

Chapter 5 Footprints Without Feet

Summary of Chapter 5: Footprints Without Feet

This chapter, written by H.G. Wells, narrates the story of Griffin, a brilliant but eccentric scientist who discovers a way to make himself invisible. However, instead of using his discovery for good, he engages in unlawful activities.

Griffin, after making himself invisible, roams around London, creating havoc. Without money or shelter, he steals food and clothes from a store. To escape detection, he enters a theatrical shop and steals bandages, a fake nose, and dark glasses to appear normal. Later, he arrives at Iping, a small village, where he rents a room at an inn. His strange appearance and secretive behavior make the villagers suspicious.

As time passes, the villagers and the innkeeper's wife suspect something unusual about Griffin. When he fails to pay his rent, the police are called. In a desperate attempt to escape, he removes his clothes and becomes invisible again. He then attacks the people and flees.

The story highlights the consequences of misusing scientific discoveries. Griffin's actions show how power without morality can lead to downfall. Instead of using his talent for good, he turns to crime, ultimately leading to his isolation.

READ AND FIND OUT

Q 1. How did the invisible man first become visible?

Ans 1: The Invisible Man first revealed himself to others when he put on warm clothing, including an overcoat, shoes, and a wide-brimmed hat, inside a store in London.

Q 2. Why was he wandering the streets?

Ans 2: After gaining the ability to become invisible, Griffin sought revenge against his landlord, who disapproved of him and attempted to evict him. In a fit of anger, he set fire to his own home, leaving him without a place to stay or any money. It was the depths of winter, and the biting cold made his situation even more dire. As he roamed the streets, he desperately searched for shelter and a way to clothe and feed himself.

READ AND FIND OUT

Q 1. Why does Mrs. Hall find the scientist eccentric?

Ans 1: In her attempts to engage with the scientist, Mrs. Hall found him to be quite unapproachable. He expressed that he had come to Iping seeking solitude and preferred not to be interrupted while he worked. Additionally, he mentioned that an accident had left his face disfigured, contributing to his withdrawn demeanor. As a result of his unfriendly attitude, Mrs. Hall came to view him as an eccentric figure.

Q 2. What curious episode occurs in the study?

Ans 2: One early morning, Griffin stealthily entered the study of a clergyman while remaining invisible. As he rummaged through the drawer, he took out some money. The sound of coins clinking together startled the clergyman and his wife awake. Grabbing a rod, the clergyman burst through the door, only to find his room empty. To his astonishment, the drawer was open, and the money was gone.

Q 3. What other extraordinary things happen at the inn?

Ans 3: Griffin had carelessly left his room door wide open, allowing the curious Mr. and Mrs. Hall to peek inside. They were taken aback by the sight of bandages and clothing scattered throughout the room. Suddenly, Mrs. Hall heard a sniffing sound right next to her ear. To her shock, the hat perched on the bedpost sprang to life and flew straight at her face. As if that weren't enough, the bedroom chair leapt into the air and charged at them, forcing both of them out of the room. The door slammed shut and locked behind them.

When Mrs. Hall confronted Griffin about the strange behavior of the furniture and how he had managed to lock himself in, Griffin became enraged. He exclaimed, "You don't really understand who I am!" With that, he discarded his bandages, whiskers, spectacles, and nose, revealing himself as a headless figure. The sight horrified them both.

Moments later, Policeman Jaffers arrived to arrest Griffin. In a twist, Griffin began to remove his clothes, rendering himself invisible. He struck Jaffers and his officers with invisible blows, ultimately knocking Jaffers down and making his escape. This series of extraordinary events left a lasting impression on everyone at the inn.

THINK ABOUT IT**Q 1. "Griffin was rather a lawless person." Comment. "**

Ans 1: Griffin undeniably exhibited lawless behavior, as evidenced by several troubling incidents:

1. Out of spite for his landlord, who sought to evict him, Griffin set fire to his own home after becoming invisible.
2. He stealthily entered a large department store in London, where he helped himself to warm clothing, food, and drinks without paying a single penny.
3. Griffin infiltrated a theatrical company, fully disguised himself, and then audaciously attacked the manager, stealing his money in the process.
4. He also committed theft in the study of a clergyman, taking cash without hesitation.
5. When confronted by Mrs. Hall, he struck her, and he even knocked down a constable who attempted to arrest him with his invisible assaults.

These actions clearly illustrate Griffin's disregard for the law and his willingness to engage in criminal activities.

Q 2. How would you assess Griffin as a scientist?

Ans 2: Griffin was undoubtedly a brilliant scientist, having made the remarkable discovery of a rare drug that could render a person invisible. This groundbreaking achievement had the potential to greatly benefit society, such as assisting law enforcement in apprehending criminals, helping those in need without compromising their dignity, and even aiding in counterterrorism efforts.

However, Griffin chose to exploit his invention for selfish and unlawful purposes. He engaged in theft, stealing money, food, and clothing. His actions culminated in violence when he attacked Mrs. Hall, the owner of a theatrical company, and later confronted Jaffers, the constable who attempted to arrest him. Griffin's misuse of his knowledge and discovery raises serious ethical concerns. Such behavior is indicative of a misguided individual who poses a threat to society, rather than a true scientist. A genuine scientist seeks to use their discoveries to improve society, enhance people's lives, and foster happiness.

TALK ABOUT IT**Q 1. Would you like to become invisible? What advantages and disadvantages do you foresee, if you did?**

Ans 1: I often dream of having the power of invisibility, and I envision using it for the greater good of my community and country. With this ability, I could stealthily infiltrate terrorist camps and hideouts, gathering vital intelligence on their plans and activities. By relaying this information to the army or police, I could help prevent potential threats and protect innocent lives.

Additionally, my invisibility would allow me to assist those in need without compromising their dignity. Whether it's providing support to the underprivileged or aiding law enforcement in apprehending criminals, I could make a meaningful difference while remaining unseen.

However, there are a couple of challenges I might face. For instance, dogs are known for their keen sense of smell and might be able to detect my presence, making me a target for their pursuit. Moreover, if my enemies become aware of my invisibility, they could potentially use tracking devices to hunt me down.

Q 2. Are there forces around us that are invisible, for example, magnetism? Are there aspects of matter that are 'invisible or not visible to the naked eye? What would the world be like if you could see such forces or such aspects of matter?

Ans 2: In addition to magnetism, gravitational force is another invisible force that surrounds us constantly. We experience its effects in many ways, such as feeling our weight while standing on Earth or observing objects fall towards the ground. Even when we venture into space, we can sense the pull of gravity.

Electromagnetic rays, including sunlight (with the exception of gamma rays, which are massless), are also invisible forces that play a significant role in our lives. Additionally, the forces generated by nuclear and chemical reactions are common yet essential invisible phenomena that affect our world.

The aspects of matter that elude our naked eye are tiny particles, often referred to as microscopic particles or microns. If we had the ability to visualize these forces and particles, we could potentially harness their power to mitigate natural disasters like earthquakes and tsunamis, ultimately contributing to a safer and happier world.

Q 3. What makes glass or water transparent (what is the scientific explanation for this)? Do you think it would be scientifically possible for a man to become invisible, or transparent? (Keep in mind that writers of science fiction have often turned out to be prophetic in their imagination!)

Ans3: Glass and water are both transparent materials, allowing light to pass through them without obstruction. This transparency occurs because there are no particles in these substances that block the rays of light.

In the future, it's conceivable that humans might achieve invisibility. While this notion has often been portrayed in fiction, it ties back to a scientific principle: the potential for mass to be converted into energy and then reverted to mass. This concept, rooted in the theories of Einstein, is still under investigation, but no significant breakthroughs have been made yet.

Interestingly, the concept of transforming mass into energy and vice versa has its origins in Hindu mythology, where deities are depicted as appearing and disappearing at will. This fascinating idea was later explored in the 19th century by Einstein, who brought it into the realm of scientific thought.