

Chapter 4: A Question of Trust

Read and Find Out

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Question: 1

What does Horace Danby like to collect?

Answer:

Horace Danby likes to collect rare and expensive books.

Question: 2

Why does he steal every year?

Answer:

He stole every year so that he could buy the rare and expensive books that he loved to collect. Each year he planned carefully so as to steal enough to last twelve months.

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Question: 3

Who is speaking to Horace Danby?

Answer:

A lady standing in the doorway is speaking to Horace Danby. She was young and pretty and was dressed in red. She said she had come just in time, or else her family would have been robbed by Horace. Thus she pretended to be one of the members of the family living at Shotover Grange.

Question: 4

Who is the real culprit in the story?

Answer:

The real culprit in the story is the woman who pretended to be a member of the family living at Shotover Grange. She tricked Horace Danby into believing her, and cleverly took away all the jewels that were kept in the safe.

Think About It

Question: 1

Did you begin to suspect, before the end of the story, that the lady was not the person Horace Danby took her to be? If so, at what point did you realise this, and how?

Answer:

Yes, we begin to suspect before the end of the story that the lady was not the person Horace Danby took her to be. She was unusually calm on seeing Horace. This seemed strange. When she did not call the police, and instead asked Horace to take out all the jewels from the safe, even if it meant breaking it open, it seems suspicious. Moreover, it seemed highly unlikely that she would forget the number combination to open the safe. Therefore it was evident, before the story ended, that the lady was not the person Horace had taken her to be.

Question: 2

What are the subtle ways in which the lady manages to deceive Horace Danby into thinking she is the lady of the house? Why doesn't Horace suspect that something is wrong?

Answer:

Her confident walk, her familiarity with the dog Sherry, her act of touching up her make-up and the ease with which she picks a cigarette from the right place are enough to deceive anybody. Horace was too frightened to think properly, so he didn't suspect anything.

Question: 3

"Horace Danby was good and respectable – but not completely honest". Why do you think this description is apt for Horace? Why can't he be categorised as a typical thief?

Answer:

Horace's habits were not typical of a thief. He was fond of books. He used to steal only once in a year so he was never stealing more than his needs. However, an act of theft is still a crime, no matter how well a thief behaves, so this description is apt for Horace. He can't be categorised as a typical thief because he is not a regular offender like other thieves.

Question: 4

Horace Danby was a meticulous planner but still he faltered. Where did he go wrong and why?

Answer:

Horace Danby failed to get enough information about the real occupants of the house. He seems to be too occupied with collecting information about the house map, wiring and location of valuable items. Although he was smart enough to know the dog's actual name, he overlooked getting information about the occupants of the house. When he landed in trouble with the appearance of the young lady, his clever mind gave way to carelessness, leading him to open the safe without wearing gloves.

Talk About It

Question: 1

Do you think Horace Danby was unfairly punished, or that he deserved what he got? (or)

Do you think Horace Danby was unfairly punished? (CBSE 2013)

Answer:

Horace Danby deserved what he got. A crime is a crime, no matter if it is committed for your own benefit or for somebody else's benefit.

Question: 2

Do intentions justify actions? Would you, like Horace Danby, do something wrong if you thought your ends justified the means? Do you think that there are situations in which it is excusable to act less than honestly?

Answer:

"Ends do not justify means", is a very old and time-tested saying. For their own benefit nobody should harm others. But this world doesn't function on idealism. There are many examples of people tricking people for quick gains. These acts should be deplored and dealt with severely.