

**АНГЛИЙСКИЙ В АДАПТАЦИИ:
ЧТЕНИЕ И АУДИРОВАНИЕ**



ГЕРБЕРТ УЭЛЛС

**ЧЕЛОВЕК-
НЕВИДИМКА**

**THE INVISIBLE
MAN**

**УПРАЖНЕНИЯ
КЛЮЧИ
СЛОВАРЬ**

**2
уровень**

HERBERT WELLS

Когда встречаются гений и злодейство...

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Адаптация, составление словаря и упражнений *Е. Бекешиной*

Иллюстрация на обложке *В. Тимофеевой*

Дизайн обложки *Ю. Щербакова*

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

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Книга предназначена для изучающих английский язык на продолжающем уровне.

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CHAPTER I

The Strange Man's Arrival

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

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

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



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

'No,' he said without turning.

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

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

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

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

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


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

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

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

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

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




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

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

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

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

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



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


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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The visitor remained in the room until four o'clock, without giving the slightest intention to go out. For the most part he was quite still during that time; it would seem he sat in the growing darkness smoking in the firelight — perhaps sleeping.

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



CHAPTER II

Mr. Teddy Henfrey's First Impressions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

these words reassured him. The stranger turned round with his back to the fireplace and put his hands behind his back. 'And now,' he said, 'when the clock repair is over, I think I should like to have some tea. But not till the clock repair is over.'

Mrs. Hall was about to leave the room — she made no attempt to continue the conversation, because she did not want to be snubbed in front of Mr. Henfrey — when her visitor asked her if she had made any arrangements about his boxes at Bramblehurst. She told him she had mentioned the matter to the postman, and that the carrier could bring them over the next day. 'You are sure that is the earliest?' he said.

She was sure, she answered coldly.

'I should explain,' he added, 'what I was really too cold and tired to do before, that I am an experimental investigator.'

'Indeed, sir,' said Mrs. Hall, much impressed.

'And my baggage contains apparatus and appliances.'

'Very useful things indeed they are, sir,' said Mrs. Hall.

'And I really want to continue my inquiries.'

'Of course, sir.'

'My reason for coming to Iping,' he went on, picking words carefully, 'was ... a desire for loneliness. I do not wish to be disturbed in my work. In addition to my work, after an accident —'

'That's what I thought,' said Mrs. Hall to herself.

'— I have to search for certain conditions. My eyes — are sometimes so weak and painful that I have to shut myself up in the dark for hours together. Lock myself up. Sometimes — from time to time. Not at present, certain-

ly. At such times the smallest disturbance, the entry of a stranger into the room, is a source of unbearable inconvenience to me — it is well these things should be understood.'

'Certainly, sir,' said Mrs. Hall. 'And if I might make so bold as to ask —'

'That I think, is all,' said the stranger, in a tone that prevented all objection. Mrs. Hall saved her question for a better occasion.

After Mrs. Hall had left the room, he remained standing in front of the fire, watching Mr. Henfrey repair the clock. Mr. Henfrey not only took off the hands of the clock, and the face, but also the whole mechanism; and he tried to work in as slow and quiet manner as possible. He worked with the lamp close to him, and the green shade threw a brilliant light upon his hands, and upon the frame and wheels, and left the rest of the room in the darkness. When he looked up, coloured spots swam in his eyes. Being of a curious nature, he had removed the works — a quite unnecessary procedure — with the idea of putting off his departure and perhaps starting a conversation with the stranger. But the stranger stood there, perfectly silent and still. So still, it got on Henfrey's nerves. He felt alone in the room and looked up, and there, grey and dark, was the bandaged head and huge blue lenses watching without a single move. It was so scary that for a minute they remained staring silently at one another. Then Henfrey looked down again. Very uncomfortable position! One would like to say something. Should he remark that the weather was very cold for the time of year?

He looked up as if to start this conversation. 'The weather — ' he began.

'Why don't you finish and go?' said the solid figure, evidently in a state of painfully suppressed anger. 'All you've got to do is to fix the hour-hand. You're simply pretending — '

'Certainly, sir — one minute more. I simply forgot — ' and Mr. Henfrey finished and went.

But he went feeling too annoyed. 'Damn it!' said Mr. Henfrey to himself, walking down the village through the melting snow; 'a man must do a clock at times, surely.'

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

And yet again, 'Probably not. If the police was wanting you you couldn't be more bandaged.'

At Gleeson's corner he saw Hall, who had recently married the stranger's hostess at the 'Coach and Horses,' and who now drove the Iping wagon, when rare clients ordered it, to Sidderbridge station, coming to him on his return from that place. Hall had evidently been 'stopping a bit' at Sidderbridge, to judge by his driving. "How do you do, Teddy?" he said, passing.

'You got a strange guest up in home!' said Teddy.

Hall pulled up. 'What's that?' he asked.

'Strangely looking customer stopping at the "Coach and Horses,"' said Teddy. 'My sakes!'

And he started giving Hall a lively description of his monstrous guest. 'Looks a bit like he wants to hide himself, don't it? I'd like to see a man's face if I had him stopping in my place,' said Henfrey. 'But women are that trustful — especially with strangers. He has taken your rooms and he hasn't even given a name, Hall.'

'You don't say so!' said Hall, who was mentally slow.

'Yes,' said Teddy. 'He paid for the week. Whatever he is, you can't get rid of him during the week. And he's got a lot of luggage coming tomorrow, so he says. Let's hope it won't be stones in boxes, Hall.'

He told Hall how a stranger with empty suitcase tricked his aunt at Hastings. Altogether he left Hall very suspicious. 'Get up, old girl,' said Hall to his horse. 'I suppose I must take care of it.'

Teddy walked his way with his mind greatly relieved.

Instead of 'taking care of it,' however, Hall on his return was seriously criticized by his wife on the length of time he had spent in Sidderbridge, and his questions were answered unwillingly and in a manner not to the point. But the seed of suspicion Teddy had planted grew in the mind of Mr. Hall. 'You women don't know everything,' said Mr. Hall, deciding to find out more about the personality of his guest as soon as possible. And after the stranger had gone to bed, which he did about half-past nine, Mr. Hall went very aggressively into the guest room and looked very hard at his wife's furniture, just to show that the stranger wasn't master there, and examined closely a sheet of mathematical calculations the stranger had left. When he was going to bed he instructed Mrs. Hall to look very closely at the stranger's luggage when it came next day.

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

She was all the more angry with Hall because the stranger was obviously an unusually strange sort of stranger, and she wasn't sure about him at all. In the

middle of the night she woke up dreaming of huge white heads like turnips, that came after her, at the end of endless necks, and with huge black eyes. But being a reasonable woman, she suppressed her terrors and turned over and went to sleep again.


CHAPTER III

The Thousand and One Bottles

So it was that on the twenty-ninth day of February, at the beginning of the thaw, this person fell out of nowhere into Iping village. Next day his luggage arrived through the melted snow — and very extraordinary luggage it was. There were a couple of suitcases indeed, such as a rational man might need, but in addition there were a box of books — big, fat books, of which some were just in handwriting — and a dozen or more containers, boxes, and cases, with objects packed in straw, as it seemed to Hall, watching with casual curiosity at the straw — glass bottles. The stranger in hat, coat, gloves, and scarf, came out to meet Fearenside's cart, while Hall was having a lively conversation. Out he came, not noticing Fearenside's dog, who was smelling Hall's legs. 'Bring those boxes in,' he said. 'I've been waiting long enough.'

And he came down the stairs towards the tail of the cart as if to take the smaller box.

As soon as Fearenside's dog caught sight of him, however, it began to roar wildly, and when he ran down the



stairs it suddenly jumped up, and then seized his hand. 'Get off!' cried Hall, jumping back, for he was afraid of dogs, and Fearenside shouted, 'Lie down!' and grabbed his whip.


They saw the dog's teeth had slipped the hand, heard a kick, saw the dog jump aside and finally bite the stranger's leg, and heard the rip of his trousers. Then the end of Fearenside's whip reached the animal, and the dog, yelping with pain, ran away and hid under the wheels of the wagon. It all happened in about half-minute. No one spoke, everyone shouted. The stranger quickly looked at his torn glove and at his leg, and then turned and ran quickly up the stairs into the inn. They heard him go across the corridor and up the uncarpeted stairs to his bedroom.

'You animal, you!' said Fearenside, climbing off the wagon with his whip in his hand, while the dog watched him through the wheel. 'Come here,' said Fearenside — 'You'd better.'

Hall had stood staring. 'He was bit,' said Hall. 'I'd better go and see how he's doing,' and he hurried after the stranger. He met Mrs. Hall in the passage. 'Carrier's dog,' he said 'bit him.'

He went straight upstairs, and the stranger's door being slightly opened, he pushed it open and was entering without any ceremony, being of a naturally sympathetic character.

The curtain was down and the room dark. He noticed something unusual, what seemed a handless arm waving to him, and a face of three huge vague spots on white, very like the face of a pale pansy. Then he was hit heavily in



the chest, thrown back, and the door shut before his face and locked. It happened so quickly that it gave him no time to think it over. A flicker of unclear shapes, a blow, and a shock. There he stood before the closed door, wondering what it might be that he had seen.

A couple of minutes after, he joined the little group that had formed outside the 'Coach and Horses.' There was Fearendside telling about it all over again for the second time; there was Mrs. Hall saying his dog didn't have to bite her guests; there was Huxter, the shopkeeper from over the road, extremely interested; and Sandy Wadgers from the forge, quiet; besides women and children, all of them saying stupid things: 'Wouldn't let it bite me, for sure;' 'That's not right keep such dogs;' 'What did it bite him for, then?' and so forth.

Mr. Hall, staring at them from the stairs and listening, found it unlikely that he had seen anything so very unusual happen upstairs. Besides, his vocabulary was too limited to express his impressions.

'He doesn't want any help, he says,' he said in answer to his wife's question. 'We'd better take his luggage in.'

'He should have it burnt at once,' said Mr. Huxter; 'especially if it's at all sore.'

'I'd shoot it, that's what I'd do,' said a lady in the group.

Suddenly the dog began roaring again.

'Hurry up,' cried an angry voice in the door, and there stood the wrapped stranger with his collar turned up and with his hat down. 'The sooner you get those things in the better I'll be pleased.' An anonymous witness said that his trousers and gloves had been changed.