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# FROM HORROR TO SCIENCE FICTION: MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN

What happens when science goes beyond nature? This is one of the main themes of *The Invisible Man*. However, it was not the first time that this theme appeared in literature. It is also at the heart of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, first published in 1818.

In this novel, Victor Frankenstein, a brilliant young scientist builds a body using parts of corpses and then brings it to life. However, the 'Creature' (as he is called in the book) is a monster and Frankenstein rejects him. The Creature runs away and discovers that his appearance terrifies people. In his anger against his 'father', he kills Victor's youngest brother. He is very lonely and begs Victor for a female companion.

When Victor refuses, the Creature kills Victor's wife and also his best friend. In the end the experiment destroys both the creator and the creation.

*Frankenstein* raises important questions about the relationship between science and ethics. This is why the most famous horror story of all time is also a precursor of science fiction.

The tragedy occurs because Victor is unable to deal with the terrible results of his experiment. He does the experiment because he is obsessed, without thinking of the possible consequences. Victor tries to protect the people he loves, but fails. He knows he was the real cause of their deaths and feels huge guilt.

- **consequences:** results of an action (usually bad)
- **corpses:** dead bodies
- **ethics:** ideas about what is right or wrong for society
- **experiment:** scientific test to discover if something is true
- **isolation:** the state of being away from other people

- **monster:** creature that is ugly and frightening
- **obsessed:** thinking about one thing all the time
- **outcast:** someone rejected from a society or group
- **precursor:** something that comes before another similar thing

It is Victor's inability to manage the results of his experiment that makes the Creature a real monster. At first the Creature hides in the woods and secretly helps a poor family that lives nearby. He tries to be part of society: he learns to speak by listening to the family, then he finds some books and teaches himself to read and write. But when he tries to connect with the family, they reject him in fear, and he becomes desperate. He

understands that without Victor's help, he will always be an outcast\*. He asks for a companion, but Victor will not create one because he believes the Creature is bad. He fears that if he gives the Creature a wife, they will bring an evil race into the world. Victor's refusal means that the Creature must live a life of total isolation\*, so he decides to make Victor's life desperate and lonely, too. The story is a true tragedy.



What happens when human intelligence produces a monster? And who is really the monster? What happens when a human makes a scientific discovery and uses it in a monstrous way? These are some of the questions *Frankenstein* and *The Invisible Man* raised. The world is still discussing them today.

Coach  
and  
Horses

Mr Hall

Mrs Hall

Dr Kemp

Colonel Adye

The Invisible Man

# The Invisible Man

Mr Teddy Henfrey

Mr Jaffers

Mr Thomas Marvel

Mr Bunting



# BEFORE READING

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## 1 Match the jobs to the descriptions of what the characters do.

1 policeman    2 scientist    3 doctor    4 landlady  
5 tramp    6 chief of police    7 vicar

- a  Dr Kemp studies and researches science.
- b  Mrs Hall is the owner of an inn.
- c  Mr Bunting is a priest in the Church of England.
- d  Mr Cuss looks after people who are ill.
- e  Mr Jaffers is called when someone breaks the law.
- f  Colonel Adye is in charge of all policemen in the village.
- g  Mr Marvel has no home, job or money; he lives on charity.

## 2 Read the two character descriptions from the story. Which characters from Exercise 1 are they describing?

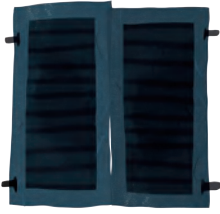
a ..... had a large face, a big nose, a wide mouth and a strange beard. He was fat, with short arms and legs. He wore a very old silk hat, and his coat had shoelaces instead of buttons. He was sitting by the roadside, not far from Iping.

b It was early evening and ....., a tall and slender young man, was sitting in his study on the hill overlooking Port Burdock, doing some important scientific research.

## 3 Find the two place names in Exercise 2. Then find out which part of England they are in. Are they both real places?



4 Look at the pictures. Match the two sentence halves below. Then write the names under the pictures.



.....



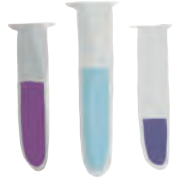
.....



.....



.....



.....




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.....

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a <input type="checkbox"/> We use test tubes</li> <li>b <input type="checkbox"/> Goggles are glasses</li> <li>c <input type="checkbox"/> Shutters look like little doors</li> <li>d <input type="checkbox"/> Handcuffs are put</li> <li>e <input type="checkbox"/> A poker is used</li> <li>f <input type="checkbox"/> We use an axe</li> <li>g <input type="checkbox"/> A cart is pulled by a horse</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 and cover a window.</li> <li>2 that protect the eyes.</li> <li>3 to cut trees and wood.</li> <li>4 to stir a fire.</li> <li>5 and carries things.</li> <li>6 on a person's wrists.</li> <li>7 in scientific experiments.</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

## 1 THE STRANGE MAN'S ARRIVAL

 The stranger came to Iping on the 29th of February, through a cold wind and snow storm, walking from Bramblehurst railway station with a large suitcase. He was wrapped up from head to foot, with big blue goggles, a scarf and a hat that together hid every bit of his face except the tip of his nose. There was snow on his shoulders and chest. He staggered into the Coach and Horses more dead than alive and dropped his suitcase.

‘A fire,’ he cried, ‘Please! A room and a fire!’

He followed Mrs Hall, the landlady, into the guest sitting room. She lit the fire and went into the kitchen. She started cooking the bacon, then went back into the sitting room to lay the table. Although the fire was burning nicely, she was surprised to see that the stranger was still wrapped up.

‘Can I take your hat and coat, sir?’ she said, ‘and give them a good dry in the kitchen?’

‘No,’ he said looking out of the window. ‘I prefer to keep them on.’

‘Very well, sir,’ she said. ‘In a bit the room will be warmer.’

He didn’t answer. Mrs Hall laid the table quickly and left the room. When she returned, he was still standing there. She put down the eggs and bacon noisily, and said loudly, ‘Your lunch is served, sir.’

‘Thank you,’ he said, and did not move.



- landlady: (here) woman who owns a pub or an inn

- staggered: walked unsteadily
- stranger: person who is not known in a particular place
- wrapped up: covered with clothes



When Mrs Hall went back, she knocked and entered without waiting for an answer. The stranger was sitting at the table and moved quickly to pick something up from the floor. She noticed his coat and hat on a chair in front of the fire. She looked at them and said, 'May I take them to dry now?'

'Leave the hat,' said her visitor, in a muffled• voice. She turned and for a moment she was too surprised to speak.

He was still wearing his gloves and he was holding a white cloth• over the lower part of his face. That was the reason for his muffled voice, but it was not what startled• Mrs Hall. It was the fact that all of his head above his blue goggles, including his ears, was covered by a white bandage•. The only visible part of his face was his pink nose. He was still wearing his scarf, and strands• of thick black hair were coming out between the bandages.

She put the hat back on the chair. 'I didn't know, sir...' she began.



'Thank you,' he said.

'I'll have it dried, sir,' she said, and took his coat and left.

'The poor man has had an accident• or an operation that disfigured• him,' thought Mrs Hall as she put his coat in front of the kitchen fire.

## MRS HALL

Why does Mrs Hall think the stranger has had an accident?

- **accident:** unexpected event that hurts someone
- **bandage:** 
- **cloth:** piece of material used for clothes 
- **disfigured:** changed his appearance in an unpleasant way
- **muffled:** unclear and quiet
- **startled:** surprised
- **strands:** long pieces

When she cleared away the stranger's lunch, he said that his luggage was at Bramblehurst station.

'Can I have it sent here?' he asked. Mrs Hall said a cart<sup>•</sup> could go there the next day.

'Not earlier?'

Mrs Hall saw the opportunity to find out the reason for her guest's appearance. 'It's a steep<sup>•</sup> road, sir,' she said. 'A cart lost control there about a year ago. Two men died. Accidents, sir, happen in a moment, don't they?'

'They do.'

'But people take a long time to get well again, don't they? My sister's son, Tom, cut his arm at work, and he was bandaged for three months. My sister had to do his bandages, and then undo them. So if you don't mind, sir, could I ask...?'

He interrupted her. 'Will you get me some matches? My pipe<sup>•</sup> is out.'

His rudeness<sup>•</sup> upset Mrs Hall. She stared<sup>•</sup> at him for a moment, then she went for the matches.

'Thanks,' he said, turning his back to her to look out of the window.

'He's very sensitive on the topic of accidents and bandages,' thought Mrs Hall. But his rudeness irritated her. He remained in the sitting room for the rest of the day.

## THE STRANGER

What is unusual about the stranger?

Why do you think the stranger is rude?

If someone is rude to you, what do you do or say?



Tell a partner.



- **rudeness:** way of behaving that is not polite
- **stared:** looked directly
- **steep:** (of a hill) that goes up or down very quickly



# AFTER READING VOCABULARY

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## 1 Match the words to the definitions. Two words have the same definition.

- |   |                          |         |   |                          |         |
|---|--------------------------|---------|---|--------------------------|---------|
| a | <input type="checkbox"/> | cry     | e | <input type="checkbox"/> | shout   |
| b | <input type="checkbox"/> | whisper | f | <input type="checkbox"/> | scream  |
| c | <input type="checkbox"/> | muffle  | g | <input type="checkbox"/> | howl    |
| d | <input type="checkbox"/> | rave    | h | <input type="checkbox"/> | exclaim |

- 1 to talk in a very angry, uncontrolled way
- 2 to say something very loudly
- 3 to make a loud, high sound because you are in pain, frightened or angry
- 4 to make a long, loud sound like a dog, usually to express pain or sadness
- 5 say in a surprised way
- 6 to speak very quietly, using the breath but not the voice
- 7 to make a quiet, less clear sound

## 2 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in Exercise 1. There can be more than one answer.

- a Mrs Bunting was woken by a noise. She woke her husband and softly ....., 'I think there's somebody downstairs.'
- b He had a hand over his mouth, so his voice was .....
- c The strange man ..... for hours about his many problems.
- d People were so frightened that they ..... and ran away.
- e Last night someone was ..... like a wolf in the fields near Port Burdock.
- f 'You set the house on fire!' ..... Kemp.
- g When Griffin realised what was going on, he looked at Dr Kemp and angrily ....., 'Traitor!'
- h As he ran towards the road workers and the crowd in the street, Dr Kemp ..... 'The Invisible Man!' so that everybody could hear him.

## **P** B1 Preliminary English Test Reading Part 1

**1** A group of friends are organising a fancy-dress party on the theme of *The Invisible Man*. Read each text: What does it say? Tick (✓) the correct answer.

**a**

→ Abc [Envelope] [Globe] Send 🔍

Jane, there's a rumour that five different people want to bring a white cat — is it true? It could be messy, especially if the cats don't get along. I think we should discourage the idea. Billy.

- 1  Five people are bringing a white cat.
- 2  Billy wants to tell people that bringing a cat is not a good idea.
- 3  Jane has a cat that doesn't get along with other cats.

**b**

You won't believe this — I've found pink contact lenses! I already have the wig, the beard, and the white face cream, so my costume is ready! 👍 Paul

- 1  Paul wants to go as Marvel.
- 2  Paul wants to go as the landlord.
- 3  Paul wants to go as Griffin.

**c**

I think we should have a competition. Of all those that come as *The Wrapped-Up Stranger*, the one who keeps the full costume on the longest wins a prize (not yet decided). Amy

- 1  The *Wrapped-Up Stranger* fancy dress will be the longest.
- 2  The *Wrapped-Up Stranger* fancy dress will be uncomfortable.
- 3  Amy wants to decide on a prize.