

talk
to
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

Footprints without Feet 5

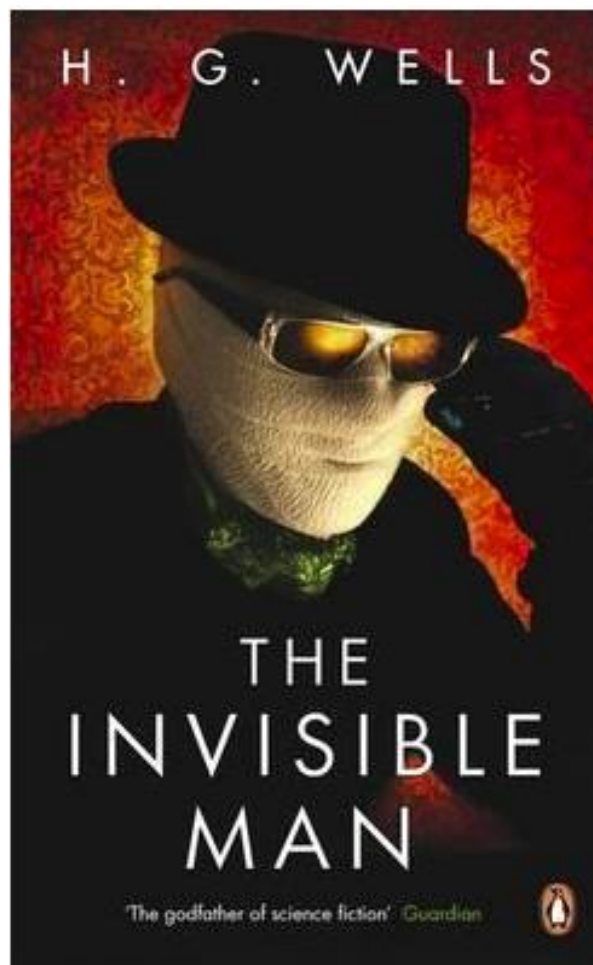
Footprints without Feet

1. Watch and listen to the story

Click on the link below to watch a video of the story being read. Note the pronunciations of the words and read along using the subtitles.

[\(83\) Footprints without Feet - YouTube](#)

2. Background



For centuries, people have wanted to become invisible. So far, this has not been possible. However, the real question is, what would happen to people's values and behaviour if nobody could find out what they did.

All the stories that have been written about invisibility, warn us that it's a bad idea that it will end in disaster. From society's point of view, there is nothing to be gained by invisibility. Invisibility gives you the freedom to do what you want, walk in anywhere and take anything you want, go into places you shouldn't go, and do things you shouldn't do. These are attractive things; they are very tempting.

We can compare this to online anonymity. In a sense, this is a kind of invisibility. It has given people the freedom to abuse, to steal, to insult and engage in other kinds of inappropriate behaviour. Since they feel that they're invisible, they say things that they would never say in other social situations, where they could be held accountable for what they do. Unfortunately, our moral values change when we know that we can't be seen and held accountable for what we say or do. We see this very clearly in 'The Invisible Man'.

3. Summary

'Footprints without Feet', a story by H.G.Wells, is an excerpt from his book, 'The Invisible Man'. It is about Griffin, an extremely brilliant but bad tempered and lawless scientist. He was determined to make himself invisible, and after many attempts, he finally succeeded. His body became invisible, though it remained solid. Unfortunately, once he became invisible, he could not make himself visible again.

Running out of clothes, food, money and shelter, he robbed and attacked people callously. People around him were very confused by his mysterious appearances and disappearances. Some were convinced that that they were being victimized by witchcraft. Finally, a police constable was summoned to arrest him. However, Griffin managed to escape.

It becomes clear that in his invisible state, his life would never go back to being what it was when he was visible. He could have tried to explain his situation to the authorities, and he could have gone back to his job in the laboratory. Instead, he chose to be a thief and a fugitive, running from one place to another.

4. Vocabulary

1. **Discovery** – the process of finding information, a place, or an object, especially for the first time; it is also the thing that has been found
Vasco da Gama made the **discovery** of a sea route from Europe to India in 1498.
2. **Imprints** – impress, or stamp or marks on a surface, marks
The **imprints** of the British rule are evident in the architecture of the buildings on Rajpath in Delhi.
3. **Gazed** – to look steadily for a long time
He **gazed** at the painting for some time before deciding to buy it.
4. **Remarkable** – unusual or special and therefore surprising and worth mentioning
Nelson Mandela was a truly **remarkable** man.
5. **Descending** – to go down something
As the curtain was **descending**, someone from the audience jumped onto the stage to congratulate the actors.
6. **Progressing** – moving forward or developing to an advanced position
Technology is **progressing** so fast, it is hard to keep up with it.
7. **Fascinated** – extremely interested
We watched, **fascinated**, as the magician made the woman disappear in a cloud of smoke.
8. **Impressions** – an idea or opinion of what someone or something is like
The **impressions** I carry of my visit to Ladakh are still fresh in my mind.
9. **Fainter** – not at all strong or clear
The sounds of the wedding party became **fainter** and **fainter** as we drove away from there.
10. **Bewildered** – puzzled, confused, perplexed
He was **bewildered** by the variety of courses offered by the university.

11. **Transparent** – that which you can see through, easily understood or recognized
The sea was visible through the **transparent** window curtains.
I wish the instructions in the television manual were more **transparent**.
12. **Experiment** – a test done in order to learn something or to discover if something works or is true
The students were doing an **experiment** on light in the Physics laboratory.
13. **Invisible** – impossible to see
Bacteria are **invisible** to the naked eye and can only be seen with a microscope.
14. **Swallowed** – caused food, drink, etc. to move from the mouth into the stomach using muscles of the throat
He **swallowed** the grape whole, without chewing it.
15. **Lawless** – not controlled by law; illegal
They were scared for their lives in that **lawless** city.
16. **Eject** – to force or throw out in a violent way, to compel to leave a place
If there is an emergency, the pilot will **eject** from the plane.
The police were ordered to **eject** the demonstrators from the stadium.
17. **Revenge** – harm done to someone as a punishment for harm that they have done to someone else
The robber was killed by a rival gang member in **revenge**.
18. **Wanderer** – a person who travels aimlessly, to move from place to place
My uncle is a **wanderer** who has never put down roots in any place.
19. **Adventures** – an unusual, exciting, and possibly dangerous activity
He had some exciting **adventures** while he was exploring the Amazon forest.
20. **Without regard** – without considering or thinking about something
We were asked to choose whatever present we wanted, **without regard** for money.
21. **Expense** – the use of money, time or effort
They have just built a new house at great **expense**.

22. **Wrappers** – pieces of paper, plastic or other material that cover and protect something
The children tore the **wrappers** of their presents in a hurry to find out what toys they had got.
23. **Fitted himself out** – to provide himself with all the things or clothes that he will need
He **fitted himself out** in an expensive suit before he went for his final interview.
24. **Wide-brimmed** – broad bottom part of a hat
I bought a **wide-brimmed** hat to wear on the beach.
25. **Assistant** – someone who helps someone else to do a job; in this case a person who helps customers who come to the shop
The shop **assistant** helped me to find the perfect sari for my mother.
26. **Approaching** – coming near to something or someone
We could see the car **approaching** the bridge.
27. **Stock** – a supply of things, inventory of goods
The new shop has a **stock** of many imported goods.
28. **Theatrical** – connected with theatre, dramatic or exaggerated behavior
He loves to dress in a **theatrical** style.
29. **Shivering** – shaking slightly because of cold, illness or fear
We all stood outside the house **shivering** in the cold.
30. **Suitable** – right for something or someone
This is not a **suitable** dress for a young child.
31. **Bandages** – long, narrow pieces of cloth that are tied around an injury or part of someone's body that has been hurt
The wound was cleaned and stitched, before **bandages** were put on it.
32. **Bushy side-whiskers** – thick whiskers on the side of the face usually worn long
On his thin, long face the **bushy side-whiskers** looked quite unattractive.

33. **Callously** – showing insensitivity or disregard of others, heartlessly, harshly
The government will not allow the hospitals to treat poor patients **callously**.
34. **Uncommon** – not common, unusual, out of the ordinary
It is **uncommon** to have such heavy rain in December.
35. **Appearance** – the way a person or thing looks to other people
His **appearance** was so smart that he was immediately let into the house without any questions being asked.
36. **Tongues wagging** – indiscreet talk, people gossiping
The postponement of the wedding ceremony set **tongues wagging** all over the neighbourhood.
37. **Desire** – a strong feeling that you want something
There is a strong **desire** for peace among the people.
38. **Solitude** – the state or situation of being alone
I enjoy the **solitude** and the silence of the hills.
39. **Eccentric** – unconventional or slightly strange behavior, odd
A genius often seems **eccentric** in his behavior.
40. **Irritable** – bad tempered, easily annoyed, touchy
The teacher was very **irritable** with the rowdy students.
41. **Pretended** – not genuine, fanciful
He **pretended** to be more qualified than he was.
42. **Curious** – strange and unusual; inquisitive
There was a **curious** looking man standing outside the door.
We were all very **curious** about where Rita had disappeared for two days.
43. **Episode** – an incident, event, happening which may be part of a sequence
The final **episode** of the series was very dramatic.
44. **Clergyman** – a male priest or religious leader, specially a Christian one
The **clergyman** thanked the people for their generous donations to the charity.

45. **Creeping** – moving slowly, quietly, and carefully, usually to avoid being noticed
The thief was **creeping** around the house, trying to find an open window.
46. **Chink** – make a slight ringing sound; opening
We could hear the **chink** of the coins in his pocket as he walked around.
There was a **chink** in the curtains through which the sunlight came into the room.
47. **Poker** – here, a metal rod with a handle used to prod and stir an open fire; also a card game
The fire burnt out as no one stirred it with the **poker** lying near the fireplace.
48. **Grasped firmly** – hold something in your hand tightly
She **grasped** my hand **firmly** and dragged me to the Principal's office.
49. **Surrender** – to stop fighting and admit defeat; to give oneself up to authority
The police surrounded the terrorists' hideout and asked them to **surrender**.
50. **Amazement** – extreme surprise
To my **amazement**, he ate up the whole bowl of biryani.
51. **Chimney** – a hollow pipe that allows smoke from a fire inside a building to escape into the air outside
Dark smoke coming out of the factory's **chimney** was polluting the air.
52. **Housekeeping money** – money used to run a house
She saved some **housekeeping money** to buy a new pressure cooker.
53. **Extraordinary** – very unusual or remarkable
Coaches are always on the lookout for **extraordinary** athletes for their school team.
54. **Behaviour** – the way that someone behaves
The **behaviour** of the students was so bad that they were punished by the school Principal.
55. **Furious** – extremely angry
My mother was **furious** when my brother came back home very late.

56. **Opportunity** – an occasion or situation that makes it possible to do something that you want to do
We must use this **opportunity** to speak to our son's teacher and tell her about all the problems he is facing.
57. **Peeped** – to secretly look at something for a short time, usually through a small opening
She **peeped** through the curtains to see what was going on in the room.
58. **Investigate** – to examine a crime, problem, statement thoroughly to learn the truth, to conduct an official inquiry
Police have been asked to thoroughly **investigate** the series of recent murders.
59. **Bedclothes** – the sheets and covers that you put on a bed
Please change the **bedclothes** as they are dirty.
60. **Sniff** – to smell something by taking air through your nose; take in air quickly through your nose, usually to stop the liquid from flowing out; the noise made while sniffing
Please do not **sniff** the food; just eat it.
She continued to **sniff** as she had a bad cold.
61. **Bedpost** – one of the four corner poles that support a bed
He had hung his coat on the **bedpost**.
62. **Leapt up** – made a large jump or sudden upward movement
She **leapt up** from the chair and ran to open the door.
63. **Dashed** – hit something with great force
During the storm, high waves **dashed** against the wall.
64. **Springing** – moving quickly and suddenly towards a particular place
Springing to her feet, she ran towards the bedroom when she heard her baby crying.
65. **Charged straight at** – moved forward quickly and violently straight towards something
The bull lowered its horns and **charged straight at** me.
66. **Foremost** – leading, best, first in the rank of importance
The **foremost** experts in the field of solar heating are meeting tomorrow in Hyderabad.

67. **Terror** – extreme fear
She was stricken with **terror** when she saw the robbers enter the house in the dark.
68. **Slam** – to move against a hard surface with force and usually a loud noise
Please do not **slam** the door; close it quietly.
69. **Hysterics** – a wildly emotional and exaggerated reaction, a frenzy, state of uncontrolled excitement, anger or panic
Many people in the crowd broke down in **hysterics** when the death of their beloved leader was announced.
70. **Convinced** – completely certain about something
The doctor was **convinced** that the patient was faking a heart problem.
71. **Haunted** – frequented by a ghost
Mahesh was convinced that the vacant house at the end of the road was **haunted**.
72. **Spirits** – forms of dead persons, similar to ghosts, or the feeling that dead persons are present although you cannot see them
The **spirits** of the dead freedom fighters seemed to haunt the jail.
73. **Moaned** – groan, sob or cry in pain or suffering
He **moaned** in his sleep as if he was having a nightmare.
74. **Witchcraft** – the practice of magic, the use of spells
Witchcraft is still practiced in some cultures.
75. **Panicked** – felt or caused to feel panic
The crowd **panicked** at the sound of a gunshot.
76. **Burglary** – theft, robbery
The **burglary** at the State Bank is being investigated by senior police officers.
77. **Suspicion** – a belief or idea that someone has committed a crime or done something wrong
She was arrested on the **suspicion** of possessing illegal drugs.
78. **Mysteriously** – in a way that is strange, not known, or not understood.
The door opened **mysteriously** and there was no one in the room.

79. **Demanded** – asked for something forcefully, in a way that showed that you do not expect to be refused
The employees **demanded** an increase in their salary.
80. **Quick-tempered** – easily made angry, fiery
I know I am **quick tempered**, but I am trying hard to control it.
81. **Horrified** – very shocked
We were **horrified** to hear of his sudden death.
82. **Prevented** – stopped
The doctor **prevented** the cancer from spreading by beginning the treatment early.
83. **Warrant** – a document authorizing arrest, authority for an action, a belief or feeling
It was afternoon by the time the police obtained a **warrant** to search the house.
84. **Garment** – an item of clothing
Please carry a windproof **garment** for the trekking expedition.
85. **Struggling** – fighting, especially with your hands
He continued **struggling** with the thief until we ran to help him.
86. **Unconscious** – the state of not being awake and not aware of things around you
She hit her head against the corner of the table and fell down **unconscious**.
87. **Attempt** – to try to do something, especially something difficult
He did **attempt** to stop her from running away from home, but she refused to listen to him.
88. **Unseen** – not seen or not able to be seen
She slipped into the dark hall **unseen**, and sat down quietly.
89. **Nervous** – worried and anxious
He is very **nervous** about his exams.

5. Questions**Read and Find Out**

- 1. How did the invisible man first become visible?**
- 2. Why was he wandering the streets?**
- 3. Why was Griffin, a brilliant scientist, being evicted from his house by his landlord?**
- 4. Why was it a bad time for Griffin to become invisible?**
- 5. How did the London store provide some respite to Griffin?**
- 6. Why does Mrs. Hall find the scientist eccentric?**
- 7. What curious episode occurs in the study?**
- 8. What other extraordinary things happen at the inn?**
- 9. Why did Mrs Hall, the Inn keeper, accept Griffin into her Inn even though he was so strange?**
- 10. Why did Mrs Hall begin to ascribe the further events with Griffin to 'witchcraft'?**

Think about it

- 1. "Griffin was rather a lawless person." Comment.**
- 2. How would you assess Griffin as a scientist?**

Talk about it

- 1. Would you like to become invisible? What advantages and disadvantages do you foresee, if you did?**
- 2. Are there forces around us that are invisible, for example, magnetism? Are there aspects of matter that are 'invisible' or not visible to the naked eye? What would the world be like if you could see such forces or such aspects of matter?**

3. **What makes glass or water transparent (what is the scientific explanation for this)? Do you think it would be scientifically possible for a man to become invisible, or transparent? (Keep in mind that writers of science fiction have often turned out to be prophetic in their imagination!)**

6. Suggested reading

- The Invisible Man by H.G. Wells
- 'As Far As the Human Eye Can See' by Isaac Asimov
- It Happened Tomorrow (ed.) Bal Phondke