Chapter 22: Footprints without Feet

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Exercise 22.1 — Read and Find Out (Page 26)

Q1 How did the invisible man first become visible?

SOLUTION

Griffin, the scientist, had swallowed certain rare drugs that made his body as transparent as a sheet of glass, so he was completely invisible.

While wandering the streets of London without clothes, he happened to step in some mud.

The mud stuck to his invisible bare feet, and as he walked he left "fresh muddy imprints of a pair of bare feet" on the steps and down the street. These footprints made his presence visible to the two boys who spotted them.

Answer: He stepped in mud, and the muddy footprints he left as he walked revealed his presence.

Q2 Why was he wandering the streets?

SOLUTION

Griffin was a lawless person. His landlord disliked him and tried to eject him from the house.

In revenge, Griffin set fire to the house. To get away without being seen, he had to remove all his clothes so that his invisible body could not be detected.

As a result he became "a homeless wanderer, without clothes, without money, and quite invisible", wandering the streets of London.

Answer: After setting fire to his landlord's house, he had to shed his clothes to stay unseen, leaving him a homeless, clothed-less, invisible wanderer.

Exercise 22.2 — Read and Find Out (Page 27)

Q1 Why does Mrs Hall find the scientist eccentric?

SOLUTION

The scientist (Griffin) arrived at Mrs Hall's inn in Iping with a very uncommon appearance — bandages round his forehead, dark glasses, a false nose, big bushy side-whiskers, and a large hat, which set all tongues wagging.

He had no desire to talk and told her, "My reason for coming to Iping is a desire for solitude. I do not wish to be disturbed in my work. Besides, an accident has affected my face."

His strange looks, his wish for solitude, and his irritable temper convinced Mrs Hall that her guest was an eccentric scientist. Because he had paid her in advance, she was prepared to excuse his strange habits.

Answer: His unusual bandaged appearance, his desire for solitude, and his irritable temper made her think he was an eccentric scientist.

Q2 What curious episode occurs in the study?

SOLUTION

Very early one morning, a clergyman and his wife were awakened by noises in the study.

Creeping downstairs, they heard the chink of money being taken from the clergyman's desk. The clergyman flung open the door with a poker in his hand and shouted, "Surrender!"

To his amazement, the room appeared to be empty. Though they searched under the desk, behind the curtains, and even up the chimney, there was no sign of anybody — yet the desk had been opened and the housekeeping money was missing. The theft had been committed by the invisible Griffin.

Answer: The clergyman and his wife heard money being stolen from the study but found the room empty, because the invisible Griffin had taken the money.

Q3 What other extraordinary things happen at the inn?

SOLUTION

The landlord and his wife found the scientist's door wide open, though it was usually shut and locked. They peeped in, saw nobody, and noticed his clothes and bandages lying about the room while the bedclothes were cold.

Suddenly Mrs Hall heard a sniff close to her ear. The hat on the bedpost leapt up and dashed itself into her face. Then the bedroom chair became alive, sprang into the air, and charged at her legs foremost, pushing her and her husband out of the room before the door slammed and locked itself.

Mrs Hall almost fell down the stairs in hysterics, convinced the room was haunted by spirits. These extraordinary events were actually caused by the invisible Griffin moving the furniture.

Answer: The scientist's furniture seemed to come alive — his hat flew at Mrs Hall's face and a chair charged at her and pushed the couple out of the room — all done by the invisible Griffin.

Exercise 22.3 — Think about it

Q1 “Griffin was rather a lawless person.” Comment.

SOLUTION

Griffin repeatedly broke the law throughout the story, showing no respect for others or their property.

When his landlord tried to eject him, he took revenge by setting fire to the house. He broke into a big London store, breaking open boxes and wrappers to steal warm clothes, food and wine.

In Drury Lane he callously attacked a shopkeeper from behind and robbed him of all his money. At the inn he stole the clergyman's housekeeping money, and he knocked the constable Mr Jaffers unconscious to avoid arrest.

All these acts of arson, theft and violence prove that Griffin was indeed a lawless person who misused his power of invisibility for selfish and criminal ends.

Answer: Yes — Griffin committed arson, repeated theft and assault (burning the house, robbing stores and the clergyman, attacking a shopkeeper and the constable), proving he was truly lawless.

Q2 How would you assess Griffin as a scientist?

SOLUTION

As a scientist, Griffin was undoubtedly brilliant. He carried out "experiment after experiment" and achieved the remarkable feat of discovering rare drugs that could make the human body transparent and invisible.

However, he lacked the qualities of a good and responsible scientist. He was described as "rather a lawless person" who used his great discovery not for the good of humanity but for personal revenge, theft and mischief.

A true scientist should use knowledge for the welfare of society, but Griffin misused his genius. Thus, though he was gifted and intelligent, he was a self-centred and irresponsible scientist.

Answer: Griffin was a brilliant and gifted scientist, but a self-centred and irresponsible one who misused his discovery of invisibility for crime instead of the good of humanity.