

The Invisible Man



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF H.G. WELLS

H.G. Wells was born in Kent, England, to a shopkeeper/professional cricketer and former domestic servant. Wells' family were not wealthy, with an unstable income. When Wells was a child he broke his leg, and while resting he read an enormous amount of books, which inspired him to become a writer. As a teenager, Wells became an apprentice to a draper in order to help support his family financially. Later he became a teacher, before studying biology at university, where he was a member of the Debating Society. He eventually earned a bachelor's degree in Zoology. A short time after this he published his first novel, [The Time Machine](#), in 1895. He published a number of other works in quick succession after, including [The Island of Dr. Moreau](#), [The Invisible Man](#), and [The War of the Worlds](#). One of the most important figures in early science fiction, Wells accurately predicted many of the technological developments that came to occur in the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as major world events such as World War II. He suffered from diabetes, and in 1946 died of unknown causes, possibly a heart attack, at home in London.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During the Age of the Enlightenment in the 18th century, scientific advancements flourished, changing people's attitude to religion and laying the groundwork for the beginnings of a newly secular era. Ideas about God, the universe, and humanity changed at a rapid pace. In the 19th century, major events in the history of science such as the publication of Charles Darwin's [On the Origin of Species](#) (1859), which introduced Darwin's theory of evolution, accelerated this move toward secularism. As well as scientific developments, [The Invisible Man](#) is also, in a less overt manner, related to political authoritarianism, and especially the origins of fascism. In the early 20th century, several fascist movements rose to prominence and power, aiming to give absolute authority to a subgroup of people thought to be superior through violent means. This ideology is reflected in Griffin's plan to carry out a "Reign of Terror" in order to institute "the Epoch of the Invisible Man."

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Other significant works of early science fiction include Mary Shelley's [Frankenstein](#) (1818), which like [The Invisible Man](#) also portrays a scientific experiment that gets out of control, Jules Verne's [Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea](#) (1870), and

Wells' other novels [The Time Machine](#) (1895), [The Island of Dr. Moreau](#) (1896), and [The War of the Worlds](#) (1897). The question of moral philosophy at the heart of [The Invisible Man](#)—whether it is acceptable to commit wrong if one could escape consequences through invisibility (or some other means)—is also explored in Plato's [Republic](#) (380 BC), in the legend of the Ring of Gyges. Like [The Invisible Man](#), Oscar Wilde's [The Picture of Dorian Gray](#) (1890) explores questions of anonymity, immorality, and accountability through telling the story of a man who retains his youthful good looks forever while a painting of him reflects the ugly reality of his wicked soul.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *The Invisible Man: A Grotesque Romance*
- **When Written:** 1897
- **Where Written:** Worcester Park, Southwest London, England
- **When Published:** 1897
- **Literary Period:** Late Victorian Era
- **Genre:** Early science fiction/horror
- **Setting:** Iping and Port Burdock, Sussex, England
- **Climax:** The final fight between Griffin, Colonel Adye, and Doctor Kemp, which ends in Griffin being beaten to death by a mob
- **Antagonist:** Griffin (The Invisible Man)
- **Point of View:** Third person limited narrator

EXTRA CREDIT

Adaptation after Adaptation. [The Invisible Man](#) has been adapted as a movie many times, including as a 1933 science fiction horror film, a 1984 Soviet film, and a six-part BBC adaptation.

Mixed Reception. Some critics dismiss [The Invisible Man](#) as being too comic and silly compared to Wells' other work from this era, while others stress that the novel is an important work vital to the development of the science fiction genre.



PLOT SUMMARY

A strange man (later introduced as Griffin) arrives in Iping and takes lodging at the Coach and Horses Inn. He is completely wrapped up in clothing, which he does not take off even after Mrs. Hall, who runs the inn, lights a fire for him. Mrs. Hall notices that Griffin's face is also wrapped in bandages. Griffin is rude to her, and impatiently asks when he will be able to get his

luggage from the train station. Later that day, Griffin explains that he is an “experimental investigator” and that he needs his equipment.

The following day, the carrier Fearenside brings Griffin’s luggage, which is filled with scientific equipment, handwritten [notebooks](#), and crates of fluids, some of which are labeled *Poison*. Later that day, Mrs. Hall hears the sound of bottles smashing, and when she asks Griffin about this he tells her not to bother him, saying that she can add extra charges to his bill. Griffin stays at the inn for a number of months. He does not attend church or communicate with anyone outside of the village, and only goes out at night. The villagers gossip, inventing many different theories about him. The local doctor, Cuss, visits Griffin at the inn, and is shocked to see that his sleeve is completely empty where an arm should be—yet he still manages to pinch Cuss’s nose.

On the holiday of Whit Monday, Rev. Bunting and Mrs. Bunting wake up to sounds of the vicarage being burgled. They try to catch the robber, but cannot see anyone there. The same morning, Mr. Hall and Mrs. Hall notice that the door to Griffin’s room is open, and his bed is empty. They call Sandy Wadgers, the blacksmith, to change the locks so they can lock Griffin out, but while they are discussing this Griffin emerges from his room (though it had seemed empty before) and goes into the parlor, which he has been using as a personal study. He locks himself in and can be heard shouting and smashing things. Later, Mrs. Hall asks Griffin why he hasn’t paid his bill; when he offers her money, she is suspicious, as just days before he said he didn’t have anything.

When confronted by the villagers at the inn, Griffin takes off his bandages to reveal a “black cavity”—his invisible face. On learning the truth about Griffin, the villagers flee in horror. The local constable, Bobby Jaffers, attempts to arrest Griffin for burgling the vicarage, but fails and Griffin escapes.

Outside of Iping, Griffin seeks the help of a local “tramp,” Thomas Marvel. At first Marvel thinks he’s hallucinating when he hears a disembodied voice talking to him, but Griffin proves that he is real and invisible by throwing stones at him. Amazed, Marvel agrees to help Griffin, and returns to the Coach and Horses, where he seizes some of Griffin’s belongings from his room, including his notebooks. Dr. Cuss and Rev. Bunting had previously looked through the notebooks while Griffin was gone, but couldn’t understand their contents. Mr. Huxter attempts to catch Marvel but fails. Griffin smashes the windows of the inn and cuts the village’s telegraph wire before fleeing. Everyone in Iping is too scared to come out of their houses for two hours.

Marvel tries to quit his role as Griffin’s helper, but Griffin threatens to kill him if he betrays him. The next day, Marvel and Griffin reach the town of Port Stowe, and Marvel strikes up a conversation with a local mariner. The mariner tells him the rumors about the Invisible Man and shows him a newspaper

article about the events in Iping. Marvel boasts that he knows about the Invisible Man from “private sources,” but after Griffin hurts him he goes back on his word and tells the mariner that the whole story is a hoax.

The narrative shifts to a man named Doctor Kemp as he sits in his office, which overlooks the town of Port Burdock. He is dismayed by local gossip about the Invisible Man and the “fools” who believe the story is real. Nearby, Marvel bursts into the Jolly Cricketers pub, explaining in terror that he needs help because the Invisible Man is after him. Griffin enters the pub too and there is a scuffle. One of the men in the pub shoots the air, attempting to hit Griffin.

Doctor Kemp’s doorbell rings, but his servant tells him that no one was there when she answered. Kemp then finds blood on his bedroom door handle and floor. In his bedroom, Griffin speaks to Kemp, and at first Kemp refuses to believe that he is really there. Griffin introduces himself, reminding Kemp that they studied together at University College London. Kemp eventually believes Griffin and gives him food and whiskey. He allows Griffin to sleep in his bedroom, and when he goes to sleep worries that Griffin might be insane and “homicidal.”

The next day, Griffin tells Kemp that years earlier, while researching light and optics, he discovered a way of turning living tissue invisible. He kept his findings to himself, worried that someone would steal them. After spending three years researching invisibility, Griffin realized that he would need money in order to actually conduct the experiment. He stole money from his father that did not actually belong to him, which led his father to shoot himself. Griffin admits that he did not feel guilt or sympathy for his father.

Griffin says he first tested his invisibility experiment on a piece of fabric, and then on his neighbor’s cat. The cat’s pained meowing awoke his landlord, who grew suspicious of Griffin’s activities. Griffin then conducted the experiment on himself, successfully turning himself invisible. Aware of his landlord’s suspicions, he set his apartment on fire and fled. Out in the world, Griffin found it harder than he assumed to be invisible. He regularly bumped into people, was freezing because he could not wear clothes without being seen, and couldn’t eat, as food showed up in his stomach before it was fully digested. He robbed two different stores, but each time got perilously close to being discovered. He was eventually able to rob clothing and other items to disguise himself, wrapping himself up to conceal his invisibility from the world. He eventually traveled to Iping, hoping to continue his scientific research there.

Griffin tells Kemp that he plans to impose a “Reign of Terror,” killing people as he sees fit, in order to institute “the Epoch of the Invisible Man.” He hopes that Kemp will work with him, but Kemp warns him that he is choosing the wrong path. Colonel Adye then arrives at Kemp’s house, and on hearing this, Griffin shouts “Traitor!” and flees. Adye and Kemp warn everyone in the local area about Griffin’s plans, and a manhunt begins. Mr.

Wicksteed, the steward to Lord Burdock, is found murdered on the grounds of Lord Burdock's house. No one knows exactly what happened, but everyone agrees Griffin is responsible.

Griffin attacks Kemp and Adye at Kemp's house, shooting Adye with his own gun. Kemp flees, begging for help from his neighbor Mr. Heelas, who refuses. Kemp runs into town being chased by Griffin. A mob of people descends on Griffin, and although Kemp begs them to have mercy, Griffin is beaten to death. His body becomes visible again as he dies.

In the epilogue, the narrator explains that after Griffin's death, Marvel used the money he stole from him to become a landlord. He is now a respected man in the local area who has a "reputation for wisdom." Sometimes Marvel shares his stories of the Invisible Man with passersby. However, he never reveals that he kept Griffin's notebooks, which he keeps stored secretly and whose contents he does not understand.



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Griffin/The Invisible Man – Griffin is the novel's anti-hero and the titular "Invisible Man." A former medical student at University College London, he never graduated and instead began pursuing research into light and optics. Griffin ended up discovering a way of turning living tissue invisible, and after testing out the experiment on his neighbor's cat he succeeded in performing it on himself. Unlike most scientists, Griffin did not seek the approval or admiration of the scientific community and refused to publish his research. Instead, his quest for invisibility was related to a desire for absolute power, including the ability to commit wrongdoing without consequences. However, once Griffin actually turns himself invisible he realizes that life is not as easy as he imagined it would be, and he struggles to fulfill his basic needs such as eating and seeking shelter. This fills Griffin with bitterness and rage, heightening his already misanthropic nature. Griffin is described as "almost an albino," and the book reveals nothing about his background or childhood, only that after he stole money from his father which did not actually belong to him, his father killed himself. Griffin shows a psychopathic lack of empathy and shame, and a desire to cause harm for the sake of it. He obsessed with power and, in a classic act of hubris, underestimates his own limitations. Among his many acts of violence, he shoots an off-duty policeman and Colonel Adye and kills Mr. Wicksteed. He ends up being killed by a mob of people in Port Burdock, at which point his body becomes visible again.

Mrs. Hall – Mrs. Hall is a woman who lives in [Iping](#) and who runs the Coach and Horses Inn with her husband, Mr. Hall. She is a polite, decent woman who fatefully overlooks Griffin's strange behavior when he promises to pay her more money for his stay. Depending on one's perspective, this arguably makes

her greedy or simply a good business owner. She prides herself on being non-superstitious, and dismisses warning signs about Griffin's invisibility, only believing that he is actually invisible after he reveals it to her himself.

Thomas Marvel – Thomas Marvel is a "tramp" (homeless person) who lives in the Sussex countryside. Griffin strikes up an alliance with him, flattering him by telling him that he has chosen him specially to help him. Marvel is astonished by Griffin's invisibility and agrees to help him too hastily, without pausing to think about the consequences. Later Marvel steals Griffin's [notebooks](#) and money from him, and Griffin almost kills him in response. However, Marvel is able to escape with both the money and notebooks, and after Griffin's death becomes a landlord with a reputation for wisdom in the local area. He keeps his possession of the books secret, treasuring them even though he does not understand their contents.

Doctor Kemp – Doctor Kemp is a medical doctor who lives in Port Burdock. He is tall and fair-haired; he also has a highly rational, even-tempered, non-superstitious disposition. He studied with Griffin at University College London. Griffin ends up breaking into Kemp's house and reintroducing himself to him, telling Kemp the long story of how he came to be invisible and what happened after. Griffin presumes that Kemp will be an ally to him and help him conduct a "Reign of Terror." In reality, Kemp is deeply disturbed by Griffin's immorality and helps to bring Griffin down. Kemp is kind and merciful, as shown by the fact that he tries to stop the mob beating Griffin at the end of the novel, not realizing that it is too late, and Griffin is already dead.

Mr. Wicksteed – Mr. Wicksteed is a man in his forties who uses a walking stick and is known as being a completely "inoffensive" person. He is the steward to Lord Burdock. He is murdered by Griffin, who it seems he may have encountered by accident on the grounds of Lord Burdock's house.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Millie – Millie is Mrs. Hall's incompetent assistant at the Coach and Horses.

Teddy Henfrey – Teddy Henfrey is [Iping](#)'s local clock-fixer, who mends the clock inside the inn's parlor room that Griffin is using as a study room.

Mr. Hall – Mr. Hall is Mrs. Hall's husband. He is more superstitious and timid than his wife, and believes that they should kick out Griffin soon after he arrives at the inn.

Fearenside – Fearenside is the local "carrier" in [Iping](#), meaning that he transports goods around town. He brings Griffin's luggage to the Coach and Horses, and while there Fearenside's dog bites Griffin. Fearenside falsely believes that Griffin is a "piebald," a term for animals with patches of different colored skin.

Dr. Cuss – Dr. Cuss is the local doctor in [Iping](#). He is extremely curious about Griffin.

Rev. Mr. Bunting – Bunting is the local vicar in [Iping](#). He is a kind, friendly man, who is embarrassed by his lack of knowledge of Ancient Greek, which he is supposed to know as a reverend. His vicarage is robbed by Griffin.

Mrs. Bunting – Mrs. Bunting is Bunting’s wife.

Sandy Wadgers – Sandy Wadgers is the local blacksmith in [Iping](#).

Bobby Jaffers – Bobby Jaffers is the local constable (police officer) in [Iping](#).

Gibbins – Gibbins is an amateur naturalist who lives in [Iping](#).

Mr. Huxter – Mr. Huxter is a local man in [Iping](#). He pursues Marvel when he tries to steal Griffin’s belongings.

The Mariner – The mariner has a conversation about the Invisible Man with Thomas Marvel while Marvel is resting in Port Burdock.

Barman – The barman works at the Jolly Cricketers pub in Port Burdock.

The Off-duty Policeman – The off-duty policeman is drinking at the Jolly Cricketers when a fight breaks out with Griffin. Griffin shoots him, but he survives.

Kemp’s Servant – Kemp’s servant, whose name is never given, assists him at his house in Port Burdock.

Colonel Adye – Colonel Adye is a local colonel and friend of Doctor Kemp’s who lives in Port Burdock and helps to bring down Griffin. He is shot by Griffin, but survives.

Griffin’s Father – The book gives little information about Griffin’s father, other than that Griffin stole money from him that did not actually belong to him. Following this theft, Griffin’s father killed himself.

Griffin’s Neighbor – Griffin’s neighbor is an elderly woman whose cat Griffin steals and makes invisible, torturing it in the process.

Griffin’s Landlord – Griffin’s landlord is a Jewish man who grows suspicious of Griffin when he conducts the invisibility experiments in his room.

The Shopkeeper – The shopkeeper is a man who works in a shop on Drury Lane that Griffin breaks into shortly after becoming invisible. Griffin beats him and throws his body down the stairs, before leaving the shop.

Lord Burdock – Lord Burdock is a local aristocrat who only appears in the narrative indirectly through the murder of his steward, Mr. Wicksteed.

Mr. Heelas – Mr. Heelas is Kemp’s next-door neighbor. He is one of the few people who doesn’t believe in the Invisible Man. However, when Kemp comes running to his house claiming he

is being chased by the Invisible Man, Mr. Heelas locks the doors, refusing to help.



THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



FREEDOM, ANONYMITY, AND IMMORALITY

The Invisible Man is a novel concerned with immorality and the question of how humans would

behave if there were no consequences. By turning himself invisible in a scientific experiment, Griffin secures an enormous amount of freedom. When telling the story of how he turned himself invisible to Doctor Kemp, Griffin recalls, “My head was already teeming with all the wild and wonderful things I now had the impunity to do.” The key word here is *impunity*: because he is invisible, Griffin (theoretically) does not face consequences for his actions. He uses this freedom to commit immoral acts, such as burgling the vicarage and shooting a policeman. Through Griffin’s actions, the novel presents a bleak view of human agency, suggesting that if there were no consequences for their actions, many people would choose to commit evil.

Crucially, Griffin does not originally make himself invisible *in order to* commit evil. Rather, he is a former medical student who is interested in scientific experiments, and becomes fascinated by his discovery that it would be possible to make human tissues invisible. Before making himself invisible, he tries to test the invisibility process on his neighbor’s cat first, torturing the animal in the process. He then ultimately leaves the cat to fend for itself and likely die, knowing that he will not have to face any consequences because he is also invisible. Griffin’s invisibility—and the lack of accountability that comes with it—causes him to sacrifice any moral principles he might have had. This is confirmed when Griffin burns down the apartment in which he was staying in order to conceal the evidence of his experiment, before going on a rampage of theft, injury, and, eventually, murder.

Whether or not readers believe Griffin was evil to begin with, the experience of being invisible makes committing immoral acts too tempting to resist. Free from consequence, Griffin burgles shops in London and the [Iping](#) vicarage, shoots a policeman, murders Mr. Wicksteed, and also tries to kill Thomas Marvel and Doctor Kemp. His evil acts culminate in a plan for a “Reign of Terror” that he hopes to inflict on the general public. Having total freedom through invisibility and

anonymity corrupts Griffin to the core. Not only does he lose his moral principles, but he gradually comes to want to inflict terror on complete strangers *en masse*. This suggests that freedom and anonymity can make people more likely to commit immoral acts, and worse, it might inspire them to unleash full-blown chaos.

The novel's exploration of whether invisibility would make people commit immoral acts is a rehashing of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato's examination of this same question in Book 2 of the *Republic*. Plato discusses a mythical artefact named the Ring of Gyges, which makes its wearer invisible. Glaucon (another philosopher engaged in the "dialogue") argues that anyone wearing the ring would commit evil because morality is socially constructed, and thus if there are no social consequences to one's actions, then an act isn't strictly immoral. Socrates disagrees, and points out that anyone who wore the Ring of Gyges and used it to do whatever they wanted without fear of consequences would actually become a slave of their own desires. This lack of control would ultimately harm the wearer.

The Invisible Man reflects Socrates' conclusion. Although Griffin boasts that "an invisible man is a man of power," he does not appear to be very happy or fulfilled by his pursuit of evil. Throughout the novel he is portrayed as being bitter, irritable, and prone to violent rages; never once is he shown to be happy or satisfied with his life as an Invisible Man. Furthermore, the secret of invisibility, along with his crimes, is discovered by various people around him, including Mrs. Hall, Marvel, and Doctor Kemp. Rather than being anonymous and free, a district-wide search is conducted to find Griffin and punish him. The fact that he is ultimately murdered by a mob suggests that it is perhaps not actually possible to commit evil without suffering some kind of consequences in the end.



THE FUTURE VS. THE PAST

The Invisible Man was published in 1897, on the brink of a new century and at a time of enormous societal upheaval. Scientific advancements such as the proliferation of electricity and Charles Darwin's theory of evolution meant that people's lives and belief systems were changing at an incredible pace. As a result, the novel appears to straddle two worlds: the world of the future and that of the past. In the narrative, the future is associated with urban life and middle-to-upper class people, whereas the past is embodied by the lower-class townspeople of Sussex. The social, economic, and educational barriers preventing lower-class people from accessing scientific knowledge and technology suggest that futurity and progress may remain elusive to much of the population even as scientific advancement and societal change as a whole are accelerating.

Broadly speaking, in the novel, the future is represented by Griffin and Doctor Kemp, whereas the past is embodied by the ordinary townspeople of Iping, a village in Sussex. Griffin and Doctor Kemp met as medical students; although Griffin never qualified as a doctor, both men now practice science (whether officially or surreptitiously) and thus represent scientific knowledge, experimentation, and technological advancement. Furthermore, both are of a higher class status than the other characters and are associated with urbanity, as both hail from London.

In contrast, the people of Iping are provincial and somewhat "backward." Indeed, when Doctor Kemp arrives in Iping and hears the rumors about the Invisible Man, he reflects: "One might think we were in the thirteenth century." The townspeople are not well-educated and are of a lower class, as seen by their accents and dialect. The contrast between Griffin and Kemp with the townspeople suggests that the future will be more urban than rural, and will be dominated by scientific knowledge and technological advancement. This reflected (accurate) predictions at the time *The Invisible Man* was published about what the twentieth century would hold.

The townspeople's lack of economic, social, and educational privilege means that they are ignorant of the scientific advancements with which Griffin and Doctor Kemp are familiar. This indicates that they may be "left behind" in an increasingly technologically advanced world. Some townspeople, such as Mrs. Hall, pretend to understand Griffin and the work that he conducts in order to appear smart. However, the chaos and confusion caused by Griffin's arrival in Iping results from the fact that Mrs. Hall and the other townspeople do not understand him and the scientific experiments that have rendered him invisible.

The issue of class tensions come to a head in the relationship between Griffin and Thomas Marvel, a "tramp." Griffin enlists Marvel to help him, promising him special rewards that he will be able to obtain through his invisibility. He takes advantage of Marvel's vulnerable status, and when Marvel tries to turn him into the police, Griffin attempts to kill him. The fact that Griffin is invisible astonishes Marvel and makes him agree to serve Griffin. Due to his poverty and lack of education, Marvel is completely powerless compared to Griffin, and Griffin deliberately chooses Marvel as an accomplice because he knows that Marvel is vulnerable. This episode demonstrates how technological advancement in the future may be used to further exploit and oppress vulnerable populations.

The novel ends on an ambivalent note regarding the future and the past, particularly as they are related to different social classes. It is revealed that Marvel remains in possession of Griffin's [notebooks](#), which contain the instructions to make a person invisible. Although at this point Marvel "has a reputation for wisdom" within the village, he cannot understand the notes, as they have been written in code. As such, there remains a

barrier between Marvel and the information that would give him access to “the future”—a future of scientific knowledge and advancement.



GREED AND SELF-INTEREST

In some ways *The Invisible Man* is a didactic novel akin to a parable, meaning that it seeks to impart a moral message to the reader. Indeed, this message comes in the form of a warning about certain immoral behaviors, most notably greed and self-interest. These are mostly embodied by the anti-hero, Griffin, who turns himself invisible in order to gain power and glory, but also by other characters, such as Mrs. Hall and Thomas Marvel, who put themselves in dangerous situations because they believe they will profit from them. Greed and self-interest are problematic because they override morality and reason. The fact that several different characters in the novel succumb to greedy, self-centered behavior suggests that these are common human flaws that all people must be vigilant against. By showing the dangerous consequences that can result from greed and self-interest, the novel warns readers not to succumb to these vices.

Griffin’s character trajectory shows that greed and self-interest are seductive, corrupting forces. Griffin’s initial interest in invisibility is a scientific one; he approaches the topic with a researcher’s mindset, curious if it would be possible to truly make living things become invisible. He believes that invisibility will confer “advantages,” but does not pursue it for this reason alone. Once he starts thinking about the possibilities that invisibility affords him, however, he quickly becomes greedy, selfish, and obsessed with power. He tells Doctor Kemp that soon after becoming invisible, he planned to “take my money where I found it” and “treat myself to a sumptuous feast [...] put up at a good hotel, and accumulate a new outfit of property.”

Yet Griffin finds that ultimately these things do not satisfy him. Furthermore, he runs into practical problems, such as the issue that when he eats, the food he consumes is visible inside him, thereby jeopardizing his invisibility. The visibility of the food is a metaphor for the limitations of bottomless greed and consumption. Griffin hopes that being invisible will allow him to steal and manipulate his way into endless property and fortune, but in reality, such a thing is not possible. Instead it corrupts him, causing him to act in increasingly rash and destructive ways, while never making him satisfied.

Although Griffin is the character most strongly associated with greed and self-interest, other characters possess these flaws too. For example, Mrs. Hall is kind and friendly, but she is also greedy. This ultimately causes her to overlook Griffin’s strange behavior, which endangers herself and her inn. While reflecting on Griffin’s suspicious and rude manner, she concludes: “He may be a bit overbearing, but bills settled punctual is bills settled punctual.” It turns out that in order to pay his bill, Griffin

robbed the vicarage, proving Mrs. Hall’s adage wrong. If money is obtained by immoral means, then surely it is not all the same—yet Mrs. Hall’s greed blinds her to this reality.

Similarly, Thomas Marvel’s greed allows him to be seduced by Griffin’s offers of rewards for helping him. Griffin promises that he will “do great things for you,” telling Marvel that “an Invisible Man is a man of power.” He begins to warn Marvel about the consequences if he betrays him, but Marvel is so excited by the prospect of the “great things” Griffin promises that he cuts him off. In ignoring Griffin’s warnings, he endangers himself—a mistake that, later in the novel, almost gets him killed. While different characters in the novel exhibit the traits of greed and self-interest to different extents, in each case the greed and self-interest are shown to be seductive, but ultimately dangerous traits that will lead to self-sabotage and potentially fatal consequences.



SKEPTICISM VS. BELIEF

Following Griffin’s experiences as the Invisible Man, the novel tests the extent to which it is believable for a man to actually turn invisible, and how people would react if this were actually to happen. While scientific ways of thinking tend to encourage skepticism over faith, the novel suggests that sometimes faith is necessary and advantageous. This is mostly shown through the different reactions of the townspeople to the Invisible Man. While those who believe that the Invisible Man actually exists turn out to be right, the novel does not suggest that faith is automatically a correct, advantageous reaction. For example, Fearenside’s faith that Griffin is a “piebald” (mixed-race) is based on Fearenside’s mistaken confidence in his own erroneous, racist beliefs. On the other hand, the novel does show that faith can lead people to correctly interpret situations. Believing that Griffin is indeed invisible takes a leap of faith from everyone he meets, yet it is a correct belief (and a pragmatic one, as being overly skeptical of Griffin’s invisibility makes people vulnerable to being taken advantage of by him). Furthermore, the novel also suggests that scientific thought involves both skepticism *and* belief, such as when one is confronted with new scientific discoveries and advancements that did not previously seem possible. In order to understand and thrive within a technologically advanced world, people must retain both skepticism and belief.

From the moment Griffin arrives at the Coach and Horses Inn, he behaves in a bizarre manner. He refuses to take off his clothes, wears strange goggles, and gets irrationally angry when anyone disturbs him. Mrs. Hall finds this behavior odd, but chooses not to investigate. At first, she believes Griffin’s story that he was disfigured in an accident. Later, as the true nature of his situation is gradually revealed, her skepticism prevents her from believing that he is actually invisible, even as it becomes increasingly obvious that this is the case. Only when Griffin has already wreaked chaos does Mrs. Hall finally come

to believe that he truly is invisible. Mrs. Hall's difficulty in balancing skepticism and belief allows Griffin to exploit her. Indeed, when Griffin's invisibility is revealed to a group of townspeople, they cannot believe that it is actually real because it strays so far from what they have previously experienced. The narrator observes: "They were prepared for scars, disfigurements, tangible horrors, but nothing!" This quotation highlights the way people's capacity for belief is limited by their existing experience and perceptions. While this makes sense, it can also prevent people from comprehending new situations. This is particularly problematic given the technological advancements that were proliferating at the time the novel was written. Such advancements mean that the characters cannot afford to be skeptical about phenomena just because they have never personally experienced them before.

Eventually almost everyone in the novel comes to believe that Griffin is invisible after being confronted with enough evidence of his invisibility. This evidence takes different forms; some people, such as the mariner, believe in the Invisible Man simply after reading a newspaper article about him. Other people, such as Doctor Kemp, require actually touching Griffin's invisible body in order to believe that he is invisible. Again, the novel emphasizes that it is important not to require too much or too little evidence in order to get over one's skepticism and have belief. Having faith on too little evidence can lead people to believe untrue things, such as Fearenside's belief that Griffin is a "piebald." On the other hand, waiting until there is too much evidence at times puts one in danger, as is true of Mrs. Hall and Doctor Kemp.

The concept of invisibility also links to issues of religious belief and skepticism. Religious belief requires trusting that God is real despite the fact that he is not visible. At the time the novel was published, society was undergoing a profound shift in which scientific skepticism was displacing religious faith. In *The Invisible Man*, this shift appears with an unexpected twist. Griffin has turned invisible through scientific innovation, not through any supernatural power. Because he is the first man in the world to achieve this, the townspeople initially must rely on faith in order to believe that he is actually invisible. In this sense, Griffin is akin to a strange version of God, a figure who has achieved mastery over nature, who is invisible, and who is only believed to be real by those who have faith. The novel does not comment directly on religion or give an indication of whether belief in God is legitimate. However, through Griffin's invisibility, it suggests that believing in invisible, unfathomable things is not necessarily irrational.



HUMANS, SCIENCE, AND NATURE

The Invisible Man explores humanity's increasing ability to manipulate nature through science, including significant manipulations of the human body. At the end of the nineteenth century, medical advances

meant that human corporeal (embodied) experience was changing rapidly, and early science fiction writers such as H.G. Wells were keen to explore where these new possibilities could lead. Advancements in medical technology led to the elimination of diseases, a better understanding of human psychology, the emergence of birth control, and other major advances. In chronicling Griffin's experience as an invisible man (the result of a science experiment), Wells emphasizes the extraordinary power of science, but also the danger inherent within this power. The novel suggests that meddling with nature and the human body in too extreme a manner can have catastrophic consequences for humanity. Indeed, while Griffin's achievement of rendering himself invisible is remarkable, his attempt to achieve mastery over nature ultimately fails, a conclusion that emphasizes the limits of human power against nature.

Prior to actually turning himself invisible, Griffin is highly optimistic about the process, and is thrilled when he realizes—both through the experiment on the cat and on himself—that it is actually possible to turn living organisms invisible. The scientific explanation of how this he achieves this, though not entirely realistic, demonstrates that the novel fits within the genre of science fiction. Wells makes Griffin's attempt at invisibility seem scientifically plausible.

This sense of plausibility serves as a kind of warning about the power and possibilities of science. While a horror story about a man who magically turns invisible would be creepy, the scientific underpinnings of *The Invisible Man* link Griffin's story to the actual social reality of the time the novel was published. At the time, scientific advancements were drastically changing society at a fast rate, such that things previously thought to be impossible were suddenly becoming possible. This created a widespread sense of awe and uncertainty about the lengths to which scientific advancement could be taken, and how this would impact society. Griffin's profound scientific achievement—turning himself invisible—serves as a meditation on the power of science and a warning about what can happen when this power is misused.

Once Griffin actually becomes invisible, he realizes that he did not think through all the consequences and limitations of his invisibility. He realizes that he cannot eat anything (food is visible in his stomach), and that he cannot go outside in the snow, rain, or fog: "Rain, too, would make me a watery outline, a glistening surface of a man [...] and fog—I should be like a fainter bubble in a fog, a surface, a greasy glimmer of humanity." Griffin's self-description as a "greasy glimmer of humanity" here reveals not only the practical problem of the different ways he can be rendered visible, but also the fact that he has altered the very nature of humanity through his experiment. Griffin quickly realizes that he will need to don clothes in order to go outside and not starve to death, and this fact emphasizes the limitations of scientific alteration of the human body. While

humans may be able to manipulate nature in remarkable ways through science and technology, humanity must be cautious about this ability, due to its inherent limitations and potentially catastrophic consequences.



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in [blue text](#) throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



IPING

Iping is a real village in West Sussex, in the English countryside. After turning himself invisible and leaving London, Griffin travels to Iping in hopes of isolating himself and focusing on his work. In contrast to the business, affluence, pollution, and anonymity that characterize life in London, Iping is quiet, rural, and provincial. The villagers are relatively poor and uneducated, and Griffin has a disdainful view of them, calling them “fools.” On one level, the novel’s portrayal of Iping is not entirely positive. For example, Iping is shown to be a place dominated by gossip and superstition. On the other hand, the residents of Iping embody values that have arguably been lost in the transition to modern, secular, urban life. Residents of the village look out for and take care of each other; there is an atmosphere of communal unity, with everyone feeling a sense of responsibility for everyone else. There is a contrast between this communality and Griffin’s self-imposed isolation. Echoing Doctor Kemp’s advice to Griffin, the novel suggests that acting as a “lone wolf” is not the right way to have a successful or happy life. Griffin may be poor and provincial, but it is also shown to have important good qualities, representing the value of the past and rural life that is often scorned by those looking only towards the future and urbanity.



GRIFFIN'S NOTEBOOKS

Griffin’s notebooks are his only record of his scientific theories and experiments. They are written in “cipher,” or code. Griffin is highly protective of them, both because he values the information inside and because he is worried that other people will find it and take credit for his findings themselves. Crucially, Griffin refuses to publish them himself. He does not seek recognition for making himself invisible within the academic community; rather, he wants a broader kind of glory and fame from the world at large. Although he uses his invisibility to steal money and items such as food and clothing, Griffin’s notebooks are the only possessions he seems to truly value. This is why he is so devastated when they fall into the hands of Marvel, resolving to get them back at any cost (even if this means killing Marvel). Griffin is ultimately unsuccessful in this mission, and is killed

before he can get the notebooks back. At the end of the novel it is revealed that they remain in Marvel’s possession, although he cannot read them. The notebooks thus come to symbolize both scientific advancement and the ways in which many ordinary people are prevented from accessing scientific knowledge.



QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Borzoi edition of *The Time Machine*, *The Invisible Man*, *The War of the Worlds* published in 2010.

Chapter 2 Quotes

☝☝ She was all the more inclined to snap at Hall because the stranger was undoubtedly an unusually strange sort of stranger, and she was by no means assured about him in her own mind. In the middle of the night she woke up dreaming of huge white heads like turnips, that came trailing after her at the end of interminable necks, and with vast black eyes. But being a sensible woman, she subdued her terrors and turned over and went to sleep again.

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man , Mrs. Hall, Mr. Hall

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 103

Explanation and Analysis

In the village, Mr. Hall runs into Teddy Henfrey, who tells him about the strange man (Griffin) who has just arrived at the Coach and Horses inn. Henfrey warns Hall that Mrs. Hall is too trusting of the stranger, and thus when he gets home Hall tells his wife to exercise more scrutiny. She tells Hall to mind his business, but that night has a frightening dream. The phrase “an unusually strange sort of stranger” points to the relationship between unfamiliarity, eeriness, and distrust. At this point in the novel, we don’t know whether Griffin is simply different from Mrs. Hall and the other residents of Iping, or whether there is indeed something seriously weird and sinister about him.

Mr. Hall clearly believes that there is something distrustful about Griffin, but it is ambiguous whether this is because Mr. Hall is a good judge of character or whether he is simply superstitious and narrow-minded. Mrs. Hall seems to pride herself on not giving into superstition, as is shown at the end of this passage. Rather than taking Griffin’s strangeness and her creepy dream as a sign that bad things are to come, Mrs. Hall ignores these indications and goes back to sleep.

Given the events that take place in the rest of the novel, however, it is unclear whether she was wise or foolish to make this decision.

Chapter 4 Quotes

☝ There were a number of skirmishes with Mrs. Hall on matters of domestic discipline, but in every case until late in April, when the first signs of penury began, he overrode her by the easy expedient of an extra payment. Hall did not like him, and whenever he dared he talked of the advisability of getting rid of him; but he showed his dislike chiefly by concealing it ostentatiously, and avoiding his visitor as much as possible. “Wait till the summer,” said Mrs. Hall, sagely, “when the artisks are beginning to come. Then we’ll see. He may be a bit overbearing, but bills settled punctual is bills settled punctual, whatever you like to say.”

Related Characters: Mrs. Hall (speaker), Griffin/The Invisible Man, Mr. Hall

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 109

Explanation and Analysis

The narrator has explained that after the initial dramatic incidents during Griffin’s arrival in Iping, his stay proceeds somewhat smoothly. The only exception is the fights that occur between him and Mrs. Hall, which are described in this passage. While Hall is certain about his dislike of Griffin, his wife is more inclined to overlook the difficulties Griffin is causing her by thinking of the money she will gain from his presence. On one level, this simply makes her an efficient business owner—her attitude that “bills settled punctual is bills settled punctual” is helpful for generating profit. At the same time, it is also possible to interpret this attitude as an indication that Mrs. Hall is blinded by greed. The fact that Griffin is causing so much trouble now should really indicate that he will not pay his bills punctually after all.

☝ The stranger did not go to church, and indeed made no difference between Sunday and the irreligious days, even in costume. He worked, as Mrs. Hall thought, very fitfully. Some days he would come down ready and be continuously busy. On others he would rise late, pace his room, fretting audibly for hours together, smoke, sleep in the armchair by the fire. Communication with the world beyond the village he had none.

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man, Mrs. Hall

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 109

Explanation and Analysis

The narrator has explained that aside from occasional fights with Mrs. Hall, Griffin’s stay at the Coach and Horses was mostly ordinary. Here the narrator describes Griffin in a way that emphasizes how different he is from the residents of Iping. Unlike the villagers, Griffin is not religious, a fact that emphasizes the association between him and a secular, scientific, urban vision of the future. Even beyond his lack of religious belief, Griffin does not appear to embody any of the values that the people of Iping hold. He is isolated and antisocial, whereas the people in Iping live a communal existence. It is clear that Griffin’s entire life revolves around scientific research, which is also strange to the people of Iping, who have little scientific education.

☝ It was inevitable that a person of so remarkable an appearance and bearing should form a frequent topic in such a village as Iping. Opinion was greatly divided about his occupation. Mrs. Hall was sensitive on the point. When questioned, she explained very carefully that he was an “experimental investigator,” going gingerly over the syllables as one who dreads pitfalls. When asked what an experimental investigator was, she would say with a touch of superiority that most educated people knew that, and would then explain that he “discovered things”. Her visitor had had an accident, she said, which temporarily discoloured his face and hands; and being of a sensitive disposition, he was averse to any public notice of the fact.

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man, Mrs. Hall

Related Themes:     

Page Number: 110

Explanation and Analysis

The narrator has explained that Griffin does not attend church or correspond with people outside the village. He only goes outside after dark, and does so completely wrapped up in clothes and bandages. The people of Iping are fascinated by Griffin’s unusual behavior, and devote much time to gossiping about him. This passage emphasizes that the villagers are baffled by Griffin—even those, such as Mrs. Hall, who claim authoritative knowledge about him.

Again, Mrs. Hall is shown to be somewhat self-interested; she wants other people to think she is smart even though in reality she doesn't seem to understand Griffin or his work at all. At the same time, her estimations that Griffin is someone who "discover[s] things" and that he discolored himself in an accident are in fact not very far from the truth.

Chapter 7 Quotes

☞ "You don't understand," he said, "who I am or what I am. I'll show you. By Heaven! I'll show you." Then he put his open palm over his face and withdrew it. The centre of his face became a black cavity. "Here," he said. He stepped forward and handed Mrs. Hall something which she, staring at his metamorphosed face, accepted automatically. Then, when she saw what it was, she screamed loudly, dropped it, and staggered back. The nose—it was the stranger's nose! pink and shining—rolled on the floor.

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man (speaker), Mrs. Hall

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 124

Explanation and Analysis

After the burglary at the vicarage, Griffin behaves strangely, which leads Mrs. Hall to suspect that he is responsible for the robbery. She confronts him about his suspicious behavior, and Griffin, infuriated, tells her she doesn't understand who he is. Although Griffin has been taken pains to conceal his invisibility, this passage shows that he is also tempted to boast about it and reveal Mrs. Hall's own ignorance to her. Indeed, Griffin's desire for glory is one of his fatal flaws. He wants other people to admire and marvel at him, even as he also tries to keep his discovery a secret.

The surreal description of the "black cavity" where Griffin's face should be and the image of his nose dropping to the floor evoke a sense of eeriness and horror. The contrast between the "black cavity" and "pink and shining" nose emphasizes how distinctly unnatural Griffin's appearance is, suggesting that he has taken the scientific manipulation of human nature to a frightening, dangerous extent.

Chapter 9 Quotes

☞ "I've chosen you," said the Voice. "You are the only man except some of those fools down there, who knows there is such a thing as an invisible man. You have to be my helper. Help me—and I will do great things for you. An invisible man is a man of power." He stopped for a moment to sneeze violently. "But if you betray me," he said, "if you fail to do as I direct you—" He paused and tapped Mr. Marvel's shoulder smartly. Mr. Marvel gave a yelp of terror at the touch. "I don't want to betray you," said Mr. Marvel, edging away from the direction of the fingers. "Don't you go a-thinking that, whatever you do. All I want to do is to help you—just tell me what I got to do. (Lord!) Whatever you want done, that I'm most willing to do."

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man, Thomas Marvel (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 135-136

Explanation and Analysis

Having fled Iping after Jaffers tried to arrest him, Griffin comes across Thomas Marvel, a tramp. He begins speaking to Marvel, and at first Marvel thinks he is drunk or has gone insane. However, Griffin eventually explains that he is invisible, and tells Marvel he has chosen him specially to help him. It is clear from this passage that Griffin is manipulating Marvel, flattering him and promising him advantages in exchange for help. In reality, Griffin does not think that Marvel is special at all—in fact, he has chosen him specifically because of Marvel's powerlessness and vulnerability.

Griffin's boast that "an Invisible Man is a man of power" demonstrates how he approaches his experimentation with invisibility as a purely self-interested project. Rather than advancing scientific knowledge and technology, Griffin only wants to gain power and advantage for himself. Meanwhile, Marvel is also shown to be short-sighted here. He eagerly accepts his position of subservience and agrees to help Griffin without waiting to hear what Griffin is threatening to do to him (or what he wants Marvel to do for him). He hears Griffin promising him "great things" and immediately agrees to help him without considering the consequences.

Chapter 10 Quotes

☞☞ After the first gusty panic had spent itself Iping became argumentative. Scepticism suddenly reared its head,—rather nervous skepticism, not at all assured of its back, but skepticism nevertheless. It is so much easier not to believe in an invisible man; and those who had actually seen him dissolve into air, or felt the strength of his arm, could be counted on the fingers of two hands. And of these witnesses Mr. Wadgers was presently missing, having retired impregnably behind the bolts and bars of his own house, and Jaffers was lying stunned in the parlour of the Coach and Horses. Great and strange ideas transcending experience often have less effect upon men and women than smaller, more tangible considerations.

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man , Sandy Wadgers

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 137

Explanation and Analysis

A group of Iping residents have attempted to help Jaffers arrest Griffin for burgling the vicarage. However, Griffin gets away, leaving the villagers in a newly intensified state of confusion about the stranger among them. In this passage, the narrator explains that many in Iping are skeptical that Griffin is truly invisible, because “it is so much easier not to believe in an invisible man.” This statement is rather comic, but also somewhat provocative. Unlike faith, skepticism involves resisting what one is told to believe, and is often associated with a more rational, intellectual approach to the world.

However, this passage questions this interpretation of the relationship between skepticism and belief by suggesting that skepticism can in fact be *easier* than belief. In the world of the novel, scientific advances have made something transpire that the residents of Iping have never seen before and thus don’t believe is impossible. It is easier for them not to believe it than to try and understand that invisibility has in fact become a reality. This proves that science sometimes actually requires faith, as it involves accepting things that one previously did not understand or think possible. Such a message challenges the opposition of science and (religious) belief—indeed, the phrase “it is so much easier not to believe in an invisible man” could also be understood as a statement on the nature of religious belief, which also revolves around having faith in the unseen.

Chapter 14 Quotes

☞☞ And just think of the things he might do! Where'd you be, if he took a drop over and above, and had a fancy to go for you? Suppose he wants to rob—who can prevent him? He can trespass, he can burgle, he could walk through a cordon of policemen as easy as me or you could give the slip to a blind man! Easier! For these here blind chaps hear uncommon sharp, I'm told.

Related Characters: The Mariner (speaker), Griffin/The Invisible Man , Thomas Marvel

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 154

Explanation and Analysis

Thomas Marvel (and an unseen Griffin) have walked to Port Stowe, where Marvel sits down and begins talking to a mariner. The mariner shows him a newspaper article about the carnage caused by the Invisible Man in Iping. The mariner says he’s heard that the Invisible Man is heading to Port Stowe, and says he hopes that he doesn’t encounter him. The mariner’s thoughts about the advantages of invisibility show that most people’s first instinct when considering invisibility is to think of the selfish and immoral acts that invisibility makes possible. While Griffin is exceptional for being the most villainous figure in the book, he is not alone in fantasizing about the immoral acts it would be possible to commit if one were able to escape the consequences.

Chapter 15 Quotes

☞☞ “Another of those fools,” said Doctor Kemp. “Like that ass who ran into me this morning round a corner, with his “Visible Man a-coming, sir! I can't imagine what possesses people. One might think we were in the thirteenth century.”

Related Characters: Doctor Kemp (speaker), Griffin/The Invisible Man

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 158

Explanation and Analysis

Doctor Kemp is sitting in his study, surrounded by scientific publications. He is looking out at the window when he spots a short figure running through the field. Kemp’s reaction to the figure reveals his disdain for the local people of Port

Burdock, who he believes to be uneducated, superstitious, provincial, and so backwards that they might as well be in “the thirteenth century.” This passage thus illuminates the tension between the future and past. As university-educated scientists from London, Doctor Kemp and Griffin are associated with an urban, upper-middle class, affluent, secular, and highly-educated future. They see the rural people of the countryside, who are poorer, less educated, and more religious, as relics from a previous era.

This is clearly a prejudiced mindset, and one that this passage hints is in fact misguided. Doctor Kemp assumes that the running figure and others who believe in the invisible man are “fools.” Of course, in actuality these “fools” are correct to believe that Griffin is invisible. Indeed, rather than thirteenth-century style superstition, belief in the invisible man actually constitutes acceptance of the possibilities engendered by science and technology.

Chapter 17 Quotes

☝☝ All men, however highly educated, retain some superstitious inklings. The feeling that is called “eerie” came upon him.

Related Characters: Doctor Kemp

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 166

Explanation and Analysis

Doctor Kemp has witnessed the commotion outside the Jolly Cricketers pub from the window of his study. He stays working until 2 am, and then heads downstairs to bed. He notices blood on the door handle to his bedroom and in various spots around the room. He then hears a voice say his name, and at first dismisses this, as he does not believe in voices. Whereas another man might have been immediately inclined to believe that the sound of the voice belonged to a ghost or other supernatural figure, Kemp’s skepticism means that it takes a long time for him to accept that the voice is really there. At the same time, as this quotation shows, no person is entirely free from superstition. Regardless of whether or not one is highly educated or even a professional scientist, every human mind is defined by a mix of skepticism and belief.

Chapter 19 Quotes

☝☝ “One could make an animal—a tissue—transparent! One could make it invisible! All except the pigments. I could be invisible!” I said, suddenly realizing what it meant to be an albino with such knowledge. It was overwhelming. I left the filtering I was doing, and went and stared out of the great window at the stars. “I could be invisible!” I repeated. “To do such a thing would be to transcend magic. And I beheld, unclouded by doubt, a magnificent vision of all that invisibility might mean to a man,—the mystery, the power, the freedom. Drawbacks I saw none. You have only to think! And I, a shabby, poverty-struck, hemmed-in demonstrator, teaching fools in a provincial college, might suddenly become—this. I ask you, Kemp, if you—Anyone, I tell you, would have flung himself upon that research.”

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man (speaker), Doctor Kemp

Related Themes:     

Page Number: 180

Explanation and Analysis

On Kemp’s request, Griffin has been explaining how he eventually made the discovery of turning himself invisible. He explained that he abandoned his studies in medicine and switched to physics, because he had always been fascinated by light and optics. He started developing theories and conducting experiments, but kept his work a secret because he was worried about other people stealing it. Here Griffin describes his astonishment when he finally realized that it would be possible to turn himself invisible. It is notable that he describes this achievement as akin to “transcend[ing] magic.” This suggests both that science is a kind of magic and that scientific possibilities are even better and more impressive than magic.

This passage also reveals Griffin’s short-sightedness, and how this is related to his greed and self-interest. At the time Griffin discovers that he can turn himself invisible, he is “shabby” and “poverty-struck,” “teaching fools in a provincial college.” Not only is Griffin struggling in a material sense, but he is also embarrassed by his lack of recognition and status. He perceives invisibility as a way to reverse this low status, and becomes drunk on the power he believes he will have. Indeed, his obsession with this power means that he doesn’t pause to consider the potential disadvantages of invisibility, which leads to his own suffering and eventual downfall.

Chapter 21 Quotes

☞☞ My mood, I say, was one of exaltation. I felt as a seeing man might do, with padded feet and noiseless clothes, in a city of the blind. I experienced a wild impulse to jest, to startle people, to clap men on the back, fling people's hats astray, and generally revel in my extraordinary advantage.

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man (speaker), Doctor Kemp

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 190

Explanation and Analysis

Griffin has been telling Kemp the story of how he originally turned himself invisible. After testing his ability to turn things invisible on a piece of fabric and a cat, Griffin successfully used the experiment on himself. His landlord and neighbors grew suspicious of his behavior, and Griffin set fire to his apartment before fleeing in order to cover his tracks. Despite the chaos and destruction that accompanied turning himself invisible, Griffin feels overjoyed when he finally gets out into the city.

His mind immediately turns to the possibilities that are available to him now that he won't have to face any consequences for his actions. It is telling that he is most tempted to commit acts of petty nuisance. His first impulse isn't to steal or commit other illegal acts for his own benefit, but rather to confuse and annoy people for no reason at all. This is evidence of Griffin's rather destructive personality, and perhaps also of the lure of forbidden behavior.

Chapter 23 Quotes

☞☞ “But you begin to realize now,” said the Invisible Man, “the full disadvantage of my condition. I had no shelter, no covering. To get clothing was to forgo all my advantage, to make of myself a strange and terrible thing. I was fasting; for to eat, to fill myself with unassimilated matter, would be to become grotesquely visible again.” “I never thought of that,” said Kemp. “Nor had I.”

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man, Doctor Kemp (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 201

Explanation and Analysis

Griffin is recounting to Doctor Kemp the story of when he first made himself invisible in London. Before becoming invisible, Griffin only thought of all the opportunities that invisibility would bring; however, once he actually succeeded in his experiment, he struggled to provide himself with basic necessities such as accommodation, food, and money. Here he confesses to Kemp that he did not think about these issues before turning himself invisible, and Kemp admits that he would not have thought of them either. This passage reveals the limits of human reasoning. Both Griffin and Kemp are well-educated and, as scientists, part of their job is to predict the consequences of experiments. In this case, however, Griffin did not properly think through what the consequences of invisibility would be.

☞☞ I could not go abroad in snow—it would settle on me and expose me. Rain, too, would make me a watery outline, a glistening surface of a man—a bubble. And fog—I should be like a fainter bubble in a fog, a surface, a greasy glimmer of humanity. Moreover, as I went abroad—in the London air—I gathered dirt about my ankles, floating smuts and dust upon my skin. I did not know how long it would be before I should become visible from that cause also. But I saw clearly it could not be for long.

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man (speaker), Doctor Kemp

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 201

Explanation and Analysis

Griffin has been explaining to Kemp all the limitations of invisibility he discovered once he actually made himself invisible. As well as the issues of food, shelter, and clothing, Griffin also struggled with the fact that certain atmospheric conditions would render him visible. On one level, this passage shows the fruitlessness of human attempts to gain power over nature. Although Griffin has successfully turned himself invisible, a natural phenomenon as simple as rain or fog thwarts this invisibility.

Furthermore, Griffin's phrase “a greasy glimmer of humanity” and his discussion of the problem of dirt suggest that his experiment is an example of scientific power being taken too far. The dirt in London is caused by the technology of the fossil fuel-powered Industrial Revolution. The

pollution created by this technology sullies the natural world in a very literal manner. Similarly, Griffin's experiment can be seen as a way of messing up the natural order. In drifting so far from nature, Griffin dehumanizes himself, becoming only a "greasy glimmer of humanity."

“You don't blame me, do you? You don't blame me?” “I never blame anyone,” said Kemp. “It's quite out of fashion. What did you do next?”

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man , Doctor Kemp (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 206

Explanation and Analysis

Griffin has been telling Kemp about his attempts to secure food, money, and clothing just after he made himself invisible. He admits that he knocked out a shopkeeper who had been suspiciously pursuing him, before throwing the shopkeeper down the stairs, gagging him, and tying him up. Kemp reacts in horror, which leads Griffin to protest that he didn't have a choice, and to ask if Kemp blames him for what he has done. Kemp's reply that it is "out of fashion" to blame people for their actions points to the secular trend of perceiving wrongdoing as a matter of social conditioning, rather than a problem of individual responsibility and sin.

Kemp appears to agree with this line of thinking, although it is not clear how much he earnestly he believes in it versus how much he practices it simply because it is in "fashion" —or if he is simply claiming that he does not blame Griffin for his actions in order to keep himself safe in this moment. Later events suggest that in fact Kemp was judging Griffin for his immoral behavior the entire time.

“I thought my troubles were over. Practically I thought I had impunity to do whatever I chose, everything—save to give away my secret. So I thought. Whatever I did, whatever the consequences might be, was nothing to me. I had merely to fling aside my garments and vanish. No person could hold me. I could take my money where I found it. I decided to treat myself to a sumptuous feast, and then put up at a good hotel, and accumulate a new outfit of property. I felt amazingly confident,—it's not particularly pleasant recalling that I was an ass. I went into a place and was already ordering a lunch, when it occurred to me that I could not eat unless I exposed my invisible face. I finished ordering the lunch, told the man I should be back in ten minutes, and went out exasperated. I don't know if you have ever been disappointed in your appetite.”

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man (speaker), Doctor Kemp

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 207

Explanation and Analysis

Griffin has told Doctor Kemp about how, after many failed attempts, he managed to secure a mask, fake nose, wig, and clothing in order to be able to move through the world without people realizing he was invisible. For a brief time he was elated, believing that his struggles were finally over. However, once again Griffin was short-sighted; his own greed and fantasies of power blinded him to simple truths, such as the fact that he would not be able to eat in public without revealing himself to be invisible.

Once again, Griffin is shown to be fatally hindered by his own self-interest and inability to properly think through the consequences of his actions. He believes that he can achieve power and control over nature, when in fact the most simple and obvious natural facts—such as the human need for nutrition—end up thwarting him. While Griffin made himself invisible in order to achieve absolute freedom, once he actually becomes invisible he finds that his freedom is even more severely restricted than it was when he was an ordinary, visible person.

Chapter 24 Quotes

☛☛ Not wanton killing, but a judicious slaying. The point is, they know there is an Invisible Man—as well as we know there is an Invisible Man. And that Invisible Man, Kemp, must now establish a Reign of Terror. Yes—no doubt it's startling. But I mean it. A Reign of Terror. He must take some town like your Burdock and terrify and dominate it. He must issue his orders. He can do that in a thousand ways—scraps of paper thrust under doors would suffice. And all who disobey his orders he must kill, and kill all who would defend the disobedient.

Related Characters: Griffin/The Invisible Man (speaker), Doctor Kemp

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 212

Explanation and Analysis

Griffin has finished telling Doctor Kemp his story about when he first became invisible in London, and all the struggles that ensued after that point. He has explained why he first came to Iping and how angry he is that Marvel ruined his plans. Griffin then tells Doctor Kemp that invisibility can help him commit murder without being caught, and emphasizes that they must kill. Kemp protests, and Griffin replies that he is thinking of “judicious slaying” rather than “wanton killing.” Of course, this distinction is actually meaningless. Griffin rationalizes the murders he is planning as necessary, but the ultimate aim of them is only to increase his own power.

It is at this point that Griffin is most clearly revealed to be an evil megalomaniac with no conscience. Indeed, his words in this passage are rather fascistic; he believes that it is necessary to inflict a “Reign of Terror” in order to subdue the local population into absolute obedience. In this sense, Griffin’s words foreshadow the ideologies of the fascist regimes that were to come to power in the 20th century.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1: THE STRANGE MAN'S ARRIVAL

A stranger (Griffin) arrives at Bramblehurst station on a snowy February day. He is completely wrapped up in clothing, so only the tip of his nose can be seen. He arrives at the Coach and Horses Inn and begs for a room and a fire. Mrs. Hall takes him to a room and lights a fire. She is thrilled that he is there, as it is very rare for visitors to come to [Iping](#) during winter. She leaves the room to get plates and glasses and when she returns is surprised to see Griffin still wearing all his clothes, despite the fact that the fire is now roaring.

Mrs. Hall asks to take Griffin's hat and coat, but he refuses. She is surprised to see that he is also wearing large blue glasses. She leaves and returns again, announcing that his lunch is served, and sees that he is still standing in the same position with all his clothes on. Mrs. Hall leaves and finds that her assistant, Millie, is still mixing the mustard for Griffin's lunch. She scolds her and, when the mustard is ready, takes it back into his room. She sees that Griffin has now taken off his boots, and she takes them to be dried.

Griffin rudely tells Mrs. Hall to leave his hat, and she is shocked to see him holding a napkin over the lower part of his face. The rest of his head above his glasses is wrapped in bandages. His black hair shoots out in different directions, which gives him "the strangest appearance conceivable." Mrs. Hall stammers an apology, promises that she will dry the boots, and leaves. She concludes that he must have been disfigured in an accident. When she returns to collect his dishes, Griffin is in a better mood. He tells her he left some luggage at Bramblehurst station, and is disappointed to hear that he won't be able to get it back before tomorrow.

Making conversation, Mrs. Hall tells Griffin about a time when her brother injured himself with a scythe, and Griffin laughs coldly. He then interrupts the conversation with a request for matches, which Mrs. Hall finds rude. However, she remembers the money she will get from him and brushes it off. After Mrs. Hall leaves, she hears what sounds like Griffin talking to himself and pacing around the room.

Beginning a story with the arrival of a strange person in extreme weather conditions is a typical trope of gothic novels. It creates a sense of eeriness, which is further emphasized by Griffin's unusual, suspicious appearance. While Mrs. Hall is perhaps not wise to trust someone whose face she hasn't even seen, she does so because she needs the money.



Griffin's behavior is odd, but Mrs. Hall does not devote much time to worrying about what is wrong with him. Instead, she focuses on providing the best service for Griffin that she can. In this sense, Mrs. Hall is shown to be a pragmatic, professional woman.



Mrs. Hall reacts to Griffin's bizarre appearance with a rationalization. She chooses a plausible explanation—that Griffin was disfigured in an accident—and in doing so assuages any fears she might have about his odd appearance. Depending on one's point of view, this could be a prudent choice or a foolish one.



Throughout the first part of the book, Mrs. Hall reassures herself about Griffin's rudeness by remembering the money she will gain from his visit. This could be viewed as evidence of her greediness; at the same time, as a small business owner, prioritizing profit is perhaps just necessary for survival.



CHAPTER 2: MR. TEDDY HENFREY'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS

At 4 pm, just as Mrs. Hall is getting ready to ask Griffin if he'd like some tea, Teddy Henfrey, the clock fixer, arrives. Mrs. Hall takes him to the parlor room, where the clock is broken, and enters. It is dark, and Griffin is lying asleep in front of the fire. For a second, Mrs. Hall thinks she can see a huge mouth gaping open in Griffin's face, but concludes that "the shadows... had tricked her." Griffin wakes and agrees to have the clock fixed, but adds that in general he wants to be left in privacy, and assumes that the parlor room will be for his own personal use. He then tells her he would like to have some tea, but "not until the clock-mending is over."

Griffin inquires again about his boxes, and Mrs. Hall assures him they will come the next day. Griffin explains that he is an "experimental investigator" and that his equipment is inside his luggage. He says he came to Iping for solitude, and hopes that he will be able to carry out his work in peace. He adds that his eyes are "weak and painful" and that sometimes he needs to be locked in the dark for hours at a time.

Mrs. Hall begins to ask Griffin a question, but he dismisses her. Mrs. Hall leaves, but Henfrey remains, trying to fix the clock as quietly as possible. Griffin asks him to hurry up, and once Henfrey leaves he grumbles to himself about Griffin's rudeness. While walking through the village Henfrey runs into Mr. Hall, and tells him about the strange guest at the Coach and Horses. Henfrey suggests that Mrs. Hall has been "too trustful" of Griffin.

When Mr. Hall returns to the inn, Mrs. Hall berates him for spending too long in Sidderbridge. Mr. Hall is suspicious of Griffin and tells his wife to inspect his luggage closely, but Mrs. Hall tells him to mind his business. That night, she has a frightening dream, but "subdue[s]" her terrors and goes back to sleep.

The darkness and surreal imagery in this scene amplify the atmosphere of gothic horror. Darkness, shadows, and the abyss—represented here by what looks like Griffin's gaping mouth—are all classic gothic tropes. The fact that the clock is broken is also potentially symbolic. Griffin's arrival in Iping has caused a confusion between present, past, and future.



Here we receive two contrasting impressions of Griffin. His explanation that he is an "experimental investigator" conducting important work makes him seem powerful. On the other hand, his statement about his eyes suggests great vulnerability.



Teddy Henfrey's claim that Mrs. Hall is too trustful of Griffin serves as an ominous warning sign, foreshadowing the terrible events that Mrs. Hall's trust helps enable.



Mrs. Hall's pragmatic, non-superstitious attitude seems to put her in the minority of those around her. This seems ominous, although at the same time her belief that it is important to respect the privacy of others is admirable in its own way.



CHAPTER 3: THE THOUSAND AND ONE BOTTLES

On February 10, the day after Griffin arrived in Iping, Fearenside, the carrier, brings Griffin's "remarkable" luggage to the inn in his cart. The luggage includes a box of enormous notebooks filled with "incomprehensible handwriting" and many crates of scientific equipment. When Fearenside arrives, Griffin demands his things impatiently. Fearenside's dog growls and attacks Griffin, tearing his clothes. Fearenside subdues the dog, while Griffin dashes inside. Pointing out that Griffin was bitten, Mr. Hall runs in after him.

Not only are the people of Iping distrustful of Griffin, the animals are, too. Fearenside's dog's attack on Griffin suggests something about Griffin that is innately strange and abnormal—a perversion of the natural order.



Mr. Hall walks into Griffin's room, hoping to help him. It is dark, but Hall briefly makes out "what seemed a handless arm waving towards him." Then the door slams in his face. He goes back downstairs, where Fearenside, Mrs. Hall, and a small group of others are discussing the dog bite. Hall explains that Griffin doesn't want any help, but soon after Griffin himself appears, with his collar turned up to cover his face. He angrily demands that his things be brought inside. When Fearenside apologizes for the dog, Griffin replies that he wasn't hurt.

Griffin's luggage is unloaded. There are crates with countless bottles of different fluids, some of which are labelled *Poison*. Griffin unpacks them in the parlor room, leaving empty crates full of straw in the middle of the room. Later, Mrs. Hall takes Griffin's dinner to him. He is so absorbed in his work that he doesn't notice her come in. He asks that she knock and wait for an answer before disturbing him in the future, and Mrs. Hall points out that there is a lock on the door. When she asks him about the straw strewn all over the room, Griffin tells her to put an extra charge on his bill to cover it. Mrs. Hall agrees and exits.

Griffin works all afternoon, mostly in silence. However, at one point Mrs. Hall hears bottles smashing and listens at the door to check that everything is alright. She hears Griffin shouting that he "can't go on" and that he has been "cheated." Mrs. Hall worries that he can hear her and leaves. When she returns with his tea, she notices broken glass on the floor, but when she points to this, Griffin replies: "For God's sake don't worry me" and tells her to put it on his bill.

Later, Fearenside and Henfrey sit in [Iping](#)'s local beershop. Fearenside admits that when he saw the tear in Griffin's trousers, he did not see the pink skin he would expect. Rather, Griffin's skin was totally black. Henfrey is shocked, but points out that Griffin's nose is "pink as paint." Fearenside suggests that Griffin may be "a piebald," a mixed-race man whose skin contains patches of black and white. Fearenside has heard that this can happen on humans as it does on horses.

CHAPTER 4: MR. CUSS INTERVIEWS THE STRANGER

While Griffin's arrival in [Iping](#) was marked by strange incidents, from that point on his stay at the Coach and Horses is seemingly ordinary. He occasionally fights with Mrs. Hall about "matters of domestic discipline," but each time he settles the matter by promising to pay her more. Griffin does not attend church and never communicates with anyone outside the village. He works "fitfully," and his mood is equally inconsistent. He speaks to himself in "a low voice," and Mrs. Hall cannot understand what he is saying.

The "handless arm" that Mr. Hall believes he sees, but is obscured by shadow, directly recalls Mrs. Hall's vision of the gaping mouth, which she believed must have meant shadows were tricking her. In these scenes, shadow is a metaphor for human ignorance. We are not able to process—and in some cases even see—things that we don't understand.



Even if there is nothing seriously sinister about Griffin, the fact that he plans to conduct experiments with poisonous chemicals inside the Coach and Horses Inn should surely be a cause of alarm for Mrs. Hall. However, Griffin has clearly learned how to manipulate Mrs. Hall by exploiting her greed and simply promising her more money. Where this money is going to come from is still an open question, though.



Griffin's rude and dismissive treatment of Mrs. Hall indicates that he believes he can treat her however he wants due to her subordinate social position. This is further reflected by his apparent belief that he can damage the inn with impunity as long as he pays for extra expenses.



This conversation reveals Fearenside and Henfrey's ignorance and adds a racial element to the tension between Griffin and the residents of Iping. "Piebald" is a term that only applies to animals, and is extremely demeaning to use as a name for a mixed-race person. Fearenside and Henfrey see Griffin as a (racial) Other, which causes this confusion.



Griffin violates all the expectations and values that are shared by people in Iping. Whereas Iping is defined by a sense of community, tradition, and faith, Griffin is isolated, non-religious, and erratic. These traits are not necessarily bad, but are perceived as bizarre by the people of Iping because they are so unfamiliar.



Griffin does not go outside in the daytime, but sometimes ventures out at night, completely wrapped up in clothes. His odd appearance startles the villagers. He quickly becomes the subject of gossip in [Iping](#). There is much discussion of his job; Mrs. Hall loves to explain that he is an “experimental investigator,” adding that this means he is someone who “discover[s] things.” When she is not listening, the villagers speculate that Griffin is a criminal who wraps himself up in order to disguise his identity. One villager proposes that Griffin is an anarchist who is secretly “preparing explosives.”

Fearenside, meanwhile, continues to insist that Griffin is a “piebald.” Others think that he is “a harmless lunatic.” People from Sussex are not usually superstitious, yet after some incidents in early April some of the women in [Iping](#) begin to entertain thoughts of “the supernatural.” Although there are many different theories about Griffin in Iping, all the villagers agree that they dislike him. They find his rude manner strange and off-putting; after he walks past people mock his manner, and children sometimes shout “Bogey Man!”

Cuss, the local doctor, is “devoured by curiosity” over Griffin’s appearance. He spends all of April and May trying to find a chance to talk to Griffin, and eventually goes to the Coach and Horses, where he is surprised to learn that Mrs. Hall does not know the stranger’s name (he’s not yet referred to as Griffin). When Cuss goes into the parlor room where Griffin is working, she overhears hushed voices, a “cry of surprise,” and a laugh. Cuss leaves ten minutes later, and Mrs. Hall hears Griffin still laughing alone. Cuss goes straight to the vicar, Bunting, and asks if he is crazy. He then demands a drink.

Cuss tells Bunting that Griffin kept sniffing while they spoke, and he assumed he’d caught a cold. Bunting inquired about Griffin’s research, and while Griffin was talking he saw that his sleeve was completely empty. When Cuss made a remark about this, Griffin extended the arm of his jacket and pinched Cuss’s nose. Cuss was so frightened that he knocked Griffin’s arm out of the way and ran out of the room. He tells Bunting that although there was nothing there, it felt like he was hitting an arm. Bunting comments that it is “a most remarkable story.”

The villagers’ speculation about Griffin reveals more about their fears than about Griffin himself. Most people in Iping (including Mrs. Hall herself, despite what she claims) do not understand what an “experimental investigator” is. As a result, their idea of Griffin is colored by various fears and prejudices of their own about criminals, anarchists, and non-white people.



It is curious that the narrator asserts that people from Sussex are not superstitious, because at other points in the novel they behave in a decidedly superstitious way. This indicates that “superstitious” has different meanings in different contexts. For example, some people consider religious belief to be a form of superstition, while others obviously do not agree.



So far there have been many episodes in which Griffin is described as laughing or surrounded by laughter. Yet this laughter is not an indication of comedy or joy; rather, there is something distinctly sinister about it. Previously, the narrator described Griffin’s laugh as “cold,” and thus this laughter seems more demonic or maniacal than jolly.



As a doctor and priest, respectively, Cuss and Bunting bear a responsibility for adjudicating matters of science, human nature, skepticism, and faith within Iping. Yet Griffin’s arrival has left them both completely baffled. If these authority figures are clueless about Griffin, then it seems there is little hope for the ordinary villagers.



CHAPTER 5: THE BURGLARY AT THE VICARAGE

On Whit Monday, the day dedicated to “the Club festivities” in [Iping](#), the vicarage is burgled. Mrs. Bunting wakes up in the early hours of the morning to footsteps. When she feels certain someone is there, she wakes her husband. Bunting grabs the poker and creeps down the staircase. It is about 4 am and completely dark. Bunting can hear the sound of rustling coming from his study, but he cannot see the robber. He enters the study and finds the drawer open and a candle lit on his desk, but no sign of anyone. He then hears the sound of metal clinking, and realizes that the robber has found the house’s stash of money.

Bunting runs into the room where the money is kept, shouting “Surrender!”, but finds no one there. He and Mrs. Bunting are then startled to hear a sneeze on the landing, and run after the sound. They see the back door open and close with a slam. They secure the back door again and search the house, but find it completely empty. By the time the sun rises, Bunting and his wife are still discussing the astonishing events of the night.

This passage is filled with more gothic imagery, from the shadowy darkness of the night to the faint, creepy sounds. If this were a gothic story, one could imagine that Rev. and Mrs. Bunting would be about to discover that their house is haunted by a ghost. However, at this point the genre of the book remains somewhat ambiguous—is it a fantastical story of the supernatural, or something more “real”?



Dr. Cuss mentioned that Griffin was sneezing, and thus the fact that Bunting hears a sneeze strongly indicates that it is Griffin who has broken into the house. The sneeze is a sinister and eerie indicator of Griffin’s presence, but also a sign of his vulnerability, reminding us of his mortality through his apparent illness.



CHAPTER 6: THE FURNITURE THAT WENT MAD

Early on the same Whit Monday morning, Mr. Hall and Mrs. Hall walk down to the cellar to do something related to “the specific gravity of their beer.” In the cellar, Mrs. Hall realizes she’s forgotten to bring a bottle of sarsaparilla from their room, and her husband goes back to get it for her. While fetching it, Hall is surprised to see that Griffin’s door is open. He is then even more surprised to see that the front door to the inn is unlatched. He finds Griffin’s room empty, and shouts down to tell Mrs. Hall that Griffin isn’t there. Mrs. Hall comes up, and declares that it is “most curious” that Griffin’s clothes are there, but he isn’t.

Moments later, Mrs. Hall hears the front door close and then a sneeze on the staircase. She goes into Griffin’s room, which is still empty, and touches the pillow. It is cold, which leads her to believe that Griffin has been gone an hour or more. Suddenly, all the bedclothes leap up and to the side, as if someone had flung them there. Griffin’s hat then flies straight into Mrs. Hall, hitting her in the face. More items jump up and around, and a chair aims right for Mrs. Hall while someone laughs in a voice that sounds just like Griffin’s.

This scene suggests a point of similarity between Griffin and Mr. and Mrs. Hall. While the Halls may not be “experimental investigators,” they also conduct a form of chemical experimentation by brewing their own beer. As the phrase “specific gravity of the beer” indicates, this involves careful adjustments according to certain scientific principles.



This scene reiterates the idea that Griffin’s presence is ghost-like. Animated furniture and a disembodied voice all suggest that Griffin is somehow haunting the room. The violence and sinister laughter in this scene confirm the fact that Griffin’s presence is somewhat sadistic and demonic, as he appears to derive joy from hurting and confusing others.



Mrs. Hall runs out into Mr. Hall's arms in the hallway, faint with fright. She declares that Griffin has put spirits in her furniture, and that they should lock him out and never let him come back to the inn. Mr. and Mrs. Hall send Millie to find the blacksmith, Mr. Sandy Wadgers. Wadgers comes over, and they discuss the situation at length. Suddenly, Griffin bursts from his room, wrapped up in his many garments. He goes into the parlor and slams the door behind him. After some hesitation, Hall knocks on the door, but Griffin replies: "Go the devil!"

Having initially been decidedly unsuperstitious, Mrs. Hall is now convinced that Griffin has been engaged in supernatural activity. Although this convinces her that she needs to act immediately and lock Griffin out, when Wadgers arrives, the group acts too slowly, wasting time discussing what's happened—and it turns out that they couldn't have locked Griffin out anyway, because he was inside the entire time.



CHAPTER 7: THE UNVEILING OF THE STRANGER

Griffin remains in the parlor room with the blinds down and doors shut until noon. Rumors of the burglary at the vicarage reach the inn, and Hall and Wadgers go to find Mr. Shuckleforth, the magistrate, because they believe Griffin may be responsible. Back at the inn, Griffin can be heard furiously cussing and smashing bottles. A group of "scared but curious people" descend on the inn, while in [lping](#) people prepare the village for Whit Monday. Griffin remains shut up in the parlor, which is dark and contains a distinct smell of chlorine.

One curious fact that is emerging about Griffin at this stage of the novel is that he seems strangely unconcerned about being punished for his misdeeds. It seems obvious that he committed the burglary, yet rather than fleeing, he remains in his room, exactly where everyone will think to look for him. This suggests that he believes he will not be held responsible for his crimes.



At midday Griffin suddenly opens the door and demands to speak with Mrs. Hall. She appears out of breath, and Griffin asks why his breakfast wasn't served. In response, Mrs. Hall asks why her bill hasn't been paid; Griffin begins to splutter an explanation, but she will not hear it and tells him to stop swearing. Griffin offers a little money he has in his pocket, and Mrs. Hall suspiciously responds that only a couple of days ago he said he didn't have anything at all. She goes on about the rest of his suspicious behavior until Griffin screams at her to stop and stamps his foot.

Mrs. Hall's demands here are hardy unreasonable; yet in response, Griffin behaves in a way that is infantile and entitled. He is clearly in the wrong, and as Mrs. Hall points out, is exhibiting highly suspicious behavior. Yet rather than attempt to cover his tracks or charm Mrs. Hall, Griffin acts with further petulance and aggression, suggesting a deep level of immorality.



Griffin declares that Mrs. Hall doesn't know who he is, and promises to show her. He takes off the bandages around his face, leaving a "black cavity." His nose falls to the floor. He then takes off his whiskers, hat, and goggles. Mrs. Hall screams in horror, and the group of people at the inn flee. They had been ready to see scars or abnormalities, but are terrified to encounter nothing at all. The villagers hear those in the inn shrieking in terror, and run to find out what's happening. Everyone talks at once, and Mrs. Hall tries to tell her story, explaining that Griffin does not have a head.

Griffin's dramatic revelation of his invisibility can be read as a reflection on the nature of fear. The villagers are prepared to encounter all manner of frightening sights, but they are more frightened than they could have imagined by the sight of "nothing." In a sense, this gives credence to the adage: "There is nothing to fear but fear itself." The nothingness of Griffin's body represents the abstract terror of fear itself.



The village constable, Mr. Bobby Jaffers, declares that he will arrest Griffin even if he doesn't have a head. At that moment, Griffin and Jaffers get into a scuffle. With the help of others standing by, Jaffers attempts to wrestle Griffin into submission, but finds he can't arrest him without being able to see him. Someone declares that Griffin is "no man at all," just "empty clothes." Griffin insists that he is there, but "it happens I'm invisible." He adds that it's annoying that he is invisible, but that doesn't mean he should be "poked to pieces by every stupid bumpkin in Iping."

Griffin continues, saying that invisibility isn't a crime, so he doesn't know why he is being arrested. Jaffers replies that he is being arrested for the burglary, not because he is invisible. Griffin begins to strip off his clothes, and Jaffers demands that people help hold him before he is naked and therefore completely invisible. A fight breaks out, and several villagers are injured. Eventually Jaffers shouts that he's seized Griffin. However, Griffin shakes him off and the scuffle continues, until it is clear that Griffin has escaped. The villagers stand around shocked, while Jaffers lies still on the floor.

The scuffle between Griffin and the surrounding villagers constitutes a rather comic image. Meanwhile, the person's comment that Griffin is "no man at all" has a significant double meaning. Griffin's invisibility means that it looks as if there is "no man" where he is standing. At the same time, both his invisibility and his immorality have degraded his humanity, making him inhuman.



Again, Griffin betrays an unnerving disregard for morals, accountability, and responsibility. Even surrounded by a mob of people, Griffin does not seem to have any fear about being punished for his actions. The fact that he tears his clothes off suggests that invisibility has made him feel untouchable and beyond reproach.



CHAPTER 8: THE UNVEILING OF THE STRANGER

Gibbins, an "amateur naturalist" who lives in Iping, hears a man coughing, sneezing, and swearing but sees nothing there. Gibbins has not yet heard about the burglary or fight, but is so disturbed by the sounds he hears that he gets up and hurries toward town straight away.

Throughout the novel, the narrator shifts focus between different characters to create a sense of confusion and suspense as pieces of information about the Invisible Man are slowly revealed.



CHAPTER 9: MR. THOMAS MARVEL

Mr. Thomas Marvel has a large face, enormous nose, expressive mouth, and wild-looking beard. He is short and wears a furry silk hat; his clothes are held together with string and shoelaces where buttons should be. He tries on a pair of boots he's found in a "leisurely manner," which is how he does everything. They are too big for him, but will protect him from the rain. He discusses the boots with an unknown voice (belonging to Griffin). When Marvel describes his struggles, the voice replies: "It's a beast of a county... and pigs for people." Marvel agrees.

Thomas Marvel is initially presented as a comic figure, somewhat akin to a Shakespearean fool. He is odd-looking and behaves in a silly manner, particularly in his reaction to Griffin, which is a distinct contrast from that of the other characters thus far. Whereas most of the people in Iping reacted to Griffin with skepticism and confusion, Marvel appears to accept his disembodied voice with ease.



Suddenly, Marvel is confused. He asks: "Where are yer?" and wonders aloud if he is drunk or hallucinating. Griffin assures him not to be frightened and that he's not hearing things because he is drunk. Yet Marvel grows increasingly alarmed, declaring that he must be insane. The voice says he will throw stones at Marvel to prove he's not imaginary. He does so, and asks if Marvel still believes he's hallucinating. Marvel is baffled, muttering to himself: "Stones flinging themselves. Stones talking... I'm done."

This scene continues in a comic manner, but the joke is cruelly at Marvel's expense. Griffin's decision to throw stones at Marvel to prove that he is real is an early indication that he does not respect Marvel. He is happy to treat him cruelly and even violently for no real reason at all.



Griffin explains that he is “an invisible man.” At first Marvel doesn’t believe him, but Griffin continues to explain that he is a normal man who needs food, drink, and shelter—yet he is invisible. Marvel asks to shake Griffin’s hand, and is frightened when he feels Griffin’s grip on him. Marvel, stunned, stares at the space where he believes Griffin to be, and asks if Griffin has been eating bread and cheese. Griffin explains that he has and that it hasn’t fully been digested yet, which is why Marvel can see it now.

Marvel finds Griffin’s presence entrancing, but Griffin explains that invisibility “isn’t half so wonderful as you think.” Marvel asks how Griffin has made himself invisible, but Griffin says it’s too long to explain. He tells Marvel that he needs help, and that he has turned to him because he is “an outcast like myself.” Griffin explains that he wants Marvel to help him get clothes and shelter. He emphasizes that he has chosen Marvel specially, and that he is one of the only people who knows about Griffin and his invisibility. He begins to warn Marvel about what will happen if he betrays him, but Marvel cuts him off, saying he will never do that.

This is one of the first instances in which the restrictions inherent within Griffin’s invisibility are revealed. Before, his invisibility was presented as something that gave him a sort of limitless power. However, it is now becomes apparent that not everything about invisibility is as advantageous as it first appears.



It is clear from this passage that Griffin is emotionally manipulating Marvel. Griffin pretends that he and Marvel are kindred spirits because they are both “outcasts,” and flatters Marvel by making it seem like he has specifically chosen him for an important job. In reality, his choice was likely based on the fact that Marvel is isolated and vulnerable, and thus has very little power compared to Griffin.



CHAPTER 10: MR. MARVEL’S VISIT TO IPING

Now that the initial panic in [Iping](#) is over, people in the village start arguing. Many are skeptical that Griffin is actually invisible; this skepticism is stoked by the fact that Jaffers remains lying silent and motionless. Iping has been decorated for Whit Monday, and everybody is dressed up. As the day progresses, everyone gradually turns their attention back to the festivities, even as “a slight uneasiness” remains in the atmosphere.

At 4 pm a stranger arrives in [Iping](#)—Thomas Marvel. He heads straight for the Coach and Horses, looking agitated. Inside, he tries to open the door to Griffin’s room before Hall shouts: “That room’s private!” Mr. Huxter sees Marvel standing outside, smoking, as the parlor window opens. Huxter watches him for a while, and when Marvel suddenly leaves he dashes after him. Huxter can see that Marvel is holding a blue tablecloth filled with items, and three [books](#) tied together with what are later discovered to be Bunting’s braces. Huxter shouts: “Stop thief!” and runs after Marvel, who flees. As Huxter runs through the village festivities, he trips and goes flying into the air.

Iping is a place defined by tradition, and in the midst of the chaos and anxiety caused by Griffin the villagers are able to seek comfort in the tradition of Whit Monday. At the same time, they cannot ignore the fact that Iping has been changed forever by Griffin’s presence.



Mr. Huxter, another Iping resident, does not have any direct connection to the earlier chaos caused by Griffin, and yet still intervenes in order to stop Marvel’s apparent theft of Griffin’s belongings. This is indicative of the way that the people of Iping feel a sense of communal responsibility and help one another out, doing their best to prevent any crime or wrongdoing from occurring in the community.



CHAPTER 11: IN THE COACH AND HORSES

The narrator goes back to explain what led up Marvel's flight from the inn. Huxter first saw Marvel at a moment when Cuss and Bunting were discussing the strange events of the morning in Griffin's room. Mr. Hall had given them permission to search Griffin's belongings; almost immediately after beginning the search, Cuss found three large **notebooks** labeled "Diary." Cuss was initially excited, convinced that the diary would help them learn about Griffin, however he was disappointed to learn that the entire thing was written in "cipher" (code). Cuss concluded that while some of it was "mathematical," other parts were written in Russian and Greek.

As a vicar, Bunting is supposed to know Greek, but he has forgotten most of it and is embarrassed to admit this. At that moment, the door suddenly opened to reveal Marvel, who on seeing the other men pretended that he was lost. Marvel closes the door on his way out, and Cuss and Bunting are left alone again. Someone sniffs. The two men discuss whether or not Griffin is really invisible. Cuss suggests that Bunting return to examining the Greek, and Bunting does so reluctantly. Suddenly, a voice says: "Don't move, little men... or I'll brain you both!" The voice curses the men for their invasion of privacy.

The voice (Griffin) tells Cuss and Bunting that he has locked the windows and door. He adds that because he is invisible, he could easily kill them and get away with it, so they shouldn't "try any nonsense." Griffin points the fire poker at each of the men's faces and tells them that he can't find his clothes. He says that he needs his clothes, "other accommodation," and the three **notebooks** they are holding.

Having learned about Griffin's invisibility, the villagers are now determined to figure Griffin out for themselves. However, they are not equipped with the scientific education necessary to understand the items in his room. The fact that his notebooks are written in code represents the lack of access ordinary people often have to science and technology.



The people of Iping may be rather simple and ordinary, but they are also prideful. Both Mrs. Hall and Rev. Bunting are keen to ensure that other people think they are smart—hence Bunting's embarrassment over his inability to read Greek. Of course, Griffin plays into these insecurities by patronizingly calling Cuss and Bunting "little men." It's assumed that Griffin enters the room when Marvel opens the door, pretending to be lost.



Again, Griffin is shown to be completely shameless in his attitude toward morality, crime, and punishment. His boast that he could easily get away with murder is arguably a sign of hubris. In making such a claim, Griffin is overestimating his own power.



CHAPTER 12: THE INVISIBLE MAN LOSES HIS TEMPER

While Griffin is threatening Cuss and Bunting inside the parlor at the inn, nearby Mr. Hall and Teddy Henfrey are sitting together talking. They hear sounds and smell a strange odor coming from the parlor, and ask if everything is all right. Bunting replies tensely that everything is fine, and that they shouldn't interrupt. Henfrey and Hall declare that this is "odd" and continue to eavesdrop on the room. Mrs. Hall appears and, seeing the two men spying, tells them to stop. Disappointed, they tiptoe away.

Again the narrator switches perspectives, this time to follow Mr. Hall and Teddy Henfrey. They do not know what is going on inside the parlor room, and this ignorance creates mystery and suspense. Bunting's assertion that everything is fine seems suspicious, but Hall and Henfrey do not have enough information to know what to do.



Henfrey says he heard the window in the parlor room, and he, Mr. Hall, and Mrs. Hall stand listening closely. It is at this moment that Huxter comes running, shouting “Stop thief!” Henfrey and Mr. and Mrs. Hall run after Huxter, and see him tumble to the ground, bringing two other men with him. A crowd quickly gathers around, crushing the three men on the floor. The situation turns into an “indecorous sprawl,” and Cuss staggers away to the Coach and Horses. He hears Griffin’s voice; it sounds as if Griffin has been struck.

Cuss shouts to Bunting, who is still in the inn, that Griffin is back and that he has “gone mad.” Panicked, Bunting climbs out of the window and runs up the hill as fast as he can. At this point Griffin’s temper becomes completely out of control. He breaks all the windows in the Coach and Horses, and then shoves a streetlamp through the window of a house belonging to another woman. He cuts the telegraph wire, and then disappears. Everyone in [Iping](#) is too frightened to come out of their houses for two hours.

This is the exact same scene that was described in the previous chapter, just from a different perspective. Focusing on a different set of characters highlights a whole other side to the events that are transpiring, adding new information along with new layers of suspense and confusion.



This passage reveals the frightening extent of Griffin’s desire to cause harm, chaos, and destruction for its own sake. We do not know whether this desire predated his invisibility, but it seems clear that he thinks being invisible has given him a license to commit as much wrongdoing as he likes without facing consequences.



CHAPTER 13: MR. MARVEL DISCUSSES HIS RESIGNATION

By evening, people begin to tentatively return to the streets of [Iping](#). Thomas Marvel walks “painfully” along the path to Bramblehurst. He is still carrying the three books and bundle of items wrapped in a tablecloth. The voice—Griffin—travels with him, cursing him for “giving me the slip” and threatening to kill him if he ever does it again. Griffin also curses the villagers for ruining his “little secret” and wonders what he is supposed to do. Marvel wonders what he is supposed to do as well. Griffin continues to insult Marvel, calling him “stupid.” He then calls Marvel a “fool” and says: “You do what you’re told.”

Marvel tries to protest, saying that he is not the right person for this job. Griffin ignores this, threatening to hurt him again if he does not be quiet. They arrive at a small village, and Griffin says that he will keep his hand on Marvel’s shoulder as they walk through it. He tells Marvel to go straight and not try any “foolery,” or otherwise things will be bad for him. Marvel replies that he knows that.

It has not taken long for Griffin to drop the act of flattery and begin insulting and threatening Marvel, revealing his true feelings about him. Griffin appears to view everyone else in the world with disdain, seeing them all as inferior to him. He is a severe misanthrope, cursing everyone around him for being foolish or disloyal when it is in fact he himself who has behaved in the most cruel, immoral manner.



Griffin is now treating Marvel like a puppet, literally steering him around in order to carry out his demands. This suggests that Griffin does not even really see Marvel as a human being, but rather just a tool to be used for his own ends.



CHAPTER 14: AT PORT STOWE

At 10 am the next day, Marvel sits, dirty and panting, on a bench outside an inn in Port Stowe. He is still carrying the [books](#), but has abandoned the bundle. A mariner sits next to him and makes small talk about the weather. The mariner stares at Marvel, and hears the sound of coins dropping, which he finds odd considering Marvel's shabby appearance. The mariner begins to question Marvel about the books, and then mentions a newspaper article about the Invisible Man. Marvel pretends to be ignorant of the matter and asks what is in the article. The mariner tells him that the Invisible Man is supposedly in [Iping](#).

The mariner shows Marvel the article, which recounts the events of Whit Monday. Marvel asks if the Invisible Man returned to [Iping](#) after the carnage he caused, and the mariner replies he didn't. The mariner adds that there are rumors that the Invisible Man is on the way to Port Stowe. He wonders aloud about all the things that the man could do without being caught.

In a whisper, Marvel boasts that he knows about the Invisible Man through "private sources." Marvel begins to reveal what he knows, when suddenly he lets out a yelp of pain. When the mariner asks what's wrong, Marvel replies that he has a toothache and that he needs to get going. The mariner insists on hearing more about the Invisible Man, and Marvel replies that it's a "hoax." The mariner grows embarrassed, asking why Marvel didn't say that it was a hoax in the first place. The two get into an argument, while Marvel is moved around in the air in a strange manner.

Marvel and the mariner part ways. Later, the mariner hears from a friend that a "fistful of money" was seen traveling through the air by itself nearby. The friend tried to grab the money, at which point he was knocked to the ground by an invisible force. The mariner is at first not sure whether to believe the story. He spends a lot of time reflecting, but only ten days later does he realize how close he personally came to the Invisible Man.

CHAPTER 15: THE MAN WHO WAS RUNNING

Doctor Kemp is sitting in his office overlooking Burdock. The bookshelves are piled high with books and "scientific publications." Doctor Kemp himself is tall, slim, and fair-haired. He hopes to soon be admitted as a fellow of the Royal Society. Looking out his window, Doctor Kemp sees a short man running through the field, and assumes it is "another of those fools" who keep talking about the Invisible Man.

To some extent, Marvel behaves obediently by pretending not to know anything about the Invisible Man. On the other hand, simply the fact that he spoke to the mariner in the first place jeopardizes Griffin's mission. The mariner is suspicious of Marvel, and any conversation risks exposing Griffin's secret to even more people.



Rumors and hearsay are generally not a reliable source of information, but in this case, everything the mariner has heard about the Invisible Man—including that he has headed to Port Stowe—is in fact correct. Griffin is not nearly as anonymous and invincible as he thinks he is.



Both Marvel and the mariner want to seem intelligent and important to one another, and this indirectly leads them to get into an argument. Marvel cannot resist the temptation of boasting about his special knowledge of the Invisible Man; meanwhile, the mariner's embarrassment over his supposed gullibility leads him to behave in an aggressive manner.



This passage serves as a reflection on how skepticism and belief can change over time. Sometimes it is not possible to truly understand a situation in the moment at which it happens. It can be necessary to have time to reflect before coming to a rational judgment.



This is the first time the book introduces a character who is of a similar class status and background to Griffin. Doctor Kemp appears to hold similarly snooty views about the local "fools," suggesting they share the same attitude of superiority.



Doctor Kemp observes that the man is clearly in a great rush, but that he is moving very slowly, as if his pockets were weighed down with lead. As the man comes nearer, it is clear from his face that he feels abject terror. Suddenly everyone in the village begins to lock themselves inside, while others shout: “The Invisible Man is coming! *The Invisible Man!*”

This scene could come straight out of a horror story. In the minds of local people, the Invisible Man has been turned into a monster, the kind of mythic figure children fear.



CHAPTER 16: IN THE JOLLY CRICKETERS

Two men chatting in The Jolly Cricketers pub are interrupted by a commotion coming from outside. The barman suggests that it might be a fire, when suddenly Marvel bursts inside. He attempts to shut the door behind him, but it remains open. Marvel is in tears, and shrieks for help, saying that the Invisible Man is coming after him. One of the men in the pub, an off-duty policeman, requests that all the doors be shut. Marvel is hysterical, saying that the Invisible Man promised to kill him and that he certainly will.

There is something especially terrifying about the fact that Marvel knows he is being chased, but cannot actually see Griffin or know where he is. He wants to secure himself inside the Jolly Cricketers, but cannot be sure that Griffin hasn't followed him inside. This again shows the frightening power of invisibility.



There is knocking and loud shouting at the door, and the policeman asks who's there. Marvel pleads that they do not open the door, and the barman offers Marvel a place to hide behind the bar. Suddenly, the window of the inn smashes. The policeman observes that as soon as the door opens, the Invisible Man will come in, and the men inside beg him not to open it. Marvel declares that the Invisible Man is now circling the house, and explains: “He's as artful as the devil.”

Marvel's comparison of Griffin and the devil highlights the extreme extent of Griffin's malicious behavior. He is now behaving in a truly demonic fashion, not only threatening Marvel personally but wreaking havoc on the public at large.



Suddenly, the door to the pub bursts open. Marvel starts squealing, and the men run behind the bar to help him. Marvel is forced into the kitchen, where he is punched in the face. Two of the men grab the air and declare that they have caught the Invisible Man. Griffin yells and knocks the men aside. Griffin escapes, and all the men rush out into the yard. One of the men from the pub shoots five bullets into the air, and then asks for someone to bring a lantern so he can feel around for the Invisible Man's body.

Here the story takes an even more violent turn, and the stakes of Griffin's horrifying presence are heightened. Thus far, Griffin has only been threatening to kill people and has not made any serious efforts to do so. However, after the man in the pub attempts to shoot Griffin, it seems likely that at least one person is going to end up dead in the end.



CHAPTER 17: DOCTOR KEMP'S VISITOR

Doctor Kemp is writing in his study when he hears the shots being fired. He wonders what the “asses” in Burdock are doing now, and looks outside to see commotion by the Jolly Cricketers. An hour later, his front doorbell rings. He asks the servant who it was, and she replies it was just a “runaway ring.” Doctor Kemp absorbs himself in work again, and doesn't leave his office until 2 am. He goes to get a glass of whisky before bed, and on the way notices a dark spot on the floor near the bottom of the stairs. Inspecting it, he realizes it is dried blood. He then goes to his bedroom and finds the door handle blood-stained, as well as other spots of blood around the place.

It is likely obvious to readers that the doorbell was not indeed a “runaway ring,” but was in fact Griffin slipping into the house unnoticed. Yet because Doctor Kemp is a proudly rational, unsuperstitious man, he is slow to believe that anything unusual has occurred—even after spotting the dried blood. This emphasizes that too much skepticism can in fact be dangerous.



Doctor Kemp hears a voice saying his name, but dismisses it because he is “no believer in Voices.” However, there is still a part of him that has “superstitious inklings.” Suddenly he sees a bloody rag hanging in mid-air, which makes him jump. A voice speaks to him again and announces itself as “an Invisible Man.” Kemp is sure that this is only foolishness or a “trick.” However, he then feels Griffin’s hand close around his shoulder. Griffin holds tight and demands that Kemp be still, threatening him if he moves.

Griffin explains that he really is an Invisible Man and that he doesn’t want to hurt Kemp, but that if Kemp behaves like a “frantic rustic” then he will have no choice. He introduces himself as Griffin, reminding Kemp that they met at University College London. He describes himself as younger than Kemp, tall, and “almost an albino,” with a pink and white face and red eyes. Kemp is confused, calling the situation “horrible” and accusing Griffin of “devilry.” Griffin agrees that it is horrible, and tells Kemp that he is injured and needs help.

Griffin demands some whisky, saying he is “near dead.” Kemp gives Griffin the glass and insists that he must be hypnotized. Griffin dismisses Kemp’s confusion and demands food. He borrows one of Kemp’s dressing gowns, and then asks for socks, slippers, and food. Kemp obliges, adding that “this is the insanest thing I ever was in.” Kemp brings some meat, which Griffin eats without cutlery, making it look as if the food is being mashed up by the air. Griffin eats greedily, saying that happening upon Kemp’s house was the first piece of good luck he has had.

Griffin explains that Marvel tried to steal his money. When Kemp tries to ask him more questions, Griffin protests that he wants to eat without having to tell stories. After his food, Griffin demands a cigar, which he smokes with the same greedy enthusiasm. Griffin repeats that he needs Kemp’s help, and observes that Kemp has stayed the same over the years; he remains “cool and methodical.” When Kemp asks more questions, Griffin again demands to be left to smoke in peace. Griffin says he needs to sleep, but then immediately declares that he can’t sleep because then Marvel will get away. Griffin says he has “a particular objection to being caught by my fellow-men,” and then worries that he has put ideas into Kemp’s head.

Most other characters immediately believe that Griffin is invisible after he announces himself as such. However, as a scientist Kemp is certain that it is more likely he is being tricked than that Griffin is really invisible. The irony of this, of course, is that it was a scientific experiment that rendered Griffin invisible in the first place.



The fact that Griffin may have albinism adds a new element to his story. Even before he was invisible, Griffin had an unusual appearance, which may have made him feel like an outsider and led him to crave the anonymity that comes with invisibility. Perhaps Griffin’s desire to isolate himself emerges from trauma of being made to feel different because of his looks.



Even after being reunited with an old friend who he hopes will turn into an ally, Griffin continues to act in a rude, greedy, and entitled manner. This is literalized by his consumption of food and drink, which Kemp can see being chewed and digested. This image suggests that Griffin’s greed is so extreme that it even surpasses his invisibility.



Griffin’s lack of social skills seems to verge on pathological. His extreme selfishness and rudeness combined with his enormous appetite for destruction and the delight he gets in causing harm to others suggest that he could be a sociopath or a psychopath. In this sense, invisibility could simply be an extension of his existing lack of remorse or consideration of consequences.



CHAPTER 18: THE INVISIBLE MAN SLEEPS

Kemp lets Griffin sleep in his bedroom. Griffin bids him goodnight, and warns him not attempt to apprehend or capture him. After Griffin goes, Kemp wonders if he is dreaming. He thinks about invisible marine life, and wonders if it is truly possible for a man to be invisible. Kemp reads the newspaper article about the Invisible Man's activities in [Iping](#). He then picks up a different newspaper, which he believes will give him "the truth." The article about Griffin is headlined: "An Entire Village in Sussex goes Mad." The article concludes that the story about the Invisible Man is "probably a fabrication."

Kemp suddenly worries that Griffin is not just invisible, but also insane and "homicidal." He is too agitated to sleep. In the morning, he instructs his servants to lay breakfast for two people, which confuses them. When the morning papers arrive, he reads about the events at the Jolly Cricketers. He thinks about Griffin, who is upstairs "free as the air." He wonders what he should do, and decides to write a letter to Colonel Adye in Port Burdock. Meanwhile, Griffin wakes up in a foul mood. Kemp can hear Griffin throwing over a chair and smashing a tumbler, and quickly goes upstairs to knock on the door.

CHAPTER 19: THE INVISIBLE MAN SLEEPS

Kemp asks Griffin what's wrong, and Griffin replies that it is nothing but a "fit of temper." Kemp says that there's breakfast, but that he first needs to understand more about Griffin's invisibility. Griffin explains that he left London and went to Chesilstowe, dropping medicine in favor of physics. He had always been fascinated by light and optics, and at 22 decided he would devote his life to studying them. He reflects that everyone is foolish at 22. Griffin worked hard, and developed radical theories that he was not sure would work in reality. He explains how he began to theorize making something invisible using a series of different scientific principles.

Griffin explains that he eventually came to realize that, although living organisms look opaque, the fibers through which they are constituted actually means that they can be rendered transparent. He explains that he'd realized all of this six years ago, just after he left London. He worried that his professor would steal his work, and thus refused to publish any of his theories. He did not wish to tell anyone about his experiments in case they stole the idea. One day he had a major breakthrough, when he realized that blood can be turned from red to a transparent white color.

This passage demonstrates how skepticism and reason can sometimes actually lead people to draw the wrong conclusions. Kemp is suspicious of the local newspaper article that assumes the Invisible Man is real, instead turning to a larger newspaper he believes is more trustworthy. However, the explanation that the whole of Iping went mad is arguably rooted in prejudice about the intelligence of rural people rather than in actual reason.



There is an important paradox within the thoughts that Kemp has about Griffin in this passage. On one hand, he thinks about Griffin being as "free as the air," a carefree, lighthearted image. On the other hand, he worries that Griffin is insane, "homicidal," and notices that he is in a terrible mood. This paradox suggests that the apparent freedom Griffin has is in fact more restrictive and punishing than it is liberating.



This passage highlights a similarity between Griffin's trajectory and the stock narrative of the "mad scientist." For mad scientists, an earnest interest in research and desire to test radical hypotheses ends up going too far, resulting in disastrous consequences—just what happens to Griffin. Now, Griffin is so embittered that he does not see his youthful enthusiasm as positive, but rather as an example of foolishness.



It is normal for scientists to be protective of their research in order to avoid intellectual theft and plagiarism. However, Griffin's paranoia about other people stealing his work goes to such an extreme degree that he keeps all of his research entirely secret. This ends up proving to be a form of self-sabotage, because there is no point in being worried about theft if no one knows about one's work in the first place.



Having made this discovery about blood, Griffin then realized that he could turn tissue invisible—and hence an entire organism, too. Griffin was captivated by the idea of the freedom and power this would give him. At this point, he did not consider any negative sides to invisibility. He worked hard for three more years, while professors around him became increasingly nosy about his research. However, after all this work he suddenly realized that becoming invisible would be impossible for financial reasons. He suddenly becomes contemplative, and admits that he robbed his own father. It turned out that the money did not belong to his father, however, who ended up shooting himself.

It did not take long before Griffin's experiments took on a seriously dark, sinister edge. Again, the fact that he was willing to steal from his father suggests that Griffin does not have a normal sense of moral principles, responsibility, or shame. Instead, he is singularly obsessed with pursuing his goal of invisibility, to the point that he will use anyone around him as a means to achieving this goal if necessary. It's suggested that his father had borrowed the money Griffin stole, and so then would be unable to pay it back and killed himself out of shame.



CHAPTER 20: AT THE HOUSE IN GREAT PORTLAND STREET

Doctor Kemp stares silently for a moment, then takes Griffin's arm and tells him to sit down, because he must be tired. With a sudden burst of energy, Griffin resumes his story. He explains that he had left Chesilstowe College by that point and returned to London. He recalls his father's funeral, and how he did not feel sympathy for his father. He believed that his father was "the victim of his own foolish sentimentality." That same day, Griffin met a girl he had known many years before, with whom he had a brief conversation.

Even after all of Griffin's terrible, remorseless behavior, his lack of guilt or sadness about his father's death is incredibly shocking. Indeed, this emphasizes just how isolated Griffin is. The episode with the girl is the only time in which there is even a vague allusion to Griffin's social or romantic life. However, nothing comes of it—it is merely a minor blip in his broader story.



Back at home, Griffin decided to finally try out making something invisible. At first he used a small piece of fabric, and was astonished that he succeeded in turning it transparent. He then heard a cat meowing outside the window, and tried to make her invisible too. However, this experiment failed, as the cat's claws and the pigments in her eyes remained visible. The cat made loud, anguished miaowing sounds, and Griffin's neighbor knocked at the door, saying she could hear her cat inside. However, Griffin pretended not to know what she was talking about.

Griffin's willingness to experiment on the cat—despite the fact that he took it without permission and is clearly causing it pain—again emphasizes his total lack of empathy and remorse. Considering that Griffin cares so little about other people and animals, the havoc he could wreak now that he is invisible seems essentially limitless.



Time passed, and Griffin was not able to make the cat's eyes or claws invisible, so it looked as if these parts of it were floating in midair. He got into bed but couldn't sleep. The cat continued to miaow all night, and eventually Griffin got so frustrated that he opened a window and the cat left. Kemp is stunned, asking if this means that there is still an invisible cat wandering around. Griffin replies that the cat is probably dead. Griffin explains that by that point, working so hard for four years had made him too exhausted to feel anything. He was left totally "apathetic."

Griffin blames his apathy on the fact that he exhausted himself from work, but the truth seems to be that he has a naturally rather apathetic personality. While at times he is able to approach his research with a sense of purpose and enthusiasm, it is unsurprising that at points he even loses this, considering his life is so devoid of sociality, empathy, joy, and meaning.



Griffin swallowed some Strychnine and went to sleep. The next day, he awoke to his landlord, an old Jewish man, at his door accusing him of torturing the cat. Griffin yelled at him and pushed him away, slamming the door shut. Griffin was suddenly terrified that his landlord would discover his experiments, and realized that he did not have enough time or money to move house. He left the house, carrying three [notebooks](#) and his check book, and sent them to a Post Office in Great Portland Street where books and letters can be stored. On returning home, Griffin saw his landlord trying to sneak into his room.

When the landlord left, Griffin made his preparations and took the “drugs that decolourize blood,” which made him drowsy. His landlord knocked at his door with a notice of eviction; when he saw Griffin, his eyes widened in terror and he fled. Griffin went to the mirror and saw that his face was “like white stone.” That night, he suffered extreme agony, fainted, and threw up. At the same time, his body slowly turned glassy until only the very tips of his fingernails remained visible. He felt very weak, but managed to complete the final stage of the process that would render his body invisible.

Griffin slept, and was awoken by another knock at the door. He could hear the voice of his landlord accompanied by someone else. Just as Griffin went to open the door, someone began to try and break it down. Griffin was furious. He gathered together some old bits of paper and turned on the gas in order to start a fire, but could not find matches.

The landlord and his stepsons finally succeeded in breaking down the door, but to them, the room looked completely empty, as Griffin was now invisible. They opened the window to see if Griffin escaped that way, and Griffin felt euphoric to realize he had confounded them. They kept looking, but eventually gave up. Griffin realized that it was too risky to abandon the apartment as it was and, having succeeded in finding matches, set it on fire before leaving forever. As he left, his mind overflowed with all the things he could do now that he was invisible.

Griffin's paranoia is not exactly baseless, as his landlord's nosiness demonstrates. At the same time, Griffin is also arguably responsible for inviting the attention of his landlord by experimenting on his neighbor's cat. Griffin's paranoid mindset leads him to believe everyone around him is conspiring against him, when in reality it is he who brings much of his misfortune upon himself.



The description of Griffin's turn to invisibility is meant to seem realistic, and this is one of the reasons why The Invisible Man is usually classified as a science fiction book rather than simply a gothic or horror story. It doesn't matter that Griffin's invisibility is not particularly scientifically plausible—what counts is that it is rendered in a realistic fashion.



Griffin would rather set his entire apartment on fire than have his research be discovered, which shows the extent of his paranoia and secrecy.



The first time Griffin actually feels joy after turning himself invisible is when he realizes that he can evade responsibility for wrongdoing. This glimpse of his own power delights him, and seemingly encourages him in burning down the apartment and escaping into a life of chaos, totally free from consequences (or so he thinks).



CHAPTER 21: IN OXFORD STREET

Griffin continues his story. At first he finds it tricky to walk now that he cannot see his own feet. However, as he gets used to it he grows more and more overjoyed. He is overcome by a desire to play tricks on people, but his joy is quickly dampened when a man bumps into him, hurting him. The man is confused, claiming “the devil” is in the basket he was holding and letting it go. A crowd gathers, and Griffin rushes away before he can be discovered. He pushes past people and keeps getting injured. Moreover, it is January at the time, and Griffin is naked and freezing. He briefly leaps into a cab, but hurries out when a woman gets in.

A small white dog begins sniffing at him and barking, and Griffin flees. Although he manages to successfully rid himself of the dog, he then creates footprints on the ground, which causes a nearby crowd of people to stare in astonishment. Griffin runs, and the crowd watches, rapt, as each step makes another footprint. Griffin keeps running, though his feet ached; he has also developed an agonizing sore throat. Occasionally he bumps into people and confuses them, and every dog he passes investigates him. He runs back to his old building, where he sees a crowd gathered around, watching the enormous fire he’d started.

Griffin's euphoria and feeling of total freedom does not last long before he encounters the obstacles he now uniquely faces as an invisible man. Not only does he have to worry about people bumping into him all the time, but even the most basic needs like clothing and transportation are suddenly difficult to access. Even when he has a stroke of luck such as finding the empty cab, this tends to run out quickly due to other people's ignorance of his existence.



Griffin's chill from the cold, his sore feet and throat, and the attention from the dog all serve as reminders that the human ability to manipulate nature through science will always be limited. Due to human mortality, we are all ultimately susceptible to natural laws. Even if we manage to evade some (for example, through invisibility), we can never escape them all.



CHAPTER 22: IN THE EMPORIUM

Griffin stands out on the street, freezing. Despite being invisible, he can't find a way to get into a house. He walks to a nearby department store and slips in behind an employee. The store is warm, and Griffin figures that if he chooses the right time to do so, he could successfully rob it. He hopes to cover himself up in clothing so that people won't notice his invisibility, acquire money, collect his [books](#) and papers from the post office, find somewhere else to live, and experiment with the kind of life he could lead as an invisible man.

Griffin watches the employees until the store closes. After he hears the door lock, he wandered through the store, which he finds remarkably silent. He then tears open boxes, drawers, and cash registers, ransacking the place for money and clothes. Next he goes to the grocery section, followed by the toy department, where he picks up some artificial noses and dark glasses. Eventually he goes to sleep on a pile of blankets, finally sated and peaceful. He dreams of the events of the preceding days, but the dream soon turns into a nightmare in which he's tormented by the idea of being both unseen and unheard, and completely alone.

It is ironic that Griffin realizes so early that in order to survive in the world as an invisible man, he will actually have to cover up his invisibility through clothing. This highlights the paradox of the freedom that invisibility gives him—he may be free to do certain things (such as sneak into places and commit criminal acts without being caught), but he has lost the freedom to do many other things.



Griffin does not seem able to consciously admit to himself that he feels lonely and scared of his self-imposed isolation. Only in his dreams does this fear materialize. Again, while invisibility gives him the ability to rob a store and sleep there, what use is this really if his entire life is spent alone, hiding from other people and unable to share the reality of his existence?



Griffin wakes up to the dawn light and the sound of voices. Two men come toward him, asking who he is and demanding that he stay still. In his fright, Griffin doesn't think to take off his clothes. Instead, he just smashes a ceramic pot on the head of one of the men, and smacks the other man in the head with a lamp. At this point he decides to strip off his clothes, just as a policeman and three more shopkeepers arrive to search for him. They can't find him. More shop assistants arrived and begin to excitedly speculate about what happened. Griffin stays in the department store until 11 am, at which point he realizes that staying inside is pointless, and it's warm enough to venture outside again.

When Griffin is frightened—particularly frightened of being caught—he reacts with violence. As a result, he is caught in an extreme cycle of violence and isolation. Any time someone almost discovers him he hurts them, which forces him to further isolate himself in order to evade punishment for this harm. At this point, Griffin's only interaction with the world is through violence and destruction.



CHAPTER 23: IN DRURY LANE

Griffin admits that before becoming invisible, he did not think of the disadvantages and difficulties that invisibility would bring. He has no food or lodging, and if he puts on clothes he loses all the advantages of being invisible in the first place. He can't go outside in snow, rain, or fog, because it makes an imprint of him visible. After returning to watch his old apartment on Great Portland Street burning, Griffin spots a shop that sells news, toys, and other miscellaneous items including masks. He enters the shop and plans to lie in wait until it closes, when he can peruse the items freely.

Griffin has made himself homeless, destitute, hungry, and alone. In some ways, he is at an even greater disadvantage than homeless beggars on the street. At least these people are able to receive charity from strangers and eat. Although Griffin is able to rob stores and seek shelter, his invisibility makes life so unsustainable that it is hard to see how much longer he can go on living like this.



Griffin stands hesitantly as the shopkeeper comes in and out of the shop, seemingly suspicious that someone else is there. He keeps waiting while the shopkeeper, who is frustratingly alert and keeps moving around, eats his meal. Finally thinking that the shopkeeper has left, Griffin sits in the man's chair to warm himself by the fire. Without thinking he puts on a coal, and this noise makes the shopkeeper return. The man stands staring for an excessively long time. Griffin tries to leave but keeps almost bumping into the shopkeeper, who suddenly stands still to listen. Griffin realizes that he must have exceptional hearing.

The problem of the shopkeeper's sharp hearing highlights the fact that Griffin needs to rely on other people's ignorance and skepticism in order to survive. As long as people don't think that it is truly possible that an invisible man walks among them, Griffin may just be able to get away with sneaking around and stealing to survive. However, the shopkeeper shows him that it might not be easy to go unnoticed for long.



Eventually the shopkeeper leaves, slamming the door in Griffin's face. The shopkeeper locks Griffin inside the house, but after Griffin accidentally brings a pile of clothes crashing down on himself, the shopkeeper returns once more, this time touching Griffin. The shopkeeper is now frightened and starts walking around the house with a gun in his hand. Griffin manages to knock him out with a stool and throws his body down the stairs. He then gags him and ties him up with a sheet. At this point in the story Kemp interrupts, horrified at Griffin's breach of morality. Griffin insists that he had no choice, and Kemp seems to halfheartedly agree.

Griffin claims that he was forced to hurt the shopkeeper, which is perhaps his justification for all the other harm and destruction he has caused thus far as well. On the other hand, Griffin himself does not seem to really care whether he behaves in a moral way or not. It is arguably only to assuage Kemp that Griffin even points out that he was acting in a warped form of self-defense.



After tying up the shopkeeper, Griffin eats some bread and cheese he found in the shop and drinks brandy and water. He then rigorously searches the whole shop, collecting anything he might find useful and putting it in a bag. He finds a mask, dark glasses, a beard, a wig, and some clothes. He also steals money from a locked cupboard. Griffin then stares at himself in the mirror and wonders if his appearance is “credible.” Eventually, he leaves. Kemp asks if he ever heard anything more from the shopkeeper, and Griffin replies that he didn’t.

Griffin continues his story: now that he has a full outfit, he briefly assumes that he will finally be able to reap the advantages of invisibility. He fantasizes about stealing money and treating himself to a sumptuous feast; however, after going to a restaurant he realizes that he cannot eat in public, or else others will notice that he’s invisible. He laments that all the joys of life are no longer available to him because he is invisible, and that he is now “a swathed and bandaged caricature of a man.”

Kemp asks how Griffin got to [Iping](#), and Griffin explains that he went there to work. He recalls the snowy day when he first arrived. Griffin asks if he killed “that fool of a constable,” and Kemp replies that it is believed he will survive. Griffin then wonders about “that tramp of mine.” He emphasizes how angry it makes him to have worked so hard and have his efforts be ruined by foolish people. He threatens that if things continue like this, “I shall start mowing ‘em.” Kemp comments that he can imagine it must be frustrating.

CHAPTER 24: THE PLAN THAT FAILED

Doctor Kemp asks Griffin what he plans to do now, and why he came to Port Burdock in the first place. Griffin replies that he thought he would have to flee the country, and planned to go to Spain or Algiers. He planned to use Marvel as “a moneybox and luggage carrier.” However, his plan was ruined when Marvel betrayed him, and now Griffin needs to find a way to get his [books](#) back. Kemp tells Griffin that Marvel asked to be locked up at the police station, where he is now. Griffin regrets having acted alone up until this point, saying that there is not much one can do alone. He says he now wants a “goalkeeper” and “helper.”

Griffin reflects that invisibility is useful in approaching people and getting away, and therefore is particularly helpful for “killing.” However, if he is caught, Griffin’s invisibility will not help him escape. Griffin emphasizes: “It is killing we must do, Kemp,” which makes Kemp uneasy. Griffin continues that they must establish a “Reign of Terror” in order to gain control over a town like Port Burdock.

The fate of the shopkeeper is clearly completely immaterial to Griffin. Indeed, the point of telling his story to Doctor Kemp seems to be to explain how Griffin survived as an invisible man, and in a sense to boast about his own ingenuity. However, this aim has backfired, as it seems that Kemp is more and more distressed by Griffin’s blatant lack of morals.



This is one of several moments when Griffin’s story most closely resembles a myth or parable. In Greek mythology, the Bible, and other religious narratives, stories are told about people who seek to further their own power and in doing so warp the natural order. Ultimately, these people always inadvertently ruin their own lives.



Despite Griffin’s many acts of cruelty and destruction, he remains convinced that it is he who is the victim of other people. Griffin believes that he is surrounded by fools who make his life impossible. In reality, Griffin has brought his own difficulties onto himself, and has behaved in an unforgivably cruel way to everyone around him.



Griffin expresses his desire for a “helper” as an acknowledgment of not wanting to be alone, perhaps in order to seem more sympathetic and likable to Kemp. However, the fact that he called Marvel a “moneybox” suggests that he sees other people more as objects or tools to be used than friends or even allies.



In this passage, it becomes clear that Griffin is in fact truly evil. The fact that he feels comfortable revealing his diabolical plans to Kemp suggests that he has deluded himself into believing that Kemp will go along with him, simply because he too is a scientist.



Kemp is distracted by the sound of his front door opening. He realizes that there are people downstairs, and quickly tells Griffin that he doesn't agree with his plan of "playing a game against the race." He advises Griffin to publish his findings and gain support from others, rather than isolating himself. Griffin hears footsteps coming upstairs, and quickly takes off the robe he was wearing, shouting: "Traitor!" Kemp attempts to lock Griffin in his bedroom, but fumbles with the key. Kemp feels himself be aggressively hit by thin air, knocking him down the stairs. He lies on the ground, and declares that Griffin has left, shouting: "the game's up!"

It does not take long for Griffin to see the error in judgment he made in assuming that Kemp would support the idea of a "Reign of Terror." Kemp's response to this plan proves that he is both more reasonable more moral than Griffin. Griffin's assumption that because Kemp is another highly educated, urban, upper-middle class scientist he would side with him reveals a profound misunderstanding of other people.



CHAPTER 25: THE HUNTING OF THE INVISIBLE MAN

Doctor Kemp, having recovered from his blow, stands talking to Colonel Adye. He accuses Griffin of being insane, saying that he is "pure selfishness" who only thinks about himself. He tells the colonel about Griffin's plans for a "Reign of Terror," and says that Adye must do everything he can to stop him. Kemp reemphasizes how dangerous Griffin is, and Adye agrees on the urgency of the situation, telling Kemp to come with him.

Doctor Kemp and Colonel Adye are both highly educated, reasonably powerful men, and are thus a more formidable match to Griffin than the people of Iping. Perhaps more importantly, they both believe that Griffin is both invisible and evil, and thus won't waste time being skeptical of his true nature.



Kemp advises Adye that when Griffin eats, his food is visible. Tentatively, Kemp suggests that they put powdered glass on the roads. He knows it's cruel, but it is perhaps necessary. Adye agrees that it's "unsportsmanlike" but that he will do it. Kemp concludes that Griffin has become "unhuman" and that he has brought whatever suffering will befall him on himself.

Kemp and Adye are the opposite to Griffin in the sense that they strongly believe in sticking to codes of morality and decency. However, considering that Griffin has violated his own humanity, they decide that these rules do not apply in his case.



CHAPTER 26: THE WICKSTEED MURDER

Griffin leaves Doctor Kemp's house in such a hurry that he breaks the ankle of a child he pushes past on the way. He disappears until 2.30 pm. While he is gone, men all over the countryside get to work trying to catch him. Armed groups accompanied by dogs search the roads and fields, while police officers warn people to stay inside and lock their doors. Copies of Kemp's testimony, signed by Adye, are posted all over the district. A "thrill of horror" runs through the area, as people learn about the murder of Mr. Wicksteed.

It is still highly uncertain whether Griffin will be caught. Not only is he invisible, he is also aided by the fact that he has no moral principles, and is even happy to harm children if they get in his way. On the other hand, everyone in the surrounding area has now finally united in their efforts to bring him down, and this might make all the difference.



No one knows for sure, but it is believed that Griffin must have been carrying an iron rod as a weapon when he encountered Mr. Wicksteed near a gravel pit close to the gate of Lord Burdock's lodge. Mr. Wicksteed's body was found with many wounds, and his walking stick was splintered. He was in his mid 40s, the steward to Lord Burdock, and a completely "inoffensive" person. The last person to see him alive, a young girl, testified that she saw Mr. Wicksteed hitting something on the ground with his walking stick, before disappearing out of sight.

Although Griffin has harmed countless people and attempted or threatened to kill many more, Mr. Wicksteed is the first person he actually succeeds in killing. This is all the more tragic considering that Wicksteed was apparently a kind and seemingly physically vulnerable man (as shown by the fact that he used a walking stick).



There is much speculation about exactly how and why Mr. Wicksteed died. The only certain evidence is Wicksteed's battered body and the bloodstained iron rod that was found nearby. In the aftermath of the murder, some reported hearing a voice wailing and sobbing. Griffin must have found everywhere the evidence of Kemp's testimony and the pursuit of him that ensued as a result. During the night he likely ate and slept, before his "last great struggle against the world" the next day.

This part of the story is told only through glimpses, rumors, and other forms of partial information that the local people collectively gather. No one knows definitively what Griffin did during these hours, which emphasizes his absolute isolation from the world, which has now united against him.



CHAPTER 27: THE SIEGE OF KEMP'S HOUSE

Doctor Kemp reads a strange letter accusing him of being "amazingly energetic and clever." The letter-writer, Griffin, says that he ate and slept to "spite" Kemp. Griffin announces that the first day of the Terror has begun, and that "the Epoch of the Invisible Man" will soon be upon them. He threatens to kill Kemp first to set an example, and ends the letter: "Today Kemp is to die." Kemp fetches his gun, putting it in his jacket pocket. He declares that he will use himself as "bait" to catch Griffin.

The true extent of Griffin's megalomania is revealed in this letter. It is clear that the whole point of his "Reign of Terror" is to give himself absolute power over the world, as indicated by the phrase: "Epoch of the Invisible Man." It seems that Kemp was right to call Griffin insane, as he now appears completely delusional.



Colonel Adye arrives at Kemp's house and informs him that his servant has been "assaulted." Adye explains that a note was violently snatched from the servant's hand. Kemp explains that the note the maid was holding proposed a trap, in which Kemp hoped to use himself as bait to capture Griffin. There is a sound of glass smashing upstairs, and Kemp declares that it's the window breaking. They hurry upstairs and find Kemp's study destroyed. More windows smash, and Kemp concludes that Griffin is going to attempt to break every one in the house. He adds that Griffin will fall and cut his feet.

Unlike Griffin, who in Kemp's words is "pure selfishness," Kemp himself is selfless. He is happy to use himself as bait, thereby potentially sacrificing himself in order to ensure that Griffin is caught. Given Griffin's threats to kill Kemp and anyone else who stands in his way, this is a very serious risk. Yet Kemp nonetheless offers for the sake of the greater good.



Adye goes outside, where he confronts Griffin's disembodied voice. Adye fires into the air, but in the next moment is hit in the face with his own gun. Griffin, still unseen, holds the gun, and demands that Adye go back into the house. From inside, Kemp watches Adye speak to the air and wonders why he hasn't shot Griffin; at this point he realizes that Griffin must have gotten the gun. Adye begins walking to the house, before turning around in an attempt to grab the gun and missing. Griffin fires a shot and Adye falls to the ground. While Adye lies still, a housemaid and two policeman hurry over.

The climactic fight scene between Griffin and Colonel Adye has a surreal edge to it, since Griffin cannot be seen. Again, further confusion is created through the fact that the reader witness the fight through Kemp's eyes. Although Kemp is smart enough to quickly realize that Griffin has seized Adye's gun, the haze of confusion is a reminder of how incapacitated even smart people are by Griffin's invisibility.



Kemp watches as the gun moves toward the house, and hears Griffin laughing and attempting to hack down the door with an axe. The doorbell rings, and Kemp hastily lets the policemen and housemaid inside. He tells them that Griffin has killed Adye and now has the gun. Kemp gives the policemen each a poker and leads them to where Griffin is attempting to smash the door. One policeman manages to grab the axe with the poker, flinging it from Griffin's hands. There is a further scuffle in which both Griffin and the policeman are injured. One of them accidentally smashes a gas bracket. The policeman suddenly finds that both the housemaid and Kemp have disappeared.

The encounter escalates as more people get involved, which doesn't seem to do much to stop Griffin. The image of him laughing maniacally while hacking through the door with an axe is something of a trope of the horror genre (but it wasn't yet a trope when Wells was writing). Before the story ends, the characters must confront the antagonist at his most evil and deranged before they are either killed or are finally able to overpower him.



CHAPTER 28: THE HUNTER HUNTED

Doctor Kemp's nearest neighbor is a man named Mr. Heelas, who is asleep during the commotion at Kemp's house. Heelas is one of the few people who still do not believe in the Invisible Man. When he wakes and first sees what is going on at Kemp's, he cannot believe his eyes. He sees Kemp and the housemaid struggle with the air, and sees Kemp run and hide behind a tree. Heelas immediately starts screaming that "the Invisible Man is coming!" and locking the doors. He sees Kemp running toward the house and tells him he's sorry that Griffin is after him, but that he won't let him in.

This passage suggests that skepticism is much flimsier than is often assumed. People who are skeptical may seem extremely certain, particularly when they are in the minority, as Mr. Heelas is. However, one encounter with Griffin is all it takes for Mr. Heelas to change his mind and believe in the Invisible Man with such certainty that he selfishly will not allow Kemp to seek shelter in his house.



Kemp attempts to get into the house another way, before giving up and running out of Heelas' sight. Kemp runs through town and finds all the houses locked. A tram is pulling into the station, and as Kemp runs toward the police station people gather around. Kemp shouts: "The Invisible Man!" He decides against going to the police station and keeps running, and sees a man coming out of a shop holding a stick. Just as Kemp announces that Griffin is close, he is hit on the ear and strangled by the air. Kemp manages to wrestle Griffin into submission, at which point many other people descend on Griffin.

For a moment it seems as if Griffin will literally outrun Kemp, and that all hope of Griffin being overpowered by the other characters has been lost. However, ultimately it is not possible for Griffin to successfully combat such a large group of people working together, even if he is invisible. Alliance and teamwork prove to be stronger than isolation and anonymity.



The crowd beats Griffin until there is a cry for mercy, at which point Kemp demands that they step back because Griffin is hurt. While some of the men hold him down, Kemp approaches Griffin and realizes that his face is wet. He then notices that Griffin is not breathing. A woman points out that Griffin is becoming visible again. Slowly, his body is revealed. On his face is an expression of "anger and dismay." Someone demands that Griffin's face be covered, and his body is carried into the Jolly Cricketers. This is the end of the "strange experiment of the Invisible Man."

In death, Griffin loses all his power—including his power of invisibility. The fact that his body can be seen again reminds us that even though he was able to conquer certain laws of nature, he never came close to overcoming his own mortality. In some ways, the sight of Griffin's beaten body and brutal expression recalls the revelation of the hideous and deformed portrait in Oscar Wilde's [The Picture of Dorian Gray](#).



THE EPILOGUE

The narrator repeats that this is the end of the “strange and evil experiment of the Invisible Man.” Marvel, who is now a landlord in Port Stowe, sometimes shares the tale of his involvement with the Invisible Man over drinks. Marvel was able to keep the money he took from Griffin, and earned more by telling his story every night for a while at a music hall. Marvel has earned a “reputation for wisdom” in the local area.

Sometimes when he is alone, Marvel takes out the [notebooks](#) he stole from Griffin, which he keeps locked away. He observes to himself that the notebooks are full of “wonderful secrets,” but adds that he would never do what Griffin did. Both Kemp and Adye have asked him repeatedly if he has the notebooks, but Marvel has kept them a secret. The narrator explains that “none other [than Marvel] will know of them until he dies.”

Marvel's reversed fortunes are a happy (and even comic) ending, showing that there is a possibility for those who are disenfranchised and abused to gain prosperity, happiness, and respect. This is also a sign of a newly modern era in which the class system does not necessarily determine the course of one's life.



Although Marvel's material conditions and social standing have greatly improved, he is still unable to understand the notebooks, a reminder that scientific knowledge is not accessible to everyone. Yet by keeping them secret, he ensures that Griffin's destruction is never repeated by someone else.



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