

Chapter 8

The Hack Driver

Read and Find Out Pg-47

Q.1 Why is the lawyer sent to New Mullion? What does he first think about the place?

Ans.: The Lawyer is sent to New Mullion to catch a man named, Oliver Lutkins. He initially thinks of New Mullion as a sweet and simple country village. However, his expectations were shattered on reaching New Mullion. The streets were full of mud water and some bare, some brown painted wooden shops stood in a row.

Q.2 Who befriends him? Where does he take him?

Ans.: A delivery man at the station befriends the lawyer. He takes him to Fritz's shop initially where Lutkins usually goes to play poker. Then, they go to Gustaff's barber shop, the main street, Gray's barber shop and Wade's Hill. Finally, he takes him to Lutkins' mother. The delivery man offers help on his own, though in lieu of money.

Q.3 What does he say about Lutkins?

Ans.: The delivery man says that Lutkins is a very cunning person and that he could deceive anyone. It was not a child's play to catch him. He further said that Lutkin's never returned anyone's money but he wasn't bad.

Read and Find Out Pg-50

Q.1 What more does Bill say about Lutkins and his family?

Ans.: Bill told the lawyer that Lutkins had a mother who was no less than a terror. About nine feet tall and four feet thick, Bill described her as a very healthy and active lady. At the same time, he warned the lawyer that she can be very dangerous.

Q.2 Does the narrator serve the summons that day?

Ans.: No, the narrator does not serve the summons that day. He was deceived and taken into confidence by Bill that he would help him find Lutkins. He misguided the lawyer the entire day by picking on a fancy name 'Bill'. He later turns out to be Oliver Lutkins himself.

Q.3 Who is Lutkins?

Ans.: Lutkins, a resident of New Mullion, is a witness in a law case. He is a clever man as he easily takes the lawyer into confidence and shows him all around the town with a fake intention of helping him find Oliver Lutkins. He is a middle aged, friendly hack driver.

Think About it

Q.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?

Ans.: Bill initially didn't know that the lawyer was looking for Lutkins. It was only when the lawyer reached the station and asked Bill about Oliver Lutkins did he come to know about it. The plan of fooling the lawyer was drafted by Bill on the spot. He offered the lawyer some help in finding Oliver Lutkins as he knew that he would be caught otherwise.

This would help him make some money as well. He appeared so genuine and friendly that the lawyer couldn't see through his plans and agreed to take his help.

The trick is a proof of Bill's (originally Oliver Lutkins) clever and deceiving nature.

Q.2 Lutkins openly takes the lawyer all over the village. How is it 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?

Ans.: Lutkins openly takes the lawyer all over the village even then no one lets out the secret that he is Lutkins himself. He cunningly makes the lawyer agree to his plan of going out first to search for him and that he should follow. In this way, Bill had enough time to hint people of the situation. Had the two gone together to enquire it would have been a different situation. Similarly, it would be a different case had the lawyer gone out first to enquire about Lutkins.

At anyplace they went, Lutkins went out first to enquire. Be it at the poker place, the barber's shop, his house or at his mother's he cleverly makes the first move and succeeds in deceiving the lawyer.

Yes, he followed the same pattern everywhere. He did the same thing at the poker house, at both the barber's shop as well as his mother's. Had the lawyer taken the first move of enquiry no one would have got a hint of the situation.

Q.3 Why do you think Lutkins's neighbours were anxious to meet the lawyer?

Ans.: Lutkin's neighbours didn't meet the lawyer on his first trip to New Mullion. They got to know later about how Lutkins fooled the lawyer, drove him across the town and made money out of it too. They were anxious to meet him because they were the only ones who couldn't meet him that day. Lutkins and his mother described him as an innocent boy of seven which hurt the lawyer as the lawyers are supposed to be witty and intelligent.

Q.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?

Ans.: The lawyer had an enjoyable time with Bill in New Mullion, irrespective of the fact that he could not serve the summons. He thought of returning to the town to practice law. The day at New Mullion's served him a pleasant experience. He took people of New Mullion's to be friendly and simple. He believed that everyone had a good heart and the city would be apt for him to stay as he was upset by the shadowy city in which he lived.

On his second visit when he found Bill and Lutkins' mother laughing with each other, he was taken aback. The man then got to know that Bill was Lutkins himself. Lutkins and his mother laughed at him as if he were a boy of seven. I am sure he would have reconsidered his idea of settling in the town.

Q.5 Do you think the lawyer was gullible? How could he have avoided being taken for a ride?

Ans.: There is no doubt that the lawyer was gullible. On reaching New Mullion, he informed Bill of the purpose of his visit even though he didn't know him in person. Lutkins took advantage of this weakness of his and tricked him into a plot. He introduced himself as Bill and offered him help.

He misguided the lawyer the entire day and drove him around in lieu of money.

The lawyer could have avoided being taken for a ride had he behaved as lawyers are supposed to do: with wits and tricks. Initially, he should have enquired about Lutkins. He should not have informed any random person about his purpose of visit.

Talk about it

Q.1 Do we come across persons like Lutkins only in fiction or do we encounter them in real life as well? You can give example from fiction, or narrate an incident that you have read in the newspaper, or an incident from real life.

Ans.: It is very common to come across people like Lutkins in real life as well. There are many of them out there. These people have a mastery in deceiving others. We can read about such cases every day in newspaper dailies. It is important to be clever and witty to avoid being fooled by such people.

I remember once a man came to my house and told my father that if he gave him fifty thousand rupees he would return him double the amount in just fifteen days. He put the condition that it had to be kept a secret as it was a scheme which was only meant for a few people shortlisted by the company through certain criterion. My father bluntly refused and asked him to leave. A month later we got to know that the man visited all the houses in our society and told them the same thing. Three of my father's friends living in the same society had given him the money. Since then, there was no trace of anything neither the man nor the money.

Nothing could be done as the address given by the man was not a valid one. All they could do was to lament over their decision.

Q.2 Who is a 'con man', or a confidence trickster?

Ans.: A con man or a confidence trickster is a man who has the skills of deceiving others easily and never getting suspected. Such a person persuades other people to give him any of his belongings in lieu of profits or any other favor.

Oliver Lutkins is one of those people who are a master of the skill. He takes the lawyer across the village, makes him meet everyone, spends half a day with him, yet the lawyer is unable to smell anything fishy. He is taken aback when the man with him tells him that the person was Lutkins himself.

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