

The Adventures of Understudy.

Answer these questions.

1) The game had begun. What was the 'game'? What would happen if they won or lost 'the game'?

A) The 'game' refers to the elaborate ruse that Rassendyll was going to execute with the help of Col. Sapt and Fritz, in which he would take the place of King Rudolf and participate in the latter's coronation ceremony. It was essential that the King showed up for this politically significant event failing which the King's half-brother, Black Michael would take over the throne. But the King had been found unconscious and in no state to attend the ceremony which led to his lookalike, Rassendyll playing the King's part for a day.

If they won the 'game', all would be well and the King himself could rule over Ruritania but if their plot was discovered, Black Michael, King Rudolf's half-brother would seize the throne of Ruritania.

2) How did Rasseydyll prepare for the role he was to play?

a) Rasseydyll prepared for the role by taking instructions from Colonel Sapt. He told Rasseydyll about King Rudolf's personal history, his family, tastes, pursuits, weaknesses, friends, companions and servants. This was to make Rasseydyll prepared to pose as King Rudolf at the coronation. He was also trained in the etiquette of the Ruritavian Court. Outwardly, he was dressed in royal clothes with a sword in its scabbard, a revolver and a helmet to look the part he was supposed to play.

3) Which line in para 6 shows us that Rasseudyll feared for his life? Find other lines in the story where Rasseudyll, Sapt and Fritz express the same fear.

A) The line, "The last thing I did was to feel if my revolver was handy and my sword loose in the scabbard." in para 4 indicates that Rasseudyll was well aware of the mortal threat involved in the risky endeavour he had chosen to undertake. However, at the same time, he was trying to manage his fears as best as he could. This fear for their lives was rife in the hearts of Col. Sapt and Fritz. Col. Sapt prayed, "God send we may be alive tonight!" to which Fritz replies, "Amen!" thus revealing the same fear.

4) Sapt and Fritz put their lives in danger to save the throne from Michael. What can we infer about the relationship between King Rudolf and Sapt and Fritz from the text?

A) Sapt and Fritz proved themselves to be worthy and loyal friends of King Rudolf when they agreed to put their lives in danger to save the throne from Michael. Even in the absence of the King they agreed to the dangerous play just for the sake of the King and his Kingdom.

5) Does the text tell us why Rassendyll would agree to such a risky task? Do you think he was brave, foolish or adventurous? What choice would you have made in such a situation?

A) In many occasions throughout the text, Rassendyll has expressed his thrill at playing the part of the King. He has a sense of adventure and is brave enough to take risks. He travels a distance without his entourage to generate trust in the people. It is a mark of goodwill. There are many instances where his fear of getting caught almost compelled him to flee, particularly when faced with the keen scrutiny of Michael. However, he continued resolutely and was eventually successful. On one hand Rassendyll comes across an adventurous, risk-loving person and on the other he shows bravery in the face of adversities.

c) Why is the text called 'The Adventures of an Understudy'? Do you think Rosendyll was good understudy? Give at least two examples to support your answer.

A) In regular use, the word "understudy" refers to a person who learns the lead actor's role in order to be able to act at a short notice in the absence of the actor. The text is called 'The Adventures of an Understudy' because it brings out the story of Rosendyll, a simple man who, just like an understudy, played the part of a real king in the latter's absence. He looked exactly like King Rudolf and hence played his part, attending his coronation in order to save the throne from a usurper. He proved himself to be a good understudy who prepared well for his role with help of Sapt and Fritz, so that he could portray the king as accurately as possible.

Since this play was a great adventure for Rossendyll the real-life understudy of King Rudolf, the title is justified as 'The Adventures of an understudy'.