"The Landlady" Review Questions

1. What seems to be the landlady's idea of a perfect guest? What happens to her guests, and how do you know?

2. One important fact you may not know is that potassium cyanide, a favorite poison in mystery and suspense stories, has a faint bitter-almond taste. Go back to the text, and find where the writer plants this clue. Provide this clue. How was Billy's fate foreshadowed by this information?

3. The climax of a story is its most exciting point. It is also the moment at which the outcome of the conflict is decided. What do you think is the climax of this story? When does the reader know what will happen to Billy?

4. Skim through the story to find the points at which Billy makes fateful decisions. Choose one of these moments, and describe what Billy does and why he does it. How might a different decision have changed the resolution, or outcome, of the story?

5. One method of creating suspense is to isolate your character. #2 on the Stop and Jot handout read, “He [Billy] had never been to Bath before. He didn’t know anyone who lived there” (Dahl 72). Provide additional examples of suspense created through isolation or any of the other thirteen techniques to create suspense.

6. How does the opening paragraph of "The Landlady" help foreshadow what is to come of Billy?

“Billy Weaver had travelled down from London on the slow afternoon train, with a change at Swindon on the way, and by the time he got to Bath it was about nine o’clock in the evening and the moon was coming up out of a clear starry sky over the houses opposite the station entrance. But the air was deadly cold and the wind was like a flat blade of ice on his cheeks” (Dahl 72).

 What type of figurative language is used? What is the author’s intended effect?

7. Why does the Landlady continuously interrupt Billy as he tries to recall where he has heard the names of the two boys? What is the author's intended effect?

5. Look back at the story and use the text to define the following vocabulary words:
-Rapacious

Definition:

Sentence in which it appears:

-Intuition

Definition:

Sentence in which it appears:

-Facades

Definition:

Sentence in which it appears:

-Emanate

Definition:

Sentence in which it appears: