

DAYAWATI MODI ACADEMY

MODIPURAM MEERUT

Class X

ASSIGNMENT AND NOTES – ENGLISH

TEACHER NAME – MS VINEETA

CHAPTER - 4 A QUESTION OF TRUST

INTRODUCTION

It is said that you must set a thief to catch a thief. But it is also said that there is honour among thieves. Which saying does this story illustrate?

The story is about a man named Horace Danby who is 50 years old and everyone around him thinks he is a good and an honest man. He used to build locks and used to earn enough profit so that he could hire two servants to help him. He was sent to jail once about 15 years ago because he used to commit robberies every year. This year, when he goes to a house for robbery, he meets a woman who pretends to be the owner of the house. Later when he leaves from there and is arrested after 2-3 days, he comes to know the truth of that lady.

About the Author

Victor Canning (16 June 1911- 21 February 1986) was a prolific British writer of novels and thrillers who flourished in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. He was personally reticent, writing no memoirs and giving relatively few newspaper interviews.

SUMMARY

A Question of Trust Summary

The story is about a 50 year old man who makes locks and lives with his housekeeper. He is a good citizen but not an honest one as he commits a robbery every year. He plans his robberies in such a way that the money he gets from there lasts him for at least an year and he is able to buy rare and expensive books with it. He buys these books because he is really fond of collecting rare and expensive books. He plans to commit a robbery at a grange named Shotover Grange. He takes all the information about the house like where the family had gone, how many servants were there in the house, what was the name of the dog, the wiring in the house, the safe in the house and even information like how much worth of jewels were there in the safe. The real twist in the story comes when he reaches the grange to commit a robbery and a woman claiming to be the owner's wife enters. She gives him an option that she will forget that she had seen him if he opens the safe for her as she has forgotten the code of the safe and has to go to a party. He does not realize that he is opening the safe for another thief and that she is not the actual owner of the house. He leaves happily thinking that he is safe but doesn't realize the fact that he had opened the safe for someone else that too without wearing his gloves. 3 days later a police officer comes and arrests him saying that his fingerprints had been found at the shotover grange. He then realizes that he had been fooled by a lady who was herself a thief and from the same background as his. He is sent to the jail and becomes an assistant librarian. He feels angry whenever someone talks about honour among thieves as he had been cheated by one from his own community.

ASSIGNMENT

EXTRACTS

1. "Then he heard a voice say from the doorway, what is it? A cold or hay fever?"

(a) Who heard whose voice and where?

(b) What is the significance of this question asked by somebody?

c. What did Horace suffer from?

(d) How did it result in his failure in his robbery attempt at the house at Shot over Grange?

Ans. (a) Horace Danby heard a lady's voice in the house at Shot over Grange.

(b) She appeared to be concerned about the problem. She wanted to prove that she was the; owner of the house.

(c) Horace Danby suffered from hay fever.

(d) The smell of flowers made him sneeze. At Shot, over Grange, the flowers betrayed him, presence to the lady in red who posed to be the mistress of the house.

2. "Horace saw them go, and he felt happy in spite of a little tickle of hay fever in his nose.

(a) Who did Horace see 'go' that made him happy? How many were there?

(b) Why did Horace forget his discomfort and was pleased?

(c) Why was Horace in discomfort?

(d) How did it herald his presence in the house at Shotover Grange?

Ans. (a) Horace saw the two servants of Shotover Grange go for a movie, leaving the place empty

(b) Horace was pleased because Shotover Grange was empty and he could rob it.

(c) He was suffering from hay fever.

(d) The pollen made him sneeze. At Shotover Grange, the flowers betrayed his presence to the young lady who posed to be the mistress of the house.

3. She nodded. "I see what an inconvenience it is for you to meet me."

- (a) What was he planning to do?
- (b) Is there any truth in what the lady said?
- (c) Who is speaking to Horace Danby?
- (d) What made 'the lady in red' look the real mistress of the house?

Ans. (a) He was planning to break the safe.

(b) Yes, because she interrupted Horace's robbery attempt and startled him.

(c) Another lady-thief is speaking to him. She has posed herself as the mistress of the ho

(d) The familiar way Sherry, the dog of the house followed her, the confidence and the authoritative voice and the reason for opening the safe — all made her look the real mistress of the house.

4. How foolish people are when they own valuable things, Horace thought. A magazine article had described this house, giving a plan of all the rooms and a picture of this The writer had even mentioned that the painting hid a safe!

- (a) What was foolish about people?
- (b) How did Horace know about the details of the house?
- (c) Where was safe?
- (d) Why do you think 'Horace Danby' was good and respectable but not completely hon?

Ans. (a) It was foolish of rich people to give all the details of their house and sea/ every

(b) It was given in a magazine article.

(c) The writer of a magazine article had mentioned that the painting hid a safe.

(d) Horace was a good, respectable and successful locksmith. But he used to rob 8 years to get money to buy rare and expensive books.

5. The voice was suddenly sharp. "Why should I? You were going to rob me. If I let you go, you'll only rob someone else. Society must be protected from men like you."

(a) Identify 'I' in the above lines.

(b) Why was her voice sharp?

(c) What was her opinion about the robber?

(d) Why do you think the lady did not call the police immediately?

Ans. (a) 'I' is the young lady.

(b) She posed to be the lady of the house.

(c) She felt that society must protect from men like Horace.

(d) In fact, she herself was a thief and wanted to rob the safe. She only wanted to threaten Horace and use him for her purpose.

6. It was a quiet, kindly voice, but one with firmness in it. A woman was standing in the doorway, and Sherry was rubbing against her. She was young, quite pretty, and was dressed in red. She walked to the fireplace and straightened the ornaments there.

(a) What does the first line reflect on the woman?

(b) What was her approach to the present situation?

(c) When was Horace confronted with the lady in red?

(d) What did she do at the fireplace?

Ans. (a) She was confident and firm.

(b) She tried to manipulate the situation according to her needs. She posed as the owner of the house.

(c) As Horace was about to open the safe, he heard a voice from the doorway. The voice was of the lady in red.

(d) She straightened the ornaments there.

7. The safe was in the drawing room, behind a rather poor painting. Horace wondered for a moment whether he should collect pictures instead of books. But they took up too much room. In a small house, books were better.

- (a) Where was the safe placed?
- (b) Why was he in a dilemma?
- (c) Why did Horace prefer to collect books?
- (d) Do you think intentions justify actions?

Ans. (a) It was behind a painting.

(b) He thought if he should collect paintings rather than books.

(c) Since pictures might take up too much room, he preferred to collect books in his small house.

(d) I do not approve this view. Means and ends both should be good, fair and just.

QUESTION ANSWERS

1. How did Horace know all the details of the house?

Ans. Horace had been studying the house for the past two weeks. Moreover, a magazine article had described this house, giving a plan of all the rooms and a picture of the room. There were also the details of the safe hidden behind the safe.

2. How did Horace fulfil his desire of reading books after he was arrested?

Ans. After Horace was arrested, he became the assistant librarian in the prison and fulfilled his desire of reading books.

3. Though Horace planned everything meticulously, why did he fail?

Ans. Though Horace planned everything meticulously; he failed because of the smart lady. She posed herself to be the owner of the house and convinced him to open the shelf as she had "not the password of the shelf. Horace got trapped in her plot.

4. How did the flowers cause him trouble?

Ans. Horace Danby had an allergy for flowers, especially during pollen season. When flowers are nearby, he got sneezing. The only cure for it was to stay away from those path flowers.

5. What was Horace Danby's hobby? How did he manage to fulfil his hobby?

Ans. Horace's only hobby was to read expensive and rare books. He used to rob a safe every year in order to arrange money for his hobby. He used to get those books from an agent.

6. How did the lady spoil his plan?

Ans. The lady posed as the owner of the house in front of Horace. Horace got scared and believed her. She asked him to open the safe as she had forgotten the password. Horace opened the safe and handed over the jewels to her. Hence, Horace's plan of robbing the safe was spoiled.

7. Why did the lady report to the police though she promised that she would not report to the police?

Or

How did the lady deceive Horace?

Ans. The lady was very clever and shrewd. She promised Horace that she would not report to the police if he would help her in getting the jewels from the safe. Horace broke the safe and helped her. But she didn't keep her promise as she was also a thief and did not want to get into trouble.

8. How did Horace enter Shot over Grange?

Ans. Horace had seen the housekeeper hang the key in the hook outside the kitchen door. He came out from behind the garden wall. He put on his gloves, took the key and opened the door of the kitchen and entered Shot over Grange.

9. Who is the real culprit in this story, the lady or Horace? How did he/she manage to rob the safe without leaving a single fingerprint?

Ans. In this story, the real culprit is the young lady. She managed to trick Horace for breaking the safe for her. She did not even touch the safe herself. She managed to get all the jewels. She had to do no physical exercise for this. In this way, she managed to rob the safe without leaving a single fingerprint.

10. What do you think is the meaning of the phrase 'honour among thieves'?

Ans. The phrase 'honour among thieves' means that thieves have their code of conduct. One thief is honest to the other thief. They never betray one another.

11. Which of the two lacked honour?

Ans. Among the two the young lady lacked honour. She came face to face with a thief, still, she tricked 'him. But Horace did not know that she was a thief. She got all the jewels. She went free but poor Horace was arrested. It was against the profession of thieves.

12. Describe Horace Danby.

Ans. Horace Danby was a good and respectable citizen. He was about fifty years old, but he was unmarried. He was a locksmith. He was very successful in his business. He was usually very well and healthy except for attacks of hay fever. But he was not completely honest.

13. How did Horace Danby manage to get rare and expensive books?

Ans. Horace Danby loved rare and expensive books. He bought them secretly through an agent. But for this, he had to rob a safe every year because he had not enough money to buy these books. In this way, he managed to get these rare and expensive books.

14. What did the young lady ask Horace to do for her?

Ans. The young lady told Horace that she had come there to take the jewels from the safe. She said that she had to wear them that night at a party. She made an excuse of forgetting the number to open the safe. So she compelled Horace to break open the safe for her if not she would tell the police everything about him.

15. What story did Horace tell the police when he was arrested?

Ans. He told the police that he had not stolen any jewels. He said that he broke open the safe for the young wife of the owner of the house. But the wife was herself an old lady of about sixty with grey-hair. So, none believed his story.

LONG QUESTION ANSWERS

1. Horace Danby represents such people who adopt the wrong ways to fulfil their wishes. What values would you like such people to imbibe to reform themselves? Write in about 100-120 words.

Ans. Horace Danby was a successful businessman. He was about fifty years respectable citizen but had a habit that led him to do robberies. Danby loved rare, expensive books and to get them he used to rob a safe every year. Every year he planned carefully just to get what he wanted. Danby adopted wrong ways to fulfil his wishes and hence, later got trapped in a plot by a thief like him. People should imbibe good values. They should learn that hard work is the only key to success. One should work hard to fulfil his desires. I think such people should imbibe the values of honesty, responsibility, hard work, dedication, self-confidence in order to reform themselves.

2. Horace Danby was a respectable man but he could not be called loyal. What do you think could be the reasons for leading a respectable man like him on the path of thievery? Did he feel lack of sense of freedom? Was it not in his nature to accept the differences among people regarding their social status? Discuss the values he should have possessed in 100-120 words.

Ans. Horace Danby's habits were not typical of a thief. He was fond of books was a respectable man but his passion for books led him to thievery. He used to steal only once. In a year so, he was never stealing more than his needs. He stole only to buy rare books; he loved rare and expensive books. Moreover, Danby used to rob only rich people. It was his nature. To accept the differences among people regarding their social status. He was aware that people with high socio-background can help him to fulfil his desire. He found such people easy to rob.

3. Horace promised the young lady that he would follow the path of honesty if she would not hand him over to the police but he could not keep his promise for more than days. Did he lack reconciliation? Was it not in his nature to keep his promise? Did he lack the courage to fulfil his needs through an honest living? Discuss the values he needed to imbibe in 100-120 words.

Ans. The lady manipulated the whole situation as well as Horace and very skillfully got the jewels without even touching anything. She talked high things like protecting the society from culprits like Horace.

Horace promised her that he would follow the path of honesty. He helped her in getting the jewels by breaking the safe without wearing gloves. But after two days, police caught him for stealing the jewels. He could not convince them that he had not taken the jewels and had helped the owner's wife. The condition provoked him to break his promise. Although he honestly felt that he would not rob any more he could not do so as he had no other choice left.

4. Horace stated that he robbed only those who had a lot of money. Was he really a threat to the society? Did he lack the qualities of a good citizen? Discuss the values he needs to imbibe to lead a path of righteousness in 100-120 words.

Ans. I don't think Horace was a threat to the society. He never threatened anyone and rather stole for a very good reason. He used to rob a safe every year to pursue his hobby of getting rare and expensive books to read. He was not a professional thief. Moreover, he never harmed anyone. He was considered a good and honest citizen by everyone. He was about fifty years old and unmarried. He had all the qualities of a good citizen. He was not a criminal or a typical thief. He did so only to fulfil his need. He was an honest and good man. He believed in the lady's story and gave away all the jewels to her. If he had been a criminal, he would have killed the lady or would have never handed the jewels to her.

5. Horace Danby requested the lady to forget what she saw. Was Horace afraid of being caught? Did he lack the courage to accept his crime publicly? Explain the values one must imbibe to accept one's mistake in 100-120 words.

Ans. Yes, Horace Danby was afraid of being caught. He lacked the courage to accept his crime publicly. He was not a professional criminal or thief. He was considered a good and honest man by everyone. He was about fifty years old and unmarried. His house was looked after by a housekeeper. He used to rob only one safe every year to pursue his habit of getting rare and expensive books to read. He used to rob only those who were rich. He had a good reputation in the society and hence did not want anyone to know about his crimes. Although he helped the lady but was caught by the police for the crime he did not commit. He learnt from his mistake.

6." Horace had some hope because she seemed to be amused at meeting him." Why did Horace feel so? Did he consider the young lady compassionate towards him? Did he find her free from biases? Discuss the values Horace should have imbibe understanding of the person in 100-120 words.

Ans. Horace was a fifty-year-old man who used to rob only to buy rare and expensive This time he decided to rob Shot over Grange. But as soon as e entered the room, a Young lady appeared. She posed to be the lady of the ruse. She was very confident in her Mat, inner of talking. She talked about high ideals like pro-acting. The society from robbers like conium racked. Then she tried to be polite and nice to him. On hearing her, Horace felt that he had a hope of escaping. He found her a bit compassionate towards him. He was amused at Horace. She acted in quite a subtle manner and showed her sympathy and admiration towards a simple and honest man. He could not judge her ace. She made Horace promise that he would never commit the crime again. Horace was cleverness and shrewdness and hence later got arrested for stealing the jewels which he did not steal.

7. Write a character-sketch of Horace Danby.

Ans. Horace Danby was a good and respectable citizen. He was about fifty years old but he was unmarried. He was a locksmith. He was very successful in his business. Despite all these qualities, he was not completely honest. He had been to jail once. So he hated the thought of jail.

He loved rare and expensive books. He broke a safe every year to have enough money to buy books. He was a careful burglar. He planned his work well. He was very careful while robbing a safe. He wore gloves and never left fingerprints on the scene of the crime. Since he was a locksmith so it was very easy for him to break any safe.

Once he was duped by a young lady. That young lady, who pretended to be the owner's wife, was also a thief. He gave all the jewels to the young lady and left his fingerprints all over the room. Thus, he was arrested and sent to prison. Now he did not like the thought of 'honour among thieves' any more. '

8. Describe Horace Danby's encounter with the young lady.

Or

'The lady in the red was a more professional thief than Horace Danby'. Give a reasoned answer.

Ans. Horace Danby was going to rob the safe at Shotover Grange. He had cut the wires of the burglar alarm. But the flowers on the table made a tickle in his nose and he was sneezing repeatedly. Just then a young lady dressed in red came in. She spoke friendly to Danby but her sound was firm.

She said that she was the owner's wife. She told him that she had come there to take the jewels from the safe. She had to wear them that night at a party. She made an excuse that she had forgotten the number to open the safe. She told the thief that she would let him go if he opened the safe for her. Danby was taken in. He opened the safe without gloves. He gave all the jewels to the young lady. She went away safely with the jewels but Danby was arrested for the jewels robbery and sent to prison.

9. What were Horace Danby's plans for his latest robbery? [H.B.S.E. March 2017 (Set-B)]

Ans. Horace was sure that the robbery he was planning for that year was going to be as successful as all the others so far. He had been observing and studying the house at Shotover Grange for two weeks. He had observed everything minutely. That afternoon, when he planned to rob the house, he had seen the two servants, who remained in the Grange, going to the movies. He came out from behind the garden wall. He had packed his tools carefully in a bag on his back. Horace knew that there were about fifteen thousand pounds worth of jewels in the Grange safe and if he sold them one by one, he was sure to get enough money to last him for another year.

Q10. How did the lady in red turn out to be much smarter and cleverer than Horace Danby? How did one thief outwit and outmanoeuvre the other?

Or

How did the lady in red manage to outsmart and outmanoeuvre the other thief, Horace Danby, by robbing the safe without leaving a single fingerprint?

Ans. The lady in red was also a thief. So was Horace Danby. But it was the lady in the red who outmanoeuvred and outwitted Horace. No doubt, Horace did his job quite professionally. He worked hard to find out the necessary details about the location of the house and the position of the key and the safe. But, Horace proved to be a novice in judging the young lady in red. The young lady acted with so much confidence and in such a convincing manner that she could easily pass off as the lady of the house. Horace Danby became a mere puppet who danced to the tune of the lady. When caught red-handed, he pleaded her to let him go. The young lady exploited his confusion and fear of going to prison fully. She made Horace open the safe. The unsuspecting Horace was made to believe that he was working for the lady of the house. So he opened the safe without putting on his gloves. He gave the jewels to the lady leaving his fingerprints on the safe. So he was found out and arrested. Naturally, the young lady in red proved far smarter and outmanoeuvred Horace Danby.

Q11. Give a character-sketch of Horace Danby in your own words. How was he outmanoeuvred by the lady in red?

Ans. Horace Danby was about fifty years old and unmarried. Everyone thought him a good and honest citizen. He was otherwise very well and happy except for attacks of hay fever in summer. He made locks and was fairly successful at his business. Horace Danby was good and respectable — but not completely honest. He used to rob a safe every year. He did so because he needed money to buy books. Horace had a passion for buying rare and costly books. With that money, he secretly bought the books he loved through an agent.

Like a professional thief, he made a lot of preparations. He made it sure that every year's robbery was going to be as successful as all the others. He studied the location of the house at Shotover Grange—its rooms, its electric wiring, its paths and its gardens in details. He also came to know that the two servants of the house were out to the movies. He also knew where was safe and its key. He befriended the little dog by calling his right name.

In spite of all his professionalism, Horace Danby proved a novice in judging the lady in red. The lady in red behaved with so much confidence and authority that Horace became totally a puppet in her hands. Easily passing off as the lady of the house, she made Horace open the safe without wearing his gloves. While the lady in red decamped with the jewels, Horace was sent to prison.

Q12. Give a character-sketch of the lady in red highlighting how she outwitted Horace Danby.

Ans. We don't get any information regarding the past history of the lady in red as we know about Horace's past. Her whole personality remains wrapped in mystery until the end. Only when the identity of the real lady of the house is unfolded, we come to know that she is a thief. She is the real culprit. The lady in red comes there with the only purpose of committing a theft in the house like Horace. She cleverly decamps with the jewels while Horace is sent to prison.

The lady in red is gifted with a rare personality. She is full of confidence. She acts like a perfect actress presenting herself as the lady of the house. Her gestures, confidence and convincing power are enough to convince Horace. He turns out quite a novice in understanding and judging the lady in red and her

motive. She dominates the proceeding. Horace only proves a puppet in her hands. She exploits his fear of going to prison. She makes him open the safe without his gloves. She convinced him that she needed those jewels to wear them to a party that night. Horace willingly hands over the jewels and she decamps with them. Only when the grey-haired, sharp-tongued woman appears as the real lady of the house, we come to know that the lady in red was a professional and crafty thief much smarter than Horace.

Q13. How had Horace planned to loot the house at Shotover Grange?

Ans. Horace Danby never committed theft in a hurry. All his previous operations were completely successful. He robbed a safe every year. This money was enough to last for a year. Like all his previous robberies, he also planned his latest robbery in a house at Shotover Grange in all details. For two weeks, he had been studying the house, its rooms, electric wiring, paths and its garden. He also had definite information that two servants working there had gone to movies. He saw them go. He came out from behind the garden wall. He had packed his tools carefully in a bag on his back. He had seen the housekeeper hang the key to the kitchen door on a hook outside. He put on a pair of gloves, took the key and opened the house. He always put on a pair of gloves before committing a theft. A magazine article had described the house with all the rooms. It also mentioned that a painting hid a safe. He collected all these details and made all preparations to make his latest theft a complete success like the others.

Q14. How was Horace Danby arrested for the robbery of the jewels in a house at Shotover Grange? Do you think his own foolishness was responsible for his arrest? Give a reasoned answer.

Ans. Horace Danby never acted recklessly in a hurry while committing a theft. He robbed a safe every year. All his previous thefts had been completely successful. Even to commit a theft in a house at Shotover Grange, he made detailed and fool-proof preparations. However, he proved a novice in comparison to the young lady in red. She, in a very confident and convincing way, made him believe that she was the lady of the house. She made him open the safe without the gloves and handover all the jewels to her. She decamped with the jewels and Horace was arrested.

By noon, a policeman arrested Horace for the jewel robbery at Shotover Grange. He had opened the safe without wearing his gloves. He did so believe that he was opening the safe for the lady of the house. He pleaded that the wife of the owner of the house had asked him to open the safe for her. The real lady of the house appeared on the scene. She was not the young lady in red but a grey-haired woman of sixty. She said that Horace's story was nonsense. Only then, Horace came to know that he was outwitted by the lady in red who was also a thief like him.