

If I Were You - Douglas James

Answers to NCERT Questions

THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

I. Answer these questions.

1. "At last a sympathetic audience.

(i) Who says this?

(ii) Why does he say it?

(iii) Is he sarcastic or serious?

Ans: (i) This has been said by Gerrard.

(ii) He says so because the intruder had asked him to talk about himself.

(iii) He is being sarcastic because he knew about the intruder's intentions.

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

Ans: The intruder had chosen Gerrard as his target whose identity he wanted to take on because he was of the same physical structure. Besides, as Gerrard, he could move around freely doing nothing in particular. He could lead a comfortable life without running at the sight of a cop.

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?

Ans: (i) Gerrard says this line.

(ii) He says that when something went wrong he reacted not by speaking but by using his gun and shooting the person down with his bullets.

(iii) He says so because having understood the intruder's intentions, he was putting on an act of being a dangerous person, so as to save himself. He had not killed anyone.

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

Ans: Gerrard seems to be a person who was involved in the business of theatre and art. It is mentioned that he was a playwright. When he saw the intruder first, he reacts

by saying, “this is all very melodramatic, not very original. Later, when he enters into a conversation with the threatening intruder, he says, “at last a sympathetic audience! He also asks the intruder, “are you American, or is that merely a clever imitation, when he warns him by saying, “better be careful, wise guy! Further, when the intruder goes about elaborating his plan for impersonation, Gerrard says, “In most melodramas, the villain is foolish enough to delay his killing long enough to be frustrated.

Yet again, while he was making up a story about his own identity, Gerrard tells him about his attire, “that’s a disguise outfit; false moustaches and what not. And finally, after trapping the intruder in his wardrobe, he picks up the phone and says, “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.

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?

Ans: (i) The intruder says these lines to Gerrard.

(ii) The intruder was a little confused as Gerrard did not show any sign of being afraid or worried. Irritated by this, he says the above lines, as if to warn him of the situation Gerrard was going to find himself in.

(iii) According to the speaker, if Gerrard would get to know of his plan of murdering him and impersonating as the latter, he would stop being smart, and begin to worry.

6. “They can’t hang me twice.

(i) Who says this?

(ii) Why does the speaker say it?

Ans: (i) These lines are being spoken by the intruder.

(ii) He says this line to Gerrard when the latter asks him why he wanted to add murder to his list of crimes. The intruder tells that he is already wanted for murder, and he cannot be hung twice.

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

Ans: The mystery that he was proposing to explain to the intruder was that he himself was a wanted criminal who was in hiding. He elaborates by saying that it was for this reason that he lived a secret life, without meeting people, and kept going from place to place to avoid being caught. The crime he was supposed to have committed was, to kill someone when things got out of hand. He says that one of his men was arrested.

Besides, the police had got hold of some important papers that could be used to convict him, which his men should have burnt and destroyed. To make it further authentic, he says that he had packed his bag and was on his way to stage another disappearing act, as he suspected some problem that night.

8. "This is your big surprise.

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

(ii) What is the surprise?

Ans: (i) This line appears twice in the play. First, when the intruder reveals his intentions to Gerrard, and the second time, when Gerrard was going to reveal "the truth about himself to the intruder.

(ii) The surprise in the first case was that the intruder planned to kill and impersonate as Gerrard. He was a wanted criminal who has been on the run. He wanted to settle down as Gerrard because the latter matched his physical appearance, and lead a comfortable life free of all fears of being caught by the police.

In the case of Gerrard, it was the fabricated story, wherein, he claims that he was a wanted criminal, who had murdered someone when things got sour. He tells the intruder that he himself was in hiding, as he was a crook and not a Sunday-school teacher. He warns him by saying that if he kills him and takes over his place, he would be caught and hung because the person he would be in disguise, "Gerrard, was also wanted.

THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

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

(i) The (site, cite) of the accident was (ghastly/ghostly).

Ans: The site of the accident was ghastly.

(ii) Our college (principle/principal) is very strict.

Ans: Our college principal is very strict.

(iii) I studied (continuously/continually) for eight hours.

Ans: I studied continuously for eight hours.

(iv) The fog had an adverse (affect/effect) on the traffic.

Ans: The fog had an adverse effect on the traffic.

(v) Cezanne, the famous French painter, was a brilliant (artist/artiste).

Ans: Cezanne, the famous French painter, was a brilliant artist.

(vi) The book that you gave me yesterday is an extraordinary (collage/college) of science fiction and mystery.

Ans: The book that you gave me yesterday is an extraordinary collage of science and mystery.

(vii) Our school will (host/hoist) an exhibition on cruelty to animals and wildlife conservation.

Ans: Our school will host an exhibition on cruelty to animals and wildlife conservation.

(viii) Screw the lid tightly onto the top of the bottle and (shake/shape) well before using the contents.

Ans: Screw the lid tightly onto the top of the bottle and shake well before using the contents.

II. 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.

What the author says	What he means
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.

Ans:

What the author says	What he means
Why, this is a surprise, Mr—er—	Gerrard means that his company is not being actually sympathetic because the intruder is in a threatening mode wielding his gun. This is no way sympathetic.
At last a sympathetic audience!	Gerrard actually was trying to tell him how immodest he was in not having revealed anything about himself.

With you figuring so largely in it
understandable

Gerrard means that it is not
understandable how anything about him
was surprising.

DICTIONARY USE

(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				

Ans:

Noun	Adjective	Adverb	Verb	Meaning
sympathy	sympathetic	sympathetically	sympathise	feel pity for others
familiarity	familiar	familiarly	familiarise	to get to know about things
comfort	comfortable	comfortably	comfort	freedom from hardship
care	caring	carefully	care	concern
surprise	surprising	surprisingly	surprise	shocked, amazed, astonished

WRITING

1. Which of the words below describe Gerrard and which describe the intruder?

smart	humourous	clever
beautiful	cool	confident

flashy	witty	nonchalant
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Ans:

Gerrard: smart, humourous, clever, cool, confident, nonchalant

Intruder: smart, flashy, clever, confident, witty, nonchalant

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

Ans: Gerrard: Gerrard was a smart, humourous and confident person. He did not lose his cool when he was in a life-threatening situation. When the intruder entered his house and took out his gun, he confronted him with courage and cool. He very cleverly cooked up a story, that was very humourous as far as the reader was concerned. Being a playwright, he used his wit and smartness at the right time and gave the intruder a “taste of his own medicine.”

Intruder: He was also very smart. To even make a plan like the one he had for his future, requires a lot of ‘intelligence’. He had done adequate research before deciding whose place he was going to take on the earth. He wears very flashy clothes, which in itself was adequate to frighten people. He has a lot of wit and smartness as is evident from the confidence and nonchalance with which he behaves with Gerrard in his house.

3. 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.

Ans: Gerrard in disguise

Gerrard was preparing to go for his drama practice. Dressed in his character’s clothes, he had packed the props that he had laid out on his bed in a box, and was just about to leave.

Lo Behold!! There was a knock on the door. He noticed a man at the door, dressed very flashily, wearing a strange look on his face. Assuming him to be a tradesperson, he receives him, to be cut short by the intruder. He takes out his gun and threatens to kill Gerrard. The smart playwright quickly comprehended the intentions of the intruder.

He was not very pleased or interested in common courtesies (welcome). He tells Gerrard that he has not gone there with noble intentions. “I have been on the run for a long time, and I would now like to retire and lead a peaceful life. For this, you have to sacrifice your life. Gerrard pretended to be ignorant and asks him why he’d have to sacrifice his life to which the intruder says, “I will kill you, and be Gerrard myself. I look a lot like you. So it would be very convenient for me. Ha Ha!! Now, Gerrard put on his thinking cap and weaves out his action plan. He tells the intruder, “Okay, your welcome to do this. I am fed up of running and hiding from the police myself. I am also wanted for murder. But be sure you are safe, for if you impersonate as Gerrard’s, you will be hung

anyway. He then tells the intruder to join him in his plan to escape, "I am worried. I am close to being caught today, I sense danger. Though doubtful of Gerrard's intentions, he moves and gets trapped very easily in Gerrard's wardrobe. Alas! Once again, it is proved beyond doubt that the "Pen is mightier than the sword.

Additional Questions

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow: (4 Marks each)

1. "I'm sorry, I thought you were telling me, not asking me.

- (a) From which lesson has this line been taken?
- (b) Who is the speaker?
- (c) Why was he sorry?
- (d) Who is 'you'?

Ans:

- (a) This line has been taken from the play, "If I Were You.
- (b) The speaker is Gerrard.
- (c) He was sorry for not understanding the questions of the intruder.
- (d) 'You' is the intruder.

2. "My speciality's Jewel robbery. Your car will do me a treat. It's certainly a dandy bus.

- (a) Who is 'my' and 'me' referring to?
- (b) Whose car is being referred to here?
- (c) Why would the car be a treat?
- (d) Why does he call it a 'dandy bus'?

3. "I am glad you're pleased to see me. I don't think you'll be pleased for long. Put those paws up.

- (a) Who is 'I'?
- (b) Who says these lines to whom? Name the lesson.
- (c) In what context has these lines been said?

(d) Explain, "Put those paws up."

Ans:

(a) 'I' is the intruder.

(b) These lines are being spoken by the intruder to Gerrard in the play, 'If I Were You'.

(c) It is said in reply to the expression of warmth and surprise expressed by Gerrard while welcoming the intruder to his house.

(d) 'Put those paws up' means to surrender.

4. "Thanks a lot. You'll soon stop being smart. I'll make you crawl. I want to know a few things."

(a) Who is thanking whom and why?

(b) Who will stop being smart and be made to crawl?

(c) Who is 'I'?

(d) What does 'I' want to know?

Ans:

(a) The intruder is thanking Gerrard for helping him with the word 'nonchalant' to complete his dialogue, when he found him stuttering (pausing) for the right words.

(b) The intruder says that soon Gerrard will stop being smart, and he would be made to crawl by him.

(c) 'I' is the intruder.

(d) The intruder has come over with the plan to impersonate as Gerrard. He has done some research. He wants to gather more information about him.

5. "there's the baker, and the greengrocer, of course and then there's the milkman—quite charming, but no one so interesting as yourself."

(a) In what context has this line been spoken?

(b) Who is speaking?

(c) What is the tone of the speaker?

(d) Why does he say 'no one so interesting as yourself'?

Ans:

(a) The speaker is saying this in answer to the question by the intruder, 'do people often come out here?'

(b) These lines are being spoken by Gerrard.

(c) The speaker is speaking with a lot of wit and humour.

(d) He says so because others, who come, do not have such interesting plans as the intruder had.

6. "in most melodramas the villain is foolish enough to delay his killing long enough to be frustrated. You are much luckier."

(a) Name the lesson and the author of the above lines.

(b) Who says these lines?

(c) What is the context?

(d) Why does he say 'you are luckier'?

Ans:

(a) These lines have been taken from the play, "If I Were You, written by Douglas James.

(b) These lines have been spoken by Gerrard.

(c) He says this in response to the plan being made by the intruder to murder Gerrard and take his place.

(d) He says 'you are luckier' because Gerrard was ready with a story to protect himself, and that was to be a major twist to the intruder's game. The expression is ironical.

Short Answer Questions (30-40 words: 2 Marks each)

1. Why does the intruder say that Gerrard's pleasure would be short-lived?

Ans: The intruder had entered the cottage with an intention of killing Gerrard and taking his place. When he was welcomed warmly and pleasantly by Gerrard, he tells him that once he gets to know of what was awaiting him, he would no longer be pleased.

2. What was the need for the intruder to impersonate?

Ans: The intruder was a wanted criminal. He had murdered a cop and has been in hiding. After a lot of research, he spotted an individual who matched his physical appearance. He was fed up of the uncertainty that surrounded his life. Therefore, he intended to do away with Gerrard and get into his boot.

3. "What have you to gain? Why does Gerrard ask the intruder this question?"

Ans: Gerrard asks the intruder with the intention of convincing the latter that he would not get anything if he killed him. The reason being that Gerrard himself was on the wanted list of the police, for having committed a murder. Therefore, even if the intruder impersonated as Gerrard, it would be of no use as he will be sent to be hanged anyway.

4. Where did the intruder see Gerrard first? What did he notice about him?

Ans: The intruder saw Gerrard first at Aylesbury. He was in his car. He overheard a conversation between two other people who had seen Gerrard, and from their discussion he gathered that he was a queer kind of a mystery man.

5. What did you learn after reading this play?

Ans: The play is a very humorous one. It is hilarious to have someone coming to your house and threatening to occupy your house after killing you. But yes, it is funny only as long as it is a piece of fiction. But from the way Gerrard handled the highly precarious (uncertain, unsafe) situation with wit, confidence and presence of mind, one gets an impetus (motivation) to follow his technique, if faced with similar problem.

6. Write a short paragraph on the gist of the story.

Ans: The story is about a man who is fed up of his life, and yearns to lead a life of comfort and freedom. He devises a plan to kill a playwright named Gerrard and impersonate as the dead man. To make this a reality, he goes to Gerrard's house, and tells him of his plan and threatens him with his gun. Gerrard was a bit too smart for the intruder. He writes a script to another story and very cleverly tricks the intruder and hands him over to the police.

Long Answer Questions (100-150 words: 8 Marks each)

1. As the playwright, make a diary entry of the day, the intruder visited your house.

Ans:

Sunday, 10 August 2000

10 p.m.

Dear Diary,

Today was a very interesting day. I have got the script for my next play.

I was just preparing to go for today's dress rehearsal, when there was a knock on the door. To my surprise, there was a young, flashy fellow standing at the door. Before I could welcome him inside the house, he charged in, took out his gun and threatened to kill me.

I was scared, but put on a brave front and tricked him into submission. I never thought I could do so. Though, it was very difficult for him to accept it, he fell for the story I had weaved. On the pretext of escaping, I pushed him into the wardrobe, locked it, and called the police and handed him over. He has just been taken. I regret not being able to go for the rehearsal. May be tomorrow. Well! I am exhausted!

Good night

2. Draw a pen picture of the Gerrard.

Ans: Gerrard was a playwright, who was supposed to be having a very queer and mysterious nature. He was rarely seen by people, and led a very private life. According to him, the only people who visited his house were the baker, greengrocer and the milkman.

However, he was very smart, witty and confident. He possessed the right mental strength to handle very meticulously a planned attack made on him by an intruder. Not losing his cool, and replying to the intruder with humour, and sarcasm, he plays a very shrewd game and gives the intruder a dose of his own bitter medicine. Eventually, he saves himself and hands the trickster to the police.

Douglas, through the character of Gerrard, displays to the readers, the approach to handle critical situations.

Self- Assessment Test

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. “I’m a poor hunted rat. As Vincent Charles Gerrard, I’m free to go places and do nothing

- (a)** Who is the hunted rat?
- (b)** Why is he being hunted?
- (c)** Who is Vincent Charles Gerrard?
- (d)** Explain the significance of this statement.

2. “Can you tell the sergeant to come up here at once?

- (a)** Who is speaking?
- (b)** Who is a sergeant?
- (c)** Why is the sergeant being called?
- (d)** Where is he telling the sergeant to come at once?

Short Answer Questions

- 1.** Describe the interaction between the two characters.
- 2.** “Careful boss, I’m watching you. Elaborate.

3. How did the intruder reach Aylesbury?
 4. Why does the intruder enquire about Gerrard's Christian name?
 5. What information about Gerrard had the intruder gathered before his attack?
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Long Answer Questions

1. Give a character sketch of the intruder.
2. Write an article on the topic, " Presence of mind... my guardian. You are Shweta/Shyam.
3. In the play, Gerrard captures the intruder. In a paragraph, attempt a different conclusion to the play.