

## **9<sup>th</sup> Standard English**

### **The Man Who Knew Too Much Summary**

Private Quelch or the Professor as he was nick named, really knew 'too much'. His greatest aim was to get a commission and to pursue his aim; he really worked hard and tried to impress his senior officers. Technical definitions, the parts of the rifle, its use and care and all things related to his profession, he had them by heart. But his showy nature or exhibitionism, his tendency to outshine others and his superiority complex made him an unpleasant and avoidable character. His exhibitionism made him a stock of laughter and his colleagues fled to avoid his sermonising.

#### **The Professor**

Private Quelch was a soldier without a rank. The narrator first met Quelch at the training depot. He was lanky, stooping and appeared to be frowning through horn-rimmed spectacles. In his first week of army life, he was nicknamed as the Professor. Those who had any doubts on the subject, lost them after five minutes' conversation with him.

#### **Ambition of Getting a Commission**

Private Quelch was quite ambitious. He meant to get on in life. He had a very fertile brain. Everyone thought that he would definitely get a commission. He was not only ambitious but very diligent also. In pursuit of his ambition, he worked very hard. He borrowed training manuals and woke up late at nights reading them. He always tried to impress his superior officers with his

knowledge and smartness. As a first step, he wanted to get a 'V'-shaped stripe, indicating the rank of a soldier.

### Exhibitionism

Exhibitionism was the dominant feature of Quelch's personality. No doubt, the Professor knew too much but he would never lose an opportunity of exhibiting his knowledge. He badgered the instructors with questions. He drilled with enthusiasm. On route marches, he was 'miraculously tireless'. Even after marching thirty miles, he would say, "What about a song, chaps?" His 'horrible heartiness' infuriated his colleagues. Each time one of his fellow soldiers made a mistake, he would publicly correct him. Whenever one of them shone, the Professor outshone him. His colleagues tried to hit back at him with clumsy sarcasms and practical jokes. The Professor hardly noticed them. He was too busy working for his stripe. He considered them just 'a gang of louts'.

### Badgered (Troubled) Instructors with Questions

The first lesson in musketry was being delivered by a Sergeant. He told them that the speed at which the bullet leaves the rifle is well over two thousand feet per second. A voice interrupted him. It was of the Professor's. He publicly corrected him by saying, "two thousand four hundred and forty feet per second". The Sergeant felt humiliated and in the hope of revenge he put questions again and again to the Professor. But it only enhanced the Professor's glory because he answered all of them correctly.

Corporal Turnbull Snubbed the Professor Corporal Turnbull was a different man. He could not be trifled with. He was explaining the outside of a grenade.

It was divided into large number of fragments. The Professor beamed at him, “Forty-four segments”. All were thunder-struck. Corporal Turnbull tossed the grenade to the Professor and asked him to give the lecture. Quite unashamed, the Professor stunned every one by his wonderful lecture. Turnbull asked him to fall in with the others. He snubbed the Professor by nominating him for permanent cookhouse duties. The Professor received the kind of treatment he actually deserved.

