

The Hack Driver

Answers to NCERT Questions

READ AND FIND OUT

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

Ans: 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 simple country village.

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

Ans: 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 the farm of Lutkins' mother. However, Oliver Lutkins was not found.

3. What does he say about Lutkins?

Ans: 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.

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

Ans: Bill told the lawyer that he knew Lutkins' mother. 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.

5. Does the narrator serve the summons that day?

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

6. Who is Lutkins?

Ans: 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

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: 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.

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 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.

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

Ans: 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.

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

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

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

Ans: 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

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.

Ans: 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.

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

Ans: 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.

Additional Questions

Short Answer Questions (30-40 words)

1. Why do you think Bill offered to help the narrator find Lutkins?

Ans: Bill himself was Lutkins. He knew that the lawyer is searching for him. He wanted to play a prank on him and offered to help him find Lutkins. He even made some money in this process and made him wander here and there. He and his mother made fool of the narrator and had a great laughter.

2. The narrator wasn't very fond of New Mullion, when he reached the place. What made him grow fond of the village and its people?

Ans: Initially, the narrator did not like the village. His eager expectations of a sweet and simple country village were severely disappointed, but the friendly behaviour of Bill made him grow fond of the village and its people. He was so open and full of warmth and affection that the narrator was touched.

3. 'But he was no more dishonest than I'. Elaborate the statement with reference to 'The Hack Driver'.

Ans: The lawyer charged a handsome amount from his firm to visit new mullion. He was given some amount to spend in the process of searching Lutkins. But he paid very little money to the hack driver. Bill already knew that the lawyer was searching for him, still, he made him wander here and there, and even charged him two dollars an hour for six hours, including one hour of his lunchtime. This made the lawyer utter these words.

4. Write the plan suggested by Bill for lunch and state the reason behind it.

Ans: The lawyer felt hungry and wanted to eat something in a restaurant, but Bill suggested him to take lunch at his home cooked by his wife. He told him that it will cost him cheaper than the restaurant because she won't charge him more than half a dollar. He did so because he wanted to make some money out of it. Secondly, it will take nearly an hour to go there and have lunch, so he will be charged another two dollars for it. Thus, it was a good business for him.

5. What qualities of the hack driver impressed the young lawyer?

Ans: The hack driver's cheerful face and friendly manner made the lawyer conclude that he liked people. The hack driver's openness, again made the lawyer glow in the warmth of affection.

6. Describe the feelings of the young lawyer when he came to know the reality of the hack driver at last.

Ans: As long as the lawyer did not know that the hack driver was Lutkins himself, he enjoyed the hack driver's company and glowed in the warmth of his affection. But as the identity of the hack driver was revealed, the lawyer felt very quiet hurt. This was especially when Lutkins and his mother laughed at the lawyer. Later, however, he acknowledged their loving kindness too.

7. On his way back, the narrator did not worry about his failure to find Lutkins. What was the reason behind his carefree attitude?

Ans: On his way back, the lawyer did not worry about the failure of his mission, for he was too busy thinking about Bill Magnuson, the hack driver. In fact, he even started considering his return to New Mullion to practise law. He found Bill deep and richly human and pictured an honest and happy life in the village.

8. Discuss the character of the young lawyer as depicted in the chapter, 'The Hack Driver'?

Ans: The narrator who is a lawyer is a man who could be taken for a ride very easily. He easily gets flattered by affection and warmth and fails to apply logic to even essential things. The hack driver who is Lutkins himself, whom the narrator wants to meet, thus, dupes him very easily. The gullible nature of the narrator invites our sympathy for him.

9. The hack driver at New Mullion befriended the lawyer. What did he do after that?

Ans: After befriending the lawyer, the hack driver who was Lutkins himself offered to search for Lutkins to whom the lawyer had to serve the summon. He first took the lawyer to Fritz's shop, then to Mustafa's and Gray's barber shops and then to the poolroom. Later, he took the lawyer to his wife for lunch for half a dollar and finally to Lutkins' mother.

10. How did Bill paint a picture of people in words?

Ans: Bill, the hack driver was very talkative. He won his confidence and drove him to various places telling that the villagers would help him in finding Lutkins.

11. Why was the lawyer happy about the day?

Ans: The lawyer was asked to go to a small village, New Mullion, to serve the summons to Lutkins. He was happy to go as he had expected the countryside town to be green and refreshing – a respite from the crowded, noisy, dry atmosphere of the city. Hence, he was happy.

12. How was the hack driver recognised?

Ans: Next morning, the lawyer was sent back to New Mullion with a man who knew Lutkins by face. At the station, the lawyer saw Bill talking to Lutkins' mother in a friendly manner. He was surprised to know that Bill was no other but Lutkins himself.

13. What did the hack driver tell the narrator about Lutkins' mother?

Ans: He said that she was nine feet tall and four feet thick as a cat and could talk sharp. She was a real terror. Once, she almost took off his skin because he did not treat the box she had given to him to carry as delicately as a box of eggs.

14. Why could the lawyer not find Lutkins?

Ans: The lawyer could not find Lutkins because the hack driver, Bill himself was Lutkins. In case, the lawyer had not seen or met him before, he could not identify him.

15. Does the narrator serve the summons that day? If not, why?

Ans: The narrator could not serve the summons that day as he could not find Lutkins. He did not know that the hack driver named Bill was actually Lutkins himself and was making a practical joke on him in the name of helping him in searching Lutkins.

16. How did Lutkins' mother receive the narrator?

Ans: The hack driver took him to the farm of Lutkins' mother. He introduced the lawyer and told her that he had come to serve summons to Lutkins and had legal right to search the property. The mother got irritated and attacked him with hot iron rod. Both got scared and ran away.

17. How did the hack driver describe Lutkins?

Ans: The hack driver told the narrator that Lutkins was very popular among the fellow villagers. He was a careless, dishonest wanderer and could be seen here, there, everywhere. He was always up to one thing or the other. He owed money to several people.

18. Why did the young lawyer wish to return to New Mullion?

Ans: Although the young lawyer failed to serve summons to Lutkins, he was so much impressed with the warmth and helpful nature of the country people that he felt excited. He planned to practise law at New Mullion and leave his job.

Long Answer Questions (100-150 words)

1. The hack driver misguided the lawyer and led him on the wrong path. How could the lawyer be proactive?

Ans: The hack driver misguided the lawyer and openly drove him all over the village. He took him too many places such as Beninese's Mustafa, a barber shop, Gray's barber shop, poolroom, and his mother's farmyard. He charged him two dollars an hour for all his visits. He himself talked low of Lutkins and did not allow him to meet anyone directly.

The lawyer could have been more protective in some ways. He should have talked to more people, rather than enjoy a whole day at the expense of the firm. He should not have hidden behind the hack driver but should have tried to talk once to the villagers. He should not give the lead to the hack driver. Instead, he should have led this visit himself, inquiring more and more people.

2. Why do you think the lawyer was happy to take summons to New Mullion? How did the lawyer develop a perception about Lutkins? If you had been in the lawyer's place, what would have your reaction been towards Bill's statements?

Ans: The narrator was happy to go to New Mullion. He thought it must be a beautiful and calm village. He considered Lutkins to be a friendly fellow. He liked his openness, warmth and affection. He took his kindness to be real. He was impressed by him although the hack driver was doing his business and earning handsome money from the lawyer.

If I had been in the lawyer's place, I would never considered Bill's statement true. I would have counter checked his statement by talking to other persons of the village. I would not have spent the whole day with a single person in search of Lutkins, but rather consulted different people to find Lutkins.

3. Give the character sketch of the hack driver.

Ans: The narrator happened to meet the hack driver on reaching New Mullion. He was Lutkins himself. When he came to know the purpose of the narrator's visit, he offered help in finding Lutkins at a charge of two pounds per hour. He was a red-faced, forty-year-old man having a cheerful and pleasant personality. The lawyer liked him at the first look. He was fun-loving and jolly. He played a practical joke on the lawyer. When he came to know that he did not identify Lutkins, he introduced himself as Bill. He was neither honest nor helpful. He was rather clever. But he was creative, humorous and

witty. He portrayed the people of New Mullion in an entertaining and humorous manner, reflecting his cheerful wisdom.

4. Narrate the narrator's first visit to New Mullion.

Ans: The narrator/lawyer was sent to New Mullion to serve summons to Lutkins. At the station, he met a cheerful hack driver who was Lutkins himself. He took advantage of the situation as the narrator who had never met Lutkins before could not identify him. The fun-loving Lutkins introduced himself as Bill. He offered him all his help to find Lutkins. He took him all over the village but in vain. He entertained the narrator with his lucid description of the village folk, charged him two dollars per hour and half a dollar for food. The narrator was impressed by the warm affection, kind and helpful nature of Bill and the hospitality and cooperation of the villagers. He thought of leaving his present job and starting his legal practice at New Mullion.

Self-Assessment Test

Short Answer Questions

1. How did Lutkins' mother treat the lawyer?
2. Who was Lutkins?
3. What information did the delivery man give about Lutkins?
4. How did the lawyer finally find Lutkins?
5. Why didn't the narrator like his work?

Long Answer Questions

1. The hack driver pretended that he was looking for Lutkins when he was Lutkins himself in real life. How did Lutkins make the lawyer a wise person?
2. Describe the encounter of the young lawyer with the hack driver in the village.
3. Describe the scene at Gustaff's barber shop.