**The Other Man**

I was a writer. I wrote books. I write now, but nobody knows. Nobody can see me now. Something strange has happened to me. I will tell you about it.

In January I wanted to write a very long book. So I left my home and I found a little room.

'This is a good room for a writer,' I thought. 'I'll write my book here.'

It was a little room, but I liked it. It was very quiet. I began to work on my book and I was happy.

Then things began to happen — strange things.

One day I was at my desk with my pen in my hand. Suddenly I thought, 'I want a coffee and I haven't got any. I'll have to go to the shop.'

I put my pen on the table and went out.

When I came back, I looked for the pen. It wasn't on the table. I looked on the floor, on my chair and then on the table again. It wasn't there!

'I don't understand it,' I thought.

That night another strange thing happened. I was in bed and the room was very quiet. Suddenly, I opened my eyes,

'What was that?' I wondered.

Then I heard a voice – a man's voice.

'Who's there?' I cried.

There was no answer and there was nobody in the room! I couldn't understand it, and I was afraid.

'What can I do?' I thought. 'What was that?'

After that, strange things happened every day. But I had to finish my book, so I stayed there.

The room was very small. There were not many things in it; only a bed, a table and a chair. And there was a mirror on the wall. It was a very old mirror and I liked it. And then, one day, I looked in the mirror and – I saw him! The other man! It wasn't me. This man had a beard, but I didn't!

I shut my eyes and looked again. This time, I saw my face in the mirror.

'That didn't happen,' I thought, ‘I was wrong. There wasn't another man.'

I went for a walk that day, and I didn't work on my book. I didn't want to be in the room. I didn't want to see or hear strange things.

At night, I went home again. The room was very quiet. I looked in the mirror and saw my face. But I wasn't happy. I went to bed, but I couldn't sleep.

‘I’ll leave here tomorrow,' I thought. And after that, I slept.

But then another strange thing happened. The other man stood by my bed and spoke to me.

'You will never leave here,' he said. 'You will stay with me.'

And then I opened my eyes. I was very cold and afraid. 'I'll leave now,' I thought. 'I can't stay here for one more minute.'

Quickly, I put my things in a case. I wanted to go – now. I couldn't forget the man, so I was afraid. But afraid of what? I didn't know.

When my clothes were in the case, I thought, 'I'll leave the room now.'

I looked round the room, and I also looked in the mirror again. And then I suddenly felt colder and more afraid. I couldn't see the other man in the mirror. Why? Because he wasn't there. But I couldn't see my face in the mirror! There was no face. Why not?

I tried to shout, but no sound came. I had no voice.

And then I saw him. I saw the other man — the man with the beard. But he wasn't in the mirror. He was at the table, with my pen in his hand. He wrote my book with my pen! I was angry and I tried to speak. But I couldn't, because I had no voice.

The other man didn't speak. He smiled and wrote.

Suddenly, there was a sound at the door, and I heard a friend's voice.

Are you there?' my friend called. 'I want to see you.'

I was very happy then. 'My friend will help me,' I thought. But I couldn't move. The other man went to the door and opened it.

'Come in,' he said to my friend. 'Come and see my room. I'm writing my book.'

My friend came into the room, but he didn't see me. He smiled at the other man.

My friend said, 'Oh, you have a beard now!'

Again and again, I tried to speak but I couldn't. My friend couldn't see me; he couldn't hear me. He only saw the other man.

That is my story. The other man has my room. And he also has my face and my voice. He will finish my book, too.

But the other man doesn't know one thing. I can write — I can tell my story. And I'm telling it to you!