

The Landlady Text-Dependent Questions

1. In the 5th paragraph (that begins with “Billy was seventeen...”), the author uses the words: brisk, briskly and briskness. Billy states that “briskness is a common characteristic of all successful businessmen.” What does the author mean by this word and what is the significance of being “brisk” in the story?
2. When Billy arrives in the city of Bath, the first thing he needs to do is to find lodgings. Why is he debating between staying at the pub instead of a boardinghouse?
3. Reread the paragraph on first page that begins, “Suddenly, in a downstairs window...” and continue rereading through the next few paragraphs. What words and phrases does the author use to describe the Bed and Breakfast? What inference does Billy make about the Bed and Breakfast based on these observations?
4. In the last paragraph on page one, the author says that Billy turns to go and “and now a queer (strange) thing happened to him.” Summarize what happens in the scene. How does the author describe the sign and Billy’s reaction?
5. Also in the last paragraph on page one, which words suggest that Billy should be on the alert?
6. The narrator emphasizes the speed at which the Landlady answers the door. What might this foreshadow about the landlady, about Billy, and about how the two might interact later in the story?
7. Reread the paragraph on page two that begins with “She was about forty-five...” What words or phrases does the author use to describe what happens next and how Billy feels about the situation? Should he have been suspicious at this point in the story? Why or why not? (Use evidence from the text in your response.)
8. How does the author’s use of irony when describing the landlady make the reader question her?
9. Why does the author include the line “There were no other hats or coats in the hall. There were no umbrellas, no walking sticks – nothing.”
10. When Billy is in the living room, what first alerts the reader that something may be wrong?
11. As Billy is almost remembering the connection between the two boys, what effect did the interruptions from the landlady have on the story?
12. What can the reader infer, using evidence from the text, about the two boys that are missing? What does this information lead the reader to believe concerning Billy’s possible fate?
13. What other evidence from the story suggests a possible, fatal demise for Billy?