



By Douglas James

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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?

Answer:

- (i) The speaker of the given line is Gerrard.
- (ii) He says it as he is asked by the intruder to speak about himself.
- (iii) He speaks the given dialogue sarcastically.

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

Answer:

Gerrard looks much like the intruder. The intruder is a murderer. The police is after him. He hopes he can easily impersonate Gerrard escape being caught.

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 this.
- (ii) It means that when things went wrong, he had used his gun to shoot someone for his escape.
- (iii) No, it is not the truth. The speaker says this to save himself from getting shot by the intruder.

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

Answer:

Gerrard is a playwright by profession. Several parts of the play that reflect this. Some of these are:

- "This is all very melodramatic, not very original, perhaps, but..."
- "At last a sympathetic audience!"
- "In most melodramas the villain is foolish enough to delay his killing long enough to be frustrated".
- "I said, you were luckier than most melodramatic villains."
- "That's a disguise outfit; false moustaches and what not".
- "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?

Answer:

- (i) The intruder says the line.
- (ii) The speaker says it to frighten Gerrard.
- (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.

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

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

Answer:

- (i) The intruder says the 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.

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 save his own life. The story was that Gerrard himself was a criminal like the intruder. He asked the intruder why else would he not meet any trades people and be a bit of a mystery man here today and gone tomorrow. The game was up as things had suddenly gone wrong for 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.

8. "This is your big surprise."

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

Answer:

- (i) This has been said twice in the play. On the first occasion, it is spoken by the intruder while revealing his plan to kill Gerrard. Secondly, it is spoken by Gerrard before he reveals his fictitious identity to the intruder.
- (ii) The intruder's surprise is his plan to kill Gerrard and take on his identity to lead a secure and hassle-free life. Whereas, Gerrard's surprise is his fictitious identity, his way of refraining the intruder from killing him.

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