**CHAPTER 12 x The Inveesible Chiel Losses The Heid**

It canna be jookit that at this pynt the tale should brakk aff again, fur a certain verra painfu rizzen that’ll sune be clear. Fin these maitters wir gaun on in the parlour, an fin Mr. Huxter wis watchin Mr. Mervel smokin his pipe agin the yett, nae a dizzen yairds awa wir Mr. Haa an Teddy Henfrey bletherin in a state o fey bumbazement the ae Iping topic.

O a suddenty there cam a forcie dunt agin the yett o the parlour, a sherp skreich, an syne--seelence.

"Fit like!" quo Teddy Henfrey.

"Fit like!" frae the Tap.

Mr. Haa tuik maitters in slaw bit siccar. "Thon’s nae richt," he spak, an cam roon frae ahin the bar tae the parlour yett.

He an Teddy cam tae the yett thegether, wi gleg faces. Their een luiked thochtfu. "Somethin’s wrang," quo Haa, an Henfrey noddit .Guffs o an orra chemical stank met them, an there wis a smored soun o blethers, unca faist an fuspered.

"Are ye aa richt thonner?" speired Haa, chappin.

The mummlit newsin stoppit richt aff, fur a meenit’s seelence, syne the newsin wis restertit, in hissin fuspers, syne a sherp skreich o "Na! na, ye dinna!" There cam o a suddenty, a meevement an the cowpin o a chair, a wee tuilzie. Seelence again.

"Fit the deil?" quo Henfrey, saftly.

"Are ye aa richt thonner?" speired Mr. Haa, sherply, again.

The meenister’s voyce reponed in a fey yarkin wey:

"Quite aa richt. Please dinna--interrupt."

"Unca!" quo Mr. Henfrey.

"Unca!" quo Mr. Haa.

"Sez, 'Dinna interrupt,'" quo Henfrey.

"I heard it," quo Haa.

"An a snuff," quo Henfrey.

They bedd lippenin. The newsin wis faist an quaet.

"I canna," quo Mr. Bunting, his voyce risin; "I tell ye, sir, I winna."

"Fit wis thon?" speired Henfrey.

"Sez he winna," quo Haa. "Wisnae spikkin tae us, wis he?"

"Affrontin!" quo Mr. Bunting, inbye.

"'Affrontin,'" quo Mr. Henfrey. "I heard it--clear."

"Fa's thon spikkin noo?" speired Henfrey.

"Mr. Cuss, I jelouse," quo Haa. "Can ye hear--onythin?"

Seelence. The souns inbye wir mochled an bumbazin.

"Souns like haivin the brod-cloot aboot," quo Haa.

Mrs. Haa cam intae the bar. Haa vrocht meevements o seelence an invitation. This steered up Mrs. Haa's wifely hackles. "Fit are ye lippenin' thonner fur, Haa?" she speired. "Dae ye nae hae onythin better tae dae on an eident day like this?"

Haa ettled tae shaw aathin bi mime, bit Mrs. Haa wis thrawn. She raised her voyce. Sae Haa an Henfrey, rather disjaskit, tiptaed back tae the bar, wyvin her ower tae explain.

At first she didnae believe in fit they telt her at aa. Syne she insisted on Haa keepin seelence, while Henfrey telt her his tale. She wis myndit tae think the hale maitter styte--mebbe they wir jist meevin the gear aboot. "I heard him say 'affrontit'; sae I did," quo Haa.

"I\_heard thon, Mrs. Haa," quo Henfrey.

"Like as nae--" stertit Mrs. Haa.

"Wheesht!" quo Mr. Teddy Henfrey. "Did I hear the windae?"

"Fit ?" windae speired Mrs. Haa.

"Parlour windae" quo Henfrey.

Aabody stude lippenin close. Mrs. Haa's een, direckit straicht afore her, saw wioot seein the bricht oblang o the howff yett, the road fite an skyrie, an Huxter's shoppie-front blisterin in the June sun. Sherp, Huxter's yett lowsed an Huxter shawed hissel, een glowerin wi smeddum, arims wyvin. "Eech!" skirled Huxter. "Stop chorer!" an he ran indireck ower the oblang tae the yaird yetts, an vanished.

At the same time there cam a stooshie frae the parlour, an a soun o windaes bein steekit.

Haa, Henfrey, an the fowk o the tap breenged oot at aince ram-stam intae the street. They saw somebody wheech roun the neuk tae the road, an Mr. Huxter vrocht a fantoosh lowp in the air that eyndit on his face an shouder. Doon the street fowk wir staunin bumbazed or rinnin tae them.

Mr. Huxter wis dumfounert. Henfrey stoppit tae fand thon, bit Hall an the twa wirk chiels frae the Tap breenged at aince tae the neuk, skirlin disjyntit ferlies, an saw Mr. Mervel vanishin bi the neuk o the kirk waa. They seem tae hae lowped tae the awfu thocht that this wis the Inveesible Chiel o a suddenty becam veesible, an set aff at aince alang the lane in pursuit. Bit Haa hid scarce run a dizzen yairds afore he gaed a lood skreich o bumbazement an gaed fleein heidlang sidieweys, cleukin ane o the wirk chiels an bringin him tae the grun. He’d bin chairged jist as a body chairges a chiel at fitbaa. The secunt wirk chiel cam roon in a cercle, glowered, an thinkin that Haa hid cowpit ower o his ain daein, furled tae restert the chase, anely tae be trippit bi the cwuit jist as Huxter hid bin. Syne, as the first wirk chiel warssled tae his feet, he wis kickit sidieweys bi a cloor that micht hae drappit a nowt.

As he gaed doon, the hale clanjamphrey frae the airt o the clachan green cam roon the neuk. The first tae cam wis the ainer o the cocoanut staa a hefty chiel in a blae gansey. He wis dumfounert tae see the lane teem barrin three chiels sprauchlin gypit on the grun. An syne somethin happened tae his hin-maist fit, an he gaed heidlang an rowed sidieweys jist in time tae scuff the fit o his brither

an fier, follaein heidlang. The twa wir syne kickit, knelt on, faa-en ower, an banned bi a fair nummer o ower-hashin fowk.

Noo fin Haa an Henfrey an the wirk chiels ran ooto the hoose, Mrs. Haa, fa’d bin won bi years o experience, bedd in the bar neist tae the till. An o a suddenty the parlour yett wis lowsed, an Mr. Cuss appeared, an wioot glentin at her breenged at aince doon the steps tae the neuk. "Haud him!" he skreiched. "Dinna lat him drap thon pyoke."

He kent naethin o the existence o Mervel. Fur the Inveesible Chiel hid haundit ower the buiks an bunnle in the yaird. The face o Mr. Cuss wis roosed an

firm, bit his rig-oot wis unca, a kinno dweeble fite kilt that could anely hae luikit weel in Greece. "Haud him!" he skreiched. "He's got ma troosers! An ilkie threid o the Meenister's claes!"

"'Takk tent tae him in a meenit!" he skirled tae Henfrey as he gaed by the face doon Huxter, an, camin roon the neuk tae jyne the stooshie, wis straicht aff caad aff his feet intae a undignifeed sprauchle. Somebody in full flicht trampit wechty on his finger. He skelloched, warssled tae staun up, wis felled again an cowpit on aa fowers, an becam awaur that he wis taen up nae in a capture, bit a rout. Aabody wis rinnin back tae the clachan. He raisse again an wis strukk hard ahin the lug. He hytered an set aff back tae the "Cairraige an Shelts" straicht aff, lowpin ower the forsaken Huxter, fa wis noo cockin up, on his wey.

Ahin him as he wis haufwey up the howf steps he heard o a suddenty a skirl o roose, risin sherp ooto the mixtermaxter o skreichs, an a soundin skelp in somebody's face. He kent the voyce as thon o the Inveesible Chiel, an the note wis thon o a chiel o a suddenty roosed bi a painfu dunt.

In anither meenit Mr. Cuss wis back in the parlour. "He's camin back, Bunting!" quo he, hashin in. "Save yersel!"

Mr. Bunting wis staunin in the windae eident in tyauvin tae claithe himsel in the hairth-basse an a West Surrey Gazette. "Fa's camin?" quo he, sae stertled that his rig-oot nerra escapitfaain apairt.

"Inveesible Chiel," quo Cuss, an breenged on tae the windae. "We'd best clear oot frae here! He's fechtin wud! Wud!"

In anither meenit he wai oot in the yaird.

"Ma Certes!" quo Mr. Bunting, dauchlin atween twa awfu choices. He heard a frichtfu tulzie in the lobby o the howf, an his harns wir set. He sclimmed ooto the windae, fichered wi his rig-oot faist, an flew up the clachan as faist as his creashie wee shanks wid cairry him.

Frae the meenit fin the Inveesible Chiel skirled wi roose an Mr. Bunting made his noteworthy flicht up the clachan, it becam eeseless tae gie an ordered accoont o maitters in Iping. Nae doot the Inveesible Chiel's first aim wis jist tae cover Mervel's retreat wi the claes an buiks. Bit his mood, at nae time verra guid, seems tae hae gaen aathegither at some chaunce cloor, an syne he set to blooterin an cowpin, fur the mere pleisur o hurtin.

Ye maun pictur the street fu o rinnin fowk, o yetts caad tee an fechts fur hidie-holes. Ye maun pictur the stooshie o a suddenty strikkin on the shaky balance o auld Fletcher's brods an twa cheers--wi dreidfu results. Ye maun pictur a horrifeed couple catched waefu in a swing. An syne the hale wud breenge his gaen by an the Iping street wi its flimflammerie an flags is teem apairt frae the still roosed unseen, an skittered wi cocoanuts, cowpit canvas screens, an the skittered gear in trade o a sweetie staa. Aawye there’s a soun o steekin shutters an shovin snibs, an the anely veesible body is an antrin flichterin ee unner a heistit eebroo in the neuk o a windae pane.

The Inveesible Chiel kittlit himsel fur a whylie bi brakkin aa the windaes in the "Cairraige an Shelts," an syne he haived a street licht throwe the parlour windae o Mrs. Gribble. He it maun hae bin fa cut the telegraph weer tae Adderdean jist ayont Higgins' hoose on the Adderdean road. An efter thon, as his fey qualities alloued, he gaed ooto fowk’s ken aathegither, an he wis neither heard, seen, nur felt in Iping ony mair. He wis aathegither gaen.

Bit it wis the best pairt o twa oors afore onybody gaed oot again intae the teemness o Iping street.