

talk  
to  
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

# Beehive

## 11. If I Were You

by

### Douglas James

#### 1. Summary

This play is set in Essex, which is in England.

This is a funny story about a murderer who is trying to escape from the cops. He hears about a mysterious man called Gerrard. The murderer plans to kill Gerrard and take over his identity so that the police can't find him. He breaks into Gerrard's cottage holding a revolver. He tells Gerrard his plan. Gerrard fools the Intruder into believing that he too is being hunted by the police. He convinces the Intruder that he has a getaway plan. Gerrard tells the Intruder to rush into a getaway car. As the Intruder steps out, Gerrard knocks the revolver out of his hand and locks him in a cupboard and gets him arrested. Gerrard is not a crook but a producer of a play and/or a playwright!

#### 2. Vocabulary

1. **Intruder** – trespasser  
A guard saw the **intruder** and called the police.
2. **Criminal** – someone who breaks the law  
The judge sentenced the **criminal** to twenty-five years in prison for killing an old woman.
3. **Take on his identity** – pretend to be someone else by using his/her name and work, etc.  
It is a crime to **take on his identity**; if you try, you will get caught and jailed.
4. **Interior** – inside  
The **interior** of Kavita's house is beautifully decorated.
5. **Divan** – a bed with only a thick base to lie on, but no frame on either end  
My dog loves to lie on the **divan** in the sun.
6. **Upstage** – part of the stage that is away from the audience  
I was sitting far from the stage so I could neither hear, nor see the action **upstage**.

7. **Horn-rimmed** – spectacles made of horn or tortoise shell, or copies of these  
I will never wear **horn rimmed spectacles**, because the horn is taken from animals.
8. **Lounge suit** – a man's suit – coat and pants, worn with a tie, for work or on formal occasions  
I am not comfortable wearing a **lounge suit** because it is so hot in Chennai.
9. **Cultured** - sophisticated, refined  
From the way she spoke, I could tell she is a **cultured** person.
10. **Expect** – think, anticipate  
I **expect** you to finish your homework by tomorrow!
11. **Count on** – depend upon  
We can always **count on** my brother for helping out with our homework.
12. **Right –ho** – slang for alright, okay  
**Right-ho**, our work is done, so let's go home!
13. **Similar in build** – almost same shape and size  
My sister and I are **similar in build**, so we can share our clothes.
14. **Flashily** – in a cheap, loud way  
She is so **flashily** dressed in a bright pink kurti, with bright green pants, large gold earrings and purple lipstick!
15. **Pleasantly** – in a way that is friendly, enjoyable, attractive, or easy to like  
I was greeted **pleasantly** at the door by Rita's father, when I went to visit her.
16. **Paws** – normally animal's feet, in this case, slang for hands  
Get your dirty **paws** off my clean plates!
17. **Melodramatic** – over dramatic, exaggerated  
Sona is **melodramatic**, she creates a drama about everything!
18. **Nonchalant** – casual  
Sudhir had a fever, but he was **nonchalant** about it and went to college.
19. **Funny business** – incorrect or deceptive behaviour  
My entire class got over 90%, so the Principal was sure that there was some **funny business**.

20. **Motions to** – points to, to make a signal usually with your hand or head  
The Principal **motioned to** me to keep quiet.
21. **Sympathetic** – caring, supportive  
My mother is very **sympathetic** to everybody's problems.
22. **Gypsies** - a tribe of wandering people that have no permanent home  
**Gypsies** wandered all the way from India to Europe about 1500 years ago.
23. **Inflection** – a change of tone in pronunciation  
The **inflection** in the voice of the teacher showed that he was very happy about our exam results.
24. **Unfamiliar** – new, untried  
I took an **unfamiliar** route back home and got lost!
25. **Emphasis** – importance or attention given to something  
In the school the **emphasis** was more on learning by doing rather than by reading books.
26. **Ability** – the physical or mental power or skill needed to do something  
The new teacher had the **ability** to explain everything clearly.
27. **Desire** – a strong feeling that you want something  
We ran to the mango orchard because we had a strong desire to eat mangoes.
28. **Christian name** – first name  
My **Christian name** is Anil, and my surname is Kumar.
29. **Run a car** – keep and use a car  
Cars cause pollution, so I don't **run a car**. I use the metro instead.
30. **Imitation** – made to look or sound like something or someone else  
This is an **imitation** leather bag; it is not made of real leather.
31. **Assist** – help  
I saw a blind man crossing the road, so I held his hand to **assist** him.
32. **Possess** – own  
I do not **possess** any leather shoes.

33. **Greengrocer** – fruit and vegetable seller  
I go to the **greengrocer** early in the morning so I can buy fresh fruits and vegetables.
34. **Charming** – attractive, appealing  
She is a **charming** lady, sophisticated, kind and extremely wise.
35. **Tradespeople** – people who buy and sell goods  
I live in a small village, with no **tradespeople**, so I had to walk 2 km to buy a lock.
36. **Considerable** – large, significant  
I am happy because my father gives me a **considerable** amount of pocket money.
37. **Modest** – ordinary, humble  
Rita is very **modest**; she never boasts about her success.
38. **Precisely** – exactly  
She explained the directions very **precisely**, so I was able to reach her home easily.
39. **Figuring so largely** – very important role in a situation  
Deepika Padukone acted as Padmavati and that is why she **figured so largely** in the movie.
40. **Understandable** – usual and not strange, easy to understand  
It is **understandable** that Rita rushed home to see her sick mother.
41. **Embrace** – hug; also to accept  
My mother held my sister in a tight **embrace** when she left home after her marriage.  
When I moved to America, I had to **embrace** a totally new way of life.
42. **Specialist** – expert  
When my father had pain in his chest, he went to see a heart **specialist**.
43. **Do me a treat** – suit very well, work very well for me  
The new shoes **do me a treat**; I look very smart in them.
44. **Wilds of Essex** – Essex is in the United Kingdom, or Britain. Wilds of Essex means a remote or deserted area of Essex  
My friend lives in **the wilds of Essex**, so she is quite lonely.

45. **Cops** – police  
The **cops** chased the chain snatcher and caught him.
46. **Trifle** – little, small, unimportant  
Five people died in that fire; so it is not a **trifling** matter!
47. **Harsh** – cruel, unkind  
Slaves were brought to America in chains and were treated very **harshly**.
48. **Heavy sarcasm** – extremely mocking or scornful, making fun of someone  
My father told me I was brilliant, but his voice was **heavy with sarcasm**.
49. **Taken a fancy** – to like somebody or something  
I have **taken a fancy** to yoga, so I practise in the park every morning.
50. **Grave** – serious  
The doctor was very **grave** when he told me that he had to operate on me immediately.
51. **Gratuitous** - not necessary  
**Gratuitous** violence in computer games has a very bad effect on the minds of children.
52. **Poor hunted rat** – somebody who is feeling trapped  
Refugees who are trying to escape from their own countries, sometimes feel like **poor hunted rats**.
53. **Frustrated** – discouraged  
Mohan was very **frustrated** when he failed his entrance exam.
54. **Posh** – high class  
She is a very **posh** lady, she wears expensive designer clothes and speaks with an accent.
55. **Pantomime** – art of showing thoughts and emotions by action rather than by talking  
She **pantomimed** drinking water to make the waiter understand that she wanted a drink.
56. **Decorative** – attractive  
The dress I bought had a lovely **decorative** border.

57. **Tribute** – compliment  
On Gandhi Jayanti, everybody pays **tribute** to the great man.
58. **Intelligence** – brains, ability to learn and understand  
The little orphan proved his **intelligence** by standing first in the class.
59. **Conversation** – talk between two or more people  
It is impossible to carry on a **conversation** with all the noise that the children are making.
60. **Elude** – escape  
The thief managed to **elude** the police for two days but was finally caught.
61. **Taking on my identity** – pretending to be me  
**Taking on my identity**, the thief used my credit card to buy an iPhone.
62. **Dodge** – escape  
Many people were throwing stones during the riot, luckily I was able to **dodge** them.
63. **Queer** – strange, odd  
He is a **queer** old man, he sits on a bench all day and talks to himself.
64. **Disregarding** – showing no care or respect for something  
Sanjay went to see the movie with his friends, **disregarding** his parents' orders.
65. **Lucky break** – unexpected good luck  
I had a really **lucky break** when I won the lottery.
66. **Apparently** – seemingly  
My brother is **apparently** on his way home to surprise my mother on her birthday.
67. **Why have I invested in this cloak of mystery** – why I have worked hard to be secretive  
**I invested in this cloak of mystery** because I am very rich and I am scared that somebody might try to kidnap me.
68. **Crook** – someone who breaks the law  
Most **crooks** get caught sooner or later.

69. **Sunday-school teacher** – a Christian religious teacher who teaches on Sundays at Church  
As a **Sunday school teacher**, I teach children to be kind, honest and truthful.
70. **Said it with bullets** – to shoot  
I had an argument with my neighbour, so **I said it with bullets**, and now I am in jail.
71. **Ready to clear off** – ready to leave  
We should not be late for the play, so let's be **ready to clear off** as soon as the school bell rings.
72. **Disguise outfit** – clothes, wigs, false moustaches, spectacles, etc. used to make you look like someone else  
I have a suitcase full of **disguise outfits**, so I can make myself look like different characters in a play.
73. **Moustaches** – hair that a man grows above his upper lip  
The bandit had a long droopy **moustache**.
74. **Musingly** - thoughtfully  
He turned the pages of the book **musingly**.
75. **Muddled** – mixed up, confused  
My uncle has drunk too much, his mind is **muddled** and he cannot even find his way home!
76. **Frame** – trap, trick, falsely accuse; also a border on a picture, door, window, etc.  
My classmate copied my answers, and then tried to **frame** me by telling our teacher that I had copied her answers!  
I got my parents' picture **framed**.
77. **Are after us** – they are chasing us  
Run! The cops **are after us**!
78. **Slams – bangs**  
The door **slammed** with the wind.
79. **Rattles** – makes a noise like a series of knocks  
I continued to **rattle** the door, but no one opened it.

80. **Yes, speaking** – polite reply when somebody on the phone asks to speak to you  
When my tutor called and asked for me, I said, “**Yes, speaking.**”
81. **Props** – things used by actors performing in a play or film  
Her business was to provide **props** for all the plays staged in the city.
82. **Rehearsal** – practise for a performance  
I have got a major role in the school Annual Day play and I am going for the **rehearsal**.
83. **Spot of bother** – a bit of trouble, often understating the problem  
I had a **spot of bother** when the tree came crashing down on my wall during the storm.
84. **Amusing** - funny  
It is always **amusing** to see my dog trying to catch his own tail.
85. **Public bar** - a public place where people go to drink alcohol  
People who drink at **public bars** everyday could become addicted to alcohol.

### 3. Questions

- I. *The following words and phrases occur in the play. Do you know their meanings? Match them with the meanings given, to find out.*

<i>cultured</i>	<i>an informal expression for a fashionable vehicle</i>
<i>count on</i>	<i>unnecessary and usually harmful</i>
<i>engaged</i>	<i>exaggerated</i>
<i>melodramatic</i>	<i>sophisticated; well mannered</i>
<i>to be smart</i>	<i>here, a tone of voice</i>
<i>inflection</i>	<i>avoid</i>
<i>wise guy</i>	<i>an unexpected opportunity for success</i>
<i>a dandy bus</i>	<i>trap</i>
<i>tradespeople</i>	<i>a Christian religious teacher who teaches on Sundays in Church</i>
<i>gratuitous</i>	<i>(American English) a person who pretends to know a lot</i>
<i>dodge</i>	<i>depend on; rely on</i>
<i>lucky break</i>	<i>( American English) an informal way of saying that one is being too clever</i>
<i>Sunday-school teacher</i>	<i>occupied; busy</i>
<i>frame</i>	<i>merchants</i>

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

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?**
4. **What is Gerrard’s profession? Quote the parts of the play that support your answer.**
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?**
6. **“They can’t hang me twice.”**
  - (i) **Who says this?**
  - (ii) **Why does the speaker say it?**
7. **“A mystery I propose to explain.” What is the mystery the speaker proposes to explain?**
8. **“This is your big surprise.”**
  - (i) **Where has this been said in the play?**
  - (ii) **What is the surprise?**

#### 4. Grammar

##### I. 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.

##### II. 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 more such expressions along with what they really mean.

<i>What the author says</i>	<i>What he means</i>
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.

## 5. Dictionary Use

A word can mean different things in different contexts. Look at these three sentences:

- The students are taught to respect different cultures.
- The school is organising a cultural show.
- His voice is cultured.

In the first sentence, 'culture' (noun) means *way of life*; in the second, 'cultural' (adjective) means *connected with art, literature and music*; and in the third, 'cultured' (verb) means *sophisticated, well mannered*. Usually a dictionary helps you identify the right meaning by giving you signposts.

Look at the dictionary entry on 'culture' from *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005*.

<p><b>cul-tural</b> 0 ➤ /'kʌltʃərəl/ <i>adj.</i> [usually before noun]</p> <p><b>1</b> connected with the culture of a particular society or group, its customs, beliefs, etc.: <i>cultural differences between the two communities</i> ◊ <i>economic, social and cultural factors</i> <b>2</b> connected with art, literature, music, etc.: <i>a cultural event</i> ◊ <i>Europe's cultural heritage</i> ◊ <i>The orchestra is very important for the cultural life of the city.</i> ▶ <b>cul-tur-al-ly</b> /-rəli/ <i>adv.</i></p> <p><b>cul-ture</b> 0 ➤ /'kʌltʃə(r)/ <i>noun, verb</i></p> <p>■ <b>noun</b></p> <p>▶ <b>WAY OF LIFE</b> <b>1</b> [U] the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group: <i>European/Islamic/African/American, etc. cul-ture</i> ◊ <i>working-class culture</i> <b>2</b> [C] a country, group, etc. with its own beliefs, etc.: <i>The children are taught to respect different cultures.</i> ◊ <i>the effect of technology on traditional cultures</i></p> <p>▶ <b>ART/MUSIC/LITERATURE</b> <b>3</b> [U] art, music, literature, etc., thought of as a group: <i>Venice is a beautiful city full of cul-ture and history.</i> ◊ <b>popular culture</b> (= that is enjoyed by a lot of people) ◊ <i>the Minister for Culture</i></p>	<p>▶ <b>BELIEFS/ATTITUDES</b> <b>4</b> [C,U] the beliefs and attitudes about sth that people in a particular group or organization share: <i>The political cultures of the United States and Europe are very different.</i> ◊ <i>A culture of failure exists in some schools.</i> ◊ <i>company culture</i> ◊ <i>We are living in a consumer culture.</i></p> <p>▶ <b>GROWING/BREEDING</b> <b>5</b> [U] (<i>technical</i>) the growing of plants or breeding of particular animals in order to get a particular substance or crop from them: <i>the culture of silk-worms</i> (= for silk)</p> <p>▶ <b>CELLS/BACTERIA</b> <b>6</b> [C] (<i>biology, medical</i>) a group of cells or bacteria, especially one taken from a person or an animal and grown for medical or scientific study, or to produce food; the process of obtaining and growing these cells: <i>a culture of cells from the tumour</i> ◊ <i>Yogurt is made from active cultures.</i> ◊ <i>to do/take a throat culture</i></p> <p>■ <b>verb</b> [VN] (<i>biology, medical</i>) to grow a group of cells or bacteria for medical or scientific study</p> <p><b>cul-tured</b> /'kʌltʃəd; NAmE -tʃərd/ <i>adj.</i> <b>1</b> (of people) well educated and able to understand and enjoy art, literature, etc. <b>SYN</b> CULTIVATED <b>2</b> (of cells or bacteria) grown for medical or scientific study <b>3</b> (of PEARLS) grown artificially</p>
---	--

(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.

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Adverb</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
sympathy				
familiarity				
comfort				
care				
surprise				

## 6. Speaking

1. Imagine you are Gerrard. Tell your friend what happened when the Intruder broke into your house.  
[Clues: Describe (i) the intruder — his appearance, the way he spoke, his plan, his movements, etc., (ii) how you outwitted him.]
2. Enact the play in the class. Pay special attention to words given in italics before a dialogue. These words will tell you whether the dialogue has to be said in a happy, sarcastic or ironic tone and how the characters move and what they do as they speak. Read these carefully before you enact the play.

## 7. Writing

- I. Which of the words below describe Gerrard and which describe the Intruder?

smart	humorous	clever
beautiful	cool	confident
flashy	witty	nonchalant

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

- II. 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 to it.