

Question 1:

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
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	(American English) a person who pretends to know a lot
a dandy bus	an informal expression for a fashionable vehicle
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gratuitous	unnecessary and usually harmful
dodge	avoid
lucky break	an unexpected opportunity for success
Sunday-school teacher	a Christian religious teacher who teaches on Sundays in Church
frame	trap

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 said the given line.
- (ii)** He said so because the intruder had asked him to talk about himself.
- (iii)** He was being sarcastic. The audience, i.e., the intruder was in no ways sympathetic. In fact, he told Gerard, at gunpoint, to talk about himself so that he could use the information to further his own interests.

Question 2:

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

Answer:

The intruder chose Gerrard as the man whose identity he wanted to take on because he was of the same build as Gerrard. Also, as Vincent Charles Gerrard, he would be free to go places and do nothing. He could eat well and sleep without having to be ready to run away at the sight of a cop.

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 said the given line.
- (ii)** It means that when things went wrong with him, he had committed a murder and got away. Here, “I said it with bullets” means that he fired at someone to escape.

(iii) No, it was not the truth. Gerard said so because he wanted the intruder to believe that he too was dangerous. The intruder would have killed him if he had not lied about his identity. He told him that he himself was a crook; that he had also killed someone and escaped. However, his partner had been caught, and he had not burnt the papers that should have been burnt. Therefore, the cops were after him too, and this meant that the intruder would still not be safe even after taking on Gerrard's identity.

Question 4:

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

Answer:

Gerrard could have been a theatrical artist, perhaps a playwright. There are several parts in the play which suggest that he had something to do with theatre. When he saw the intruder, he said "This is all very melodramatic, not very original, perhaps but..." When the intruder asked him to talk about himself, he said "At last a sympathetic audience!" He also asked the intruder "Are you American, or is that merely a clever imitation?" Then, when the intruder had told him his plan of killing him and taking over his identity, he said "In most melodramas the villain is foolish enough to delay his killing long enough to be frustrated." Later, he again said "I said you were luckier than most melodramatic villains." When he told the intruder about his false identity in order to save himself, he told him "That's a disguise outfit; false moustaches and what not". Finally, after locking him up, he picked up the phone and said "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."

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 said the given line.

(ii) When Gerrard did not show any signs of being perturbed by the intruder's presence, the intruder responded by saying "Trying to be calm and — er —". He stopped and fumbled for words and then, Gerrard completed his sentence by saying "'Nonchalant' is your word, I think". Peeved at the smartness displayed by Gerrard, the intruder said that Gerard would stop being smart once he knew what was going to happen to him.

(iii) According to the intruder, Gerrard would stop being smart once he knew what was going to happen to him. The intruder's plan was to kill Gerard and take over his identity. He felt that when Gerrard would know this, he would stop being smart and start getting scared.

Question 6:

"They can't hang me twice."

(i) Who says this?

(ii) Why does the speaker say it?

Answer:

(i) The intruder said the given line.

(ii) The intruder had been telling Gerrard that he had murdered one man, and that he would not shy away from murdering him too. This is because the police could not hang him twice for two murders.

Question 7:

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

Answer:

The mystery that Gerrard proposed to explain was the story he made up to dodge the intruder and escape him. The story was that Gerrard himself was a criminal like the intruder. He asked why else would he not meet any trades people and was all over different places. When things went wrong with him, he had committed a murder and got away. Unfortunately, one of his men had been arrested and certain things were found which his men should have burnt. He said that he was expecting some trouble that night and therefore, his bag was packed and he was ready to escape.

Question 8:

“This is your big surprise.”

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

Answer:

(i) The given line was spoken twice in the play. First, it was spoken by the intruder when he revealed to Gerrard why he was there and what he was going to do with him. On the second occasion, it was spoken by Gerrard when he was about to reveal his made-up story to the intruder.

(ii) When the intruder said this line, the surprise was that he was going to kill Gerrard and take over his identity. He told him that as Vincent Charles Gerrard, he would be free to go places and do nothing. He could eat well and sleep without having to be ready to run away at the sight of a cop.

When Gerrard said this line, the surprise was his made-up story about himself. The story was that Gerrard himself was a criminal like the intruder. When things went wrong with him, he had committed a murder and got away. Unfortunately, one of his men was arrested and certain things were found, which his men should have burnt. He said that he was expecting some trouble that night and therefore, his bag was packed and he was ready to escape.

Question 1:

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.
2. Our college principal is very strict.
3. I studied continuously for eight hours.
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Question 2:

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 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.

Answer:

What the author says	What he means
You won't kill me for a very good reason.	Gerrard was just pretending to have a 'very good reason'. However, there was 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 found 'quite amusing' was actually a life-threatening situation. He had been in confrontation with a criminal.
In most melodramas the	Gerrard pretended that the villain, i.e., the intruder

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villain is foolish enough to delay his killing long enough to be frustrated. You are much luckier.

was really intelligent to have thought up a plan to take over the identity of a man who lived at such a place where the police could not reach instantly. However, the intruder was much mistaken because Gerrard was actually using this 'delay' to think up a plan to escape him.