

GRADE: 10

COURSE : CBSE A

SUBJECT: ENGLISH

SUBMITTED BY: RUCHI JAIN

TITLE: A QUESTION OF TRUST

About the writer: VICTOR CANNING

Victor Canning was a British author known for his prolific writing career in the mid-20th century. He penned a wide range of novels, encompassing genres such as crime fiction, adventure, and suspense. Canning's works often featured intricate plots, memorable characters, and a knack for blending mystery with intricate storytelling. His contributions to the literary world have left a lasting legacy.

About the characters:

1. Horace: A respectable 50 years old man, who is unmarried, doing fine financially. He is fond of collecting rare and expensive books. To afford to buy them he commits robbery once a year. In the given story he plans to break and rob a safe, but gets outwitted by another thief, whom he thought of the wife of the owner.
2. The lady in the red dress: She is cunning and a clever lady. She is a thief too but outwits Horace easily. She is quiet confident that she manages to easily fool Horace.

Overview:

In the chapter "A Question of Trust" by Victor Canning, trust becomes the central theme. Set in a small village, the story revolves around the protagonist's struggle to determine who to trust amidst a web of deception. As secrets unravel and alliances shift, the chapter explores the fragile nature of trust and its profound impact on relationships. Will the protagonist uncover the truth and restore trust?

Flow of the Story:

1. The story begins by introducing Horace Danby, who is perceived by everyone as a good and honest citizen. However, beneath his respectable facade, Horace secretly robs a safe every year to support his love for rare books. He meticulously plans each robbery and uses an agent to acquire the books he desires.

2. In the present year, Horace sets his sights on Shotover Grange, a house containing valuable jewels worth around fifteen thousand pounds. He spends two weeks observing the house and its routines. One afternoon, when the servants are away, he enters the house with his tools and begins his carefully planned robbery.
3. As Horace makes his way through the house, he encounters a small dog named Sherry, whom he calms by using its correct name. He reaches the drawing room where the safe is hidden behind a painting. Horace contemplates collecting paintings instead of books, but decides books are more practical due to their space-saving nature.
4. However, the strong scent of flowers in the room triggers Horace's hay fever, causing him to sneeze. Just then, a young woman dressed in red enters the room and strikes up a conversation with him. She seems amused by their unexpected encounter but quickly reveals that she is aware of his intentions.
5. The woman warns Horace that if he attempts to flee, she will call the police and report him. Horace considers incapacitating her but ultimately decides against it. He tries to convince her to let him go, promising never to commit such crimes again. However, she remains firm and believes that society must be protected from people like him.
6. In a surprising turn of events, the woman proposes a deal. She explains that she forgot the combination to the safe and needs her jewels for a party that night. She offers to let Horace go if he helps her retrieve the jewels by breaking into the safe. Seeing this as an opportunity, Horace agrees.
7. True to his word, Horace successfully opens the safe and returns the jewels to the woman. He is filled with satisfaction, thinking that he has pulled off another successful heist. However, his joy is short-lived.
8. Two days later, Horace is arrested by the police for the jewel robbery at Shotover Grange. His fingerprints are found all over the crime scene, as he had opened the safe without wearing gloves. Despite his claims that he was acting under the request of the owner's wife, nobody believes him, including the wife herself.

9. In the end, Horace is imprisoned and becomes an assistant librarian. He bitterly reflects on his encounter with the cunning woman who tricked him. The story concludes with Horace's disdain for the notion of "honor among thieves."

Conclusion:

"A Question of Trust" by Victor Canning tells the story of Horace Danby, a seemingly respectable citizen with a secret life as a periodic safecracker. The tale explores themes of deception, trust, and the consequences of one's actions. Horace's carefully laid plans are unexpectedly disrupted when he encounters a clever woman who turns the tables on him.

The story serves as a reminder that appearances can be deceiving, and trust should not be easily granted. Horace's downfall highlights the risks involved in criminal activities and the importance of personal integrity. Ultimately, the narrative leaves readers with a sense of the unpredictability of human interactions and the consequences of our choices.