

A Question of Trust

Character & Motivation

1. **Analyze** the complex character of Horace Danby. In what ways does he embody the contradiction of being a "good and honest citizen" while also being a methodical thief?
 2. "Horace Danby was a meticulous planner, but his planning had a fatal flaw." **Identify and explain** this flaw, focusing on his psychological profile rather than his technical skills.
 3. **Dissect** the methods of manipulation used by the young lady in red. How does she expertly use her appearance, voice, and understanding of human nature to control the situation?
 4. **Contrast** the criminal philosophies of Horace Danby and the young lady. What does their interaction reveal about the idea of "honor among thieves"?
 5. Is Horace Danby a victim or simply a less successful criminal than the lady in red? **Justify your stance** with strong evidence from the text.
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Plot, Irony & Literary Devices

6. **Explain** the central irony of the story. How do the very things Horace prides himself on—his careful planning and his "honorable" nature—directly contribute to his capture?
 7. **Trace** the role of Horace's hay fever throughout the plot. How does this seemingly minor detail act as a crucial catalyst for the story's main conflict?
 8. **Analyze** the dialogue between Horace and the lady. Pinpoint the exact moments where she seizes psychological control of the conversation and how she maintains it.
 9. The story's climax hinges on an act of trust. **Discuss** how the title "A Question of Trust" applies not only to Horace's decision to trust the lady but also to the police's trust in fingerprint evidence.
 10. **Imagine** the story was told from the perspective of the lady in red. How would the tone, suspense, and the reader's perception of Horace change?
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Themes & Critical Analysis

11. **Elaborate** on the theme of **appearance versus reality**. Use both Horace and the young lady as primary examples to show how nothing in the story is quite what it seems.
 12. **Critically evaluate** the social class dynamics at play. How do both characters use assumptions about class and respectability to their advantage?
 13. What commentary is Victor Canning making about the nature of crime? Does the story suggest that the most successful criminals are not those with technical skill, but those with psychological insight?
 14. The rare books that Horace desires are his motivation for stealing. What do these books **symbolize** about his character and his aspirations?
 15. Does the story encourage the reader to feel sympathy for Horace Danby upon his arrest? **Discuss** the moral ambiguity presented and whether Horace deserves his fate.
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Hypothetical & Inferential Questions

16. What if Horace had not been afflicted by hay fever at that moment? **Construct a plausible alternative outcome** for his attempt to rob Shotover Grange.
17. The story ends with Horace in prison, angry when anyone talks about "honor among thieves." What does this ending reveal about his **character development** or lack thereof?
18. **Infer** the possible background of the lady in red. What skills and experiences must she have possessed to pull off such a convincing and audacious deception?
19. How does Horace's job as a locksmith ironically **mirror** his life as a thief? Discuss the dualities of creating and breaking security.
20. The story is a perfect crime, but not for the protagonist. If you were to write a sequel, what would be the next "perfect crime" for the lady in red, based on her established character?