How I Met Myself

David A. Hill

Summary

Englishman John Taylor lives and works in Budapest, Hungary, and is married to a Hungarian, Andrea. He has a strange meeting on the evening of 18 January – he is knocked over in the street by a man who is his double. The man apologises and runs on to Zsolt’s cellar bar, leaving no footprints in the snow. John’s questions at the bar reveal that only he has entered; he feels disturbed but curious.

The next day, John investigates further. The man came out of number 7 Felka utca and ran to the bar at nearby Gergely utca. That night John begins to dream about the meeting and feels scared. He spends time at the bar, drinking alone and brooding. Finally he confides in Andrea, who accompanies him on a visit to the buildings at Felka utca and Gergely utca. The housekeepers know of nobody resembling John, whose fear is that he has had an encounter with a dead person.

Meanwhile, John researches the idea of a doppelgänger – a ghostly double of a living person who gives a warning to the living. Andrea, now pregnant, starts work part-time at Zsolt’s bar. The year passes, baby Kati arrives, and John becomes more carefree. At Christmas, on holiday in England, his worries return. An old friend, Paul, takes his story seriously, and confirms that a doppelgänger may give a warning to its living double. Back in Budapest, John becomes more preoccupied as 18 January approaches. The dreams of the meeting return, but are now accompanied by loud noise. Andrea, now increasingly exasperated, agrees to join him at 7 Felka utca on the anniversary. Exactly the same thing happens; John is knocked down and the man disappears into Zsolt’s bar, which is closed. Andrea sees nothing except John falling over and shouting at nobody.

John researches the local press, eventually discovering that fighting ended in Pest on 18 January 1945, when a mother and child named Szabó were killed by a bomb in Gergely utca. John now sees a link. He goes back to 7 Felka utca and meets an old lady, Mrs Fischer, who remembers the Szabó family living there. Szabó rushed round the corner to Gergely utca, only to find his wife and child had died in the cellar shop, now Zsolt’s bar. John, now convinced of a link, tries to talk to Andrea, but she is becoming increasingly unsympathetic with what she regards an obsession.

Another year passes. John becomes less preoccupied and things improve with Andrea. After the New Year, however, the dreams return, with greater intensity. John has the ominous foreboding that the meetings with the doppelgänger have a connection with his wife. Further investigation reveals that the names ‘János’ and ‘Szabó’ mean ‘John’ and ‘tailor’, like his name ‘Taylor’. Also, Szabó like John was born on 23 October, and had a wife called Andrea and a daughter, Kati. John, now sick with anxiety, cannot talk to Andrea.

On arriving home on the next 18 January John finds a note from Andrea – she has gone to work in Zsolt’s bar. It is 6.45 pm. He dashes round to 7 Felka utca. Inside he hears a loud noise and runs out, straight into somebody. This time, John sees himself on the ground, apologises, and runs on to Gergely utca. To his horror the wine bar has been destroyed. Frantically he tries to organise a rescue, but is pulled away by emergency services who fear further explosions. Beside himself with grief, John is sent home, only to meet his doppelgänger again, who points along the street – Andrea and Kati are there, safe! Overjoyed, John is reunited with his family. At the bar, a man looking like John had discouraged Andrea and Kati from entering. She remembered that a doppelgänger could be seen by someone close, and went away with Kati. Andrea is now convinced of the truth of John’s strange meetings.
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Check your reading

Chapter 1
1. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 2
1. John Taylor, a 34-year-old Englishman has been working in Budapest for 4 years. 18 months after falling in love with his Hungarian teacher, Andrea, they get married. They live in the 13th District of Budapest. It takes John 30 minutes to get to work. His normal day starts at 8.30 am and finishes at 6.00 pm.

Chapter 3
1. g, e, a, h, c, b, f, d

Chapter 4
1. 1 d, 2 a, 3 b, 4 e, 5 c
2. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 5
1. Student’s own answers, giving same information.
   a And every night I had the same dream and woke up feeling afraid in the dark.
   b And if I went back to sleep, I had the dream again.
   c And if I didn’t go back to sleep, I lay in bed in the dark trying to understand what was happening to me.
   d And every morning I was more and more tired, and I wasn’t nice to Andrea.
   e And I felt worse because Andrea didn’t know why I was arriving late every evening, and I didn’t tell her the truth.
   f And even worse, the next day I argued with Andrea.
   g And then because I didn’t feel good, I started drinking more than the two glasses of wine I had had the first two nights.

Chapter 6
1.  a No,  b Yes,  c Yes,  d No,  e No
2. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 7
1. A German word which is used in English. It means a ghostly double of a living person, who comes to give messages about danger or to offer advice. It can only be seen by its ‘owner’. However, it can sometimes be seen by someone close if it has an important message. It is usually thought to bring bad luck and is often believed to show that there will soon be a serious problem or a death.

Chapter 8
1.  a Andrea and John
   b Paul
   c John
   d John
   e Andrea

Chapter 9
1.  1 b, 2 c, 3 d, 4 a, 5 c
2. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 10
1.  a different,  b same,  c same,  d same,  e same,  f different
2. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 11
1.  a fact,  b fact,  c fact,  d possibility,  e possibility,  f possibility

Chapter 12
1.  b, c, d, e
Worksheet
Answer Key
Level 3

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Chapter 13
1.  a fact, b fact, c fact, d difficult, e difficult
2.  Student’s own answer.

Chapter 14
1.  Student’s own answer.

Chapter 15
1.  a the same, b 23 October, c Andrea, d Kati
2.  Student’s own answer.

Chapter 16
1.  1 b, 2 e, 3 d, 4 c, 5 f, 6 a

Chapter 17
1.  a John
   b fireman
   c nurse
   d ambulance man
   e policeman

Chapter 18
1.  a doppelgänger
   b John
   c doppelgänger
   d Kati
   e Andrea
   f Andrea