously popular among them for more than 100 years.

## BEFORE-READING QUESTIONS

Before you start reading the first chapter of the novel, answer the following questions:

1. What role does science play in the lives of each of us?
2. Do scientific discoveries imply benefits or losses for society?  
Do you agree that scientific research should be controlled and, if necessary, limited to avoid threats to mankind?
3. How does the scientist's personality influence his career?
4. Does a scientist need such traits as honesty, responsibility and integrity?
5. What moral choices does a scientist often face?

## Chapter 1

### THE STRANGE MAN'S ARRIVAL

The stranger came early in February, one winter day, through a **biting** wind and heavy snow. He walked from Bramblehurst railway station, carrying a little black **portmanteau** in his gloved hand. He was **wrapped up** from head to foot, and his soft felt hat hid every inch of his face but the shiny tip of his nose. The snow was on his shoulders and chest, and the luggage he carried. He **staggered** into the "Coach and Horses", more dead than alive, and **flung** his **portmanteau** down. "A fire," he cried, "A room and a fire!" He **stamped** his foot and shook the snow off himself in the bar, and followed Mrs. Hall into her guest **parlour**.

Mrs. Hall lit the fire and left him there while she went to prepare his meal. A guest at Iping in the wintertime was an unheard piece of luck, and she was **resolved** to do her best to please him. She brought the cloth, plates, and glasses and began to lay the table. Although it was warm in the room, she was surprised to see that her visitor still wore his hat and coat. His seemed to be lost in thought. Mrs. Hall noticed that the melted snow dripped 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



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big blue spectacles and had bushy **whiskers** over his coat collar that completely hid his face.

“Very well, sir,” she said. “As you like. In a while the room will be even warmer.”

He made no answer and turned his face away from her again, and Mrs. Hall laid the rest of the table things and **whisked out** of the room. When she returned he was still standing there, like a man of stone, his back **hunched**, his collar turned up, hiding his face and ears completely. She put down the eggs and bacon, and called rather than said to him, “Your lunch is served, sir.”

“Thank you,” he said and did not stir until she closed the door.

She noticed that he had taken off his coat and hat and put them on a chair in front of the fire. “Oh,” she thought, “his pair of wet boots can ruin my steel fender!” and said aloud, “I suppose I may dry them now,” she added in a voice that took 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 **gaping** at him, too surprised to speak.

He was holding a white cloth—it was a serviette 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 for his **muffled** voice.

But it was not that which **startled** 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 only his pink nose. It was bright, pink, and shiny just as it had



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been at first. He wore a dark-brown velvet jacket with a high, black collar turned up about his neck. His thick black hair, between the cross **bandages**, gave him the strangest appearance imaginable.

He did not remove the serviette, but remained holding it with a brown gloved hand. "Leave the hat," he said, speaking very distinctly 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 embarrassed.

"Thank you," he said dryly, glancing from her to the door and then at her again.

She shivered a little as she closed the door behind her and went quite softly to the kitchen, too preoccupied even to ask her maid Millie what she was **messing about** with.

"The poor soul's had an accident or an operation, or something," said Mrs. Hall to herself.

The visitor was smoking a pipe and never took off his silk **muffler** he had wrapped round the lower part of his face. "I have some luggage," he said, "at Bramblehurst station," and he asked her how he could get it. "Tomorrow!" he said. "There is no quicker delivery?" he asked and seemed quite disappointed when she answered, "No." Was she quite sure?

"It's a steep road, sir," she said, "It was there a carriage was overturned more than a year ago. A gentleman and his coachman were killed. Accidents, sir, happen in a moment, don't they?"

"They do," he said through his **muffler**, eyeing her quietly through his impenetrable glasses.

"Will you get me some matches?" said he, quite abruptly. "My pipe is out."



Mrs. Hall went for the matches.

“Thanks,” he said, as she put them down, and turning his shoulder upon her, **stared** out of the window again.

## Glossary

- biting** [ˈbaɪtɪŋ] — *прил.* сильный, пронзительный, пронизывающий, резкий
- portmanteau** [pɔ:tˈmæntəʊ] — *сущ.* саквояж
- wrap up** [ˌræp ˈʌp] — *гл.* заворачивать, укутать, кутаться
- stagger** [ˈstæɡə] — *гл.* шататься, покачиваться, идти шатаясь
- fling** (flung, flung) — *гл.* бросать, кидать, швырять
- stamp** [stæmp] (one’s foot) — *гл.* топнуть ногой; наступить (кому-нибудь на ногу)
- parlour** [ˈpɑ:lə] — *сущ.* гостиная, общая комната
- resolve** [rɪˈzɒlv] — *гл.* твердо решить (сделать что-л.); решить (задачу, проблему и т. д.)
- whiskers** [ˈwɪskəz] — *сущ.* бакенбарды
- whisk out** [ˌwɪsk ˈaʊt] — *гл.* быстро удалиться, юркнуть
- hunch** [hʌntʃ] — *гл.* горбиться, сутулиться
- muffled** [ˈmʌfld] — *прил.* 1) закутанный, укутанный; завернутый, обернутый; прикрытый, закрытый (особенно о лице, закрытом в целях маскировки); 2) заглушенный, приглушенный (о голосах, звуках)
- gape** [geɪp] — *гл.* 1) смотреть в изумлении (на что-л.); 2) изумляться
- startle** [ˈstɑ:tl] — *гл.* испугать; поразить, сильно удивить
- bandage** [ˈbændɪdʒ] — 1) *сущ.* бинт; 2) *гл.* (= bandage up) бинтовать, перевязывать
- mess about** [ˌmes əˈbaʊt] — *гл.* лодырничать, возиться с (чем-л.)



**muffler** ['mʌflə] — *сущ.* толстый, теплый шарф; теплое кашне  
**stare** [steə] — *гл.* пристально глядеть, вглядываться; уста-  
витьcя

## Chapter 2

### MR. TEDDY HENFREY'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS

At four o'clock, when it was almost dark, Teddy Henfrey, the clockmaker, came into the bar. "Mrs. Hall," said he, "what 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. Henfrey," said she, "I'd be glad if you could look at the old clock in the parlour. 'It strikes well; but the **hour hand** won't do anything but point at six."

And she went across to the door, knocked and entered.

Her visitor, was sitting in the armchair before the fire, **dozing**. The only light in the room was the red glow from the fire. But for a second it seemed to Mrs. Hall that the man she looked at had an enormous mouth wide open. It was only for a moment: the white-bandaged head, the monstrous eyes—

Then he stirred and started up in his chair. She opened the door wide, so that the room was lighter, and saw him more clearly, with the muffler held up to his face.

"Look at the clock?" he said, staring round in a drowsy manner, "certainly."





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Mrs. Hall went away to get a lamp, and he rose and stretched himself. Then came the light, and Mr. Teddy Henfrey was **confronted** by this bandaged person. He was, he says, “**taken aback.**”

“Good afternoon,” said the stranger.

“I hope,” said Mr. Henfrey, “that it’s no intrusion.”

“None whatever,” said the stranger.

“I thought, sir,” said Mrs. Hall, “you’d prefer the clock—”

“Certainly,” said the stranger, “certainly—but, as a rule, I’d like to be alone and undisturbed.”

Mrs. Hall was about to leave the room. She told the visitor the carrier would bring his luggage over in the morning. “You are certain that is the earliest?” he said.

“I should explain,” he added, “that I am an **experimental investigator.**” “Indeed, sir,” said Mrs. Hall, much impressed. “And my baggage contains equipment and **appliances.**” “Very useful things indeed they are, sir,” said Mrs. Hall. “My reason for coming to Iping,” he proceeded, “was ... a desire for **solitude.** I do not wish to be disturbed in my work. In addition to my work, an accident—”

“I thought as much,” said Mrs. Hall to herself.

“My eyes—are sometimes so weak and painful that I have to shut myself up in the dark for hours. Lock myself up. At such times the slightest disturbance is a source of excruciating annoyance to me— these things should be understood.”

“Certainly, sir,” said Mrs. Hall.

After Mrs. Hall had left the room, he remained standing in front of the fire, **glaring** at the clock being mended. Mr. Henfrey, being curious by nature, wanted **to fall into conversation** with the stranger. But the stranger stood there, per-



fectly silent and still. So still, it got on Henfrey's nerves. He felt alone in the room and looked up, and there was the bandaged head and huge blue lenses staring fixedly. It was so creepy to Mr. Henfrey that for a minute they remained staring blankly at one another.

He looked up and began, "The weather—"

"Why don't you finish and go?" said the figure, evidently in a state of suppressed **rage**. "All you've got to do is to fix the **hour hand** of the clock."

"Certainly, sir—one minute more. I overlooked—" and Mr. Henfrey finished and left.

But he left feeling excessively annoyed. "Damn it!" said Mr. Henfrey to himself, **trudging** down the village through the thawing snow; "a man must do a clock at times, surely."

And again, "Can't a man look at you? — Ugly!"

At the corner he saw Mr. Hall, who had recently married the stranger's hostess at the "Coach and Horses."

"I'd like to see a man's face if he stopped at my place," said Henfrey. "But women are so **trustful**."

"You don't know everything," said Mr. Hall to his wife later, resolved to find out more about the personality of his guest.

"You mind you own business, Hall," said Mrs. Hall, "and I'll mind mine."

## Glossary

**hour hand** [ 'auə,hænd ] — *сущ.* часовая стрелка

**doze** [dəuz] — *гл.* дремать, клевать носом

**confront** [кən'frʌnt] — *гл.* стоять лицом к лицу; сталкиваться  
лицом к лицу

**to take aback** — захватить врасплох; поразить



- experimental investigator** [ɪksperɪ'mentl in'vestigeɪtə] — исследователь-экспериментатор
- appliance** [ə'plaɪən(t)s] — *сущ.* аппарат, прибор; приспособление, устройство
- solitude** ['sɒlɪ(j)uːd] — *сущ.* одиночество; уединение, изоляция (*о человеке*)
- glare** [glɛə] — *гл.* пристально или сердито смотреть (*на кого-л.*)
- to fall into conversation** — завязать разговор
- rage** [reɪdʒ] — *сущ.* ярость, гнев, бешенство; приступ сильного гнева
- trudge** [trʌdʒ] — *гл.* идти с трудом, устало тащиться
- trustful** ['trʌstf(ə)l] — *прил.* доверчивый

## Chapter 3

### THE THOUSAND AND ONE BOTTLES

The next day the stranger's luggage arrived through the **slush**. There was a pair of trunks and a box of books—big, thick books, some of which were just in an **incomprehensible** handwriting—and a dozen or more boxes and cases, containing glass bottles. The stranger, muffled in his hat, coat and gloves, came out impatiently to meet the cart. “Come along with those boxes,” he said. “I’ve been waiting long enough.”

Then he turned and **rushed** swiftly up the steps into the inn. Mr. Hall went straight upstairs, and the stranger's door being **ajar**, he pushed it open and entered.



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The blind was down and the room dim. He **caught a glimpse of** what seemed a handless arm waving towards him. Then he was **struck** violently in the chest, hurled back, and the door **slammed** in his face and locked. It was so rapid that it gave him no time to observe.

A couple of minutes after, he joined the little group outside the “Coach and Horses.”

Mr. Hall, staring at them from the steps and listening, found it incredible that he had seen upstairs. Besides, his vocabulary was too limited to express his impressions.

“Come along,” cried an angry voice in the doorway. “The sooner you get those things in the better. Hurry up!”

When the first box was carried into the parlour, the stranger flung himself upon it eagerly, and began to unpack it, **scattering** the straw on Mrs. Hall’s carpet. And from it he began to produce bottles—little bottles containing powders, small and slender bottles with coloured and white fluids, blue bottles labeled Poison, bottles with round bodies and slender necks, large green glass bottles, large white glass bottles—putting them in **rows** everywhere.

The stranger went to the window and **set** to work, not bothering in the least about the litter of straw, the fire which had gone out, the box of books outside or the trunks and his other luggage that had gone upstairs.

When Mrs. Hall brought his dinner, he was already so **absorbed** in his work that he did not hear her until she had put the tray on the table.

Then he half turned his head and immediately turned it away again. But she saw he had removed his glasses; and it seemed to her that his eye sockets were extraordinarily



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hollow. He put on his spectacles again, and then turned and faced her.

“I wish you wouldn’t come in without knocking,” he said in the tone of abnormal exasperation that seemed so characteristic of him.

“I knocked, but —”

“Perhaps you did. But in my investigations—my really very urgent and necessary investigations—the slightest disturbance—I must ask you—”

“Certainly, sir. You can turn the lock any time.”

“A very good idea,” said the stranger.

“This straw, sir, if I might remark—” “Don’t. If the straw makes trouble put it down on the bill.” He was so odd, standing there, so aggressive, with a bottle in one hand and a test tube in the other, that Mrs. Hall was quite alarmed.

All the afternoon he worked in silence with the door locked. But once there was a sound of bottles ringing together and the **smash** of a bottle flung violently down, and then a rapid **pacing** along the room. Fearing “something was the matter,” she went to the door and listened.

“I can’t go on,” he was raving. “All my life it may take me! ... Patience! Patience indeed! ... Fool!”

When Mrs. Hall took in his tea she saw broken glass in the corner of the room under the mirror, and a golden stain that had been carelessly wiped. She drew attention to it.

“Put it down on the bill,” **snapped** her visitor. “For God’s sake don’t worry me,” he said and went on ticking a list in the exercise book before him.