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1. A Triumph of Surgery

1. What kind of a person do you think the narrator, a veterinary surgeon, is? Would you say he is tactful as well as full of common sense?

Answer: The narrator seems to be a practical person with lots of common sense. He is helpful to others as well. The way he treats Tricki without a single medicine tells us about his common sense. Moreover, the way he shares eggs, wines and brandy; sent by Mrs. Pumphrey; with his staffs, tells us about his practical mindset.

2. Do you think Tricki was happy to go home? What do you think will happen now?

Answer: The way Tricki jumps in its owners lap and the way it shows affection towards the owners indicates that Tricki is happy to go home. There can be two possibilities. Either Mrs. Pumphrey will mend her ways and make Tricki an agile and healthier dog or she may go back to her old ways spoiling Tricki's habits.

3. Do you think this is a real-life episode, or mere fiction? Or is it a mixture of both?

Answer: This can be anything. This can be a real life story or fiction or a mixture of both.

4. This episode describes the silly behaviour of a rich woman who is foolishly indulgent, perhaps because she is lonely. Do you think such people are merely silly, or can their actions cause harm to others?

Answer: These sort of people have disposable money with no avenues to spend. They probably don't inculcate a pastime. They can easily get bored so indulge in silly behavior. Some people dote too much on their child as well buying them more toys than they need and overfeeding them. These actions do more harm than good to the object of affection.

5. Do you think there are also parents like Mrs Pumphrey?

Answer: Yes there are parents who are too much possessive about their kids. The sense of overindulgence can go in either way. There are examples of parents spoiling their child by meeting each and every demand of the child. There are also examples of strict parents who put unnecessary pressure on their child for study and particular behaviour pattern.

6. What would you have done if you were: (i) a member of the staff in Mrs Pumphrey's household, (ii) a neighbour? What would your life have been like, in general?

Answer: As a staff I would have no other way than to follow Mrs. Pumphrey's orders. Otherwise she would have sacked me on my job.

As a neighbour I would have given her the proper suggestion. But the choice of following or refusing my suggestions is upto her. She is a rich lady who loves to splurge her money. So there is least chance that naybody can forcefully change her opinion about a subject.

7. What would you have done if you were in the narrator's place?

Answer: I would have done the same things which the narrator did. May be I would not have allowed Tricki back to Mrs. Pumphrey's house.



2. The Thief's Story

1. What are Hari Singh's reactions to the prospect of receiving an education? Do they change over time? What makes him return to Anil?

Answer: Hari Singh's reactions to the prospect of receiving an education change over time. When he started living with Anil he wanted to be literate so that he could become a more cunning cheat. Later on there is a change in his heart. He wants to earn respect in life. Probably he is influenced by the calm in Anil's life. Although, both of them depend on irregular sources of income, but Anil seems to be more satisfied. Hari Singh develops a desire to be part of the civilized society.

2. Why does not Anil hand the thief over to the police? Do you think most people would have done so? In what ways is Anil different from such employers?

Answer: The wetness of notes must have given the idea of Hari Singh's act to Anil. But Anil is pleased with the fact that Hari returned whatever he had stolen. This must have given him a hope for Hari Singh's desire to change. That is why he did not hand over Hari to police. People like Anil are hard to find. Most people would have reacted in predictable ways by thrashing Hari Singh and calling police. Anil is different because he wants his servant to become literate. He wants his servant to lead a respectable life in future.

3. Do you think people like Anil and Hari Singh are found only in fiction, or are there such people in real life?

Answer: Both Anil and Hari Singh are rare in society. Especially the changed Hari Singh after he decides to go back to Anil is difficult to find.

4. Do you think it a significant detail in the story that Anil is a struggling writer? Does this explain his behaviour in any way?

Answer: Hari Singh's observation about Anil getting irregular income and Anil's statement about his sale of a book to a publisher indicates that he is a struggling writer. He lives life according to the flow of money he gets at a given time. When he gets the money he enjoys eating out with his friends. When he is having less money then he even doesn't accept paying salary to Hari Singh.

5. Have you met anyone like Hari Singh? Can you think and imagine the circumstances that can turn a fifteen-year-old boy into a thief?

Answer: I have met several people who help needy people and help them specially in becoming literate. Fifteenth year is a very dangerous phase of life as it is teenage. A deep scar on mind or a deep sense of greed can make criminal out of ordinary boys and girls. There is a chance of Hari Singh getting a sound rebuke from his parents for asking some costly thing. Or there is equal chance of Hari Singh spoiling his consumption pattern beyond his means.

6. Where is the story set? Which language or languages are spoken in these places? Do you think the characters in the story spoke to each other in English?

Answer: The story is set in Uttar Pradesh somewhere near Lucknow. The town is having an important railway station as express trains have stoppage over there. The presence of sweet shop indicates towards presence of a decent market. The description of hotels near railway station indicates that it is an important centre where people come from far off places for business related activities.



3. The Midnight Visitor

1. "Ausable did not fit any description of a secret agent Fowler had ever read." What do secret agents in books and films look like, in your opinion?

Answer: Secret agents in fiction are projected like ideal men, 'Tall dark and handsome'. They are usually well built and keep have beautiful women for company. They would always smoke pipe or cigar and do death defying stunts. James Bond is a very famous character by Ian Fleming. Movies based on James Bond show hi-tech gizmos which assist the detective in countering villains. There are some exceptions as well. There is a character named Feluda which was created by Satyajit Ray, the famous Bangla Filmmaker. Feluda was typical bhadralok by appearance.

2. How does Ausable manage to make Max believe that there is a balcony attached to his room? Look back at his detailed description of it. What makes it a convincing story?

Answer: Ausable creates a detailed description of how his office was part a bigger apartment and how the next room had direct connection with the balcony. His statement that somebody else also broke into his office through that balcony made it a convincing story.

3. Looking back at the story, when do you think Ausable thought up his plan for getting rid of Max? Do you think he had worked out his plan in detail right from the beginning? Or did he make up a plan taking advantage of events as they happened?

Answer: Ausable is very clever the way a detective should be. He made the plan to get rid of Max from the very beginning which is evident from the story of the imaginary balcony. He knew the waiter would come to deliver his drinks. He planned carefully to create an imaginary policeman which would have compelled Max to jump on the non-existent balcony.

4. A Question of Trust

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?

Answer: It is difficult to guess before the story ends. The incidence of the lady calming the dog gives some hint but it is not strong enough. Her statement of getting the safe repaired can make some reader to think but this can be also be a case of fear of a strict husband.

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?

Answer: Her confident walk, her act of touching up her make-up and the ease with which she picks cigarette from the right place are enough to deceive anybody. Horace was too frightened to think properly so he didn't 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?

Answer: Danby's habits were not typical of a thief. He was fond of books. He used to steal only once in a year so he was never stealing more than his needs. Act of theft is still a crime not matter how good a thief behaves, so Danby can't be termed as completely honest. He is not a regular offender like other thieves so he can't be categorized as a typical thief.

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

Answer: Horace Danby failed to get enough information about real occupants of the house. He seems to be too occupied with collecting information about house map, wiring and location of valuable things. Although he was smart enough to know the dog's actual name but overlooked getting identity of each and every occupants of the house. Once he was in problem then probably his clever mind gave way to carelessness leading him to open the safe without wearing gloves.

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

Answer: He deserved what he got. A crime is a crime no matter if it is committed a hundred times or just once.

6. 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?

Answer: "Ends do not justify means", this is a very old and time tested saying. For own benefit nobody should harm others. But this world doesn't function on idealism. There are many examples of people duping people for quick gains. These acts should be deplored and dealt with severely.



5. Footprints Without Feet

1. "Griffin was rather a lawless person" comment.

Answer: Griffin never thought twice before harming anybody. He put his landlord's house on fire. Then his stealing acts at shops and later in the village indicate towards this. When he was encountered by the landlady of the inn, he threw chair at her and her husband. Lawless persons never think about safety and well being of others. They are always preoccupied by their benefits only.

2. How would you assess Griffin as Scientist ?

Answer: Griffin is a brilliant scientist which is evident from his drug of invisibility. But he seems to enjoy the feeling of power which he got out of his invisibility. The power to hurt anybody without getting noticed can give sadistic pleasure to somebody. A true scientist makes discovery for the larger benefit of the society.



6. The Making of A Scientist

(II) How can one become a scientist, an economist, a historian? Does it simply involve reading many books on the subject? Does it involve observing, thinking and doing experiments?

Answer: Reading books is just one aspect of learning. This is an exercise in information gathering. It is how your brain processes the information that affects the degree of learning. The first and the foremost criteria to become a genius in one's chosen field is to have great curiosity and unending hunger to discover more. Next criteria is a good sense of observation which helps you to correlate your findings with what you see or experience in the real world. Experiments are must to test your findings against possible variables and in real life situations. And last, but not the least criteria is an urge to work really hard on your area of interest.

(III) Discuss Ebrights' works in the light of what you have studied in your science books.

Answer: Ebrights' work are directly related to Biology. Discovery of cell's structure has helped scientific community to understand the way any organism functions and grows. This has helped scientists to discover how disease causing organisms attack us and grow inside our body. This must have given them idea to counter a particular disease . DNA fingerprinting is helping police to pinpoint the real culprit. This was not possible when DNA was discovered. Monarch butterflies present an amazing example of a tiny creature migrating thousands of miles from North America to the rainforest of Amazon. Some day we can be in a position to develop as sturdy and reliable navigation system as that of the Monarch butterflies.

7. The Necklace

1. The Course of Loisel's life changed due to necklace. Comment.

Answer: Because of necklace Loisel fell in a debt trap which forced her to live like an ordinary lower middle class housewife. She started doing all the household chores which a lady of her status normally does. This was good for her as it taught her to cut her coat according to her cloth. People should always try to live within their means. Aspirations have no limits but one should never forget the ground realities.

2. What was the cause of Matilda's ruin? How could she have avoided it?

Answer: Matilda wanted to live life like a queen. Her family background did not permit this. She was not ready to accept her life's realities. She was hell bent on showing off. She could have avoided it by learning to accept her current situation. Another way could have been to try getting a job or starting a business. One should either try to work hard to realise one's dreams or stop dreaming altogether.

3. What would have happened to Matilda if she had confessed to her friend that she had lost her necklace?

Answer: As the end of the story suggests it being a necklace made of fake diamonds so it was possible that Matilda and her husband did not have borrow beyond their means. Another angle worth attention is the good nature of her friend. The ease by which she showed all her jewellery to Matilda suggests that even if it was of original diamonds she would not have been angry at getting it lost.

8. The Hack Driver

1. When the lawyer reached New Mullion, did 'Bill' know that he was looking for Lutkins? When do you think Bill came up with his plan for fooling the lawyer?

Answer: Lutkins act of taking the lawyer for a ride clearly indicates that he is a very cunning person. It is his natural behaviour to not disclose his true identity to unknown persons. Moreover, being a cheat as he is it seems his regular practice to dupe people who are newcomers.

2. Lutkins openly takes the lawyer all over the village. How is it that no one lets out the secret? Can you find other such subtle ways in which Lutkins manipulates the tour?

Answer: Lutkin never allows the lawyer to the place where the imaginary Lutkins is supposed to be present at a given time. The way he weaves stories about Lutkin's vagabond nature and the way he scares the lawyer about Lutkin's mother are great tools applied by Bill.

3. Why do you think Lutkins' neighbours were anxious to meet the lawyer?

Answer: Lutkin's neighbours were not anxious to meet a person who could be easily duped. They wanted to enjoy the lawyer's predicament.

4. After his first day's experience with the hack driver the lawyer thinks of returning to New Mullion to practise law. Do you think he would have reconsidered this idea after his second visit?

Answer: After his second visit the lawyer must have got the shock of his life that how easily he believed Lutkin. He also got a lesson to deal carefully with people. The image of a village with friendly people must have changed in his mind. So there is least chance of him planning to practice law in that village.

5. Do you think the lawyer was gullible? How could he have avoided being taken for a ride?

Answer: The lawyer seems to be a simpleton and inexperienced person. He has yet to come to grips with the way the bad world functions. He could have done his homework better before going to the village. He could have taken a photograph of Lutkin if available. Before relying on Bill he could have cross checked with other people as well. He could have avoided sending Bill alone to search Lutkin.

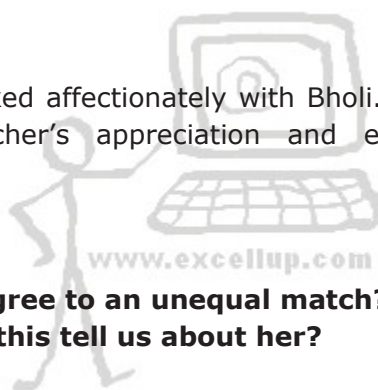
9. Bholi

1. Bholi had many apprehensions about going to school. What made her feel that she was going to a better place than her home?

Answer: The day she was going to school forced her parents to dress her nicely. She was bathed and her hair was properly done. Until then she was not being taken care of. The special treatment she received made her feel that she was going to a better place.

2. How did Bholi's teacher play an important role in changing the course of her life?

Answer: Bholi's teacher talked affectionately with Bholi. This gave her the required confidence. Moreover, teacher's appreciation and encouragement helped her overcome her low morale.



3. Why did Bholi at first agree to an unequal match? Why did she later reject the marriage? What does this tell us about her?

Answer: This is normal practice in India that girls seldom oppose their parent's choice for a groom. The upbringing of daughters brings a kind of mental conditioning which doesn't give them enough courage to rebel against their parent's wishes. Bholi more or less followed the tradition of being an ideal Indian girl. Later on when the prospective groom bared his greed to everyone it repulsed Bholi and made her reject the marriage. This incident highlights the fact that education does produce some positive effects in terms of sense of empowerment. Unlike her sisters Bholi is educated and has a mind of her own. She is as independent as any modern girl of a big city.

4. Bholi's real name is Sulekha. We are told this right at the beginning. But only in the last but one paragraph of the story is Bholi called Sulekha again. Why do you think she is called Sulekha at that point in the story?

Answer: The word Bholi means a simpleton. Throughout the story she had been a simpleton hardly expressing her opinion. The word Sulekha means the person with beautiful sense of letters. In this story this word has a larger meaning of being a literate, intelligent and mature individual. After her education Bholi has really changed to Sulekha and her assertion during marriage is her announcement to the world that she is no more a Bholi but Sulekha.

