



Chapter 5 · The Disappearing Act

When Jazz and Mortimer finally meet Dr Salamander and discover his secret, they decide to try and help their neighbour. But with his great-grandfather's notes destroyed, it's not looking good...

THE CURIOUS CASE OF DR SALAMANDER

Damian Harvey

CONTENT



READ!

- **Reading comprehension questions:** 10 multiple choice questions to test text retrieval and reading comprehension. These questions may also be completed online at www.fictionexpress.co.uk
- **Guided reading:** teacher's notes and a written response worksheet comprising 6 questions which allow for deeper response to the story, looking at personal response, inference and prediction



WRITE!

- **"Inspire!" words** to encourage children to include them in their own writing
- **"Spotlight!" word list** of the words highlighted and defined online
- **Writing worksheet:** write a review of the book
- **Grammar worksheet:** improving your writing



TALK!

- **Drama activity:** act out an alternative ending



EXPLORE!

- **Art and design activity:** Create an advert for Dr Salamander's house



Name: _____

1 What is Dr Salamander wearing on his face when the children see him?

- ☐ A. A scarf
- ☐ B. A red nose
- ☐ C. Thick white powder

2 What can Jazz see under the table?

- ☐ A. Dr Salamander's strange webbed feet
- ☐ B. Her pet mouse, Twitch, hiding in a box
- ☐ C. Nothing – Dr Salamander's legs are invisible

3 Why is Dr Salamander invisible?

- ☐ A. Because of his father's experiments
- ☐ B. Because of the experiments he has done
- ☐ C. Because of his great-grandfather's experiments

4 When did Dr Salamander become invisible?

- ☐ A. During his tenth birthday party
- ☐ B. The first time he visited his grandfather
- ☐ C. One day when he was cleaning his teeth

5 How is Dr Salamander different from his great-aunts?

- ☐ A. They are magicians and he is a scientist
- ☐ B. He is invisible and they are not
- ☐ C. They like being invisible and he does not



Name: _____

6

How does Dr Salamander plan to make Mortimer invisible?

- ☐ A. Inject him with green glowing liquid
- ☐ B. Put the cage between two strange lights
- ☐ C. Make him swim in a bubbling, frothy drink

7

What happened to the invisible pets?

- ☐ A. They escaped but couldn't be found
- ☐ B. They stopped being invisible
- ☐ C. They seem to glow

8

Why were the twins particularly pleased to take Herbert back to Mrs Hall?

- ☐ A. They were given a reward
- ☐ B. Herbert bites and scratches
- ☐ C. They didn't trust Dr Salamander

9

What is the twins' mum doing when they get home?

- ☐ A. Putting on some special sun cream
- ☐ B. Phoning the police to report them missing
- ☐ C. Talking to Dr Salamander over the hedge

10

What do the children give Dr Salamander to help him be seen?

- ☐ A. A balaclava
- ☐ B. Face paints
- ☐ C. A silly mask



1

Ask: What is the big reveal in this chapter? (Dr Salamander is invisible.) Ask: Were you surprised? Discuss other ideas that the children had about Dr Salamander, for example, he doesn't exist, he is Mrs Heckle dressed up, he hates sunlight. Ask: Why does Jazz guess before Mortimer? (She sees his lack of legs.) Ask: Why is Dr Salamander invisible? (His great-grandfather made himself invisible in an experiment and passed the condition on.)

2

Ask: Do you feel sorry for Dr Salamander? Ask the children to explain their thoughts and discuss the sides of the argument, for example, it must be hard to be invisible versus his behaviour (stealing pets and threatening children). Ask: Does Dr Salamander have any excuse to experiment on Mortimer? Listen to each other's ideas and ask questions. Ask the children to vote for or against the statement 'I feel sorry for Dr Salamander'.

3

Ask: What clues have been answered in this chapter? List clues together: the footprints in the snow in the first chapter, the empty cages, the door opening on its own, the bouncing ball, the cage being pulled up the stairs by an unknown force. Agree that all these events were Dr Salamander. Ask: If you were writing a new chapter for this story, what would you have Dr Salamander do? Perhaps ride a bike through town or throw snowballs!

4

Challenge the children to find as many different words for 'said' and for how people talk in this chapter, for example: *deep, husky voice, startled gasps of amazement, hissed, whispered, replied, added, squeaked, explained, agreed, complained, asked, assured, told, admitted, suggested, sounding hurt, sniffed, sighed, laughed*. Ask volunteers to try to read the sentences in the style suggested by the text. Point out that many of these words are about explanations and understanding.

5

Ask: Do you like the ending of this story? Discuss the children's likes and dislikes. Ask: Are you happy that the mystery has been solved and the children have forgiven Dr Salamander and tried to help him? Or do you think he should have been punished in some way? Ask: Is it a happy ending (everyone is safe)? Or a sad ending (Dr Salamander is still invisible)? How is this chapter different from chapter 4? (It is happy not spooky.)

6

Ask: How have the children helped Dr Salamander? (They have bought him face paints.) Ask: What do you think could happen in a sequel? Encourage the children to be inventive with their ideas. For example, perhaps as Dr Salamander tries different cures, he might become huge or small, turn pink or change into a rabbit! Perhaps the children and Dr Salamander come up with some schemes where he can secretly and invisibly do good in the local area.

The Curious Case of Dr Salamander · Chapter 5 · The Disappearing Act
Guided Reading Response Questions



Name: _____

1

Why is Dr Salamander invisible?

2

Do you feel sorry for Dr Salamander? Explain why or why not.

3

Why was the cage moving upstairs on its own in the last chapter?



Name: _____

4

Find and copy four different words for 'said' used in this chapter.

5

What did you like about the ending?

6

How do the children help Dr Salamander at the end?



Here is some of the challenging or potentially unfamiliar vocabulary used in chapter 5 of *The Curious Case of Dr Salamander*.

You may wish to explore this vocabulary, to improve children's understanding of the chapter, and inspire and enhance the quality of their own writing. You might like to display the words in the classroom, and encourage children to use new vocabulary as part of the Write! worksheet tasks.

amazement

fade away

flop

puzzled

ridiculous

squeal

tugged

weird



Find these words in chapter 5. Use the definition to check that you understand the meaning of the sentences you find them in.

admitted – agreed that it was true

amazement – a feeling of great surprise or wonder

assured – said in a way to make someone less worried

astonishment – a feeling of surprise

barking – loud sounds made by some animals such as dogs

bellowing laugh – a loud, deep laugh

calm – not showing or feeling nervousness, anger, or other strong emotions

clutching – holding tight

complained – sounded annoyed or unhappy about something

crazy – another word for ‘mad’, ‘foolish’ or ‘wild’

create – another word for ‘make’ or ‘invent’

dentists – people who look after teeth

destroyed – damaged so badly that something is ruined

doomed – certain to have a bad fate, to suffer

exclaimed – cried out with excitement

face paints – special paint that can be used on your face or body to make patterns, characters or animal faces

fade away – get fainter and slowly disappear

float – move near to a surface, such as the ground, without touching it

flop – sit down heavily

formula – a list of ingredients with which something is made

gasp – a sharp intake of breath, often when someone is feeling surprised or shocked

ghost – the spirit of a dead person thought of as living in an unseen world or as appearing to living people

great-grandfather – the father of your grandfather or grandmother

guinea pig – a pet animal, plus the name given to something that is used for experiments



harmed – another word for ‘hurt’

husky (voice) – low-pitched and slightly croaky

impossible – not able to happen

ingredients – items in a recipe or medicine

invisible – cannot be seen

lab coat – a long white coat worn in a laboratory

listened – gave someone your attention

medicine – a treatment that makes someone feel better or cures them of something

multi-coloured – lots of different colours

peered – looked closely at something

reflected – when light or sound has hit a surface or body and bounces away without being absorbed

reverse – do the opposite to what has just been done

permanently – forever

puzzled – confused, not understanding

remained – was left behind

ridiculous – another word for ‘silly’

shrugged – raised shoulders to express uncertainty about something

solved – found the answer

squeal – a high-pitched noise, such as a squeak

startled – very surprised and slightly scared

success – accomplishment of an aim, did what was expected

sun cream – a lotion that is put on your skin to protect against the sun's rays

syringe – a tube with a nozzle for sucking in and pushing out liquid

terrible – horrible, awful

tugged – another word for ‘pulled’

vanished – another word for ‘disappeared’

visible – can be seen

weird – another word for ‘strange’ or ‘odd’

wig – a covering worn on the head, made of real or fake hair

yowling – a loud sound made by an animal



Name: _____

Now that you have read the final chapter of *The Curious Case of Dr Salamander*, write a review of the book.

Title: _____

Author: _____

Genre: _____

My rating (colour in how many stars you would give the story):



What happened in the story?

My favourite part:

Literary effects I liked (alliteration, similes etc.):

I would recommend this story to a friend because:



Name: _____

Try to improve these sentences or write new sentences that use some of the writing techniques you have learnt.

“His experiments were a success ” Dr Salamander told them “He made himself invisible but the trouble was he couldn’t make himself visible
(Add in punctuation, an adjective and an adverb.)



Write one sentence below that includes 3 adjectives to describe this house.

Write a sentence below that includes a simile, providing a description of the weather when the story happens.

These will provide a description of the setting.

Dr Salamander explained that the same thing had happened to him
“When I was looking in the bathroom mirror brushing my teeth
I realised I could see the wall behind me. I had vanished ”
(Add punctuation, a connective and an adverb.)

Now cut all these sentences out and arrange them in any order you like to write a paragraph.



Improvisation of a different ending

In pairs or a small group, look back at the voting options at the end of chapter 4. Use improvisation to act out a different ending for the story, using an option that was not chosen in the vote.

Remember to consider how this new ending affects the direction of the plot in chapter 5. Think about how you portray each character and their thoughts and feelings – think about their appearance, how they might speak and the body language they might use.



Name: _____

The mystery of Dr Salamander has been solved and he's ready to move on. Can you help him create an advert so he can sell the house? Draw the front of the house and the rooms, then write a description of the property. Look back through the chapters to help you.

PROPERTY FOR SALE

The front of the house

This property has come onto the market for the first time in 40 years...

The library

The attic

ANSWERS

READ! Comprehension

1. What is Dr Salamander wearing on his face when the children see him?
A. A scarf
2. What can Jazz see under the table?
C. Nothing – Dr Salamander’s legs are invisible
3. Why is Dr Salamander invisible?
C. Because of his great-grandfather’s experiments
4. When did Dr Salamander become invisible?
C. One day when he was cleaning his teeth
5. How is Dr Salamander different from his great-aunts?
B. He is invisible and they are not
6. How does Dr Salamander plan to make Mortimer invisible?
A. Inject him with green glowing liquid
7. What happened to the invisible pets?
B. They stopped being invisible
8. Why were the twins particularly pleased to take Herbert back to Mrs Hall?
A. They were given a reward
9. What is the twins’ mum doing when they get home?
A. Putting on some special sun cream
10. What do the children give Dr Salamander to help him be seen?
B. Face paints

WRITE! Improving your writing

Answer examples:

“His experiments were a huge success!” Dr Salamander told them glumly. “He made himself invisible but the trouble was he couldn’t make himself visible again.”

The large, creepy house was the talk of the neighbourhood, and thick black curtains covered the delicate windows on every side.

The snow fell thickly, covering the houses that lined the street like a soft blanket.

Dr Salamander explained that the same thing had happened to him “One day, when I was looking in the bathroom mirror and brushing my teeth gently, I realised I could see the wall behind me. I had completely vanished!”

Photo credits:

Snow-covered house: jshirl/Bigstockphoto