“THE LANDLADY” Comprehension & Analysis Questions

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper. All answers should restate the question in your own words, cite specific evidence, and explain the evidence.

Remember: typing = +1 bonus point

1. On page 73, the author uses the words: brisk, briskly, and briskness in the first full paragraph. Billy states that, "briskness is a common characteristic of all successful businessmen." What does the author mean (what’s the tone) by this word and what is the significance (importance) of being "brisk" in the story?

2. When Billy arrives in the city of Bath, the first thing he needs to do is find lodgings. Why is he debating between staying at a pub instead of a boardinghouse?

3. Reread the paragraph on page 73 that begins, “Suddenly, in a downstairs window…” and continue rereading through the next few paragraphs. What specific 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. On page 74, the author says that Billy turns to go, “and now a queer thing happened to him.” Summarize what happens in this scene. How does the author describe the sign and Billy’s reaction?

5. Which words in paragraph 2, page 74, 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 in the second column on page 74 that begins, “Please come in.” 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. Irony happens when a character says one thing, but the reader understands it as meaning something else. How does the author’s use of irony when describing the landlady make the reader question her? Give specific examples of how he describes her.

9. On page 75, in paragraph 10, 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 (death) for Billy?