

Lesson 4

A Question of Trust

Read and Find Out Pg-20

Q.1 What does Horace Danby like to collect?

Ans.: Horace Danby, a not so rich man, likes to collect rare and expensive books.

Q.2 Why does he steal every year?

Ans.: Horace Danby was fond of rare and expensive books. However, he was not as rich to afford them. He stole every year to purchase the books and cherish them.

Read and Find Out Pg-22

Q.1 Who is speaking to Horace Danby?

Ans.: A woman, young, pretty and dressed in red, is speaking to Horace Danby. It is not very clear who she is. She introduces herself as the lady of the house.

Q.2 Who is the real culprit in the story?

Ans.: The real culprit in the story is a young, pretty lady who introduced herself as the lady of the house to Horace Danby when she caught him stealing from the locker.

Think About it

Q.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?

Ans.: It appeared that the lady talked to Horace Danby in a firm and confident manner. However, when the lady started talking about Horace's sneezes and offered not to tell the police if he helped her in getting her jewels, the situation turned fishy. However, it was only when Horace got arrested for the jewel robbery, the truth unfolded.

Q.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?

Ans.: The description of the lady makes her seem fit as the lady of the house. She was nowhere to be seen unless Horace sneezed which must have caused noise in the silent house. She cleverly manipulated Horace by saying that she had just arrived and wasn't expecting a thief. She threatened him that she would call the police if he tried to escape. Such a call, made Horace nervous and his fear of going to the prison didn't allow him to suspect her in any case.

Q.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?

Ans.: The author describes Horace Danby, a fifty year old man, as a good and respectable man in the society who earned well by making locks. He was successful enough to afford two helpers. However, his riches were

not sufficient to fulfill his desire of having rare and expensive books, which was why he stole once a year.

He can't be categorized as a typical thief because he was not a professional who earned his bread by robbing people. He did not harm anyone and neither took any weapon ever. He used to steal some money once a year and purchase rare and expensive books with the stolen money.

Q.4 Horace Danby as a meticulous planner but still he faltered. Where did he go wrong and why?

Ans.: Undoubtedly, Horace Danby was a meticulous planner. For two weeks, he had been studying the house deeply. He read a magazine article that described the house, giving a plan of all the rooms and a picture of the room. He had seen the place of the key. He had even learnt the name of the dog. He cut the wires of the alarm as precautions. However, his only mistake was that he did not try to know about the owner. Had he known about the owner's personal life, he would not have been tricked by the young lady into believing that she was his wife. He believed her very quickly and did as she said, making a mistake of leaving his fingerprints everywhere.

Talk about it

Q.1 Do you think Horace Danby was unfairly punished, or that he deserved what he got?

Ans.: According to me, Horace Danby got what he deserved. Though, he was not a professional thief and the robbery did not benefit him in any way, he had robbed people before as well for the mere sake of purchasing rare and expensive books. A thief is a thief: no matter what the purpose is, how much the amount is and who the person being robbed is.

Q.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?

Ans.: It is indeed true that intentions justify actions but we should not always fall a prey to them. It is equally important to judge the action before performing it. We must ponder upon the consequences. In the case of Horace Danby, his intentions of robbery were not bad but a robbery is a robbery. His justification of doing so for purchasing books doesn't make him less of a criminal and neither does it heal the harm caused to the person robbed.

I would not like to do any wrong thing in any situation. However, it is also true that there are many situations in life in which it is excusable to act less than honestly. For example, it is fine if I eat a chocolate from the refrigerator in the night when everyone's sleeping but we need to keep ourselves away from these petty things as well. We never know when these trivial things turn into a habit and we are possessed by the art of acting in dishonest ways.