

ST ANTONY'S CONVENT

SCHOOL

Gagore Vijaypur

ENGLISH

CLASS : Xth

TOPIC : Footprints without feet

Summary

This chapter is an excerpt from the famous novel "An Invisible man" written by H.G. Wells. The novel deals with the adventures of a scientist "Griffin" who discovers a way by which a human body can become invisible. He faces many hardships but overcomes each one of them by one way or the other.

The chapter commences when two boys become surprised and fascinated on seeing muddy imprints of a pair of bare feet on the steps of a house in London. These imprints are of a brilliant scientist, Griffin, who discovers the method of making a human body invisible. He carries out many experiments and finally swallows certain rare kinds of drugs to become transparent. He is presented in the novel and our chapter as a lawless person. His landlord, being dissatisfied with him tries to expel him but he in return sets fire to his house and escapes by becoming invisible. He chooses to be a homeless rogue in mid winter, when it becomes unbearable for him to wander without clothes. He enters a big London store and uses various garments to wear, and feeds himself with food and wine. Then he sleeps comfortably on a pile of quilts. Next morning, when he does not wake up in time, the assistants of the store chase him and he escapes by removing the garments. Thus, he again becomes invisible.

Next, he enters a theatrical company and uses its stock to cover himself. Moreover, he knocks down a shopkeeper and robs him off his money. He then goes away from London to a countryside village of Iping, where he books two rooms in a local inn. His arrival surprises everyone because of his strange get up and appearance and awkward time of arrival. His landlady tries to be friendly with him, but he avoids her and tells her that his motive of coming to Iping is seclusion. So, his landlady excuses his irritable nature considering him an eccentric person and mainly due to his advance payment.

Soon, Griffin's stolen money finishes and he puts off his landlady for the payment of rent by pretending to expect a cheque. Shortly afterwards, a clergyman and his wife get awakened by some noises in the study. They creep downstairs and find the clergyman's desk open and housekeeping money missing. Later, in the morning, Mrs And Mr Hall find the scientist's door wide open and decide to investigate his belongings. Suddenly, Mrs Hall hears a sniff close to her ear. Then Griffin's hat leaps up and dashes itself in her face. A little later, the bedroom chair becomes alive and pushes the landlord and the landlady out of the room and slams the door behind them. Mrs Hall becomes very much emotional because of her mother's furniture rising up against her. She blames Griffin for creating some evil spirits to enter her mother's furniture. The neighbours believe the abnormal behaviour of the

furniture because of witchcraft but the news of theft at the clergyman's house and Griffin's presentation of ready cash create suspicion on him.

Finally, the village constable is called but Mrs Hall starts asking the scientist about the abnormal behaviour of her furniture. The scientist becomes very furious at these queries and removes his disguising costumes. In a moment, the people at the place find themselves staring at a headless man. Now the constable tries very hard to catch the person who goes on becoming more and more invisible. Finally, he is knocked down and Griffin shakes himself free by becoming invisible once again.

Q1. How would you assess Griffin as a scientist?

Ans. As a scientist, Griffin seems to be appreciable. He is a brilliant scientist who is very determined about his experimental skill. He strives very much to make his experiment, of making a human body invisible, a success. Ultimately, when he is not able to get his desired results from his experiments, he ingests several unusual and rare drugs and makes his efforts a success by becoming invisible.

Q2. The two boys in London were surprised and fascinated. Why?

Ans. The two boys got surprised on observing the fresh muddy imprints of a pair of bare feet on the steps of a house in the middle of London. They were fascinated when they saw some new foot marks appearing one after the other without the feet being visible at all.

Q3. What did Griffin do inside the shop?

Ans. Griffin slipped into a big London store and as soon as the shop was closed, he put on warm clothes, shoes, an overcoat and a wide-brimmed hat. Then he ate cold meat with coffee followed by sweets and wine. Finally, he settled down to sleep on a pile of quilts.

Q4. How did he escape from the London store?

Ans. In London store, Griffin took rest on a pile of quilts after feeding himself at night. He was fast asleep and was not able to wake up before the store was opened by the assistants in the morning.

On seeing them, the scientist got into a panic and began to run. The assistants gave him a chase. He quickly took off his clothes and escaped out of the store invisibly.

Q5. He entered the shop of a theatrical company. What did he do there?

Ans. After escaping from the London store, Griffin entered the shop of a theatrical company. He wore bandages around his forehead, put on dark glasses, false nose, big bushy side whiskers and a large hat. Then he attacked the shopkeeper from behind and robbed him of all the money he had.

Q6. Why was the arrival of this stranger in a village inn an unusual event? Give two reasons.

Ans. The arrival of this stranger in village inn was an unusual event because it was mid-winter and the atmosphere was very chilly and deserted. Moreover, Griffin had disguised himself in a strange way. So, his strange appearance and arrival surprised everyone.

Q7. How did the scientist look when he came to the inn?

Ans. The scientist looked very strange when he came to the inn. He had his forehead covered with bandages, big bushy side whiskers, dark glasses and talked to everyone in an irritable manner. He preferred solitude and thus appeared to be an eccentric person to everyone at the inn.

Q8. The landlord's wife was convinced that Griffin was "an eccentric scientist".What made her think of Griffin in these terms?

Ans. Griffin had an uncommon and a very strange appearance. Mrs. Hall tried to be friendly with him but he avoided her and asked her not to disturb him. Besides this, his strange habits and irritable temper made her believe that he was an eccentric scientist.

Q9. What was "the curious episode" that took place in the Clergyman's study?

Ans. Very early in the morning, the clergyman and his wife heard some noises which revealed that someone was stealing money from the clergyman's desk

in the study. On entering the room, they were surprised to see it empty and the money was missing from the desk.

Q10. The landlord and his wife were surprised to see the scientist's door wide open. Why were they surprised?

Ans. The landlord and his wife were surprised to see the scientist's door wide open because it was shut and locked all the time and the scientist used to get furious if anyone entered his room, as he preferred solitude. On finding the door open, Mr. and Mrs. Hall entered the room and started to investigate it. All of a sudden, Mrs. Hall heard a sniff close to her ear. After a while, Griffin's hat jumped on its own and hit her in the face. Then the bedroom chair moved, jumped and pushed them out of the room.

Q11. Mrs. Hall almost fell down the stairs in hysterics. Pick out an example of humor from what follows this incident.

Ans. Mrs. Hall was terrified by the strange incident. She believed that Griffin had made her mother's spirit enter the chair which attacked her and she felt quite disturbed on thinking that her mother's spirit rose up against her. This is a humorous incident.

Q12. The Scientist was furious. What did he do in anger? Why were the people in the bar horrified?

Ans. Mrs. Hall questioned Griffin and enquired about the incident that had happened in his room. He became furious. He shouted at her and told her that he would show her his real identity. Within just a minute, he threw off his bandages, whiskers, spectacles and false nose, due to which his head disappeared. All the people present in the bar were greatly horrified to see a headless man in front of them.

Q13. What happened to the constable?

Ans. The constable was called to capture Griffin. The scientist was putting off his clothes one by one and ultimately became totally invisible. The brave constable still tried to get hold of the invisible scientist, but he was hit by him and he fell unconscious.

Q14. The scientist was a man of "irritable temper". Give an example to prove this.

Ans. The scientist was a man of irritable temper. It has been clearly shown by many incidents. One such incident is when Mrs. Hall interrogates him about the abnormal behaviour of her furniture; he loses his temper and discloses his identity. Moreover, he dislikes friendly atmosphere and prefers loneliness which depicts that he was unsociable and a man irritable temper.

Discussion

Do you think Griffin misused his discovery? How?

Ans. Griffin is sketched in our perception as a brilliant scientist for he discovered the formula of becoming invisible, but he was a lawless person as well. He misused his discovery in many ways.

Firstly, he slipped into the London store and gave himself the pleasure of clothing and feeding illegally.

Secondly, he went to the shop bearing the stock of a theatrical company and disguised himself with its stock. He also attacked the shopkeeper mercilessly and robbed him of his money. He stole money from clergyman's house and finally, he had an encounter with the constable, and finally he escaped invisibly to further clarify his lawless nature.

1. A debate on "Evil of Dowry System" is being organised in your school. As Headboy of your School, write a notice for the students notice board, inviting interested students to give their names and saying that all the students would have to attend the function. Put the notice in a box.
2. You are Anshu of class X. You have to participate in a speech competition on the topic, "Uses and abuses of Internet." Write a speech on the given topic.
3. Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper against bad lighting arrangements on the roads in your town.