

# The Landlady

## Word Work

### Language in Context

#### Reflexive & Emphatic Pronouns

In the story 'The Landlady', pronouns ending '-self' are used a number of times.

The room itself was filled with pleasant furniture.

Animals were usually a good sign in a place like this, Billy told himself.

The name itself conjured up images of watery cabbage.

Billy found himself automatically starting forward.

There are two different uses of the '-self' pronoun here: one is being used to for **emphasis** ("the room itself") and the other describes an action which refers to the same person who performs the action ("Billy told himself") and so is **reflexive**. In the first situation it is the subject of the sentence (a noun) which is being referred to ("the room"; "the name") directly, while the second requires an intervening verb ("told himself"; "found himself")

In the extracts from the story, decide which form is being used:

"I saw the notice in the window, " he said, holding himself back.

We have it *all* to ourselves," she said smiling at him over her shoulder.

The old girl is slightly dotty, Billy told himself.

"I stuff *all* my little pets myself when they pass away."

**1.** In the following extracts, the '-self' pronoun has not been used, but could easily have been. Using the prompts given, either rewrite or add a phrase which includes *myself*, *himself* or *itself*

Example: 1. Billy Weaver had travelled down from London on the slow train. (*He was alone*)  
*Billy Weaver had travelled down by himself from London on the slow train*

Example: 2. "Find your own lodgings and then go along and report to the Manager."  
(*substitute 'go' with 'take'*)  
*Find your own lodgings and then take yourself along and report to the Manager"*

3. On the carpet in front of the fire, a pretty little dachshund was curled up asleep with its nose tucked into its belly. (*The dachshund was alone*)
- 

4. Each word was like a black eye forcing him to stay where he was. (*He was unable to control events. Use the verb 'help' in a new phrase*)
- 

5. "And this one is *all* yours," she said. (*emphasise it is his alone*)
- 

6. "And you may light the gas fire at any time if you feel chilly." (*substitute 'if you feel chilly' with phrase using the verb 'warm'*)
- 

7. I'm a lucky fellow, he thought, rubbing his hands. (*replace 'thought' with the verb 'congratulate'*)
- 

8. "They're on the fourth floor, both of them together." (*insert a phrase using the verb 'have' and the quantifier 'whole'*)
- 

9. "Milk?" she said. "And sugar?" (*add phrase using verb 'help'*)
- 

10. "It doesn't look in the least bit dead. Who did it?" "I did." (*add two words to emphasise that no one helped*)
-

2. Rewrite the sentences so it includes a suitable form of one of the verbs in the box, and a reflexive pronoun.

ask    behave    blame    cut    feed    enjoy    express    hurt  
introduce    talk

1. We can leave the food in the fridge, and Billy ...**can feed himself**..
2. I keep .....why those name were so familiar.
3. The landlady spoke clearly and had no difficulty in.....
4. When she slipped off the sofa, she didn't .....
5. Billy was polite and always .....
6. Billy had to ..... but she forgot his name anyway.
7. The accident wasn't your fault. Don't .....
8. The landlady had a habit of ..... to ..... when nobody else was around.
9. When she was preparing her 'pets' for stuffing, she never .....
10. Bath is a very pleasant city and you should ..... there.

## Comparatives

While Billy and the landlady are drinking tea, she compares him with the two previous guests whose names Billy has seen in the guest-book.

"He was a trifle shorter than you are, and his teeth weren't *quite so white*. You have the most beautiful teeth, Mr Weaver, did you know that?"  
 "They're not *as good as* they look," Billy said.

The direct comparisons "**so white**" and "**as good as**" are both preceded by negative verbs ('*were not*' and '*are not*'). In this case we can use either 'so' or 'as' to compare things. (Remember that in **so white** the meaning **so white as yours** is implied).

Therefore we can say

- His teeth weren't quite so white (as yours)
- His teeth weren't quite as white (as yours)
- They're not as good as they look
- They're not so good as they look

However, we don't have this choice if the meaning is positive

- His teeth were as white as yours** ✓
- His teeth were so white as yours **X**
- They are as good as they look** ✓
- They are so good as they look **X**

Look at the chart below. It compares some details about Billy Weaver, Christopher Mulholland and Gregory Temple. Write five positive and five negative sentences comparing any two of them at a time. (10 sentences in all).

	<b>Billy Weaver</b>	<b>Christopher Mulholland</b>	<b>Gregory Temple</b>
<b>age</b>	17	17	28
<b>teeth</b>	very white	white	yellowish
<b>skin</b>	smooth	silky	like a baby
<b>height</b>	1.82	1.80	1.81
<b>weight</b>	85kgs	82kgs	87kgs
<b>shoe size</b>	43	41	43
<b>occupation</b>	junior salesman	student	scientist
<b>family background</b>	lower class	upper class	middle class
<b>city of origin</b>	London	Cardiff	Bristol
<b>general appearance</b>	very handsome	very handsome	very handsome

**Example:** Christopher Mulholland's teeth weren't as white as Billy Weaver's

# Glossary

<b>a bit of all right</b>	(old fashioned) enjoyable
<b>alas</b>	sadly
<b>baby-grand piano</b>	smallest of long, three legged pianos
<b>big shot</b>	important person
<b>bitter almonds</b>	unsweetened taste of essence of <i>amêndoa</i>
<b>blotchy</b>	uneven marks
<b>brisk</b>	quick, efficient
<b>choosy</b>	not easily pleased
<b>dainty</b>	delicate
<b>dither</b>	unable to decide (what to do)
<b>dotty</b>	crazy
<b>Eton</b>	exclusive private school
<b>five and sixpence</b>	old British money, value about 18 euro cents
<b>frisky</b>	lively
<b>fuss</b>	paying a lot of attention to
<b>glow</b>	giving off a warm light
<b>hearth</b>	place in a room where a fire is put
<b>jack-in-the-box</b>	children's toy where head on a spring jumps out of a box
<b>kippers</b>	a smoked fish (herring)
<b>landing</b>	place where stairs meet in a house
<b>off her rocker</b>	crazy
<b>on the off-chance</b>	by luck
<b>pane</b>	single piece of glass in a window
<b>peeling</b>	layer coming away from the wall
<b>plump</b>	soft
<b>pop</b>	jump out suddenly
<b>pop in</b>	enter quickly, without ceremony
<b>porch</b>	covered entrance of exterior door
<b>rim</b>	edge, side
<b>rings a bell</b>	sounds familiar
<b>sip</b>	drink slowly, delicately (especially when hot)
<b>swamp</b>	overwhelm; too much of something
<b>swanky</b>	expensive and snobbish
<b>teeny weeny</b>	extremely little
<b>tiny</b>	very little
<b>tray</b>	flat receptacle for carrying cups, plates etc
<b>trot</b>	walk quickly (implies unconcerned way of walking)
<b>undergraduate</b>	University student studying for first degree
<b>whiff</b>	slight smell