

He Knows Too Much Alan Maley (Total word count: 27,923)

Summary

This is the story of a company official in India who believes himself to be unjustly dismissed. His search for the truth leads him through divorce and the uncovering of corruption to a new love.

Dick Sterling, the protagonist, is the manager of a factory in Madras in 1986. He believes that he has unearthed corrupt activities by two of his subordinates, a married couple called Vish and Molly. He tells his boss, Keith Lennox, of his concerns and is subsequently forced to take early retirement.

Dick and his wife Sally return to Britain, to Cambridge, where she settles in easily but he does not. His behaviour leads to a separation and he goes to live in Hove. Life deteriorates until one day he receives a letter from Ramu, a friend in Madras, corroborating suspicions he had had about Vish and Molly, and telling him that Molly spent a year in England about 20 years ago.

Dick decides to return to India. Whilst there he visits Nagarajan, a former company employee. He too has a grievance, and is taking it out on the bottle and his widowed daughter, who is his housekeeper. Dick is deeply impressed with Lakshmi, the daughter.

Dick returns to Cambridge to continue his investigations and discovers that Molly had a child by Keith Lennox during her year in England. He traces her son, John Verghese, and gathers more documentary evidence about Vish and Molly's corruption.

Dick returns once more to India, and visits Lakshmi. They spend

some time together, during which Dick is attacked by gangsters and Lakshmi rescues him. Dick and Lakshmi fall in love.

Dick returns to Madras and pays a visit to Vish and Molly. However, he is accompanied by the gangsters he had earlier foiled. Dick confronts Vish and Molly with what he knows. Vish threatens to have him murdered but Dick assures him that copies of the documents he has gathered would then be disseminated. He is released and before returning to London is offered a partnership in a new venture by Ramu.

Back in England, Dick visits Barbara Lennox, Keith's wife, and realises that she knows nothing about her husband's child with Molly, believing him to be an orphan. Dick then confronts Lennox with this evidence. He demands that Lennox decline a knighthood, resign from the company and pay compensation to those he has wronged. Dick telephones Lakshmi and hears of her father's death. Lakshmi remonstrates with him over his desire for revenge. Dick goes to see Barbara again and finds that she has discovered the truth and is close to a breakdown. Dick calls for help and leaves her. On his way home he realises that Lakshmi was right and throws his carefully assembled evidence into the river.

Postscript 1997: Dick is now married to Lakshmi and they have two children. He is in partnership with Ramu. Lennox is in jail after the collapse of the company. Vish and Molly are both badly injured after a road accident. Dick is glad he chose not to play God.

Worksheet answer key

CHECK YOUR READING

CHAPTER 1

1. e, c, a, f, d, b

CHAPTER 2

1. He lives in a company house in Boat Club Road.

He's 48, in good shape physically, 6 feet tall, slim and muscular, and has grey hair.

He's worked for Trakton since he left university. He has worked in many different countries.

His first wife died when he was 24. He has two children, Simon and Angie. He is now married to Sally.

2. contracts, work, owned, companies, prove, complained, refused, agreed

CHAPTER 3

1. 1 c, 2 d, 3 a, 4 b

CHAPTER 4

1. a Dick e Sally
b Dick f Sally
c Sally g Sally
d Dick h Dick

CHAPTER 5

1. a F, b T, c F, d F, e F, f T

CHAPTER 6

1. b, d, e, c, f, g, a

CHAPTER 7

1. and 2. Student's own answer.
3. Molly used to be a telephone operator, she used to go out with Ned Outram, she went on special leave to the UK, she married Vish as soon as she returned from the UK.
4. Student's own answer.

CHAPTER 8

1. a T, b T, c F, d F, e T

CHAPTER 9

1. a Sir Percy d Dick
b Jacko e Jacko
c Dick, Lakshmi f John Verghese

CHAPTER 10

1. a Lakshmi d Ned
b Dick e Ned
c Ramu

CHAPTER 11

1. a T, b F, c T, d F, e T

CHAPTER 12

1. a Ramu g a Brahmin priest
b Shaukat h three men
c Lakshmi i her mother-in-law
d Nagarajan j the three men from the restaurant
e Dick
f Shaukat

CHAPTER 13

1. Vish and Molly
2. a Dick, b Lakshmi

CHAPTER 14

1. b, h, g, c, a, d, f, e

CHAPTER 15

1. 1 d, 2 c, 3 a, 4 e, 5 b
2. To tell Barbara everything he has found out about Keith – his affair with Molly and their son John Verghese, and his corruption.

CHAPTER 16

1. to refuse the knighthood, to resign from Trakton, to pay Nagarajan and Ned Outram £1000 each.

CHAPTER 17

1. a Dick
b Lakshmi
c Keith

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