

NCERT QUESTIONS WITH SOLUTIONS

Read and Find out

1. What does Horace Danby like to collect?

Ans. Horace Danby likes to collect rare and expensive books.

2. Why does he steal every year?

Ans. He stole every year so that he could buy the rare and expensive books that he loved to collect. Each year, he planned carefully, stole enough to last twelve months, and secretly bought the books, through an agent.

3. Who is speaking to Horace Danby?

Ans. 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.

4. Who is the real culprit in the story?

Ans. 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

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. 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.

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 lady managed to deceive Horace Danby into thinking that she was the lady of the house with her subtle ways. She was dressed up pretty well, just like the lady of the house would be dressed. Also, her manner of talking calmly, the way in which she petted the dog Sherry, and her going to the fireplace to straighten the ornaments there showed her familiarity with the place. She regulated her tone and voice according to the situation. Sometimes, she talked in a kind voice. At other times, she spoke in a serious manner. She would laugh occasionally, and then, suddenly, her voice would become sharp. She spoke about how society should be protected from men like Horace. Because of all these things, Horace could not suspect that she was not the lady of the house. He was nervous himself, and was scared of getting caught. The moment he saw that she would let him go, he quickly broke open the safe for her, and promised not to rob again. According to the narrator, he was a 'good, honest citizen'. This was why Horace could not suspect anything.

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. "Horace Danby was good and respectable but not completely honest". This description is apt for Horace. He was about fifty years old. He robbed only from rich people, and his purpose was to buy rare and expensive books with the money. He stole only once a year. The intention of buying books was good. However, the fact that he stole to achieve this end showed that he was not completely honest. He cannot be categorized as a typical thief because he did not steal to eat or drink or squander money. He had a house. He made locks, had two people to help him, and was successful in his business. He only stole enough money to buy the books.

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

Ans. Horace Danby was a meticulous planner, but still he faltered. He used to plan his robberies very well. He knew all the details of the Shotover Grange. He knew the time when there would be no one at the house. But 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. He was completely deceived by the lady he met at the house. He was outdone by her. He was taken in by her subtle ways, and did not realize that she herself could have been a thief. On seeing her, he got scared and started begging her to let him go. When she asked him to take out the jewels for her, he readily agreed. He did not feel any oddity in her leaving him, and not getting him arrested. His clever mind gave way to carelessness, leading him to open the safe without wearing gloves. He was only too happy and thankful that he could go. In his hurry, he even overlooked the fact that his fingerprints were left all over the safe. He blindly believed the lady, and thus, in spite of his meticulous planning, he faltered.

Talk About It

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?

Ans. 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.

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. "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.