

Class X - English

A Question of Trust

CBSE NOTES

A Question of Trust - Challenge Worksheet

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Challenge Questions

1. Analyze the character of Horace Danby. Is he a victim of circumstances or a deliberate criminal? Justify your answer with examples from the story.

Hint: Consider Horace's motivations, his reaction to the lady in red, and his final thoughts in prison.

Solution: Horace Danby is a complex character who cannot be simply categorized as a victim or a criminal. He is a meticulous planner with a passion for rare books, which drives him to commit thefts. However, his encounter with the lady in red shows his gullibility and lack of malice. His actions are driven by his love for books rather than a desire to harm, making him more of a flawed individual than a hardened criminal.

2. Evaluate the role of trust in the story 'A Question of Trust'. How does it lead to Horace Danby's downfall?

Hint: Think about the consequences of Horace's trust in the lady and how it contrasts with the theme of 'honour among thieves'.

Solution: Trust plays a pivotal role in the story. Horace Danby trusts the lady in red, believing her to be the lady of the house, which leads him to remove his gloves and leave fingerprints. This trust is misplaced, as the lady is actually a thief herself. The story illustrates how trust can be manipulated and how it can lead to one's downfall when given to the wrong person.

3. Discuss the irony in the story 'A Question of Trust'. How does it contribute to the overall message of the story?

Hint: Consider the expectations versus the reality in Horace's encounter with the lady in red.

Solution: The story is rich in irony, particularly situational irony. Horace Danby, a thief, is tricked by another thief. The title itself is ironic, as the story questions the very notion of trust among thieves. This irony underscores the message that appearances can be deceiving and that trust can be a double-edged sword.

4. Compare and contrast Horace Danby and the lady in red. What traits make one successful and the other unsuccessful in their endeavors?

Hint: Focus on their strategies, interactions, and the outcomes of their actions.

Solution: Horace Danby and the lady in red are both thieves, but their approaches and outcomes differ significantly. Horace is methodical and passionate about his love for books, but his gullibility and lack of suspicion lead to his capture. The lady, on the other hand, is manipulative and quick-thinking, using her wit to deceive Horace and achieve her goal without getting caught.

5. Examine the moral dilemma faced by Horace Danby. Should he be sympathized with or condemned for his actions?

Hint: Consider the balance between personal desires and societal laws.

Solution: Horace Danby's moral dilemma revolves around his justification for stealing—his love for rare books. While his passion is understandable, his means of achieving it are illegal. The story invites readers to ponder whether his intentions mitigate his actions. However, society's need for order and justice justifies his punishment, even if it evokes some sympathy for his character.

6. How does the setting contribute to the plot of 'A Question of Trust'? Discuss the significance of the house at Shotover Grange.

Hint: Think about how the physical environment influences the characters' actions and the story's outcome.

Solution: The setting of Shotover Grange is crucial to the plot. Its description and the presence of valuable jewels set the stage for the theft. The house's layout, as detailed in a magazine article, aids Horace in his plan but also becomes a trap when the lady in red exploits his knowledge. The setting thus plays a dual role in both facilitating and foiling the theft.

7. Analyze the theme of deception in 'A Question of Trust'. How do the characters deceive each other, and what are the consequences?

Hint: Look at the motives behind each character's deception and how it backfires.

Solution: Deception is central to the story. Horace deceives society by presenting himself as a respectable citizen while committing thefts. The lady in red deceives Horace by pretending to be the lady of the house. These layers of deception lead to Horace's arrest, highlighting the unpredictable and often negative consequences of deceit.

8. Discuss the significance of the title 'A Question of Trust'. How does it reflect the central conflict of the story?

Hint: Consider how the title relates to the interactions between Horace and the lady in red.

Solution: The title 'A Question of Trust' encapsulates the central conflict of the story—whether trust can exist among thieves. Horace's trust in the lady in red leads to his downfall, questioning the adage 'honour among thieves'. The title thus reflects the story's exploration of trust, deception, and the consequences of misplaced faith.

9. Evaluate the ending of 'A Question of Trust'. Is it a just conclusion for Horace Danby? Why or why not?

Hint: Think about the fairness of Horace's punishment compared to the lady's escape.

Solution: The ending, where Horace is arrested and becomes a prison librarian, can be seen as just because he committed a crime. However, it also carries irony, as he is punished while the lady in red escapes. This ending serves as a moral lesson on the consequences of illegal actions, regardless of one's intentions.

10. Imagine an alternative ending for 'A Question of Trust'. How would it change the story's message?

Hint: Consider how different outcomes would alter the moral or thematic impact of the story.

Solution: An alternative ending where Horace outsmarts the lady in red and escapes could shift the story's message to one of redemption or cleverness. However, it would dilute the moral lesson about the consequences of crime. The original ending reinforces the idea that crime does not pay, even for those with noble intentions.

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