
CBSE Class 10 English Language and Literature

NCERT Solutions

Footprints Chapter 8

The Hack Driver

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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 serve summons on a person named Oliver Lutkins, who was needed as a witness in a law case.

He had expected the place to be a sweet and simple country village.

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

Ans: The lawyer was befriended by a delivery man who introduced himself as Bill. He told him that he knew Lutkins and would help the lawyer in finding him. He took him to all the possible places where Lutkins was seen or was known to hang out. He took the lawyer to Fritz's shop, where Lutkins was a frequent visitor to play 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 Oliver's mother's farm. However, so much of roaming around did not yield any result as they failed to find Oliver Lutkins.

3. What does he say about Lutkins?

Ans: Bill told the lawyer that Lutkins was a clever fellow hard enough to catch. He was always up to something or the other. He owed money to many people, including Bill, and had never even paid anybody a cent. He also said that Oliver played a lot of poker and was good at deceiving people.

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1. 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 treat it like a box of eggs. He also said that she was very tall and fat. She was very quick and could talk a lot. He said that Oliver must have heard that somebody was chasing him and consequently, would have gone into hiding at his mother's place.

2. Does the narrator serve the summons that day?

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

3. Who was Lutkins?

Ans: The hack driver, who called himself Bill, was Oliver Lutkins.

Page No: 53 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 of fooling the lawyer?

Ans: Lutkins' act of taking the lawyer for a ride clearly indicates that he is a very cunning person. The way he tried to deal with the lawyer shows how quick he is in making plans to fool people. His idea to not disclose his true identity to unknown persons shows how clever he is and it seems to be his regular practice to dupe people, especially the newcomers. As soon as the lawyer told Bill his purpose of visit to that place, Bill instantly knew how he would be fool the lawyer.

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: Lutkin never allows the lawyer to the place where the imaginary Lutkins is supposed to be present at a given time. He asks him to keep out of sight, weaving vague stories about Lutkin's vagabond nature. Bill also tries to scare away the lawyer, cooking up different stories about Lutkin's mother. He did all this just to save himself from being summoned in the case.

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

Ans: Lutkin's neighbors were not anxious to meet a person who could be easily duped. They just wanted to enjoy the lawyer's predicament.

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: After his first day's experience with the hack driver, the lawyer got a lesson for life that not to befriend anybody so easily. However, he realized during his second visit that he had been literally taken for a ride by the hack driver (who himself was Lutkin's) and people of that town were just trying to enjoy the situation he was in. After becoming the laughing stock of the town, it is most likely that the lawyer would have reconsidered his initial idea of practicing law in that village.

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

Ans: The lawyer seems to be a simpleton and inexperienced person. He has yet to come to terms with the way the people in this world function. Being a lawyer, he could have easily avoided being duped by a stranger. Before visiting that village, he could have gathered important information regarding Lutkin's. He could have taken a photograph of Lutkin's along with him. Most importantly, he should not have discussed his purpose of his visit with a total stranger, as it was a matter that involved law and security.
