

If I Were You

Introduction

'If I were You' is a melodrama written by Douglas James. There are only two characters in the story, *viz.*, Gerrard and the intruder. Both resemble each other. The intruder has killed a policeman. He intends to murder Gerrard and then impersonate him.

Summary

In the story, an intruder enters the house of Gerrard, who is a playwright.

The intruder was a criminal. He had killed a policeman. He had now decided to kill Gerrard and then impersonate him. When he broke into Gerrard's house, Gerrard was preparing to leave the house. He was going to attend a rehearsal of his drama. He had kept necessary props for the rehearsal in his travelling bag.

The intruder threatens Gerrard with his revolver. He then asks Gerrard to tell him about himself, so that he does not have any difficulty in impersonating him and he can live there without any risk. He tells Gerrard about his intentions. When the intruder was about to shoot him, Gerrard warned him to be careful. He tells the intruder that he was also a murderer. The police were after him. If he killed Gerrard, he was sure to be hanged as himself or as Gerrard. The intruder hesitated on hearing this.

Gerrard then asked him to hurry and run with him in his car to a safer place as the police were likely to come there soon. Gerrard opened a door to show him the man who would inform him about the arrival of the police. The intruder leaned forward. As the intruder turned his head, Gerrard pushed him into the cupboard and slammed the door and locked it.

Then, Gerrard phoned his friend and asked him to inform the police. Thus, he outwitted the intruder.

Message

The story conveys the message that one can overcome difficult situations by presence of mind. Panic and fear just tend to add to the problems and not solve them.

Extract Based Questions

1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Gerrard: Nonchalant' is your word, I think.
Intruder: Thanks a lot. You'll soon stop being smart. I'll make you crawl. I want to know a few things, see.
Gerrard: Anything you like, I know all the answers. But before we begin I should like to change my position; you may be comfortable, but I am not.
Intruder: Sit down there, and no funny business. (Motions to a chair, and seats himself on the divan by the bag.) Now then, we'll have a nice little talk about yourself!
Gerrard: At last a sympathetic audience! I'll tell you the story of my life. How as a child I was stolen by the gypsies, and why at the age of thirty-two, I find myself in my lonely Essex cottage, how...

(a) The intruder thanks Gerrard and says that soon he will stop being

- (i) sympathetic (ii) fool
(iii) smart (iv) funny

(b) At the age of thirty-two, Gerrard found himself in his lonely

(c) 'A sympathetic audience' here refers to:

- (i) the author
(ii) a person concerned about Gerrard
(iii) a person concerned about the intruder
(iv) a group of nomads

(d) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract. sympathetic : compassionate :: cozy :

Answers

- (a) (iii) smart
(b) Essex cottage
(c) (ii) a person concerned about Gerrard
(d) comfortable

2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Gerrard: Very rarely. Surprisingly few people take the trouble to visit me. There's the baker and the greengrocer, of-course; and then there's the milkman—quite charming, but no one so interesting as yourself.

Intruder: I happen to know that you never see trades people.

Gerrard: You seem to have taken a considerable amount of trouble. Since you know so much about me, won't you say something about yourself? You have been so modest.

Intruder: I could tell you plenty. You think you're smart, but I'm the top of the class round here. I've got brains and I use them. That's how I've got where I have.

(a) 'I've got brains and I use them' here means:

- (i) Intruder had money and he used it
(ii) Intruder had brains and he used his intelligence
(iii) Intruder had many things to use
(iv) Intruder had a gun that made him smart



- (b) According to Gerrard, the people who bothered to visit him were
- (c) The antonym of 'modest' can be:
 (i) humble (ii) meek
 (iii) gentle (iv) arrogant
- (d) State whether the given statement is True or False. A lot of people usually visit Gerrard.

Answers

- (a) (ii) Intruder had brains and he used his intelligence
 (b) the baker, the green grocer and the milkman
 (c) (iv) arrogant
 (d) False

3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Gerrard: You're planning a gratuitous double, so to speak. Admitted you've nothing to lose, but what have you to gain?

Intruder: I've got freedom to gain. As for myself, I'm a poor hunted rat. As Vincent Charles Gerrard I'm free to go places and do nothing. I can eat well and sleep and without having to be ready to beat it at the sight of a cop.

Gerrard: In most melodramas the villain is foolish enough to delay his killing long enough to be frustrated. You are much luckier.

- (a) As the intruder had committed a murder, he was hunted by the:
 (i) rat (ii) police
 (iii) foolish act (iv) villain
- (b) In the extract, is a 'poor hunted rat'.
- (c) In most melodramas, the villain is normally shown as a:
 (i) calm person (ii) foolish person
 (iii) luckier person (iv) brave person
- (d) An antonym of 'delay'

Answers

- (a) (ii) police
 (b) the intruder
 (c) (ii) foolish person
 (d) hasten

4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Intruder: It brought me to Aylesbury. That's where I saw you in the car. Two other people saw you and started to talk. I listened. It looks like you're a bit queer—kind of a mystery man.

Gerrard: A mystery which I propose to explain.

Intruder: (disregarding him) You phone your orders and sometimes you go away suddenly and come back just the same. Those are just the things I want to do.

Hearing about you was one of my luckiest breaks.

Gerrard: Apparently you haven't the intelligence to ask why I am invested in this cloak of mystery.

- (a) is considered by the intruder as his luckiest break.
 (i) Ordering things over the phone
 (ii) Go away and return suddenly
 (iii) Hearing about Gerrard
 (iv) Want of doing things
- (b) State whether the given statement is True or False. Gerrard outwitted the intruder.
- (c) The word 'queer' means the same as:
 (i) strange (ii) usual
 (iii) common (iv) plain
- (d) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract. apparently : evidently :: unexpectedly :

Answers

- (a) (iii) Hearing about Gerrard
 (b) True
 (c) (i) strange
 (d) suddenly

5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Gerrard: Hello, Yes, speaking. 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. Listen, can you tell our friend the Sergeant to come up here at once? You'll probably find him in the Public Bar.

- (a) Gerrard was not able to deliver the props in time for the rehearsal as:
 (i) he didn't want to make them ready
 (ii) he wanted to send them to his home
 (iii) he had been troubled by someone
 (iv) it was difficult for him to do this act
- (b) In the extract, had a 'spot of bother—quite amusing'.
- (c) Gerrard asked the person to send the to his residence.
 (i) sergeant (ii) Intruder
 (iii) green grocer (iv) milkman
- (d) Substitute the word 'rehearsal' with one word similar in meaning in the following sentence:
 Sorry I can't let you have the props in time for rehearsal.

Answers

- (a) (iii) he had been troubled by someone
 (b) Gerrard
 (c) (i) sergeant
 (d) practice

Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. What did Gerrard tell the Intruder about his life?

Ans. Gerrard told the Intruder that he was a criminal who had murdered someone and the police were after him. If caught, he would be given death sentence.

Q 2. 'I don't think you will be pleased for long.' Why does the Intruder say so?

Ans. The Intruder says that Gerrard will not be pleased for long because he has come there with an evil design. He wants to kill Gerrard so that he can impersonate him and live peacefully forever.

Q 3. Where did the Intruder see Gerrard? What did he come to know about Gerrard there?

Ans. The Intruder saw Gerrard in Aylesbury. Gerrard was in his car. Two other people saw him and started talking about him. He listened and found that Gerrard was considered to be a queer-kind of a mystery man.

Q 4. Why was the Intruder looking for a safe place?

Ans. The Intruder was a criminal and specialised in jewel robbery. In one of these robberies he had killed a cop and now the police were after him. Therefore, he was looking for a safe place.

Q 5. What story did Gerrard cook up to mislead the Intruder?

Ans. Gerrard tells the Intruder that he himself is a crook and is on the run because one of his accomplice has been caught and the police can reach his cottage anytime. One of his men is on the watch and he will inform him when he sights any cop. He tells him that he is leaving the cottage because of impending danger.

Q 6. Why does the Intruder choose Gerrard as the man whose identity he wants to take on?

Ans. The Intruder chooses Gerrard as the man whose identity he wants to take on because Gerrard resembles the Intruder in terms of built and form and also because Gerrard lives a mysterious life. He wants to kill Gerrard and impersonate him.

Q 7. What is Gerrard's profession? Quote the parts of the play that support your answer.

Ans. Gerrard is a playwright. In his last speech Gerrard says, 'Sorry I can't let you have the props in time for rehearsal. I've had a spot of bother—quiet amusing, I think I'll put it in my next play.'

Q 8. 'A mystery I propose to explain.' What is the mystery the speaker proposes to explain?

Ans. The mystery Gerrard proposes is the story he made up to dodge the Intruder and save his own life. The story was that Gerrard himself was a criminal like the Intruder.

Long Answer Type Questions

Q 1. What was the Intruder's plan? Did he succeed in his plan? Give reasons in the support of your answer.

Ans. The Intruder first sees Gerrard at Aylesbury. Gerrard was in his car. Two other people saw Gerrard and started to talk about him. He felt Gerrard was a mystery man.

He decided to learn more about Gerrard. He came to know that Gerrard avoided meeting people and sometimes went away suddenly and then returned suddenly. All this appeals to Gerrard. He also observes that he resembled Gerrard. The Intruder was a criminal and had killed a cop. He was on a run, so he planned to murder Gerrard and impersonate him so that he can live peacefully.

One day the Intruder entered Gerrard's cottage with a revolver in his hand. First he wanted Gerrard to talk to him so that he might get more clues about him. But in the end, Gerrard outwitted the Intruder. He closed him in the cupboard and locked the door. Then, he sent for the police to get him arrested.

Thus, we see that the Intruder could not succeed in his plan.

Q 2. Imagine you are Gerrard. Write a letter to your friend telling him what happened when the Intruder broke into your house.

Ans. 12-A, Garden Street
Aylesbury

Dt. _____

Dear James,

Hello and lots of love.

I hope this letter finds you in the best of spirits.

An interesting incident occurred and I would like to share the same with you.

While I was packing my travelling bag, an Intruder entered silently into my cottage. He resembled me. He had a revolver in his hand. He was flashily dressed in an overcoat and a soft hat.

He threatened to kill me unless I answered all his questions truthfully. He gave out his plan. He told me that he would kill me and then he would impersonate me as he had killed a cop and was on a run.

I told him that I had also killed and police were after me. I told him that my man was outside to keep a watch for cops. I asked him to see for himself. I opened the door. He leaned forward to inspect. As he turned his head, I pushed him into the cupboard. I closed the door. I informed the police about the Intruder and thus saved myself. This incident has given me an interesting plot for my next play.

Rest all is fine. Hope to hear from you soon.

Love

Gerrard



Practice Exercise



Extract Based Questions

1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

"I wouldn't want a strange man in my house to teach me." Tommy screamed with laughter. "You don't know much, Margie. The teachers didn't live in the house. They had a special building and all the kids went there."

"And all the kids learned the same thing?"

"Sure, if they were the same age."

"But my mother says a teacher has to be adjusted to fit the mind of each boy and girl it teaches and that each kid has to be taught differently."

(a) A special building that Tommy said about to Margie is:

- (i) a school
- (ii) a hotel
- (iii) a library
- (iv) a special room

(b) State whether the given statement is True or False.

A strange man here refers to a human teacher.

(c) Give a word that can correctly substitute 'screamed' in the extract.

(d) According to Margie's mother, each child had to be taught differently depending on

2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

As a five-year-old, Bismillah Khan played *gilli-danda* near a pond in the ancient estate of Dumraon in Bihar. He would regularly go to the nearby *Bihariji* temple to sing the *Bhojpuri* 'Chaita', at the end of which he would earn a big laddu weighing 1.25 kg, a prize given by the local *Maharaja*. This happened 80 years ago, and the little boy has travelled far to earn the highest civilian award in India—the Bharat Ratna.

(a) What was the distance that the little boy has travelled far?

- (i) From childhood to adulthood
- (ii) From a poor child to the richest man
- (iii) From a small award of 1.25 kg laddu to the highest civilian award in India
- (iv) An amazing journey from 8 years to 80 years of age

(b) As a five-year old, Bismillah Khan played *gilli-danda* near a pond in the ancient estate of Dumraon

(c) The antonym of 'ancient' can be:

- (i) obsolete
- (ii) recent
- (iii) former
- (iv) bygone

(d) State whether the given statement is True or False. Bismillah Khan would regularly go to the nearby *Bihariji* temple to sing the *Bhojpuri* 'Chaita'.

3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

At the urging of a colleague, Einstein wrote a letter to the American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, on 2 August, 1939, in which he warned: 'A single bomb of this type exploded in a port, might very well destroy the whole part together with some of the surrounding territory.' His words did not fail to have an effect. The Americans developed the atomic bomb in a secret project of their own and dropped it on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

(a) A character trait of Einstein that is shown in this extract is his:

- (i) humanitarian quality
- (ii) kindness
- (iii) trust on others
- (iv) faith on people

(b) Einstein warned the President of America about a powerful atomic bomb developed by

(c) The antonym of 'destroy' is:

- (i) create
- (ii) demolish
- (iii) ruin
- (iv) damage

(d) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract. drop : throw :: miss :

4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

I was one of many children—a short boy with rather undistinguished looks, born to tall and handsome parents. We lived in our ancestral house, which was built in the middle of the 19th century. It was a fairly large *pucca* house, made of limestone and brick, on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram. My austere father used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries. However, all necessities were provided for, in terms of food, medicine or clothes. In fact, I would say mine was a very secure childhood, both materially and emotionally.

(a) A character trait of Abdul Kalam that is highlighted in this extract is:

- (i) strict and severe
- (ii) love and affection
- (iii) quality of gratitude
- (iv) simple and ordinary

(b) Abdul Kalam's ancestral house was a *pucca* house which was made of

(c) His austere father used to avoid all:

- (i) inessential comforts and luxuries
- (ii) essential things
- (iii) tea and coffee
- (iv) bed and sofa

(d) The word 'ancestral' means the same as

5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

While her journey from the frozen plains of Siberia to the summit of women's tennis has touched the hearts of tennis fans, for the younger herself there appears to be no room for sentiment. The straight looks and the answers she gives when asked about her ambition make it amply clear that she considers the sacrifices were worth it. 'I am very, very competitive. I work hard at what I do. It's my job.' This is her mantra for success.

- (a) State whether the given statement is True or False.
Maria considers that her sacrifices were not worth what she achieved.
- (b) Tennis fans feel emotional to know about Maria's journey from the frozen region of Siberia to the summit of
- (c) Maria's mantra for success is that she is:
(i) intelligent and hard-working
(ii) competitive and hard-working
(iii) emotional and competitive
(iv) sentimental and gives importance to work
- (d) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract.
sentiment : emotion :: apex :

6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Gerrard: You're planning a gratuitous double, so to speak. Admitted you've nothing to lose, but what have you to gain?

Intruder: I've got freedom to gain. As for myself, I'm a poor hunted rat. As Vincent Charles Gerrard I'm free to go places and do nothing. I can eat well and sleep and without having to be ready to beat it at the sight of a cop.

Gerrard: In most melodramas the villain is foolish enough to delay his killing long enough to be frustrated. You are much luckier.

- (a) As the intruder had committed a murder, he was hunted by the:
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- (d) An antonym of 'delay'



Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 7. What subjects did Margie and Tommy learn?
- Q 8. How did percussionist Ron Forbes help Evelyn in her career?
- Q 9. How would Kezia's father behave in the evening after the work?
- Q 10. What was Einstein's 'Special Theory of Relativity' about?
- Q 11. Why did Abdul collect tamarind seeds in 1939?
- Q 12. Which years can be deemed as landmarks in Maria Sharapova's career?



Long Answer Type Questions

- Q 13. How does Evelyn hear music?
- Q 14. Kezia's efforts to please her father resulted in displeasing him very much. How did this happen?
- Q 15. The snake has been compared to three objects. What are they? How are the objects similar to the snake?
- Q 16. 'Determination and courage made Santosh reach for the top of the world.' Justify.
- Q 17. To hear any flute is to be drawn into the commonality of all mankind. Why does the author say this?

