

The Elephant Man

Chapter 1 Synopsis – The Creature in The Shop

One day in 1884, a doctor, whose name is Dr Frederick Treves, saw a picture in the window of a shop near the hospital he works in, the London Hospital. The picture was ugly and did not look like a man but an elephant instead. “Come in and see the Elephant Man. Two pence,” it said below the picture. Dr Treves entered the shop to see the man in the picture. The store was filthy and rotten fruits were seen lying around. The shopkeeper, Mr Simon Silcock, first refused to let the doctor visit the ugly man because he was closing shop and asked the doctor to come back tomorrow. However, the doctor was entertained when he said that he will offer more than two pence to see the man in the picture.

Silcock brought the doctor into a little room at the back of the shop. It was cold and dark, and a horrible smell was present. In the room, a disfigured man with a cloth over its head, sat on a chair very quietly. The doctor described him as a creature because of his appearance, an elephant’s face because of his dead skin. The shopkeeper then orders the man to walk. The doctor observed him, his condition and he could not walk well due to his big legs and bad back. His left hand however attracted the doctor’s interest. The left arm and hand did not look like the rest of his body, it was beautiful, it looks like a young woman’s hand. Joseph Merrick was the man’s name.

The doctor and the shopkeeper then left the dark room. Silcock spoke about Merrick. He takes Merrick, the Elephant Man, because of his appearance, around the country and says that many hundred-people come to see him. He explained that the business is difficult and sometimes, he gets a lot of money. His business is difficult because of the police, he explained. So the shopkeeper and the Elephant Man move every week.

The doctor introduced himself to the shopkeeper and he wanted to bring Merrick to the hospital. Silcock was hesitant and said it was going to be difficult because people are afraid of him due to his appearance. Sometimes, little boys run after Merrick and hit him. The police sometimes put Silcock and Merrick in prison for scaring the public. The doctor offered the shopkeeper even more money, possibly hoping the shopkeeper to cooperate and to bring the man to the hospital. Silcock then suggested the doctor to bring him in a cab.