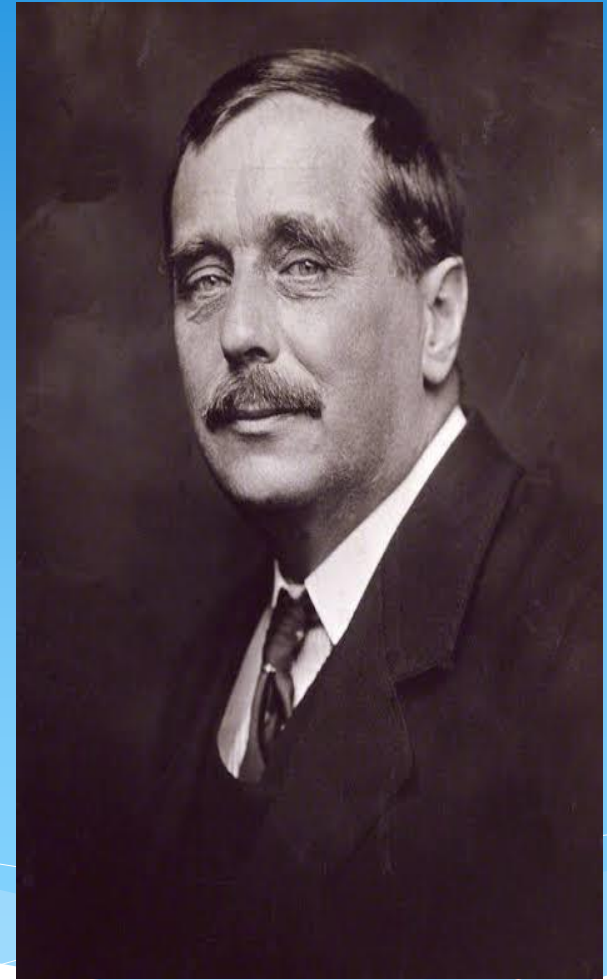


FOOTPRINTS WITHOUT FEET

By – H G Wells

H G Wells

Herbert George Wells (21 September 1866 – 13 August 1946) was an English writer. He was prolific in many genres, writing dozens of novels, short stories, and works of social commentary, satire, biography, and autobiography, and even two books on recreational war games. He is now best remembered for his science fiction novels and is often called the "father of science fiction", along with Jules Verne and Hugo Gernsback



Footprints without Feet

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Can a man become invisible? This is the story of a scientist who discovers how to make himself invisible. Does he use, or misuse, his discovery?

READ AND FIND OUT

- How did the invisible man first become visible?
- Why was he wandering the streets?

THE two boys started in surprise at the fresh muddy imprints of a pair of bare feet. What was a barefooted man doing on the steps of a house, in the middle of London? And where was the man?

As they gazed, a remarkable sight met their eyes. A fresh footmark appeared from nowhere!

Further footprints followed, one after another, descending the steps and progressing down the street. The boys followed, fascinated, until the muddy impressions became fainter and fainter, and at last disappeared altogether.

The explanation of the mystery was really simple enough. The bewildered boys had been following a scientist who had just discovered how to make the human body transparent.

Griffin, the scientist, had carried out experiment after experiment to prove that the human body could become invisible. Finally he swallowed certain rare drugs and his body became as transparent as a sheet of glass — though it also remained as solid as glass.

Brilliant scientist though he was, Griffin was rather a lawless person. His landlord disliked him and tried to eject him. In revenge Griffin set fire to the house. To get away without being seen he had to remove his clothes. Thus it was that he became a homeless wanderer, without clothes, without money, and quite invisible — until he happened to step in some mud, and left footprints as he walked!

He escaped easily enough from the boys who followed his footprints in London. But his adventures were by no means over. He had chosen a bad time of the year to wander about London without clothes. It was mid-winter. The air was bitterly cold and he could not do without clothes. Instead of walking about the streets he decided to slip into a big London store for warmth.

Closing time arrived, and as soon as the doors were shut Griffin was able to give himself the pleasure of clothing and feeding himself without regard to expense. He broke open boxes and wrappers and fitted himself out with warm clothes. Soon, with shoes, an overcoat and a wide-brimmed hat, he became a fully dressed and visible person. In the kitchen of the restaurant he found cold meat and coffee, and he followed up the meal with sweets and wine taken from the grocery store. Finally he settled down to sleep on a pile of quilts.

If only Griffin had managed to wake up in good time all might have been well. As it was, he did not wake up until the assistants were already arriving next morning. When he saw a couple of them



approaching, he panicked and began to run. They naturally gave chase. In the end he was able to escape only by quickly taking off his newly-found clothes. So once more he found himself invisible but naked in the chill January air.

This time he decided to try the stock of a theatrical company in the hope of finding not only clothes but also something that would hide the empty space above his shoulders. Shivering with cold he hurried to Drury Lane, the centre of the theatre world.

He soon found a suitable shop. He made his way, invisible, upstairs and came out a little later wearing bandages round his forehead, dark glasses, false nose, big bushy side-whiskers, and a large hat. To escape without being seen, he callously attacked the shopkeeper from behind, after which he robbed him of all the money he could find.

READ AND FIND OUT

- Why does Mrs Hall find the scientist eccentric?
- What curious episode occurs in the study?
- What other extraordinary things happen at the inn?

Eager to get away from crowded London he took a train to the village of Iping, where he booked two rooms at the local inn.

The arrival of a stranger at an inn in winter was in any case an unusual event. A stranger of such uncommon appearance set all tongues wagging. Mrs Hall, the landlord's wife, made every effort to be friendly. But Griffin had no desire to talk, and told her, "My reason for coming to Iping is a desire for solitude. I do not wish to be disturbed in my work. Besides, an accident has affected my face."

Satisfied that her guest was an eccentric scientist, and in view of the fact that he had paid her in advance, Mrs Hall was prepared to excuse his strange habits and irritable temper. But the stolen money did not last long, and presently Griffin had to admit that he had no more ready cash. He pretended, however, that he was expecting a cheque to arrive at any moment.

Shortly afterwards a curious episode occurred. Very early in the morning a clergyman and his wife were awakened by noises in the study. Creeping downstairs, they heard the chink of money being taken from the clergyman's desk.

Without making any noise and with a poker grasped firmly in his hand, the clergyman flung open the door.

"Surrender!"

Then to his amazement he realised that the room appeared to be empty. He and his wife looked under the desk, and behind the curtains, and even up the chimney. There wasn't a sign of anybody. Yet the desk had been opened and the housekeeping money was missing.

"Extraordinary affair!" the clergyman kept saying for the rest of the day.

But it was not as extraordinary as the behaviour of Mrs Hall's furniture a little later that morning.

The landlord and his wife were up very early, and were surprised to see the scientist's door wide open. Usually it was shut and locked, and he was furious if anyone entered his room. The opportunity seemed too good to be missed. They peeped round the door, saw nobody, and decided to investigate. The bedclothes were cold, showing that the scientist must have been up for some time; and stranger still, the clothes and bandages that he always wore were lying about the room.

All of a sudden Mrs Hall heard a sniff close to her ear. A moment later the hat on the bedpost leapt up and dashed itself into her face. Then the bedroom chair became alive. Springing into the air it charged straight at her, legs foremost. As she and her husband turned away in terror, the extraordinary chair pushed them both out of the room and then appeared to slam and lock the door after them.

Mrs Hall almost fell down the stairs in hysterics. She was convinced that the room was haunted by spirits, and that the stranger had somehow caused these to enter into her furniture.

"My poor mother used to sit in that chair," she moaned. "To think it should rise up against me now!"

The feeling among the neighbours was that the trouble was caused by witchcraft. But witchcraft or not, when news of the burglary at the clergyman's home became known, the strange scientist was strongly suspected of having had a hand in it. Suspicion grew even stronger when he suddenly produced some ready cash, though he had admitted not long before that he had no money.

The village constable was secretly sent for. Instead of waiting for the constable, Mrs Hall went to the scientist, who had somehow mysteriously appeared from his empty bedroom.

"I want to know what you have been doing to my chair upstairs," she demanded. "And I want to know how it is you came out of an empty room and how you entered a locked room."



The scientist was always quick-tempered; now he became furious. "You don't understand who or what I am!" he shouted. "Very well — I'll show you."

Suddenly he threw off bandages, whiskers, spectacles, and even nose. It took him only a minute to do this. The horrified people in the bar found themselves staring at a headless man!

Mr Jaffers, the constable, now arrived, and was quite surprised to find that he had to arrest a man without a head. But Jaffers was not easily prevented from doing his duty. If a magistrate's warrant ordered a person's arrest, then that person had to be arrested, with or without his head.

There followed a remarkable scene as the policeman tried to get hold of a man who was becoming more and more invisible as he threw off one garment after another. Finally a shirt flew into the air, and the constable found himself struggling with someone he could not see at

all. Some people tried to help him, but found themselves hit by blows that seemed to come from nowhere.

In the end Jaffers was knocked unconscious as he made a last attempt to hold on to the unseen scientist.

There were nervous, excited cries of "Hold him!" But this was easier said than done. Griffin had shaken himself free, and no one knew where to lay hands on him.

H.G. WELLS

WORD MEANINGS:-

Muddy- covered in or full of mud.

Imprints- impress or stamp (a mark or outline) on a surface.

Bare- not clothed or covered. **Gazed-** looked at steadily and intently, especially in admiration, surprise, or thought.

Remarkable- worthy of attention; striking.

Sight- the faculty or power of seeing

Progressing- move forward or onward in space or time.

Fascinated- strongly attracted and interested. **Fainter-** barely perceptible.

Bewildered- perplexed and confused; very puzzled.

Eject- compel (someone) to leave a place.

Wander- walk or move in a leisurely or aimless way.

Bitterly- in an angry, hurt, or resentful way.

Expense- the cost incurred in or required for something.

Panicked- feel or cause to feel panic.

Theatrical- relating to acting, actors, or the theatre.

Shivering- shaking slightly and uncontrollably as a result of being cold, frightened, or excited.

Whiskers- a long projecting hair or bristle growing from the face or snout of many mammals.

Callously- in a way that shows an insensitive and cruel disregard for others.

Inn- a pub, typically one in the country, in some cases providing accommodation.

Wagging- move or cause to move rapidly to and fro.

Solitude- the state or situation of being alone.

Eccentric- unconventional and slightly strange.

Curious- strange; unusual.

Clergyman- a male priest, minister, or religious leader, especially a Christian one.

Poker- a metal rod with a handle, used for prodding and stirring an open fire.

Grasped- seize and hold firmly.

Affair- an event or sequence of events of a specified kind or that has previously been referred to. **Furious-** extremely angry.

Peeped- look quickly and furtively at something, especially through a narrow opening. **Sniff-** draw up air audibly through the nose to detect a smell, to stop it running, or to express contempt.

Leapt- jump or spring a long way, to a great height, or with great force.

Terror- extreme fear. **Slam-** shut (a door, window, or lid) forcefully and loudly.

Hysterics- a wildly emotional and exaggerated reaction

Moaned- make a long, low sound expressing physical or mental suffering

Witchcraft- the practice of magic, especially black magic; the use of spells.

Horrificed- filled with terror; extremely shocked.

Prevented- keep (something) from happening.

Magistrate- a civil officer who administers the law, especially one who conducts a court that deals with minor offences and holds preliminary hearings for more serious ones.

Knocked- collide with (someone or something), giving them a hard blow.

SUMMARY

The story is about a scientist named Griffin. He had been discovering ways which could make a man invisible and finally swallowed certain rare drugs that made him invisible. He was first noticed by two boys in staircase of a house where they could just see his footsteps and started following it. They follow it until the footsteps are fainter and cannot be seen. First, as he is feeling cold he enters a mall for some warmth. After the stores shut down, he decides to wear some warm clothes and eat something. He first unboxes a few clothes and wears them. Then from the kitchen of a restaurant, he eats cold meat and some coffee. Later he goes to a grocery store and eats sweets and drinks

wine. He then falls asleep on a pile of quilts. He then wakes up in the morning when some of the store assistants had seen him and started chasing him. He quickly threw away all the clothes he was wearing and became invisible again. Then he started roaming around again without any clothes in the cold winters of London.



He then decides to steal clothes from a theatre company as he knew he would get something there to cover his face as well. He then steals bandages for his face, dark glasses, false nose and a hat for covering himself. He then hits the shopkeeper and steals all his money. Soon he realizes that London is too crowded to live like this and decides that he would go to a remote village. He books two rooms at an inn at the Iping village.



He reaches there and it is strange for the people of Iping that a stranger with such a weird appearance has come to stay at an inn during the winter season. Once his money is over, he steals from people and also hits the landlord and his wife when they try to check his room in his absence. Then the village constable is asked for help but before that Mrs. Hall, the wife of the landlord asks him questions regarding who he is and what he did to her furniture. This makes him really furious and he decides to show her who he really is. The people then see a headless man and Mr. Jaffers, the constable also finds out that he would have to arrest a man who does not have a head. They are unable to catch Griffin as he removes all his clothes and becomes invisible. He even knocks out Jaffers as he tries to catch him.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1) How did the invisible man first become visible?

Ans) The invisible man first became visible when he accidentally stepped into some mud and his footprints started becoming visible to two boys who followed him until his footprints faded and became invisible again. He got rid of them and spent a night at a large London store where he wore some clothes and slept on a pile of quilts. The next morning, when he was still sleeping, the store assistants started coming in and saw him which was actually the first time he was seen.

Q2) Why was he wandering the streets?

Ans) Griffin had burned down the house of his landlord who had tried to throw him out of the house. He was a lawless person and to save himself from being caught he removed all his clothes so that he could not be seen and thus, became a homeless wanderer. He did not have any money or clothing left with him.

THANK YOU

The image features the words "THANK YOU" in a large, bold, blue serif typeface. The text is slanted upwards from left to right. Each letter is rendered with a 3D effect, featuring a dark blue outer shell and a lighter blue inner section, giving it a metallic or embossed appearance. Directly beneath the letters is a soft, out-of-focus reflection of the text in a lighter blue shade. The background is a clean white, accented by a solid blue rectangular area at the top and a series of light blue, wavy horizontal lines that create a sense of depth and movement.