

Footprints without Feet

Introduction

This story is an extract from a novel written by H.G. Wells, titled ‘The Invisible Man’. In this story, the adventures of an invisible man at the village Iping are narrated.

Summary

Griffin was a brilliant scientist. He had discovered a rare drug. It could make a man invisible. He swallowed that drug and his body became as transparent as a sheet of glass. However, Griffin was a lawless person. He was disliked by his landlord who wanted to eject him out of his house. Angrily, Griffin set the house of his landlord on fire. Then, he removed his clothes. This made him look invisible and thus he was able to escape without being seen by anyone. He became a homeless wanderer, without clothes, without money and quite invisible. However, he had chosen a bad time of the year to wander about London without clothes. It was mid-winter and the air was bitterly cold. So, Griffin decided to slip into a big London store. After the store closed, Griffin fitted himself with warm clothes and after becoming fully dressed he became a visible person. He ate to his fullest, drank wine and settled down to sleep on the pile of quilts.

Next morning, the assistants opened the store and found Griffin. He panicked and began to run. He managed to escape only by taking off his clothes. So, once more he was invisible and naked in the chilly January air.

He then decided to go to Drury Lane, to try to find clothing from theatrical companies found there. He found a suitable shop and made his way upstairs and came out a little later wearing bandages round his forehead, dark glasses, false nose, big bushy side whiskers and a large hat. To escape without being seen, he hit the shopkeeper from behind and stole his money.

Griffin then decided to leave London. He took a train to the village Iping. He hired two rooms in the inn of the village. He told the landlady, Mrs Hall, that he loved solitude and therefore he should not be disturbed. When his stolen money was spent, he stole the money from a clergyman's desk. The clergyman and his wife heard the chink of money being taken away. But they found no one in the room. The money was missing all the same.

Mrs Hall saw the door of Griffin's room wide open next morning. She and her husband decided to investigate. They found that Griffin's clothes and bandages were lying about the room. Mrs Hall then heard a sniff near her ear. Soon, the hat on the bedpost leapt up and struck her face. The chair rose up and pushed them out of the room.

The door was slammed and locked after pushing them outside. Mrs Hall was hysterical. She was convinced that the room was haunted by spirits and that Griffin was somehow responsible for all this.

People also began to suspect that Griffin had a hand in the theft at the clergyman's house. Suspicion grew even stronger when he suddenly produced cash, though he had previously admitted that he had no money. A constable was secretly sent for. Meanwhile, Mrs Hall confronted Griffin. She asked him how he had managed to come out of an empty room and how he had managed to enter a locked room. Griffin became furious on being questioned in such a manner. He threw off bandages, whiskers, spectacles and even his nose. He was now a headless person. The constable arrived. He tried to arrest him but Griffin was becoming more and more invisible as he took off one cloth after the other. The constable found himself struggling with someone he could not see. People tried to help him but they found themselves being hit by blows that seemed to come from nowhere. In the end, Jaffers was knocked unconscious and Griffin managed to escape.

Message

This story conveys the message that ingenuity and a sharp mind are appreciated and honoured only when they work for the betterment of society.



Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow:

1. The two boys started in surprise at the fresh muddy imprints of a pair of bare feet. What was a barefooted man doing on the steps of a house in the middle of London? And where was the man?

As they gazed, a remarkable sight met their eyes. A fresh footmark appeared from nowhere!

Further footprints followed, one after another, descending the steps and progressing down the street. The boys followed, fascinated, until the muddy impressions became fainter and fainter and at last disappeared altogether. (CBSE 2023)

(a) The boys were surprised to see a barefooted man in London because

- (i) everybody in London moved around in shoes.
- (ii) it was very cold in London to move around barefoot.

(iii) the muddy footprints were fresh.

(iv) only a homeless person would walk barefoot.

(b) Select the option that correctly captures the usage of the word 'started' in the above extract.

- (i) When I reached the theatre the movie had already started.
- (ii) The fire started from the kitchen.
- (iii) On hearing the bell ring, the sleeping Raman started and jumped out of bed.
- (iv) Taking a deep breath, Ravi started down the stairs.

(c) The boys' reaction can best be described as:

- (i) captivated, bored
- (ii) repulsed, absorbed
- (iii) curious, unhappy
- (iv) captivated, interested

(d) Complete the analogy by selecting the suitable word from the text:

disappeared : vanished :: extraordinary :

(e) According to the extract, the boys were when they saw the footmark.

1. terrified 2. nervous
3. delighted 4. curious
5. puzzled

Select the correct option:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| (i) 1, 2, 4 | (ii) Only 1 |
| (iii) 4 and 5 | (iv) 2 and 3 |

Answers

(a) (ii) It was very cold in London to move around barefoot.

(b) (iii) On hearing the bell ring, the sleeping Raman started and jumped out of bed.

(c) (iv) captivated, interested

(d) remarkable

(e) (iii) 4 and 5

2. His landlord disliked him and tried to eject him. In revenge, Griffin set fire to the house. To get away without being seen he had to remove his clothes. Thus, it was that he became a homeless wanderer, without clothes, without money and quite invisible – until he happened to step in some mud, and left footprints as he walked! (CBSE 2023)

(a) Griffin's landlord tried to eject him because:

- (i) he was a lawless person.
- (ii) he had set his house on fire.
- (iii) he didn't like him.
- (iv) he was a drug addict.

(b) Fill in the blank with one word only.

Griffin deliberately removed his clothes because he wanted to become

(c) Select the option that correctly captures the application of the word 'fire' as used in this extract.

- (i) Griffin said that he would fire the manager.
- (ii) The soldiers opened fire at the enemy.
- (iii) His remarks provoked heavy fire from the political opponents.
- (iv) The Amar Palace was completely destroyed by the fire.

(d) Griffin's presence was felt when:

- (i) he jumped into the water with a splash.
- (ii) he wore clothes.
- (iii) he left muddy footprints.
- (iv) he stepped in mud.

(e) Which of the following is not true with reference to the given extract?

- (i) Griffin had become penniless.
- (ii) Griffin promised to behave himself.
- (iii) Griffin revealed himself by his muddy footprints.
- (iv) No one could see Griffin when he took off his clothes.

Answers

(a) (i) he was a lawless person.

(b) invisible

(c) (iv) The Amar Palace was completely destroyed by the fire.

(d) (iii) he left muddy footprints.

(e) (ii) Griffin promised to behave himself.

3. He escaped easily enough from the boys who followed his footprints in London. But his adventures were by no means over. He had chosen a bad time of the year to wander about London without clothes. It was mid-winter. The air was bitterly cold and he could not do without clothes. Instead of walking about the streets, he decided to slip into a big London store for warmth.

(CBSE 2021 Term, Modified)

(a) (A) It was stupid on his part to come out on a winter night.

(B) He was not completely stupid, though.

(i) A is right and B is wrong.

(ii) B is right and A is wrong.

(iii) Both A and B are right.

(iv) Both A and B are wrong.

(b) 'He had chosen a bad time of the year'. Explain.

(c) The phrase 'slip into' means the same as:

(i) fall into

(ii) enter quietly

(iii) enter boldly

(iv) move out

(d) Who is 'he' in the extract?

Answers

(a) (iii) Both A and B are right.

(b) He had set fire to his landlord's house and to get away without being seen, he had to remove his clothes. But it was mid-winter, the air was bitterly cold and it was a bad time to be out without clothes.

(c) (ii) enter quietly

(d) 'He' is Griffin, the scientist.

4. Suspicion grew even stronger when he suddenly produced some ready cash, though he had admitted not long before that he had no money.

(a) What was 'he' suspected of?

(b) State whether the given statement is True or False.

In the extract 'he' refers to Mr Hall.

(c) What happened when the suspicion grew even stronger?

(d) Give a word which is opposite in meaning to the word 'admitted'.

Answers

(a) 'He' was suspected of the burglary.

(b) False

(c) When the suspicion grew ever stronger, the village constable was secretly sent for. Mrs Hall didn't even wait for the constable and went to Griffin to ask questions about the recent happenings.

(d) Denied

Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. What did Griffin do to escape after setting fire to the house of his landlord? (CBSE 2019)

Ans. Griffin was a brilliant scientist. He had discovered some drugs which could make human body become invisible. He had consumed those drugs and now his body was transparent as a glass. When his landlord tried to eject him from his house, he set fire to the house and to escape without being seen, he removed his clothes, thus becoming invisible and managed to run away without being caught.

Q 2. Why were the two boys in London surprised?

Ans. The two boys in London were surprised as they could see fresh muddy imprints of a pair of bare feet, without any sight of the barefooted man. Fresh footmarks appeared from nowhere. As the boys followed the footmarks, they started becoming fainter and fainter and at last they disappeared altogether.

Q 3. Why did Griffin go to Drury Lane? What did he do there? (CBSE 2019)

Ans. After managing to escape from a London store, Griffin found himself invisible and naked in the chilly January air. He decided to try the stock of a theatrical company in the hope of finding not only clothes but also something that would hide the empty space over his shoulders. So, he went to Drury Lane, which housed a number of such companies. After reaching there, he entered a shop, donned himself with bandages around his forehead, dark glasses, false nose, big bushy side whiskers and a large hat. He then attacked the shopkeeper from behind, robbed all the money he could and escaped from there.

Q 4. How did the invisible man first become visible?

Ans. The invisible man first became visible when he entered the big London store. Thereafter, the store closed, he fitted himself with warm clothes. Soon, with shoes, an overcoat and a wide-brimmed hat he became a fully dressed and visible person.

Q 5. What did Griffin do inside the big London store?

Ans. Inside the big London store, Griffin had the pleasure of clothing and feeding himself without any payment. After the store was closed, he broke open boxes and wrappers and fitted himself with warm clothes. He became fully dressed, wearing an overcoat, a wide-brimmed hat and shoes. In the kitchen of the restaurant, he found cold meat and coffee and this he followed up with sweets and wine taken from the grocery section. Then he settled down to sleep on a pile of quilts.

Q 6. What made Mrs Hall think of Griffin as unconventional and strange?

OR

Why does Mrs Hall find the scientist eccentric?

Ans. Mrs Hall thought of Griffin as unconventional and strange. There were several reasons for this. First

of all, Griffin had arrived in Iping in winter, which was unusual because the village did not have any visitors during this time of the year. Secondly, his appearance was uncommon. He had bandages all round his forehead and wore dark glasses. He did not reciprocate the friendly behaviour of his landlady. He told them that he had come to Iping in search of solitude and did not wish to be disturbed. He also told them that an accident had affected his face.

Q 7. What did the landlord and his wife find on investigating the scientist's room?

Ans. They found that the bed clothes were cold, showing that Griffin might have been up for some time. They also found that the clothes and bandages that Griffin always wore were lying about the room.

Q 8. What happened when Mr and Mrs Hall entered the stranger's room?

Ans. One day, Mr and Mrs Hall were very surprised to see the stranger's room wide open. They entered the room to investigate. They found that the bed clothes were cold, showing that Griffin might have been up for some time. They also found that the clothes and bandages that Griffin always wore were lying about the room. Suddenly, the hat from the bedpost leapt up and dashed into Mrs Hall's face. Then, the chair became alive and pushed them out of the room and it appeared that it has closed the door from inside.

Q 9. What happened to Jaffers when he tried to catch the invisible scientist?

Ans. Constable Jaffers had come to arrest Griffin on account of theft in clergyman's house. But when he reached the inn, he found a headless person there who was becoming more and more invisible as he threw off one garment after another. Soon Jaffers found himself struggling with someone he could not see at all. As he made an attempt to hold onto Griffin, he was knocked unconscious.

Q 10. How would you assess Griffin as a scientist?

Ans. Griffin was indeed a great scientist. He had successfully discovered how to make the human body transparent. He had carried out several experiments to prove that the human body could become invisible. Finally, he swallowed certain rare drugs and his body became as transparent as a sheet of glass. So, there is no denying the fact that Griffin was a brilliant scientist. He had the ability to make great inventions and discoveries. But, we regret for him being lawless.

Long Answer Type Questions

Q 1. How did Griffin find himself invisible but naked in the chill January air for the second time? (CBSE 2019)

Ans. After becoming invisible for the first time, Griffin was wandering on the streets of London without clothes. He started feeling cold and therefore he slipped into a big London store for warmth. After the

store closed, he dressed himself with an overcoat, a wide brimmed hat and shoes and he became visible again. Then he had a hearty meal in the kitchen of a restaurant and settled down to sleep on a pile of quilts. However, he did not wake up until the assistants arrived the next morning. When he saw a couple of assistants approaching, he panicked and began to run. The assistants started chasing him. In the end, he was able to escape only by quickly taking off his new clothes. So, once more he found himself invisible but naked in the chill January air.

Q 2. What are the adventures made by Griffin in the village Iping? Give examples in support of your answer.

Ans. The tiny and quiet village of Iping saw one adventure after another ever since the arrival of Griffin. The first event occurred at the clergyman's house. Very early in the morning, the clergyman and his wife were awakened by noises in their study. They heard the chink of money being taken from the clergyman's desk. But when the clergyman flung open the door, there was no one inside. The room appeared to be empty. The clergyman and his wife looked under the desk, behind the curtains and even up the chimney but there wasn't a sign of anybody. Yet the desk was open and the housekeeping money was stolen. Griffin had stolen the money.

Then another extraordinary event took place at Mrs Hall's inn. Mrs Hall found the door of Griffin's room open and decided to investigate. They found that Griffin was not in his room and his clothes and bandages were lying about the room. Just then, Mrs Hall heard a sniff close to her ear and a moment later, the hat on the bedpost leapt up and hit her on her face. Then suddenly the bedroom chair became alive. Springing into the air, it charged at Mrs Hall's legs and pushed her and her husband out of the room and then slammed and locked the door after them. Griffin had pushed them and slammed the door and locked it. And when the village constable came to arrest Griffin, the villagers were witness to yet another extraordinary spectacle. Griffin threw off his bandages, whiskers, spectacles and his nose and the people were staring at a headless man. And then he threw off one garment after another and became more and more invisible and then disappeared completely. These adventures were made by Griffin in the village Iping.

Q 3. Give the character-sketch of Griffin. (CBSE 2020)

Ans. Griffin was an extremely gifted scientist, but he had more negative qualities. Truly, he was a lawless person. He was not a true scientist as he misused his scientific discovery. He indulges in anti-social activities. After becoming invisible, he enters a London store and steals various things. Then he goes to a theatrical company in Drury Lane and steals clothes and other accessories and also robs

its owner. Then, he flees to Iping village. There he steals money from the clergyman's house. People call Mr Jaffers, the village constable, in Iping. The constable tries to catch him, but Griffin becomes invisible and escapes. All these activities show that Griffin had a criminal mind. He also had a bad temper. He used his invention to harass other people. He was not a law-abiding citizen.

Q 4. Griffin was not a true scientist as he misused his scientific discovery. Illustrate this point by giving two incidents from the story.

Ans. Griffin was indeed not a true scientist. He never missed an opportunity to misuse his scientific discovery which made human body invisible. The following two incidents illustrate this point:

- (i) His landlord, in London, wanted to eject him. In revenge, Griffin set fire to the house. To get away without being seen, he removed his clothes, became invisible and fled from there.
- (ii) In the village of Iping, he stole money from the clergyman's house after becoming invisible.

Q 5. Describe the scene when Mr Jaffers, the constable, tries to arrest a man without a head.

Ans. When Mr Jaffers, the constable, arrived, he was quite surprised to find out that he had to arrest a man without a head because by that time Griffin had thrown off his bandages, whiskers, spectacles and even his nose. But, that did not prevent Mr Jaffers from carrying out his duty. He tried to get hold of the man who was becoming more and more invisible. Finally, a shirt flew into the air and the constable found himself struggling with someone whom he could not see. Though some people attempted to help him, they were hit by blows which appear to come from nowhere. Moments later, Mr Jaffers was also knocked down. He lay on the floor, unconscious. The invisible scientist had managed to flee the scene.

Q 6. 'Griffin was rather a lawless person.' Comment.

Ans. Griffin is considered to be a lawless person for the following reasons:

- (i) His landlord did not like him and wanted to eject him. In revenge, Griffin set fire to his house. He became invisible to escape without being seen.
- (ii) He slipped into a big London store. He was able to give himself the pleasure of clothing and feeding himself without any expense. When the assistants arrived in the morning, he panicked and ran away.
- (iii) He entered into a theatrical shop. He wore bandages round his forehead, dark glasses, false nose, big bushy side-whiskers and a large hat. He callously attacked the shopkeeper from behind and robbed him of all his money. ●