

内 容 提 要

本书从英、美、加等国著名短篇小说中精选 14 篇,按照小说的基本要素把全书分为 7 章,依次为:情节与结构、人物、视点、背景、主题、象征与讽寓、语言与风格。每章含两篇小说,每篇选文均有作者简介、语言和文化知识上的中文解释和思考题。书末的附录一是“小说评析写作要点”,对如何写作评析小说的论文做了简要讲解,并列出了系列相关问题启发学生写作时思考。附录二是分析著名作家詹姆斯·乔伊斯的小说《阿拉比》的范文 5 篇,它们分别剖析了该小说的背景和氛围、象征、神话与原型、视点和人物。附录三是“小说评析常见术语”,对所列的每一条术语做了简要解释。本书旨在帮助学生通过学习这些短篇小说,提高阅读理解能力、赏析文学作品的能力和写作水平,增进学生对于英语国家的社会文化知识和风土人情的了解,提高人文素养。本教材可供开设大学英语选修课使用,亦可作为自学英语的读本。

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英语短篇小说赏析/程锡麟主编. —重庆:重庆大学出版社,2008.5
(大学英语选修课系列教材)
ISBN 978-7-5624-4485-5

I. 英… II. 程… III. ①英语—语言读物—高等学校—教材②短篇小说—文学欣赏—西方国家—高等学校—教材 IV. H319.4:1

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2008)第 046002 号

大学英语选修课系列教材

英语短篇小说赏析

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责任校对:费 梅 责任印制:赵 晟

*

重庆大学出版社出版发行

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全国新华书店经销

重庆川渝彩色印务有限公司印刷

*

开本:787×960 1/16 印张:12.25 字数:226 千

2008 年 5 月第 1 版 2008 年 5 月第 1 次印刷

印数:1—3 000

ISBN 978-7-5624-4485-5 定价:21.00 元

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总 序

我国的大学英语教学起步于 20 世纪 80 年代,经过 20 多年的发展,大学英语在教学水平、课程设置、教学方法、教学环境、师资队伍等各个方面都有了长足的进步和发展。但随着我国加入 WTO 和国民经济的快速发展,大学英语教学暴露出与时代要求不相称的一面。为适应现代社会对人才培养的实际需求,推动和指导大学英语教学改革,教育部于 2003 年颁布了《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》(以下简称《要求》),并于 2007 年结合对人才能力培养的新要求再次做了修订和调整,作为全国各高校组织非英语专业本科生英语教学的主要依据。

《要求》将大学阶段的英语教学分为一般要求、较高要求和更高要求三个层次,强调要贯彻分类指导、因材施教的原则,使英语教学朝着个性化的方向发展,要“将综合英语类、语言技能类、语言应用类、语言文化类和专业英语类等必修课程和选修课程有机结合,形成一个完整的大学英语课程体系,以确保不同层次的学生在英语应用能力方面得到充分的训练和提高”。这样,大力发展大学英语选修课就成了大学英语教学改革的重要课题。

大学英语选修课的开设不仅是《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》精神的体现,也是《教育部财政部关于实施高等学校本科教学质量与教学改革工程的意见》(以下简称《意见》)的内在要求,《意见》将“学生的实践能力和创新精神显著增强”作为教学改革的重要目标之一,而大学英语教学要在这方面有所作为的话,必须注重培养学生的跨文化交际能力、文化素养和在全球化、信息化的背景下获取知识的能力,这显然是传统的大学英语教学和课程设置所不能胜任的。

近年来,全国许多高校纷纷进行了开设大学英语选修课的尝试,并取得了可喜的成绩。但是由于指导思想不明晰、教师知识结构单一和配套改革滞后等原因,在大学英语选修课的开设中出现了“因人设庙”,开课随意性强,开课种类单一,各门课程难易不均,课程测试不规范,学生对各门课程的兴趣差异过大等问题。大学英语选修课的开设迫切需要某种程度的规范与引导,需要更为科学地设置选修课程,确实达到《要求》和《意见》中提出的目标。

针对以上问题,我们认为,一套由成熟理念指引的、体系科学的、建立在选修课开设的成功实践基础之上的系列教材能够起到这种规范和引导作用。因此,重庆大学出版社组织来自全国各地的、在选修课开设方面走在前列的高校的专家和教师,

在多次交流与反复论证的基础上,组织编写了这套“大学英语选修课系列教材”。该套教材具有以下明显的特点:

第一,教材体系科学、系统。系列教材以《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》为指导,覆盖语言技能类、语言应用类、语言文化类和专业英语类等四个板块,既注重语言基础知识的积累,也充分考虑对学生文化素质的培养,确保不同层次的学生在英语应用能力方面得到充分的训练和提高。

第二,坚持“实用、够用”的原则。在体例安排和内容选择上严格按照选修课的课时要求和学生水平的实际需要,力求精练,避免长篇累牍,在语言难度上体现了与英语专业同类教材的差别。

第三,注重知识与技能相结合,语言与文化相结合。在深入浅出地讲授知识的同时,结合课程内容尽可能多地为学生提供说与写的练习,在雕琢学生语言的同时,尽可能培养学生的跨文化交际能力和批判性思维能力。

第四,强调学生综合能力的培养:考虑到学生在选修课阶段可能不再修综合英语类的课程,各教材在主要训练与课程相关能力的基础上,适当补充了其他能力的训练内容。

第五,吸纳并总结近年来相关高校选修课开设的经验和成果。该套教材的参编者来自全国多所高校,多数教材是由开设该门课程最成功的、最受学生欢迎的学校和教师撰写,教材既吸纳了相关讲义的优点,又根据专家意见,按照学科要求和普遍情况进行了改编,在保证教材科学性的前提下,最大程度地体现了大学英语学生的选修取向。

选修课的开设是大学英语教学改革的重要发展方向,但是在改革中诞生的事物也必然不断地在改革中被重新定义,因此我们这套大学英语选修课教材的体系也将是动态的和开放的,不断会有新的教材被纳入,以反映大学英语教学改革在这方面最新的成功尝试。相信随着教学改革不断走向深入,我们的教材体系也将日臻完善。

总主编

2008年1月

前 言

近年来,我国大学英语在进行着改革,课程设置、教学方法、教材编写等诸多方面都发生着变化。学生的英语水平有了很大的提高,同时,社会对大学生的英语水平也提出了更高的要求。为了适应大学英语教学的需要,为了满足大学生提高英语阅读能力和英语小说的赏析能力的需求,同时也为了提高他们的英语写作能力,我们编写了这本英语短篇小说赏析的教材,可供开设选修课使用,亦可作为自学英语的读本。

本书从英美加等国著名短篇小说中精选 14 篇,作者均为文学名家。编者按小说的基本要素把全书分为 7 章,依次为:情节与结构(Plot and Structure)、人物(Character)、视点(Point of View)、背景(Setting)、主题(Theme)、象征与讽寓(Symbolism and Allegory)、语言与风格(Language and Style)。每章含两篇小说,每篇开头加上英文的作者简介并附有作家头像,对选文中的语言和文化知识上的难点加注中文解释,以帮助学生理解作品。文后列有 4~5 个问题,为赏析小说提供切入的角度,供教师引导学生讨论和作文使用。最后,附录一是“小说评析写作要点”(How to Write about a Story?),对如何写作评析小说的论文做了简要讲解,并列出了系列相关问题启发学生写作时思考。附录二是分析著名作家詹姆斯·乔伊斯的小说《阿拉比》的范文 5 篇,它们分别剖析了该小说的背景和氛围、象征、神话与原型、视点和人物。附录三是“小说评析常见术语”,对所列的每一条术语做了简要解释。我们期望大学生们通过学习这些短篇小说,能提高他们的阅读理解能力、赏析文学作品的能力和写作水平,增进学生对于英语国家的社会文化知识和风土人情的了解,提高他们的人文素养。

建议教学进度可以按照每周学一篇小说,附录二的 5 篇范文可用两周讲解,全书可安排在 16 周讲完。

所选 14 篇短篇小说出自以下英文短篇小说选集和文学作品选集:

Jerome Beaty. ed. *The Norton Introduction to Fiction* (4th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton, 1991.

Cleanth Brooks & Robert Penn Warren. eds. *Understanding Fiction* (《理解小说》,第 3 版). 北京:外语教学与研究出版社,2004.

Eugene Current-Garcia & Bert Hitchcock. eds. *American Short Stories* (6th ed.). New York: Longman, 1997.

X. J. Kennedy & Dana Gioia. eds. *An Introduction to Fiction* (7th ed.). New York: Longman, 1999.

Edgar V. Roberts & Henry E. Jacobs. eds. *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1998.

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Chapter I

Plot and Structure

Plot, together with character, setting, theme, language and style, composes the basic elements of fictions and short stories. It is the pattern of actions and events in a literary work, and in a loose sense, refers to the chief events logically hanging together to shape the structure of a fiction.

In *Poetics* (4th century B. C.) Aristotle insists that a plot be more than just arrangement of incidents, and function as a governing principle of development and coherence, to which other elements (including character) must be subordinated.¹ In fact, plot, theme and character are taken as interdependent elements, selected and arranged in some specific way to meet the writer's purpose when a fiction is composed.

There are a variety of plot forms. Generally speaking, a fiction is presented to the reader as an organic whole, with one thing bringing on another in a chronological order. But the time sequence, with the "natural" order and duration, is not always valid in story-telling when particular artistic effect is demanded. Therefore, some plots are designed to achieve the effects of comedy, and some the effects of tragedy, romance, and satire etc. Ordinarily, a plot has certain natural stages: the beginning, the middle, and the end. The beginning, known also as **exposition**, indicates that the story will develop from the assumptions in the opening scene. The middle is called **complication**, and it presumes something gone and requires something to follow. The highest tension—**climax** is often seen in this part when conflict reveals itself. Then there comes the end,

¹ Chris Baldick, ed., *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*, (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2000): 171.

or the **denouement**, which means the solution to the problem. ¹

Fictional **structure** has great concern with plot design, which requires logic connections of the incidents to bring out the cause-and-effect relationship in the story. It can be defined as organization and shape of a fiction, both of which are determined by the internal logic exhibited by the plot. **Linear form** structure (beginning-middle-end) is generally employed in **genre fictions**; while **non-linear form** is more often found in complicated novels with more than one clue. ²

In “The Furnished Room”, O. Henry explicitly planned its plot and structure. The story is divided into two parts. In the first part, the story ends at its climax: a young man lodged in a room where he could smell the odor of mignonette. He was in the search of his sweetheart, and the odor made him believe that she had been in the same room. Mentally and physically weak in the fruitless search, he turned on the gas to kill himself. The second part reveals a **surprise** end to the readers that the landlady buried the facts that his sweetheart had, a week earlier, committed suicide in the same room.

As to Margaret Atwood’s “The Whirlpool Rapids”, it is composed of two parts, too, with the latter part marked by a **flashback**, which means moving back in time to show what happened earlier in the story. The story opens to tell stories about fearless women, and thus introduces to the readers the unique heroine Emma. The second part of the story goes back to a near-death experience that Emma had at the age of twenty-one. She was invited to a tour trip to raft down the Whirlpool Rapids below Niagara Falls. This adventure claimed four lives of her group which made her a different person since then. After her narrow escape from death, Emma seemed to become a woman living in eternity.

¹ Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, ed., *Understanding Fiction*, (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2004): 33-39.

² Debbie Lee Wesselmann; *Structure*, 2007-06-15. <<http://trutor.net/struc.html>>



☞ **O. Henry** ☞

(1862–1910)

O. Henry, the pseudonym of William Sydney Porter. He established his fame as a preeminent short story writer with around 400 short stories in his lifetime, among which “The Gift of Magi”, “The Last Leaf”, and “The Furnished room” are the best-known tales.

Porter was born in North Carolina where he took a brief schooling. Then he traveled to Texas in 1882, trying different types of work including a position as a bank teller in an Austin Bank and a journalist in a Houston paper. In 1896 he was charged with embezzlement in the bank. Although it eventually turned out to be some technical mismanagement, he fled to Honduras and came back at his wife’s deathbed.

After five years in prison, Porter moved to New York to write again. He became very popular and published works in great rapidity: *Cabbages and Kings* (1904), *The Four Million* (1906), *Heart of the West* (1907), *The Trimmed Lamp* (1907), *The Gentle Grafter* (1908)... Through years of hard work, he raised the short story to a fine literary art form, and formed the unique O. Henry-style with ironic circumstances and plots full of coincidence. He was good at characterizing those plain, simple characters we find in everyday life: clerks, policemen and waitresses etc... His sense of humor, incisive mind and deep insight helped him to make ingenuous depiction and witty narration to win the lasting prestige in literature.

The Furnished Room

Restless, shifting, fugacious as time itself is a certain vast bulk of the population of the red brick district of the lower West Side. Homeless, they have a hundred homes.

They flit from furnished room to furnished room, transients for ever—transients in abode, transients in heart and mind. They sing “Home, Sweet Home” in ragtime; they carry their lares et penates in a handbox; their vine is entwined about a picture hat; a rubber plant is their fig tree¹.

Hence the houses of this district, having had a thousand dwellers, should have a thousand tales to tell, mostly dull ones, no doubt; but it would be strange if there could not be found a ghost or two in the wake of all these vagrant ghosts.

One evening after dark a young man prowled among these crumbling red mansions, ringing their bells. At the twelfth² he rested his lean hand-baggage upon the step and wiped the dust from his hat-band and forehead. The bell sounded faint and far away in some remote, hollow depths.

To the door of this, the twelfth house whose bell he had rung, came a housekeeper who made him think of an unwholesome, surfeited worm that had eaten its nut to a hollow shell and now sought to fill the vacancy with edible lodgers.

He asked if there was a room to let.

“Come in,” said the housekeeper. Her voice came from her throat; her throat seemed lined with fur. “I have the third floor back, vacant since a week back. Should you wish to look at it?”

The young man followed her up the stairs. A faint light from no particular source mitigated the shadows of the halls. They trod noiselessly upon a stair carpet that its own loom would have forsworn. It seemed to have become vegetable; to have degenerated in that rank, sunless air to lush lichen or spreading moss that grew in patches to the staircase and was viscid under the foot like organic matter. At each turn of the stairs were vacant niches³ in the wall. Perhaps plants had once been set within them. If so they had died in that foul and tainted air. It may be that statues of the saints had stood there, but it was not difficult to conceive that imps and devils had dragged them forth in the darkness

¹ ragtime: 拉格泰姆音乐(1890—1915 期间在美国流行的一种音乐); lares et penates 本义为(古罗马)家庭守护神,这里指全部家当; a picture hat 阔边帽; a rubber plant 拐杖。

² At the twelfth: 第十二号或第十二幢房子。

³ niches: 神龛, 壁龛。

and down to the unholy depths of some furnished pit below.

“This is the room,” said the housekeeper, from her furry throat. “It’s a nice room. It ain’t¹ often vacant. I had some most elegant people in it last summer—no trouble at all, and paid in advance to the minute. The water’s at the end of the hall. Sprowls and Mooney² kept it three months. They done a vaudeville sketch. Miss B’retta Sprowls—you may have heard of her—Oh, that was just the stage names—right there over the dresser is where the marriage certificate hung, framed. The gas is here, and you see there is plenty of closet room. It’s a room everybody likes. It never stays idle long.”

“Do you have many theatrical people rooming here?” asked the young man.

“They comes and goes. A good proportion of my lodgers is connected with the theatres. Yes, sir, this is the theatrical district. Actor people never stays long anywhere. I get my share. Yes, they comes and they goes.”

He engaged the room, paying for a week in advance. He was tired, he said, and would take possession³ at once. He counted out the money. The room had been made ready, she said, even to towels and water. As the housekeeper moved away he put, for the thousandth time, the question that he carried at the end of his tongue.

“A young girl—Miss Vashner—Miss Eloise Vashner—do you remember such a one among your lodgers? She would be singing on the stage, most likely. A fair girl, of medium height and slender, with reddish gold hair and a dark mole near her left eyebrow.”

“No, I don’t remember the name. Them stage people has names they change as often as their rooms. They comes and they goes. No, I don’t call that one to mind.”

No. Always no. Five months of ceaseless interrogation and the inevitable negative. So much time spent by day in questioning managers, agents, schools and choruses; by night among the audiences of theatres from all-star casts down to music halls so low⁴ that he dreaded to find what he most hoped for. He who had loved her best had tried to find

1 It ain’t = it isn’t.

2 Sprowls and Mooney: 斯普罗尔斯和穆尼(人名)。

3 take possession: 这里指入住,住下来。

4 music halls so low: 低等的杂耍戏院。

her. He was sure that since her disappearance from home this great water-girt city held her somewhere, but it was like a monstrous quicksand, shifting its particles constantly, with no foundation, its upper granules of to-day buried to-morrow in ooze and slime.

The furnished room received its latest guest with a first glow of pseudo-hospitality, a hectic, haggard, perfunctory welcome like the specious smile of a demirep¹. The sophisticated comfort came in reflected gleams from the decayed furniture, the ragged brocade upholstery of a couch and two chairs, a foot-wide cheap pier-glass between the two windows, from one or two gilt picture frames and a brass bedstead in a corner.

The guest reclined, inert, upon a chair, while the room, confused in speech as though it were an apartment in Babel², tried to discourse to him of its divers tenantry.

A polychromatic rug like some brilliant-flowered, rectangular, tropical islet lay surrounded by a billowy sea of soiled matting. Upon the gay-papered wall were those pictures that pursue the homeless one from house to house—The Huguenot Lovers, The First Quarrel, The Wedding Breakfast, Psyche at the Fountain³. The mantel's chastely severe outline was ingloriously veiled behind some pert drapery drawn rakishly askew like the sashes of the Amazonian ballet⁴. Upon it was some desolate flotsam cast aside by the room's marooned when a lucky sail had borne them to a fresh port—a trifling vase or two, pictures of actresses, a medicine bottle, some stray cards out of a deck.

One by one, as the characters of a cryptograph become explicit, the little signs left by the furnished room's procession of guests developed a significance. The threadbare space in the rug in front of the dresser told that lovely woman had marched in the throng.

¹ demirep: 娼妓(法语)。欧·亨利把这间带家具的出租屋比作脸上堆起假笑,红中透病、形容枯槁的暗娼。

² Babel: 巴别塔,也称通天塔。来自旧约《圣经》创世记第11章中的一段经文,内容讲述人类经历大洪水之后,筹备兴建一座能直抵天堂的巴别塔以证明自己的能力。上帝知悉后非常愤怒,于是搅乱人类的言语令他们不能互相沟通。巴别塔最终没有建成,人类从此亦散落到世界各地居住。这里将房间拟人化,将其比作巴别塔中的一个套间,向房客诉说它的历史。

³ The Huguenot Lovers, The First Quarrel, The Wedding Breakfast, Psyche at the Fountain: 画名: 胡格诺情人、第一次争吵、婚礼晨宴、泉边的普塞克。

⁴ the sashes of the Amazonian ballet: 舞剧里亚马逊女人用的腰带。亚马逊女人,也称亚马逊女战士,在希腊神话中,她们骁勇善战。

Tiny finger prints on the wall spoke of little prisoners trying to feel their way to sun and air. A splattered stain, raying like the shadow of a bursting bomb, witnessed where a hurled glass or bottle had splintered with its contents against the wall. Across the pier-glass had been scrawled with a diamond in staggering letters the name “Marie.” It seemed that the succession of dwellers in the furnished room had turned in fury—perhaps tempted beyond forbearance by its garish coldness—and wreaked upon it their passions. The furniture was chipped and bruised; the couch, distorted by bursting springs¹, seemed a horrible monster that had been slain during the stress of some grotesque convulsion. Some more potent upheaval had cloven a great slice from the marble mantel. Each plank in the floor owned its particular cant and shriek as from a separate and individual agony. It seemed incredible that all this malice and injury had been wrought upon the room by those who had called it for a time their home; and yet it may have been the cheated home instinct surviving blindly, the resentful rage at false household gods² that had kindled their wrath. A hut that is our own we can sweep and adorn and cherish.

The young tenant in the chair allowed these thoughts to file, soft-shod, through his mind, while there drifted into the room furnished sounds and furnished scents. He heard in one room a tittering and incontinent, slack laughter; in others the monologue of a scold, the rattling of dice, a lullaby, and one crying dully; above him a banjo tinkled with spirit. Doors banged somewhere; the elevated trains roared intermittently; a cat yowled miserably upon a back fence. And he breathed the breath of the house—a dank savour rather than a smell—a cold, musty effluvium as from underground vaults mingled with the reeking exhalations of linoleum and mildewed and rotten woodwork.

Then, suddenly, as he rested there, the room was filled with the strong, sweet odour of mignonette³. It came as upon a single buffet of wind with such sureness and fragrance and emphasis that it almost seemed a living visitant. And the man cried aloud, “What, dear?” as if he had been called, and sprang up and faced about. The rich odour clung to

1 springs: 弹簧。

2 household gods: 掌管家庭的神社, 家庭守护神。

3 mignonette: [植]木犀草。

him and wrapped him about. He reached out his arms for it, all his senses for the time confused and commingled. How could one be peremptorily called by an odour? Surely it must have been a sound. But, was it not the sound that had touched, that had caressed him?

“She has been in this room,” he cried, and he sprang to wrest from it a token, for he knew he would recognise the smallest thing that had belonged to her or that she had touched. This enveloping scent of mignonette, the odour that she had loved and made her own—whence¹ came it?

The room had been but carelessly set in order. Scattered upon the flimsy dresser scarf were half-a-dozen hairpins—those discreet, indistinguishable friends of womankind, feminine of gender, infinite of mood and uncommunicative of tense. These he ignored, conscious of their triumphant lack of identity. Ransacking the drawers of the dresser he came upon a discarded, tiny, ragged handkerchief. He pressed it to his face. It was racy and insolent with heliotrope; he hurled it to the floor. In another drawer he found odd buttons, a theatre programme, a pawnbroker’s card, two lost marshmallows, a book on the divination of dreams. In the last was a woman’s black satin hair-bow², which halted him, poised between ice and fire. But the black satin hair-bow also is femininity’s demure, impersonal, common ornament, and tells no tales.

And then he traversed the room like a hound on the scent, skimming the walls, considering the corners of the bulging matting on his hands and knees, rummaging mantel and tables, the curtains and hangings, the drunken cabinet in the corner, for a visible sign, unable to perceive that she was there beside, around, against, within, above him, clinging to him, wooing him, calling him so poignantly through the finer senses that even his grosser ones became cognisant of the call. Once again he answered loudly, “Yes, dear!” and turned, wild-eyed, to gaze on vacancy, for he could not yet discern form and colour and love and outstretched arms in the odour of mignonette. Oh, God! whence that odour, and since when have odours had a voice to call? Thus he groped. He burrowed in

¹ whence : 从何处, 从哪里; 根源。

² hair-bow: 蝴蝶形发结。

crevices and corners, and found corks and cigarettes. These he passed in passive contempt. But once he found in a fold of the matting a half-smoked cigar, and this he ground beneath his heel with a green and trenchant oath. He sifted the room from end to end. He found dreary and ignoble small records of many a peripatetic tenant; but of her whom he sought, and who may have lodged there, and whose spirit seemed to hover there, he found no trace. And then he thought of the housekeeper.

He ran from the haunted room downstairs and to a door that showed a crack of light. She came out to his knock. He smothered his excitement as best he could.

“Will you tell me, madam,” he besought her, “who occupied the room I have before I came?”

“Yes, sir. I can tell you again. ‘Twas Sprowls and Mooney, as I said. Miss B’retta Sprowls it was in the theatres, but Missis Mooney she was. My house is well known for respectability. The marriage certificate hung, framed, on a nail over—”

“What kind of a lady was Miss Sprowls—in looks, I mean?”

“Why, black-haired, sir, short, and stout, with a comical face. They left a week ago Tuesday.”

“And before they occupied it?”

“Why, there was a single gentleman connected with the draying business. He left owing me a week. Before him was Missis Crowder and her two children, that stayed four months; and back of them was old Mr. Doyle, whose sons paid for him. He kept the room six months. That goes back a year, sir, and further I do not remember.”

He thanked her and crept back to his room. The room was dead. The essence that had vivified it was gone. The perfume of mignonette had departed. In its place was the old, stale odour of mouldy house furniture, of atmosphere in storage.

The ebbing of his hope drained his faith. He sat staring at the yellow, singing gaslight. Soon he walked to the bed and began to tear the sheets into strips. With the blade of his knife he drove them tightly into every crevice around windows and door. When all was snug and taut he turned out the light, turned the gas full on again, and laid himself gratefully upon the bed.

It was Mrs. McCool's night to go with the can for beer. So she fetched it and sat with Mrs. Purdy in one of those subterranean retreats where housekeepers forgather and the worm dieth seldom¹.

"I rented out my third floor back this evening," said Mrs. Purdy, across a fine circle of foam. "A young man took it. He went up to bed two hours ago."

"Now, did ye, Mrs. Purdy, ma'am?" said Mrs. McCool, with intense admiration. "You do be a wonder for rentin' rooms of that kind. And did ye tell him, then?²" she concluded in a husky whisper, laden with mystery.

"Rooms," said Mrs. Purdy, in her furriest tones, "are furnished for to rent. I did not tell him, Mrs. McCool."

"'Tis right ye are, ma'am; 'tis by renting rooms we kape alive. Ye have the rale sense for business, ma'am. There be many people will rayjict the rentin' of a room if they be tould a suicide has been after dyin' in the bed of it."

"As you say, we has our living to be making," remarked Mrs. Purdy.

"Yis, ma'am; 'tis true. 'Tis just one wake ago this day I helped ye lay out the third floor back. A pretty slip of a colleen she was to be killin' herself wid the gas—a swate little face she had, Mrs. Purdy, ma'am."

"She'd a-been called handsome, as you say," said Mrs. Purdy, assenting but critical, "but for that mole she had a-growin' by her left eyebrow. Do fill up your glass again, Mrs. McCool."

Questions

1. What is the motivation for the young man to kill himself? If he were told the truth, would the information save his life from suicide?
2. At the end of the story the landlady told her crony that she had lied to the young man about the girl, which gives a turn to the plot. Is it meaningful to add this last-minute

¹ where housekeepers... dieth seldom: 这是房东们聚会、蛆虫猖獗的地方。

² ye = you; rentin' = renting; 'Tis = it is; ma'am = madam; kape = keep; rale = real; rayjict = reject; wid = with. 这部分多使用非标准英语。