

If I Were You

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
engaged	exaggerated
melodramatic	sophisticated; well mannered
to be smart	here, a tone of voice
inflection	Avoid
wise guy	an unexpected opportunity for success
a dandy bus	trap
tradespeople	a Christian religious teacher who teaches on Sundays in Church
gratuitous	(American English) a person who pretends to know a lot
dodge	depend on; rely on
lucky break	(American English) an informal way of saying that one is being too clever

Sunday-school teacher	occupied; busy
frame	merchants

Answer:

cultured	sophisticated; well mannered
count on	depend on; rely on
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melodramatic	exaggerated
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lucky break	an unexpected opportunity for success

Sunday-school teacher	a Christian religious teacher who teaches on Sundays in Church
frame	trap

Thinking about the Text

I. Answer these questions.

Question 1. "At last, a sympathetic audience."

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

Answer:

- (i) Gerrard says the given statement.
- (ii) He says it when the intruder asks him to talk about himself.
- (iii) He is sarcastic.

Question 2. 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 because Gerrard is a mystery man who phones his orders and sometimes goes away suddenly and comes back just the same.

Question 3. "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 statement.
- (ii) It means that when he was in trouble, he shot someone to escape.
- (iii) No, it is not the truth. Gerrard says this to manipulate the intruder so that he does not kill him.

Question 4. What is Gerrard's profession? Quote the parts of the play that support your answer.

Answer: Gerrard's profession is that of a dramatist.

The parts of the play that support that implication are:

"In most melodramas, the villain is foolish enough to delay his killing long enough to be frustrated".

"Sorry I can't let you have the props in time for rehearsal..."

"I think I'll put it in my next play."

"At last, a sympathetic audience!"

Question 5. "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 given statement.
- (ii) The intruder says this to scare Gerrard and know more about him.
- (iii) The speaker intends to kill Gerrard. According to the speaker, when Gerrard gets to know that he came to Gerrard to kill him and steal his identity, he would become scared and stop being smart.

Question 6. "They can't hang me twice."

- (i) Who says this?
- (ii) Why does the speaker say it?

Answer:

- (i) The intruder says the given statement.
- (ii) The speaker says this because he had already murdered someone. So, it is not a big deal for him to kill another man. He can't be hanged twice.

Question 7. "A mystery I propose to explain." What is the mystery the speaker proposes to explain?

Answer: The mystery that the speaker, Gerrard, proposes to explain is why he himself is a mystery man. He explains to the intruder that he himself is a criminal who is on the run. That is the reason why he does not meet tradespeople. He says that he murdered someone and got away with it. But now he was in a trouble and that's why his bag was all packed to escape again.

Question 8. "This is your big surprise."

- (i) Where has this been said in the play?
- (ii) What is the surprise?

Answer:

- (i) This statement is said twice in the play.

Once when the intruder is trying to scare Gerrard and the second time when Gerrard is explaining to him why he won't kill him for a good reason.

- (ii) The surprise in the first utterance of the statement is that the intruder expresses his intention to kill Gerrard.

The surprise in the second utterance of the statement is that Gerrard explains to him that he himself is a criminal on the run, which is why it won't do any good to the intruder to kill him and steal his identity.

Thinking about Language

I. 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:

1. The site of the accident was ghastly.
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II. 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:

- Oh, wasn't that clever!/Oh that was clever!
- You have been a great help, I must say!
- You've got yourself into a lovely mess, haven't you?
- Oh, very funny!/ How funny!

We use a slightly different tone of voice when we use these words ironically.

Read the play carefully and find the words and expressions Gerrard uses in an ironic way. Then say what these expressions really mean. Two examples have been given below. Write down three more such expressions along with what they really mean.

<i>What the author says</i>	<i>What he means</i>
Why, this is a surprise, Mr—er—	He pretends that the intruder is a social visitor whom he is welcoming. In this way he hides his fear.

At last a sympathetic audience!

He pretends that the intruder wants to listen to him, whereas actually the intruder wants to find out information for his own use.

Answer:

<i>What the author says</i>	<i>What he means</i>
You have been so modest.	Gerrard says this to express how immodest the intruder has been by not talking about himself at all.
At last a sympathetic audience!	Gerrard says this sarcastically as the intruder is asking about Gerrard while holding a gun.
You won't kill me for a very good reason.	Gerrard says this as if he has some 'very good reason' to be spared by the intruder. He says this so as to create a doubt in the intruder about killing him.

Dictionary Use

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

- The students are taught to respect different cultures.
- The school is organising a cultural show.
- 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.

cul-tural 0 ➤ /'kʌltʃərəl/ *adj.* [usually before noun]

1 connected with the culture of a particular society or group, its customs, beliefs, etc.: *cultural differences between the two communities* ◊ *economic, social and cultural factors* **2** connected with art, literature, music, etc.: *a cultural event* ◊ *Europe's cultural heritage* ◊ *The orchestra is very important for the cultural life of the city.* ▶ **cul-tur-ally** /-rəli/ *adv.*

cul-ture 0 ➤ /'kʌltʃə(r)/ *noun, verb*

■ *noun*

• **WAY OF LIFE 1** [U] the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group: *European/Islamic/African/American, etc. culture* ◊ *working-class culture* **2** [C] a country, group, etc. with its own beliefs, etc.: *The children are taught to respect different cultures.* ◊ *the effect of technology on traditional cultures*
• **ART/MUSIC/LITERATURE 3** [U] art, music, literature, etc., thought of as a group: *Venice is a beautiful city full of culture and history.* ◊ **popular culture** (= that is enjoyed by a lot of people) ◊ *the Minister for Culture*

• **BELIEFS/ATTITUDES 4** [C,U] the beliefs and attitudes about sth that people in a particular group or organization share: *The political cultures of the United States and Europe are very different.* ◊ *A culture of failure exists in some schools.* ◊ *company culture* ◊ *We are living in a consumer culture.*

• **GROWING/BREEDING 5** [U] (*technical*) the growing of plants or breeding of particular animals in order to get a particular substance or crop from them: *the culture of silkworms* (= for silk)

• **CELLS/BACTERIA 6** [C] (*biology, medical*) 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: *a culture of cells from the tumour* ◊ *Yogurt is made from active cultures.* ◊ *to do/take a throat culture*

■ **verb** [VN] (*biology, medical*) to grow a group of cells or bacteria for medical or scientific study

cul-tured /'kʌltʃəd; NAmE -tʃərd/ *adj.* **1** (of people) well educated and able to understand and enjoy art, literature, etc. **SYN** CULTIVATED **2** (of cells or bacteria) grown for medical or scientific study **3** (of PEARLS) grown artificially

(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.

Noun	Adjective	Adverb	Verb	Meaning
Sympathy				
Familiarity				
Comfort				
Care				
Surprise				

Answer:

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Adverb</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Sympathy	sympathetic	sympathetically	sympathize	To feel pity for someone
Familiarity	familiar	familiarly	familiarize	To know someone/ something
Comfort	comfortable	comfortably	comfort	To make someone feel relaxed
Care	caring	carefully	care	To be concerned about someone
Surprise	surprising	surprisingly	surprise	To amaze someone

Speaking

Question 1. Imagine you are Gerrard. Tell your friend what happened when the Intruder broke into your house. [Clues : Describe (i) the intruder – his appearance, the way he spoke, his plan, his movements, etc., (ii) how you outwitted him.]

Answer: Last night, while I was on the phone, an intruder broke into my cottage. He had a gun in his hand. He was a criminal on the run. He was planning to kill me and steal my identity. He kept threatening me with the gun and asked me to tell him everything about myself. I did not reveal my true profession and instead gave him a dodge. I told him that just like him, I too am a criminal and that is why killing me will not do any good to him. I told him that I was in trouble myself and had to escape. While trying to come out of the cottage, I locked him up in the cupboard and called the police. That's how I was able to outwit him and save myself.

Question 2. Enact the play in the class. Pay special attention to words given in italics before a dialogue. These words will tell you whether the dialogue has to be said in a happy, sarcastic or ironic tone and how the characters move and what they do as they speak. Read these carefully before you enact the play.

Answer: Do it yourself.

Writing

I. Which of the words below describe Gerrard and which describe the Intruder?

Smart; humorous; clever

Beautiful; cool; confident

Flashy; witty; nonchalant

Write a paragraph each about Gerrard and the Intruder to show what qualities they have. (You can use some of the words given above.)

Answer:

Gerrard:

Gerrard is a smart and humorous person. He is clever and confident. Even in a life-threatening situation, he is cool and handles the situation in an amazing way. Instead of losing his mind and getting killed by the intruder, he quickly cooks up a story of being an on-the-run criminal. He is a witty person who saves himself and gets the intruder behind bars.

Intruder:

The intruder is a flashy person who tries to be very smart from the very beginning. He believes the cooked-up story of Gerrard and agrees to get out of the cottage with Gerrard. We see that the intruder is then locked up by Gerrard and the intruder even loses his gun to Gerrard.

II. 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: Do it yourself.

