1. Were you surprised by the confessions from Madame Beaumont and Mr. Farrington? Why or why not?

2. What is your reaction to the opening paragraphs of the story and the emphasis on description of the setting? What do you think O. Henry was trying to accomplish?

3. How does O. Henry establish Madame Beaumont as a member of high society and therefore an acceptable guest in the Hotel Lotus? To what degree does he use the same techniques with Harold Farrington? Leaving the question of wealth aside, are the two characters portrayed as acceptable guests? Explain.

4. Irony: O. Henry’s writing often includes irony. Define irony and its three types. Create examples for each. Identify the irony in this story. How does he use this device in this story? Is this effective?

5. Why is the register of language so important to the story’s effectiveness? Identify the moment when a new language register appears in the narrative. How would you describe each type of register? What effect does each register have on the reader?

**Register** refers to the level of formality of language. Language can be characterized according to the social context for which it is appropriate. For example, language with a colloquial register might contain slang expressions and unconventional grammar.