The Invisible Man

A Grotesque Romance by H.G Wells

Welcome to England. It’s 1897, presumably. Very soon, a mysterious, splenetic man covered from head to toe will arrive in the civil parish of Iping, Sussex, and demand a room at the local inn. From there, several strange events will happen. The guest shall lock himself in his room, bringing in trunks full of cryptic notes and bottles of unknown content, and an unseen burglar will break into the local vicarage.

As you may have guessed, the culprit is our stranger. His identity? A scientist-turned criminal by the name of Griffin, formerly of University College in London. A former medical student who began studying optics, he worked himself to the bone before discovering a miraculous formula and learning how to prevent a visible body from reflecting, refracting, and absorbing light - thus rendering it invisible.Soon, this practice was extended to living tissue, and then an abducted, drugged cat, and finally, a man.

Now, if things go as they will, the truth about the Invisible Man will be revealed and he shall go on the run, becoming a brief sensation in the papers and terrorizing the English countryside before he is eventually cornered and killed by a mob.

+1000cp (Choice Points)
Location

1. Iping
A small village in the county of Sussex, this is where Griffin will arrive one cold winter’s night.
He’ll arrange a long stay at the local inn, but soon, the Invisible Man will overstay his welcome - something not helped the least by his reclusive, irascible and possibly sociopathic personality...

2. Port Burdock

A seaside town. A certain colleague of Griffin’s named Kemp lives here, and the Invisible Man himself shall arrive hot on the heels of Thomas Marvel - an unfortunate tramp he will have forced into service, now fleeing his wrath. It is here as well where the Invisible Man shall die at last…

3. London

You know, the capital of Britain. Home to the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, St.
Paul’s Cathedral, and many, many people. It’s here where Griffin will first achieve invisibility,
and proceed to commit crimes such as arson and robbery…

4. Free Choice

Origins

Researcher (Drop-In): A man of learning, a scientific investigator. Quite possibly a sociopath. You’ve studied at University College, and likely know Griffin and Kemp. What horrible things will you do? Make things invisible and commit crimes? Prance around naked and terrorize people, possibly?

Citizen: Literally everybody else. You are one of many British citizens, and you likely live wherever you rolled as a location. It’s not necessarily a tiny village. You’re a normal person doing normal things. Like most people around the world, you have a job and a role in society - or perhaps you’re a tramp. Soon, you’ll come across an unseen influence…

Perks

Perks are discounted by 50% to their corresponding origins. Discounted 100-point perks come free.

Researcher

University College (100): To be a scientist, you need to have a sharp mind and a good education, and both of those are now yours. Your erudition, if not before, is now enough to land you a spot in a good post-secondary institution in these times. You’re certainly been endowed with a superior intellect than most. And you’ve put it to good use, having studied Greek and Latin, mathematics, and chemistry.

“A fire, in the name of human charity!” (200): There’s something to be said about sacred hospitality, at least when it comes to you. People are positively eager to accommodate you as a guest in their homes, as long as you’ve got some money to sweeten the deal. You’re able to stretch, perhaps even abuse this hospitality and get the benefit of the doubt - the consequences of antics like being continually late on rent, bringing in thousands of bottles, and even being the prime suspect of crime will be downplayed. Of course, your hosts might decide enough is enough after a while…

The Invisible Jumper (400): Through a strange process, you have rendered yourself invisible to the naked eye, just as Griffin did. Light goes right through your form, but despite this, you have no trouble perceiving it yourself - meaning you can still see, though none may perceive your form. If you weren’t before, your body is now albino - as white as alabaster with the red eyes to match. This invisibility only applies to your own person, so to become truly undetectable, you’ll have to take off all your clothes. Nonetheless, the power to go unseen is the power to rule, the power to be free of consequences, and the power to begin a reign of terror…

Certain First Principles (600cp): Perhaps Griffin wasn’t the only one who discovered the formula of invisibility. There is another - you. You are perhaps the world’s foremost expert on light. More than just bending, your advanced understanding on the matter allows you to perform the process of making light on other living things, including people. This process works the best on objects or beings that are as white in color as possible - not in the sense of fair-skinned, but the color of paper or snow. You’re also knowledgeable in an obscure bleaching drug found in India, Monocaine, that grants the same invisibility at the cost of one’s mental health. Beware, though, of meddling in things that man must never know.

Citizen

An Occupation (100): You, like the vast majority of people, must work to make a living, and work you shall. You possess a substantial amount of experience in any one job, enough for you to sell your labour or services to make an honest man’s wage. Perhaps you are an innkeeper, a clock-jobber, a policeman, or vicar. This must be a simple, mundane trade. It may not consist of any complex, empirical expertise or such.

Calling for Adye (200): Despite being impossible to perceive with the naked eye, the Invisible Man was ultimately killed through mob violence. Mob. A group. People are much more inclined to leap to your aid when you are in distress, assisting and protecting you from any assailants who would do you harm. You’d have no trouble convincing the constabulary that you need help, that’s for sure. This perk only works if you are legitimately in need of assistance and/or protection.

An Accomplice (400): The trust and friendship of dangerous people is both beneficial and a threat to one’s livelihood and well-being, and chances are you’re going to run into such people. You have an increased likelihood of encountering people integral to the ‘plot’ of a world, the supernatural, or when they coincide, both. You’re all but guaranteed to meet the Invisible Man in this jump, for example. These dangerous/important/supernatural people are generally predisposed to have a favorable view of you, and will include you in their plans.

Marvelous Escape (600): Upon the death of the Invisible Man (the literary Griffin, to specify. Not movie Griffin or League of Extraordinary Gentlemen Griffin), his notes remained unfound. Where did they go? They fell into the hands of Thomas Marvel, a tramp - the once-unwilling accomplice and crony of the Invisible Man, who managed to escape the wrath of the Invisible Man with both his life and a series of notebooks containing the written procedure on replicating the process. When pursued, you have incredible luck when it comes to escaping with your life, and if possible, valuable things that many would covet.

Items

Items are discounted by 50% to their corresponding origins. Discounted 100-point perks come free.

Researcher

Mysterious Outfit (100): A coat. A hat. Gloves. Boots. A fake nose. And enough bandages to wrap your entire body in them. I wonder what these could be used for? Certainly, all these articles of clothing could cover up someone’s full body, and they’d certainly keep you warm. Guaranteed to cover your entire person, leaving no part of your true body visible to others.

A Thousand and One Bottles (200): An excess of luggage, consisting of over a dozen boxes, crates, and the like, a few trunks, and myriad glass bottles. This is effectively your very own laboratory in miniature, with enough glassware and other equipment to fill a chemist’s shop and then some. There’s certainly enough to conduct any experiments you may wish to. You can also have a bottle of Sarsaparilla, if you’d like.

Books (400): These three books contain writings in scripts arcane to all but the classically-educated - Greek and Latin. Arcane indeed, for they contain nothing less than the vaunted secrets of Invisibility. Written here is the exact, reproducible method used by Griffin to render first an old woman’s cat, then the man himself invisible. While the writing may be difficult to decipher, it is well worth the effort.

Citizen

Home (100/200): A home. And a living. You own a house tucked away somewhere appropriate to your location. Its quality will vary - a London townhouse will probably be much better than a house in rural Sussex, after all - but it’s got a room, a bed, and some sturdy locks. Make sure you do the latches every night. Never know who might come in. For an additional 100 points, this is not just a house, but an inn similar to Mrs. Hall’s Coach and Horses or Thomas Marvel’s Invisible Man Inn, which will attract guests and make you a tidy profit.

Revolver (200): It’s a gun. What more do you want? A revolver. It never jams, and it’ll come with a replenishing stock of ammunition. It’s a gun that you could find in late 19th-century England. A Webley, maybe. Even an unseen enemy would have cause to fear you when you’ve got a way of putting lead into his general vicinity if you’ve got a bead on him, after all…

Constabulary Office (400): You are now the head of the local police. A chief constable. Now, policing was far less advanced in the late 19th century than in the early 21st, but nonetheless, a not-insignificant force of policemen will follow your orders. About sixty in all, and a number of horses for mounted police and a good deal of hounds to sniff out any elusive prey. Now, if you could surround your quarry, find some way of detecting him, you’d most certainly get him…

Companions

Import (free): You may bring in up to eight fellow travelers here free of charge. They get 600cp each and may take up to 200cp of drawbacks.

Canon (free): Alternatively, you may recruit a local, though I don’t know why you would. As long as you convince them, at least. Griffin? Kemp? Thomas Marvel? The local constable?

Drawbacks

Adaptation (+0): By taking this drawback, you may visit any adaptation featuring the character of the Invisible Man. The 1933 or 2020 films, Hollow Man, The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, or more. This drawback may not be used to pick a setting with an invisible character with powers beyond the ones of H.G Wells’ Invisible Man - as such, you may not use this drawback to visit a Marvel Universe, for example.

A Dictionary of the Sussex Dialect (+100): Did you know that Wells deliberately misspells the dialect of many villagers in Iping, in order to highlight the regional accent? As such, you will encounter many people who speak in accents that may be difficult for you to understand. By no means are they unintelligible, but it’ll take some adjustment.

Injured (+100): You’ve been shot. By a revolver. Fortunately, it wasn’t lethal, but a gunshot wound is a gunshot wound. No amount of power can accelerate its recovery - you’ll have to heal naturally. Fortunately, the bullet hit no vital organs. You will need to seek shelter and care, but rest assured that you’ll make a full recovery if you receive the appropriate medical attention.

Monocaine Madness (+200): You exhibit the very same negative traits that the titular Invisible Man, at least when it comes from your demeanor and mannerisms. You can be described with a few words - paranoid, violent, aggressive, taciturn. You won’t be making friends, that’s for sure, and if you have any superhuman traits at all you’ll go mad with power. It’s up to you if your unpleasantness is due to being driven mad due to monocaine exposure, or if you’re just like that naturally.

Betrayal (+200): At some point during this jump, someone you trust as a friend or accomplice will prove unworthy of that trust, selling you out to whoever your enemies are. If you don’t have any, it’ll default to the local police. A Judas to your Jesus… or to use a less conceited and more pertinent analogy, a Kemp to your Griffin. Whatever the case, this betrayal will land you in some serious trouble. You will forget this drawback.

Powerloss (+400): That obligatory drawback. You have lost access to all out-of-setting perks, powers, items, the cosmic warehouse etc. So have your companions. You’ve been reduced to your bodymod(!), what you’ve bought here with points, and whatever skills you’ve learned the hard way. Wow.

The Visible Man (+400): That’s you (whether you’re a man or not). Whether the naked eye can see you or not, you’ve found yourself the most wanted person, dead or alive, within a hundred miles. Every constable within the area is seeking you out, armed with guns, truncheons, and accompanied by hounds to sniff you out if you can’t be seen. Everyone in the area has locked up tightly in order to deny you food and shelter. Hundreds of people are hunting you. If you are killed by the authorities or remain in captivity by the end of the Jump, you fail the chain.

Reign of Terror (+400/600): You’ve attracted the ire of the Invisible Man. Griffin wants you dead, and will stop at nothing to execute you. He’ll stalk you constantly, and will only close in for your death by his hand when you’ve let your guard down. Will you be able to evade the unseen death?

For an additional 200 points, it is no longer the reign of Queen Victoria. A foul usurper has taken the throne, at least over at least one town in Sussex. Invisible Man the First. Griffin has installed himself as the ruler of the area and dominates through tyranny; controlling everyone through the terror of the unseen. He kills all those who disobey him and controls the town that way. It’s either Port Burdock or Iping. The Invisible Man has found for himself several accomplices who will shelter him, provide him safe harbor, food, drink, and rest… and he is out for your blood. He’s ordered your death and is hunting you personally…

Future

Well, you’ve spent ten years here. What now?

Go Home

Stay Here

Move On

Notes

This Jump is largely meant for the original Invisible Man, Griffin. I am largely quoting from the book and the 1933 film when I talk about optics, so please forgive me if I get something wrong.

The entire novel can be read here.

The limitations of invisibility include:
● Being naked
● Food being visible until digested
● Leaving footprints
● You can be smelled or heard
● Rain

Made 2025-10-10.
WIP 0.1 released to Bunker Thread #70 on 2025-10-19. Full version released to Bunker Thread #99 on 2025-12-23.