



Class: X QUESTION BANK ON THE HACK DRIVER (2020-21)
Sub: ENGLISH

SUMMARY-

The author of the story was an American novelist Sinclair Lewis. This is an amusing tale about a young lawyer who is very innocent. He goes to a village to serve to summon to a person called Oliver Lutkins. At the railway station, he meets a person who introduced himself as Bill. Bill told that he knew everyone in the village and promises to search Lutkins for the lawyer. He takes the lawyer and visit lots of places and takes a lot of money from him. But after a long search, they could not find Lutkins. Next day, when the lawyer goes to the village with one of his colleagues, he came to know that the hack driver was Lutkins. Everyone, except the lawyer, was laughing at him, and he felt ashamed of himself.

This is a story of a lawyer who after completing his graduation started working with a famous firm in the city. He was working as an assistant clerk there. He did not like the job of serving summons because sometimes he had to face harsh situations. One day, he had to give summons to Oliver Lutkins who was a key witness in some case. He lived in a small village New Mullion. He was happy to go to the village but the village looked very dull and lifeless. The narrator saw a hack driver on a platform that was cheerful. He inquired him about Lutkins and came to know he was a shrewd man and had taken loan from many people. The hack driver cunningly extracted from lawyer that he has come here to give court summon to Lutkin.

The lawyer decided to rent Bill's hack and search for Lutkins. Bill manipulated the lawyer and made him visit different places in search of Lutkins. He always goes ahead and inquires about Lutkins. They went to Fritz's shop to catch Lutkins where he plays poker. They have been told that he has gone to Gustaff barber for shaving. Later at Gustaff's place also they could not meet him and somebody told them they saw him in the pool room. They could not find him there and told he left the poolroom after buying cigarettes. In Afternoon Bill asked the lawyer to buy food from his wife as it would be less costly than a restaurant. They had their lunch at Wade's hill which is a beautiful place.

By now the lawyer was fully convinced that Bill is a generous and helpful person. He even started comparing city people and villagers. Later they went to Lutkins mother's house but she was a horrible lady and she was close to attacking them with a hot iron rod. At last, the lawyer has to leave without serving to summon to Lutkins. He was badly scolded by his Chief the next day and was sent again to New Mullion with a colleague who knew Lutkins. On reaching station the lawyer happily acknowledged that Bill was such helpful people to him in searching Lutkins. At this point, he was told by his colleague that the hack driver was none other than Oliver Lutkins. The lawyer felt ashamed of himself. The story teaches us that we should not trust anyone without knowing them otherwise people will make fool of us.

CHARACTER SKETCH – OLIVER LUTKINS

The hack driver, Bill, who was Oliver Lutkins himself, does help us drawing a character-sketch of Oliver Lutkins. Being a good talker, Bill gave a detailed description of Oliver Lutkins and his

activities to the narrator. Bill told the narrator that Lutkins was a hard fellow to be caught. He was always up to something or the other. He was deeply interested in poker. Probably, he was trying to start up a poker game in the back of Fritz's shop. Bill told that Oliver Lutkins never paid anybody a cent. He still owed Bill fifty cents on a poker game. Lutkins was not really bad, but it was hard to make him part with his money. Bill also told that Lutkins had a talent for dishonesty. Lutkins' mother was a terror and he had gone to his mother's farm to hide behind his mother's skirts. Oliver Lutkins' real character was exposed when his real identity was revealed. Bill was actually acting as Oliver Lutkins. When summons was served, Lutkins and his mother laughed at the narrator as if he were a seven-year-old boy. Lutkins outwitted, outsmarted and outmanoeuvred the narrator. Clever and cunning, Lutkins proved that the gullible narrator was just a novice before a seasoned crook like him.

CHARACTER SKETCH OF THE LAWYER

The lawyer was a fresh graduate from a university. He got a job as a junior assistant clerk in a law firm. His duty was to serve the summons. He did not like his job. He liked simple, honest and friendly people. He got very happy when he was asked to go to New Mullion. He loved natural beauty. He liked New Mullion and its people very much. He considered starting his law practice at New Mullion. He was a simple-hearted man. He was easily taken for a ride by the hack driver. He could not see the trick of the hackman behind his friendly behaviour. But he was a man of self-respect. His feelings were hurt when Lutkins and his mother laughed at him as he was a bright boy of seven years.

EXTRA QUESTIONS-

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. Even he made some money in this process and made him wander here and there. He and his mother made a fool of the narrator and had great laughter.

2. The writer 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 writer 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 writer 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 expend 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 one and half 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 quite hurt. This was especially when Lutkins and his mother laughed at the lawyer as though the lawyer was a boy of eleven. 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 practice 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. 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.

11. How was the hack driver recognized?

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 Lutkin's mother in a friendly manner. He was surprised to know that Bill was no other but Lutkins himself.

12. 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.

13. Why could the lawyer not find Lutkins?

Ans. The lawyer could not find Lutkins because the hack driver, Bill himself was Lutkins. 'As the lawyer had not seen or met him before, he could not identify him and Lutkins took advantage of it playing a practical joke on him.

14. 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.

15. How did Lutkins' mother receive the narrator?

Or

How did Lutkins' mother treat the lawyer?

Ans. The hack driver took him to the farm of Lutkins's 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 rods. Both got scared and ran away.

16. 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.

17. 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 practice at New Mullion and leave his job.

18. What kind of a job was the narrator usually entrusted with? Why wasn't he satisfied with his job in the city?

Ans. The narrator was a junior assistant clerk in a magnificent law firm. He was sent, not to prepare legal briefs but to serve the summons. He had to act like a cheap private detective. It wasn't easy and safe to go to the 'dirty' and 'shadowy' corners of the city. Sometimes he was even beaten up by goons. He hated his job of working in such a hostile environment in the city.

19. Why was the narrator disappointed when he got to New Mullion? What was the only 'agreeable sight' about the place?

Ans. The narrator had formed quite a romantic and pleasant picture of this country town called New Mullion. When he reached there, his eager expectations were belied. He was very much disappointed. Its streets were narrow rivers of mud. Its shops were either badly painted or not painted at all. The only agreeable sight about the place was the delivery man at the station who called himself Bill.

20. What impression did the narrator (the lawyer) form of Bill when he met him for the first time?

Ans. The narrator found the delivery man at the station as the only 'agreeable sight' in New Mullion. The man called himself Bill and he was a hack driver. He was about forty. He looked red-faced and cheerful. He looked thick in the middle. His working clothes were dirty and worn out. His manners were pleasant and friendly. The narrator was happy to meet such a man.

21. Why did the narrator feel that Bill had already made it his own task to find Oliver Lutkins for him?

Ans. The narrator found Bill very open and friendly. He ‘glowed with warmth’ of his affection. Bill wanted the business but his kindness was real. He offered his carriage for two dollars an hour. The narrator was happy to pay to such a good fellow. Bill assured the narrator that he knew about all the places where Lutkins usually could be found out. The narrator began to feel that Bill had made it his own task to find Oliver Lutkins for him.

22. Why did the narrator feel that ‘Bill seemed to admire Lutkins for dishonesty? Why did he feel that if he had been a policeman, he would have regretted sending him to jail?’

Ans. Bill told the narrator that Oliver Lutkins was “not really bad”. He was a hard fellow to be caught. He was always up to something or the other. He played a lot of pokers. He was good at deceiving people. The narrator felt that Bill seemed to admire Lutkins’ talent for dishonesty. Had he been a policeman, he would have regretted sending Bill to jail.

23. Why did the narrator and Bill proceed to Fritz and why did Bill ask him to keep out of sight behind him?

Ans. Bill told the narrator that probably Oliver Lutkins was trying to start a poker game in the back of Fritz’s shop. Bill led him there and he asked the narrator to hide behind him. Fritz hesitated and then admitted that Lutkins was there a little while ago. Bill kept the narrator behind him because he didn’t want him to talk to any person directly. Had he done so, Bill would have been exposed at once that he was playing a double role. He was Lutkins himself.

24. Why did the narrator feel that Bill’s helpfulness for him was not entirely of brotherly love?

Ans. The narrator began to understand that Bill’s helpfulness for him was not completely of brotherly love. He was a perfect businessman. The narrator paid him for six hours, including the lunch hour. Bill was paid 2 dollars for an hour. But the narrator realised that Bill was not more dishonest than him. He charged the whole amount from the firm.

25. Describe the narrator’s encounter with Lutkins’ terrible mother. Why was he asked to move out immediately by Bill?

Ans. Bill drove the narrator into a poor farmyard. There they were faced by a huge and cheerful old woman. Bill bravely went up to her and asked about her son, Oliver Lutkins. She shouted that she didn’t know anything about him. Bill told her that they had a legal right to search the house. This made her famous. She went inside and came out with an iron rod from the hearth. She threatened to burn them alive if they dared to do such a thing. Bill asked the narrator to go out at once before she could murder them.

26. Why did the narrator worry very little about his failure and considered returning to New Mullion to practice law?

Ans. The narrator worried very little about his failure to trace Oliver Lutkins. He was busy thinking about Bill Magnuson. He considered returning to New Mullion to practise law. After all, he could find such honest and human people like Bill only in New Mullion. He would feel honoured to have soft-spoken and wise neighbours like Fritz and Gustaff and a hundred others. He pictured an honest, happy and a new way of life there.

27. How did the narrator's boss react to his failure in tracing Oliver Lutkins?

Ans. The narrator couldn't trace Oliver Lutkins in New Mullion. The people in the company were upset. The case was coming up in court. The narrator felt himself a 'shameful, useless fool.' He felt his promising legal career coming to an end before it had begun. The chief almost 'murdered' him. He hinted that he might do well at digging trenches. He was ordered back to New Mullion with a man who had worked with Oliver Lutkins.

28. What happened at the railway platform when the narrator saw Bill standing with Oliver's mother on his second visit to New Mullion?

Ans. The narrator was on his second visit to New Mullion. He was with a man who had worked with Lutkins. When the train arrived at the station, the narrator saw Bill standing at the platform with Oliver Lutkins' mother. They were talking and laughing freely. He introduced his companion to Bill and praised him for helping him in hunting Oliver Lutkins. The man recognised Lutkins. He declared that the hack driver was not Bill but Oliver Lutkins himself.

29. Why did Oliver Lutkins and his mother laugh at the lawyer (the narrator) when he served the summons? Why did Lutkins take him to his neighbour's house for a cup of coffee?

Ans. When the narrator served summons, Lutkins was not at all worried. On the other hand, the narrator was hurt that they laughed at him as if he were a seven-year-old boy. Then, Lutkins begged the narrator to accompany them to one of his neighbours for a cup of coffee. He said sarcastically that all the people of New Mullion had met such a (gullible and novice) person like the narrator. They were the only people in the town that missed seeing him.

30. How did the hack driver sketch the character of Lutkins?

Ans. The hack driver said that Lutkins was a very dishonest fellow. He was very good at deceiving people. It was hard to catch him. He loved playing poker. He owed money to many but did not pay anybody a cent because he did not like to part with money.

31. Who was the hack driver? What really hurt the feelings of the narrator?

Ans. In reality, the hack driver was Oliver Lutkins himself. He took the narrator the whole day in his carriage looking for Oliver Lutkins. The narrator's feelings were hurt because Lutkins and his mother laughed at him as though he was a bright boy of seven years.

32. How did the hack driver come to know why the lawyer was hunting for Lutkins?

Ans. The hack driver told the lawyer that if he tried to collect money from him in those fancy clothes, he would be suspicious and run away. The lawyer took him into his confidence and told him that he wanted to serve the summons on Lutkins.

33. How did the narrator learn the truth about the hack driver?

Ans. The owner of the law firm in the city sent the narrator to New Mullion immediately. A man who knew Lutkins was also sent with him. When they reached the station, the hack driver was standing there near his carriage. The man pointed out that the hack driver was Lutkins.