

**H. G. Wells's**  
***The Time Machine & The Invisible Man***  
**Study Guide**

***The Time Machine***

**Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2**

1. What are the four dimensions that the Time Traveller discusses in the first chapter?
2. How does he define duration of time?
3. What defines existence?
4. Identify the characters in Chapter 1.
5. What is the significance of Filby's wink at the conclusion of Chapter 2?
6. What is the purpose of these chapters?

**Chapter 3**

1. Why do the others in the room distrust the Time Traveller?
2. How does Wells build suspense and tension in this chapter?
3. What point of view is being used? Explain.
4. In Chapter 3, what three new guests are present at the Time Traveller's home?
5. Why does Wells identify the dinner guests predominately by occupation?

**Chapter 4**

1. What is the nature of the physical sensations accompanying time travel?
2. The arrival in the future involves a risk. Explain.
3. When the machine stops traveling through time, where is it?
4. What possibilities begin to make the Time Traveller afraid?
5. What is it that reassures the Time Traveller when he stops his machine?

**Chapters 5 & 6**

1. Describe the first people the Time Traveller encounters.
2. In what year does the Time Traveller find himself, and how does he know?
3. In what respect are the agricultural products he sees in this future world, an extension of what is happening in his own world?
4. Why, then, is the landscape described as "a tangled waste"?
5. What is so strange about the buildings the Time Traveller observes? Why?
6. What does this indicate about the society in which he finds himself?
7. The Eloi men and women look very much the same physically. What does the Time Traveller conclude from this?
8. The Time Traveller uses the phrase "the sunset of mankind." To what does he attribute this decline of humanity?
9. How are "hardship and freedom" the causes of human intelligence?

## **Chapters 7 & 8**

1. What is the significance of the White Sphinx?
2. What causes the Time Traveller to panic? Why?
3. Does patience prove to be a virtue for the Time Traveller? Is he always patient?
4. Describe some childlike qualities. Which of these qualities do the Eloi demonstrate?
5. Describe the relationship between Weena and the Time Traveller.
6. What does the Time Traveller think will be the eventual fate of all the planets?
7. What theory does the Time Traveller use to explain how and why a species of man comes to live underground?
8. How do the economic theories influence the thinking of the Time Traveller?
9. How does humanity arrive at a society of Haves and Have-nots?
10. In this story, who are the Haves? Who are the Have-nots? Expound upon your answer.

## **Chapter 9**

1. What is the result of the Time Traveller's explorations?
2. Describe the Under-world.
3. What are the peculiar features of the Morlocks?
4. In this chapter, what is the dramatic effect of darkness?
5. What erroneous assumptions does the Time Traveller make about this future age?

## **Chapter 10**

1. Why do the Morlocks continue to make clothes for the Eloi? To what does the Time Traveller equate their behavior?
2. In the second paragraph of Chapter 10, what does the Time Traveller come to consider his enemy?
3. Why does the Time Traveller go to the Palace of Green Porcelain?
4. Looking up into the Milky Way, the Time Traveller contemplates the "gravities of terrestrial life." How does this relate to the events of the novel?
5. When the Time Traveller says, "Yet it was too horrible [to think about]," to what is he referring?
6. How does the Time Traveller attempt to intellectualize the situation?

## **Chapter 11**

1. In what ways is the Palace of Green Porcelain like a library?
2. In this chapter, how does the Time Traveller's personality develop?
3. Consider the use of coincidence to advance the plot.

## **Chapter 12**

1. What is the significance of fire in this novel?
2. Is Weena's demise necessary to the plot?
3. Can Weena be left entirely out of the story?
4. What awful fate does Weena seem destined to meet? What saves her from this fate?

## **Chapter 13**

1. What does the Time Traveller mean when he states, “the human intellect . . . had committed suicide”?
2. What lessons are to be learned from the year 802,701?
3. Why do the Morlocks resort to cannibalism?
4. Is the Time Traveller’s final escape from the Morlocks a good example of realism (the depiction of life as it really is) or romanticism (the depiction of emotion, imagination, natural beauty, and the irrational realms of dreams and legends)?

## **Chapter 14**

1. Describe the astronomy of this future.
2. What is the effect of the silence?
3. Is this chapter an important part of the plot structure? Why or why not?
4. What is the “round thing”?

## **Chapters 15 & 16**

1. What psychological effect does his trip into the future have on the Time Traveller?
2. Examine the reaction of the other characters as the Time Traveller concludes his story.
3. Is it plausible that the Time Traveller will leave again?
4. Evaluate the last paragraph of this chapter as a resolution in the construction of the plot.

## **Epilogue**

1. Summarize the character of the Time Traveller, as perceived by the narrator.
2. The Epilogue presents two points of view on the future. Whose views are presented, and what are they?

## ***The Invisible Man***

### **I. The Strange Man's Arrival**

1. Describe some of the actions and appearances of the stranger upon arrival at the Coach and Horses.
2. How would you describe Mrs. Hall's reaction to the stranger after she has served his meal?
3. Give some examples of the stranger's rudeness to Mrs. Hall.
4. How can you tell this novel takes place in the 1800s?

### **II. Mr. Teddy Henfrey's First Impressions**

1. Who is Mr. Teddy Henfrey, and how did he get along with the stranger?
2. Describe the differences in the dialects of Mr. Henfrey and the stranger.
3. Quote the sentence in which the stranger gives information as to what his work is. Does this answer seem odd?
4. Find a metaphor around page 20.

### **III. The Thousand and One Bottles**

1. What is unusual about the arrival of the stranger's luggage?
2. Describe what happens when Fearenside brings the stranger's luggage to his room.
3. What does Hall see in the room?
4. What theories about the stranger do Teddy Henfrey and Fearenside hold?

### **IV. Mr. Cuss Interviews the Stranger**

1. Why does the narrator intrude into the story?
2. What are some of the theories about the stranger that are discussed among the village inhabitants?
3. Who is Cuss, and what plan did he devise to learn more about the stranger?
4. How much of the stranger does Mr. Cuss see?
5. What happens in the room that causes some laughter when it is explained?

### **V. The Burglary at the Vicarage**

1. How does the author build suspense about what is wrong with the stranger? This stranger is invisible, so there is no wondering on the reader's part.
2. During the burglary, the Buntings could hear things indicating that someone was in the Vicarage, that a candle had been lit, and that money in a drawer was gone. What conclusion can be drawn from this chapter?

### **VI. The Furniture That Went Mad**

1. Slapstick is crude comedy in which the humor comes from violent activity. Which sentences would qualify as slapstick? (around page 116)
2. Find an example of personification. (around page 117)
3. What is another way of saying, "A door onbust is always open to bustin, but ye can't onbust a door once you've busted en"? (around page 117)

## **VII. The Unveiling of the Stranger**

1. What is Mrs. Hall trying to do in her conversation with the stranger?
2. What can you infer the people suspect is the reason the stranger now has money?
3. What is the result of Mrs. Hall's badgering of the stranger?
4. There is a good deal of humor in the description of the melee going on as the entire village tries to subdue the Invisible Man. Despite this, a frightening thing happens. Describe it.

## **VIII. In Transit**

1. What happens in this brief chapter?

## **IX. Mr. Thomas Marvel**

1. The first sentence of this chapter describes the tramp, Thomas Marvel, in very elaborate language. What could be a simpler way to describe Mr. Marvel?
2. Find a simile around page 127.
3. Why is the voice without a body not startling to Mr. Marvel at the beginning?
4. How does the stranger convince Marvel to help?
5. What can Marvel see of the Invisible Man?
6. What does the Invisible Man want Mr. Marvel to do? Does Mr. Marvel finally agree to do it?

## **X. Mr. Marvel's Visit to Iping**

1. What is going on in the village on the afternoon of Whit-Monday?
2. What happens to Mr. Huxter, the tobacconist?

## **XI. In the Coach and Horses**

1. As the Doctor and the Vicar are inspecting the Invisible Man's books with the record of his scientific experiments, they discover the notes are in secret writing. What else happens when they are looking over the books?
2. Has the personality of the Invisible Man changed from the early chapters of the novel?

## **XII. The Invisible Man Loses His Temper**

1. What do Mr. Hall and Teddy hear?
2. Mr. Cuss says that "He's fighting mad!" Is the Invisible Man really insane?
3. Describe the Invisible Man's escalating anger and its effect on the village.
4. What is learned at the end of this chapter about Iping and the Invisible Man?

## **XIII. Mr. Marvel Discusses His Resignation**

1. How would you describe the Invisible Man's relationship with Mr. Marvel as they walk along the road to Bramblehurst?

#### **XIV. At Port Stowe**

1. What has the mariner read?
2. What happens to Mr. Marvel when he brags about his knowledge of the Invisible Man to the mariner? What excuse does Marvel give when the Invisible Man intrudes?
3. What does Mr. Marvel's willingness to tell a stranger about the Invisible Man show about his trustworthiness, even in the face of the threats of the Invisible Man? Does this hold any implications for their future relationship?
4. What has been happening throughout the area?

#### **XV. The Man Who Was Running**

1. What impression do you have of Dr. Kemp?
2. What is happening to Mr. Marvel as seen by Dr. Kemp? Find the simile to describe how Marvel sounds.

#### **XVI. The Jolly Cricketers**

1. What is "The Jolly Cricketers"?
2. What is meant by the phrase "conversed in American"?
3. What is the meaning of the sentence, "I'm out of frocks"?

#### **XVII. Dr. Kemp's Visitor**

1. Describe the sequence of Dr. Kemp's reactions to his first meeting with the Invisible Man.
2. What is learned about the background of the Invisible Man in the chapter?
3. What emotions does the Invisible Man display toward Dr. Kemp?

#### **XVIII. The Invisible Man Sleeps**

1. Dr. Kemp weighs all the happenings of the night and what he learns from newspaper reports while the Invisible Man sleeps. Discuss Dr. Kemp's thinking about the conflict between scientific certainties he holds and what his actual experiences of the night have shown.
2. What makes Dr. Kemp decide to seek the help of Colonel Adye in Port Burdock?

#### **XIX. Certain First Principles**

1. Dr. Kemp tells the Invisible Man that his (the Invisible Man's) secret is known throughout the country. What does Dr. Kemp also tell him, which is a lie?
2. State a generalization about life expressed by the Invisible Man.
3. Even though this is a science fiction novel, discuss your opinion of whether the Invisible Man's explanation of the scientific principles of optical density and light reflection and refraction are sound.
4. What shocking confession did the Invisible Man make about something that happened during his research studies after college.

## **XX. At the House in Great Portland Street**

1. Name two things in this chapter that show a lack of human feeling in the Invisible Man.
2. Describe the process by which the Invisible Man became invisible.
3. What crime does the Invisible Man commit in this chapter?

## **XXI. In Oxford Street**

1. A cursory look at this entire chapter, much of the previous, and many of the remaining ones, shows that they are written from Griffin's memory. What point of view is used, the first or the third-person? Why do you think the author uses this particular point of view? What literary term is represented in this revealing of how Griffin became invisible?
2. What does Griffin discover has not changed, despite his invisibility?
3. What nearly gets the Invisible Man caught?
4. What possessions did the Invisible Man save before he set his rooming house on fire?

## **XXII. In the Emporium**

1. An emporium is a large store that sells a wide variety of merchandise. Why would the Invisible Man choose to hide in a store?
2. Find an instance of humor in the description of the shop clerks.
3. What does the Invisible Man say was his major difficulty in his disguise previously?

## **XXIII. In Drury Lane**

1. The Invisible Man has a plan of action for when he is in Drury Lane. What is it?
2. Kemp interrupts Griffin's explanation of hitting the shopkeeper. What is Kemp's reasoning, and what is Griffin's response?
3. Describe the power the Invisible Man says he thought being invisible would bring him.

## **XXIV. The Plan That Failed**

1. Has the Invisible Man, thus far in the novel, had any successful human relationships, or has he been a man alone and outside society? Discuss how that situation may have entered into his decision to try to find the key to becoming invisible and have power over others.
2. Why do you suppose Dr. Kemp keeps prodding Griffin to keep talking?
3. In the discussion, how does the Invisible Man seem to be changing?
4. What plea does Dr. Kemp make to the Invisible Man as the police arrive?
5. Who enters Kemp's office looking for the Invisible Man?

## **XXV. The Hunting of the Invisible Man**

1. What words does Dr. Kemp use to describe the Invisible Man to Dr. Adye, which shows that Kemp sees the Invisible Man as a monster?
2. What is the significance of "powdered glass"?
3. In the last paragraph of this chapter, Dr. Kemp says that the Invisible Man "has cut himself off from his kind." What does he mean by this?

## **XXVI. The Wicksteed Murder**

1. What overexaggeration does Wells use at the beginning of this chapter? Why do you think he uses it?
2. The plot of this novel is filled with conflict. Would you say it is a novel of a man against nature, man against himself, or man against man? Give a reason for your answer.
3. The Invisible Man uses part of a fence to murder Wicksteed. What symbolism can be read into a broken fence and the consequent murder?
4. What bit of humanity does Wells allow Griffin?
5. What words are used at the end of this chapter to describe the Invisible Man as one who has crossed the boundary of a civilized man?

## **XXVII. The Siege of Kemp's House**

1. How would you describe the letter the Invisible Man wrote to Dr. Kemp?
2. Dr. Kemp orders his housekeeper to lock all the doors and windows. When the Invisible Man lived at the Coach and Horses, he locked all the doors and windows. What does each of these events symbolize?
3. Even though the Invisible Man wrested Adye's gun from him and promised not to shoot him, he actually did so. Why?
4. There have been violent scenes in the early chapters of this novel, as well as violence in this chapter. Is there any difference between how the author chose to present the earlier violence and how he presents it in this chapter?
5. With what elements of suspense does the chapter end?

## **XXVIII. The Hunter Hunted**

1. Discuss the manner of the Invisible Man's death considering what moral the author may have wished to present to the reader.
2. How and why has Wells changed the point of view of this chapter?
3. What happens to Griffin after his death?

## **The Epilogue**

1. Who is the owner-landlord of the inn near the Port Stowe, and what is his reputation?
2. In what way does Mr. Marvel imitate the Invisible Man every Sunday morning?

## Essay Topics for *The Time Machine*

For each of these, remember to go beyond mere plot summary and argue a point.

1. A major theme in this novel is that the continued exploitation of the masses by the aristocracy (or the rich or the upper-class) will result in disaster for everyone. Cite and compare actual historical events with the events in the story to support this thesis.
2. Discuss Wells's philosophical view on evolution. How and why does evolution take place in the novel?
3. For science fiction stories to work, writers must convince us that what they describe is possible; that is, that there exists an element of verisimilitude. In the first chapter, how does Wells convince readers to suspend their disbelief in regards to the time machine? To what extent is time travel actually possible? What about his views of the future of mankind?
4. Argue for or against the following point and refer to the story to support your contention: Weena is unnecessary in this story, and is included only to bring in a romantic plot line.
5. Identify the ways in which power and fear affect the characters in this book. Cite examples from the story to demonstrate how Wells weaves the two concepts together throughout the novel.

## Essay Topics for *The Invisible Man*

For each of these, remember to go beyond mere plot summary and argue a point.

1. There are two predominant types of conflict in this novel: "man against nature" and "man against man." Discuss how both of these types of conflict are handled in *The Invisible Man*.
2. Two types of scientific endeavor are described in *The Invisible Man*: theoretical science and experimental science. In your essay, discuss these two types of science and tell how they apply in this novel.
3. Consider this quotation: "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Griffin believes he would achieve absolute power through becoming invisible. Discuss whether or not Griffin was corrupted "absolutely" by the power of the invisibility.
4. *The Invisible Man* can be seen partially as a novel of social mores, which considers the concept of how persons who are "different" are isolated in society. Discuss the things about Griffin that made him different in his society, and how literal invisibility can be a metaphor for figurative invisibility.
5. Discuss the symbolism of doors, windows, fences, blinds, and curtains in the novel.
6. Discuss the interweaving of humor, monstrosity, and violence in this novel.