

Footprints Without Feet

Summary: This story is about a scientist who discovers a potion to make a man invisible. After swallowing the potion, the scientist turns to various mischiefs. He steals clothes from a supermarket and then steals lots of cash. To avoid getting notices, the scientist moves from London to a small village. He stays at a local inn in the village. When he is out of money, he steals from a clergyman's house. The local people suspect him and police is called. He escapes the police because of his ability to become invisible.

Question 1: "Griffin was rather a lawless person" comment.

Answer: Griffin never thought twice before harming anybody. He put his landlord's house on fire. Then his stealing acts at shops and later in the village indicate towards this. When he was encountered by the landlady of the inn, he threw chair at her and her husband. Lawless persons never think about safety and well being of others. They are always preoccupied by their benefits only.

Question 2: How would you assess Griffin as Scientist?

Answer: Griffin is a brilliant scientist which is evident from his drug of invisibility. But he seems to enjoy the feeling of power which he got out of his invisibility. The power to hurt anybody without getting noticed can give sadistic pleasure to somebody. A true scientist makes discovery for the larger benefit of the society.

Question 3: Would you like to become invisible? What advantages and disadvantages do you foresee, if you did?

Answer: It can be an exciting idea for most of the people. Like two facets of coin; invisibility can have many advantages and disadvantages. For a child, invisibility may mean a license to do all kinds of pranks without getting caught. Like a Hindi movie, invisibility can help you beat all the villains black and blue and get rid of them.

Once you become invisible, nobody would notice you. Within no time, the sadness of isolation will take over the excitement of being invisible. You will have no friend. You will tend to behave like the eccentric scientist in this story.

Question 4: 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?

Answer: Magnetic force and electrostatic force are examples of invisible force. The atoms and molecules in a matter are so small that they are not visible to the naked eye. Similarly, heat energy is invisible. Similarly, sound is invisible to us. While the idea of seeing invisible things can be very exciting but their visibility would create too much problem. For example; if we are able to see all the sound around us, that would be too irritating for us.

Question 5: 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!)

Answer: The fact that light can pass through glass or water, make them transparent. When light falls on an object, the reflected light from that object makes it visible to us. If some device can be made which can prevent reflection of light from the human body then the human body can be made invisible.