

Chapter 8: The Hack Driver

Read and Find Out

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Question: 1

Why is the lawyer sent to New Mullion? What does he first think about the place?

Answer:

The lawyer was sent to New Mullion to serve summons on Oliver Lutkins, who was needed as a witness in a law case.

He first thinks that the place must be a sweet and a simple country village.

Question: 2

Who befriends lawyer? Where does he take him?

Answer:

A hack driver at the station, who called himself Bill Magnuson, befriends him. He told the lawyer that he knew Lutkins and would help in finding him. Bill took him to all the places where Lutkins was known to hang out. He took the lawyer to Fritz's shop, where Lutkins played a lot of poker; to Gustaff's barber shop and then to Gray's barber shop; to the poolroom and several other places before finally taking him to Lutkins' mother's farm. However, Oliver Lutkins was not found.

Question: 3

What does Bill say about Lutkins?

Answer:

Bill told the lawyer that Lutkins was a hard person to find as he was always busy in some activity or the other. He owed money to many people, including Bill, and had never paid back anybody. He also said that Lutkins played a lot of poker and was good at deceiving people.

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Question: 4

What more does Bill say about Lutkins and his family?

Answer:

Bill told the lawyer that he knew mother of Lutkins'. He said that she was a terror. He narrated an incident when he took a trunk to her once and she almost took his skin off because he did not carry it carefully. He also said that she was very tall and bulky. She was very quick and could talk a lot. He said that Lutkins must have heard that somebody was chasing him and consequently would have gone into hiding at his mother's place.

Question: 5

Does the narrator serve the summons that day?

Answer:

No, the narrator did not serve the summons that day.

Question: 6

Who is Lutkins?

Answer:

The hack driver himself is Lutkins but pretends to be Bill Magnuson. He tricks the lawyer to avoid the summons to be a witness in a case.

Think About It

Question: 1

When the lawyer reached New Mullion, did 'Bill' know that he was looking for Lutkins? When do you think 'Bill' came up with his plan for fooling the lawyer?

Answer:

No, 'Bill' did not know initially that the lawyer was looking for him.

He must have made his plan for fooling the lawyer when the lawyer told him that he was looking for Lutkins, as he knew that he was required as a witness but did not want to give his testimony.

Question: 2

Lutkins openly takes the lawyer all over the village. How is that no one lets out the secret? (Hint : Notice that the hack driver asks the lawyer to keep out of sight behind him when they go into Fritz's.) Can you find other such subtle ways in which Lutkins manipulates the tour?

Answer:

Lutkins never allows the lawyer to reach the place

where the imaginary Lutkins is supposed to be present at a given time. The way he weaves stories about Lutkins' vagabond nature and the way he scares the lawyer about Lutkins' mother are ways of fooling the lawyer devised by the hack driver. Everywhere he does not allow the lawyer to ask about Lutkins but he himself pretends to ask about him, which the villagers are knowing is a pretence. So the villagers also join in the whole drama.

Question: 3

Why do you think Lutkin's neighbours were anxious to meet the lawyer?

Answer:

Almost the entire village had enjoyed Lutkins making a fool of the lawyer. Only Lutkins' neighbours had not seen the lawyer but had come to know what happened. They wanted to see the gullible man who Lutkins had taken for a ride. That is why they wanted to meet him.

Question: 4

After his first day's experience with the hack driver the lawyer thinks of returning to New Mullion to practice law. Do you think he would have reconsidered this idea after his second visit?

Answer:

No, absolutely not. After knowing how Lutkins had made fool of him, he would never return to New Mullion to practice law.

Question: 5

Do you think the lawyer was gullible? How could he have avoided being taken for a ride? CBSE 2015

Answer:

Yes, the lawyer was gullible. He believed every word of what Oliver Lutkins said. He should have asked about Lutkins from other villagers. Instead, he depended completely on the hack driver.

Talk About It

Question: 1

Do we come across persons like Lutkins only in fiction or do we encounter them in real life as well? You can give examples from fiction, or narrate an incident that you have read in the newspaper, or an incident from real life.

Answer:

Persons like Lutkins are found in real life as well. They do not just appear in stories. They are very much real. Newspapers are full of reports of such tricksters. There is this famous con man in 'David Copperfield' written by Charles Dickens. His name is Uriah Heep. He traps a gullible, rich old man. The old man depends on him entirely. He takes advantage of his trust and takes all his money. He makes the old man an addict to alcohol. Then he forces the old man to marry his daughter to him.

Question: 1

Who is a 'con man', or a confidence trickster?

Answer:

A 'con man' or a confidence trickster is a person who makes a fool out of other people. He wins their trust first and then, he gets from them whatever he wants.

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