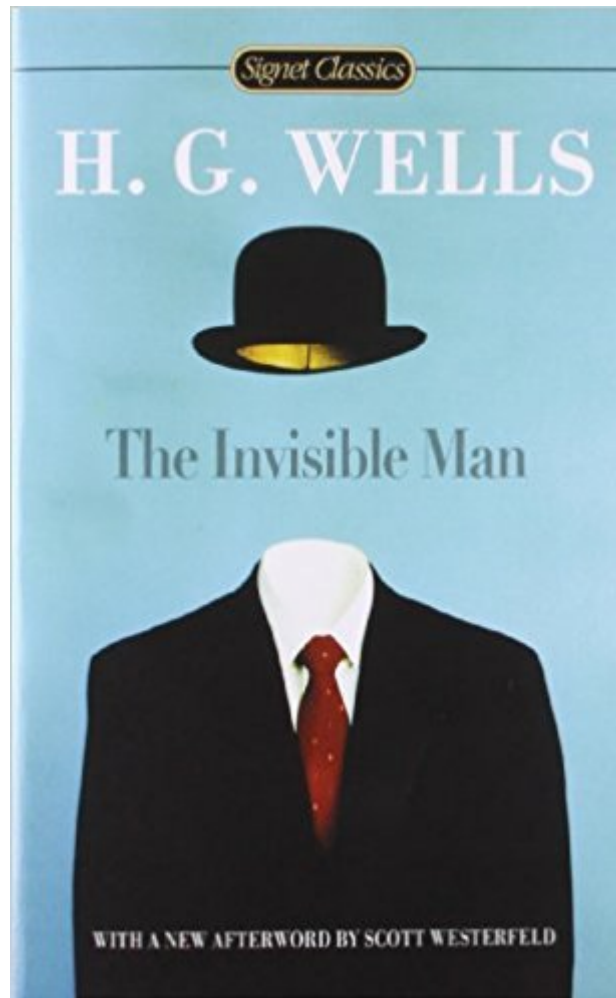


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The Invisible Man (Signet Classics)



Synopsis

From the twentieth century's first great practitioner of the novel of ideas comes a consummate masterpiece of science fiction about a man trapped in the terror of his own creation. A stranger emerges out of a freezing February day with a request for lodging in a cozy provincial inn. Who is this out-of-season traveler? More confounding is the thick mask of bandages obscuring his face. Why is he disguised in such a manner? What keeps him hidden in his room? The villagers, aroused by trepidation and curiosity, bring it upon themselves to find the answers. What they discover is not only a man trapped in the terror of his own creation, but a chilling reflection of the unsolvable mysteries of their own souls. "My fantastic stories do not pretend to deal with possible things. They aim indeed only at the same amount of conviction as one gets in a gripping good dream."

H. G. Wells
With an Introduction by W. Warren Wagar and an Afterword by Scott Westerfeld

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First, this edition: it's reasonably well-formatted for a free ebook, with few typos, although the table of contents is not clickable; it clocks in at 1,841 "locations." As to the story itself: This is H.G. Wells' foundational science-fiction tale of a mad scientist who discovers a way to turn himself invisible. It's a masterfully told story that's been entertaining readers for roughly a hundred years, and I'd lay good odds you'll find it well worth the read. What many readers might miss, though (I certainly did, my first time through) is that this isn't just a sci-fi potboiler; it's a modernization of the Platonic story

of the Ring of Gyges. Beyond being a master storyteller, Wells was also an ardent philosopher and socialist, and like all of his other tales, there's a major political point here -- that morality derives from society -- and some additional minor political themes, like the plight of the urban poor. Wells' genius here was to take the Platonic story of a Ring of Invisibility that inevitably led its wearer to commit injustice, and revitalize it in a modern context and in a way that made a sophisticated philosophical point. Where Plato's Glaucon states:-----"For all men believe in their hearts that injustice is far more profitable to the individual than justice, and he who argues as I have been supposing, will say that they are right. If you could imagine any one obtaining this power of becoming invisible, and never doing any wrong or touching what was another's, he would be thought by the lookers-on to be a most wretched idiot, although they would praise him to one another's faces, and keep up appearances with one another from a fear that they too might suffer injustice.

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