

"the two bottles of
relish" by lord
dunsany essay
sample



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“ The Two Bottles of Relish” by Lord Dunsany Essay Sample

In Lord Dunsany’s “ The Two Bottles of Relish” (1932), Smithers, a relish salesman, partners with Linley, an intelligent gentleman from Oxford to solve the murder of the young Nancy Elth. After Smithers has discovered clues from the murder scene in Unge, he must rely on Linley because he cannot solve the case. Smithers’ self - deprecation, ignorance, and lack of creativity prevent him from solving the case.

Smithers’ is extremely hard on himself. His self - deprecation hinders him in solving the case. For instance, Smithers shows his self - deprecating attitude because he believes he is simply a “ small man in a small way of business” (43). He does not think of himself highly at all. Again Smithers shows his self - depreciation when he approaches Linley about rooming with him and belittles himself by saying “... I wouldn’t be no more in your way than a cat” (43). He is comparing himself to a cat, is inferior to a human being. Smithers is not even proud of himself when he sells forty - eight bottles of Num-numo because he says “ Only a fool, I know, would have been unable to push it there...” (53). Smithers is extremely tough on himself and whenever he does something wrong he reminds himself how terrible he is. Although his self - depreciation is obvious, his ignorance shows throughout the story, too. Smithers shows his ignorance many times. He tries to sound intelligent by saying “...you don’t have to quote the whole Inferno to show that you’ve read Milton...” (44).

Smithers shows his ignorance here because he is not aware that Milton did not write the *Inferno*, but Dante Alighieri did. Smithers thinks that rooming with Linley is going to make him a more intelligent man and maybe a better salesman. He does not understand that just being around a smart man will make him smarter. Smithers also says he is unable to do any "big thinking" (49). Which demonstrates his lack of intelligence and ignorance. Smithers is a very unimaginative gentleman. After he finds all of the clues from the murder case, he is unable to put them all together and solve the crime. He does not think creatively. Smithers is a straight forward thinker. When Linley asks Smithers to play, Smithers kindly rejects the offer stating that he is a poor chess player. Chess is a game of imagination and intelligence, which Smithers lacks.

As Smithers and Linley are talking, Linley asks him what he would have done if it were him and Smithers responds by saying "I can't ever imagine doing such a thing" (52). Linley is leading him on and Smithers' unimaginative thinking does not allow him to respond to the question correctly. His lack of creativity and unimaginative thinking hinder him when trying to solve the case. Smithers has very negative traits. His self-deprecation, ignorance, and lack of creativity hold him back from being a genius. Smithers almost solves the most confusing case in *Unge*. Sometimes, a "small" man can make such a large difference.

Work Cited

Plunkett, E. J. M. D. "The Two Bottles of Relish." 1932. 21 *Great Stories*. Ed. Abraham H. Lass and Norma L. Tasman. New York: Mentor, 1969. 42-55.

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