

English-302

Chapter 12 *If I were you*

Summary

Gerrard is a cultured playwright. He lives in a small cottage. He does meet many people. He is to go out soon, but before he does so, an intruder enters his cottage. The intruder is a criminal and has a gun in his hand. He bumps accidentally against the table. Gerrard welcomes him with confidence. The intruder asks many questions to Gerrard. He answers his questions with wit, irony and humour. The intruder wanted to murder him and live as Gerrard because he looked like him. Gerrard at once understood everything. He told the intruder that he was also a murderer. Therefore, the police were after him. Gerrard explained that unfortunately one of his men had been caught. He was expecting trouble that night. He then made the intruder understand that it was good for him if he went with him. The intruder agreed. But when he was about to cross the door, Gerrard pushed him into the nearby cupboard. He then slammed it. Thereafter, he telephoned the police for the intruder's arrest.

Important points from the text:

- The play opens with Gerrard answering a phone call which is from a client to whom he promises to deliver the props for rehearsal. After talking on the phone, he starts to pack his travel bag when he notices an intruder enter from his right side.
- Gerrard notices that the unknown man resembles him quite a bit and is dressed flashily, wearing an overcoat, a soft hat and carrying a revolver in his hand. However, before he can take Gerrard by surprise, the intruder bumps accidentally against a table, and alerts Gerrard of his presence.
- The intruder without wasting any time asks Gerrard to raise his hands up in the air. Gerrard on the other hand, is surprisingly relaxed and does not panic at gunpoint. He starts chatting with the intruder and asks his name pleasantly.
- The intruder starts interrogating Gerrard about his details. Gerrard requests him to discuss in a comfortable position, so the intruder asks him to sit down on a chair. As they start talking again, he asks Gerrard if he stays alone and owns a car.
- Gerrard tries to figure out who the intruder is when the latter threatens him with dire consequences if his questions are not answered.
- The intruder was a criminal who was mainly a jewellery robber. After killing a policeman, he was fleeing from the police and due to this resemblance to Gerrard, he plans to kill him and assume his identity to get rid of the police.
- Gerrard makes out that the intruder is not so smart but only over-confident. Thus, he plans something witty and lies to the intruder. Gerrard makes up a story that he is also a criminal and murderer himself. Much similar to the intruder, the police are also after him and if he ends up killing Gerrard, the intruder will be killed either way.
- So, the intruder believes his story and Gerrard convinces him to go in the garage from where they both can flee in his car. After opening the garage door, we learn that it was actually a cupboard in which Gerrard locks up the intruder and informs the police of his whereabouts.
- Thus, we see that how a little alertness and cleverness saved Gerrard's life. Thus, we see that Gerrard's presence of mind and alertness saved him from a life-threatening situation.

Message of the play : The play gives the message that over-confidence can lead to catastrophic results. One should never consider oneself to be smarter than the rival. The play also conveys the message that intelligence, presence of mind, and keeping a cool head can help us overcome any problems that we may experience.

Important words from the text:

1. Cultured: a person who has good education and manners
2. Sympathetic: feeling pity or sorrow for someone
3. Assist: help/aid
4. Mystery: puzzle/ something impossible or difficult to understand
5. Disguise: pretending to be somebody else

Evaluate yourself

- Why did the invader select Gerrard as the guy whose identity he wishes to assume?
- What is Gerrard's profession? How do his words and speech convey this?
- How did Gerard convince the intruder that he would not get away even as Gerard?
- “This is your big surprise”. What “big surprise” is the intruder talking about?
- Bring out the contrast between Gerrard and the intruder.
- The best way to deal with a problem is not to lose your calm. Explain this statement with reference to Gerrard's behaviour in the play

Do you know?

- The simple past tense is used to describe a completed activity that happened in the past. In other words, it started in the past and ended in the past. For example:
 1. Mira baked a cake.
 2. They painted the house.
- Biodata, short for biographical data, is a one- to three-page document you use when applying for a job. Your biodata summarizes most aspects of your life, including personal details, education, skills and work experience. Your bio-data should be self explanatory. By simply looking at your bio-data the employers should be convinced that you are the right candidate for the specific job. It should be impressive.

The following details should be included in a resume:

- Name
- Phone number
- Email id
- Date of birth
- Educational qualifications
- Experiences
- Hobbies/strengths/ weaknesses
- References

Extend your horizon.

Imagine you are Gerrard, write a diary entry describing what happened when the intruder broke into your house.

- Describe the intruder's appearance using adjectives
- His way of speaking, mannerisms, demeanour
- His plan to evade the law
- And what did you do in order to save yourself.