

If I Were You

Q1 : "C Gerrard lives alone in a lonely cottage. An intruder, who is a criminal, enters his cottage. He intends to murder Gerrard and take on his identity. Does he succeed?

"C The following words and phrases occur in the play. Do you know their meanings? Match them with the meanings given, to find out.

| | |
|----------|--|
| cultured | an informal expression for a fashionable vehicle |
| count on | unnecessary and usually harmful |
| | |

Answer :

"C No, the intruder does not succeed in fulfilling his plans because he is outsmarted by Gerrard's wit.

| | |
|--------------|---|
| cultured | sophisticated; well mannered |
| count on | depend on; rely on |
| engaged | occupied; busy |
| melodramatic | exaggerated |
| to be smart | (American English) an informal way of saying that one is being too clever |
| inflection | here, a tone of voice |
| wise guy | |

Vidya Champ

Q1 : "At last a sympathetic audience."

- (i) Who says this?
- (ii) Why does he say it?
- (iii) Is he sarcastic or serious?

Answer :

- (i) The speaker of the given line is Gerrard.
- (ii) He says it as he is asked by the intruder to speak about himself.
- (iii) He speaks the given dialogue sarcastically.

Q2 : Why does the intruder choose Gerrard as the man whose identity he wants to take on?

Answer :

The intruder chooses Gerrard as the man whose identity he wants to take on as they were of similar built.

Q3 : "I said it with bullets."

- (i) Who says this?
- (ii) What does it mean?
- (iii) Is it the truth? What is the speaker's reason for saying this?

Answer :

- (i) Gerrard says the given line.
- (ii) It means that when things went wrong, he had used his gun to shoot someone for his escape.
- (iii) No, it is not the truth. The speaker says this to save himself from getting shot by the intruder.

Q4 : What is Gerrard's profession? Quote the parts of the play that support your answer.

Answer :

Gerrard is a playwright by profession. Several parts of the play that reflect this. Some of these are:

- "This is all very melodramatic, not very original, perhaps, but..."
- "At last a sympathetic audience!"
- "In most melodramas the villain is foolish enough to delay his killing long enough to be frustrated".
- "I said, you were luckier than most melodramatic villains."
- "That's a disguise outfit; false moustaches and what not".
- "Sorry I can't let you have the props in time for rehearsal, I've had a spot of bother - quite amusing. I think I'll put it in my next play."

Q5 : "You'll soon stop being smart."

- (i) Who says this?
- (ii) Why does the speaker say it?
- (iii) What according to the speaker will stop Gerrard from being smart?

Answer :

- (i) The intruder says the line under reference.
- (ii) Peeved at the smartness displayed by Gerrard, the intruder says this to warn him against acting smart as he is unaware of the consequences that he might suffer.
- (iii) The speaker thinks that Gerrard would stop acting smart once he comes to know about his plan to kill Gerrard and take over his identity.

Q1 : Consult your dictionary and choose the correct word from the pairs given in brackets.

1. The (site, cite) of the accident was (ghastly/ghostly).
2. Our college (principle/principal) is very strict.
3. I studied (continuously/continually) for eight hours.
4. The fog had an adverse (affect/effect) on the traffic.
5. Cezanne, the famous French painter, was a brilliant (artist/artiste).
6. The book that you gave me yesterday is an extraordinary (collage/college) of science fiction and mystery.
7. Our school will (host/hoist) an exhibition on cruelty to animals and wildlife conservation.
8. Screw the lid tightly onto the top of the bottle and (shake/shape) well before using the contents.

Answer :

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Q2 : Irony is when we say one thing but mean another, usually the opposite of what we say. When someone makes a mistake and you say, "Oh! That was clever!" that is irony. You're saying 'clever' to mean 'not clever'.

Expressions we often use in an ironic fashion are:
 "Ç Oh, wasn't that clever!/Oh that was clever!
 "Ç You have been a great help, I must say!
 "Ç You've got yourself into a lovely mess, haven't you?
 "Ç Oh, very funny!/How funny!

We use a slightly different tone of voice when we use

Answer :

| What the author says | What he means |
|--|--|
| You won't kill me for a very good reason. | Gerrard is just pretending to have a 'very good reason' even though there is no such reason. |
| Sorry I can't let you have the props in time for rehearsal, I've had a spot of bother - quite amusing. | The 'spot of bother' that Gerrard calls 'quite amusing' is actually a life-threatening situation, where a criminal actually threatens to kill him. |
| You have been so modest. | Here, Gerrard means that it is immodest on the part of the intruder to know so much about him without disclosing his own identity. |

Q3 : "They can't hang me twice."

(i) Who says this?

(ii) Why does the speaker say it?

Answer :

(i) The speaker of the given line is the intruder.

(ii) Since he is already being hunted for having killed someone else, murdering Gerrard won't make any difference. Hence, he says that he cannot be hanged twice.

Q4 : "A mystery I propose to explain." What is the mystery the speaker proposes to explain?

Answer :

The speaker proposes to explain the mystery about himself. He tells the intruder that he would not be able to lead a peaceful life even as Vincent Gerrard. This is because he himself is a criminal living an unstable life, being hunted by the police.

Q5 : "This is your big surprise."

(i) Where has this been said in the play?

(ii) What is the surprise?

Answer :

(i) This has been said twice in the play. On the first occasion, it is spoken by the intruder while revealing his plan to kill Gerrard. Secondly, it is spoken by Gerrard before he reveals his fictitious identity to the intruder.

(ii) The intruder's surprise is his plan to kill Gerrard and take on his identity to lead a secure and hassle-free life. Whereas, Gerrard's surprise is his fictitious identity, his way of refraining the intruder from killing him.

Q1 : A word can mean different things in different contexts. Look at these three sentences:

"Ç The students are taught to respect different cultures.

"Ç The school is organising a cultural show.

"Ç His voice is cultured.

In the first sentence, 'culture' (noun) means *way of life*; in the second, 'cultural' (adjective) means *connected with art, literature and music*; and in the third, 'cultured' (verb) means *sophisticated, well mannered*. Usually a dictionary helps you identify the right meaning by giving you signposts.

Look at the dictionary entry on 'culture' from *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 2005.

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|---|---|
| <p>Cul.tural ➔ /'kʌltʃərəl/ <i>adj.</i> [usually before noun]</p> <p>1. Connected with the culture of a particular society or group, its customs, beliefs, etc.: <i>cultural differences between the two communities</i> ◊ <i>economic, social and cultural factors</i>.</p> <p>2 connected with art, literature, music, etc.: <i>a cultural event</i> ◊ <i>Europe's cultural heritage</i> ◊ <i>The orchestra is very important for the cultural life of the city.</i> ▶ cul.tur.ally /rɒli/ <i>adv.</i></p> <p>Cul.tural ➔ /'kʌltʃərəl/ <i>noun, verb</i></p> <p>noun</p> <p>▶ WAY OF LIFE 1 [U] the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group: <i>European/Isamic/African/American, etc. culture</i> ◊ <i>working class culture</i> 2 [C] a country, group, etc. with its own beliefs, etc.: <i>The children are taught to respect different cultures.</i> ◊ <i>the effect of technology on traditional cultures</i></p> <p>▶ ART/MUSIC/LITERATURE 3 [U] art, music, literature, etc., thought of as a group: <i>Venice is a beautiful city full of culture and history.</i> ◊ <i>popular culture</i> (= that is enjoyed by a lot of people) ◊ <i>the Minister for Culture</i></p> | <p>▶ BELIEFS/ATTITUDES 4 [C, U] the beliefs and attitudes about sth that people in a particular group or organization share: <i>The political cultures of the Unites Sates and Europe are very different.</i> ◊ <i>A culture of failure exists in some schools.</i> ◊ <i>company culture</i> ◊ <i>We are living in a consumer culture.</i></p> <p>▶ GROWING/BREEDING 5 [U] (<i>technical</i>) the growing of plants or breeding of particular animals in order to get a particular substance or crop from them: <i>the culture of silk-worms</i> (= for silk)</p> <p>▶ CELLS/BACTERIA 6 [C] (<i>biology, medical</i>) a group of cells or bacteria, especially one taken from a person or an animal and grown for medical or scientific study, or to produce food; the process of obtaining and growing these cells: <i>a culture of cells from the tumour</i> ◊ <i>Yogurt is made from active cultures.</i> ◊ <i>to do/take a throat culture</i></p> <p>▶ verb [VN] (<i>biology, medical</i>) to grow a group of cells or bacteria for medical or scientific study</p> <p>cul.tured /'kʌltʃəd; NAmE ˈtʃɜrd/ <i>adj.</i> 1 (of people) well educated and able to understand and enjoy art, literature, etc.</p> <p>SYN CULTIVATED 2 (of cells or bacteria) grown for medical or scientific study 3 (OF PEARLS) grown artificially</p> |
|---|---|

(Noun, verb, adjective, adverb, synonyms, etc. are signposts which help you locate the right meaning and usage, and give information about the part of speech that the word is.)

Look up the dictionary entries for the words *sympathy*, *familiarity*, *comfort*, *care*, and *surprise*. Use the information given in the dictionary and complete the table.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| <i>Noun</i> | |
|-------------|--|

Answer :

| Noun | Adjective | Adverb | Verb | Meaning |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|--|
| sympathy | sympathetic | sympathetically | sympathize | feeling of pity for others in their misfortune |
| familiarity | familiar | | | |

<< Previous Chapter 19 : A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal (Poem)

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Q1 : Which of the words below describe Gerrard and which describe the Intruder?

| | | |
|--------------------|----------|--------|
| smart beautiful | humorous | clever |
|--------------------|----------|--------|

Answer :

The words that describe Gerrard are cool, confident, witty, nonchalant, humorous and clever. While the Intruder could be described by the words like flashy and smart.

Gerrard is a cool and confident playwright. He is a witty fellow, as is evident from the way he tackles a grave situation in which he finds himself face to face with a dangerous criminal. When he is asked for his personal information by the Intruder, he talks to him in a nonchalant and humorous manner. He cleverly convinces the Intruder that he too is a criminal and then manages to lock him up in his wardrobe.

The Intruder enters Gerrard's premises dressed in flashy clothes. He is smart in his attempt to extract all the personal information about Gerrard.. But he is outsmarted by Gerrard's wit. He fails to see through Gerrard's concocted story about himself.

Q2 : Imagine you are Gerrard. Tell your friend what happened when the Intruder broke into your house.

[Clues: Describe (i) the intruder's appearance, the way he spoke, his plan, his movements, etc., (ii) how you outwitted him.]

Answer :

One day, while I was packing things in a traveling bag, I heard someone bump against the table behind me. As I turned, I was taken aghast to see a man of similar build as mine, dressed in an overcoat and a soft hat. He was pointing a revolver at me. I tried to keep myself calm so as to find out the intruder's motives. He threatened me and said he would kill me and thereafter live his life as me, Vincent Charles Gerrard. He wanted to know everything about me. I tried to delay his plan by telling him a made-up story about myself. I won his trust by declaring that I too was a crook like him and that I could help him to escape. I told him to exit by a door, which actually was of a wardrobe. I pushed him inside and locked him up. Then I got a call from a friend, whom I asked to inform the Sergeant.

Q3 : Convert the play into a story (150 - 200 words). Your story should be as exciting and as witty as the play. Provide a suitable title to it.

Answer :

On Confronting an Intruder

One day, a professional playwright named Gerrard is visited by a flamboyantly dressed intruder. The intruder points a gun at him. Even though he is alarmed, Gerrard starts a conversation with him in a nonchalant manner. In time, the intruder reveals his plan to extract all the information from Gerrard before killing him. This he wants so that after killing him he can start living as Gerrard, freely and without the fear of being hunted and imprisoned by the police. But, Gerrard cleverly concocts a story about him being a criminal like him. He says that he has a man posted on the main road who shall inform him if the police approaches. He shows him his traveling bag, fake moustaches to make the intruder believe his story. And believe he does. Finally, Gerrard shows him a door to exit, which is actually of a cupboard. He pushes and locks the intruder inside, and picks up the fallen revolver. He then informs the sergeant of the criminal. In this way, the clever and witty playwright Gerrard manages to save himself from the intruder.

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