

O. Henry's The Gift of the Magi

and other stories

Student Learning Materials

Published by
The Office of English Language Programs
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20037
americanenglish.state.gov

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TRANSIENTS IN ARCADIA

PRE-READING ACTIVITY 1: VOCABULARY BUILDING

The story “Transients in Arcadia” is about Madame Héloïse D’Arcy Beaumont and Mr. Harold Farrington, who meet in the Hotel Lotus. This activity will help you learn some keywords about their encounter at the hotel.

Directions:

1. Read the words and their definitions in the table below. The images help in understanding the meaning of each word.
2. Complete the sentences with words from the table. One sentence has been completed as an example.

Words	Images	Definitions
transient (p. 62)		A person who stays in a place for only a short time before going somewhere else
Arcadia (p. 62)		A very pleasant and quiet place
Madame (p. 63)		A polite title used like “Mrs.” in French
lotus (p. 63)		A flowering plant that grows on the surface of water
prince (p. 64)		The son or grandson of a king or queen
sailing (p. 64)		Travelling on water in a sailboat

- A. This young prince will become the king in the future.
- B. If you rent a sailboat, you will be excited to go _____ along the West Coast.
- C. _____ Beaumont was well served during her stay in the hotel.
- D. I should grow a _____ in my pond for its beautiful flowers.
- E. The hotel guests are usually regarded as _____ because they only stay a few days there.
- F. _____ is a peaceful place with simple pleasures.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY 2: PREDICTING THE STORY



The story “Transients in Arcadia” takes place in a hotel. Not many people know this hotel. It is a cool, quiet place in the midst of a hot, noisy city. Guests in this hotel are usually very special. O. Henry describes the hotel and the restaurant in the hotel in detail. Look at the picture, which represents the hotel’s restaurant, and answer a few questions about the story before you read it. This activity will help you guess what the story will be about.

Directions:

- Before you read the story, look at the picture and read the phrases above the picture.
- Match phrases with the questions **Who? What? When? Where? How?**.
- Write the letter for each phrase on the line below the corresponding question. An example is provided.
- What do think the story will be about? Write a short sentence with your prediction.

Phrases:

- The Hotel Lotus on Broadway in New York
- Madame Beaumont and Mr. Farrington
- Living one week like a rich lady and a gentleman
- Finding a cool and special hotel
- During a hot summer

Who?	What?	When?	Where?	How?
<u>B</u>				
<p><u>What do you think this story will be about?</u></p>				

WHILE-READING ACTIVITY 1: HOTEL DESCRIPTION

In this story, O. Henry calls the Hotel Lotus “Arcadia,” a place with quiet and simple pleasures. The hotel is a special place for Madame Beaumont and Mr. Farrington where they meet. Not many people know about this hotel. In this activity, you will analyze information about this hotel and sort this information into different categories.

Directions:

1. As you read **pages 62-66**, pay attention to the way O. Henry describes the Hotel Lotus.
2. Read the sentences with details about the hotel in the box below.
3. Put the letter for each sentence about the Hotel Lotus into the corresponding category into **Description of the Hotel Lotus**. An example has been completed for you.

Details about the Hotel Lotus

- A. ~~You will eat better fish than you could catch for yourself in streams in the hills. (p. 62)~~
- B. You will have better meat than a hunter brings home from the forest. (p. 62)
- C. They (guests) feel especially wise because they have found this delightful place. (p. 62)
- D. They (guests) are afraid that the restless pleasure-seekers will find their hotel and destroy its pleasant quiet. (p. 63)
- E. More waiters than necessary are always near. (p. 63)
- F. New York might have been miles away. (p. 63)
- G. The pleasing distant noise of Broadway sounds like running water in a forest. (p. 63)
- H. It (the hotel) was the most desirable and the most restful place in America during the heat of summer. (p. 64)
- I. Guests of the Lotus seemed to understand each other very easily. (p. 64)
- J. The waiter stood near, ready to get anything they asked for. (p. 66).

Description of the Hotel Lotus

Location and Environment	Food and Services	Guests
1. _____	1. <u>A</u> _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____
	4. _____	

WHILE-READING ACTIVITY 2: DESCRIBING THE MAIN CHARACTERS

In the story “Transients in Arcadia” Madame Beaumont and Mr. Farrington are the main characters. O. Henry uses many descriptive phrases to talk about these characters. This activity will help you compare (find the similarities) and contrast (find the differences between) the two main characters in the story.

Directions:

1. Read the descriptive words and phrases from the story in the table below.
2. To compare and contrast Madame Beaumont and Mr. Farrington, fill in the circles below with descriptive words and phrases.
3. Write the words and phrases about Madame Beaumont in the **left** circle.
4. Write the words and phrases about Mr. Farrington in the **right** circle.
5. Write the words and phrases that describe both characters in the overlapping area of the circles under **Both**.

Descriptive words and phrases

beautiful (p. 63)

quiet but good clothes (p. 64)

a perfect guest (p. 63)

not rich

alone

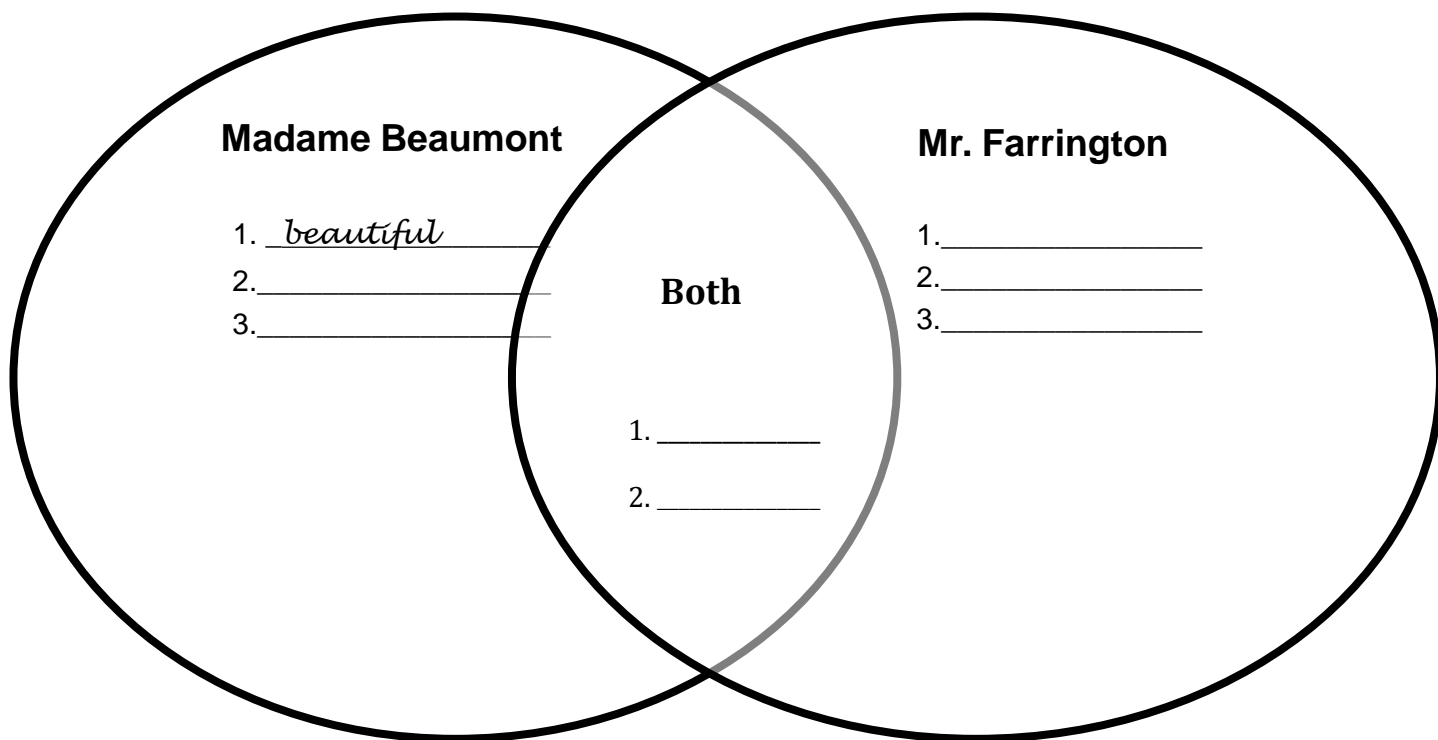
a sweet and soft person (p. 63)

good manners (p. 64)

pleasant face (p. 64)

honest

happy



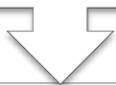
POST-READING ACTIVITY 1: RIGHT THERE

In the story “Transients in Arcadia,” O. Henry first sets up the situation (when and where the story takes place) and introduces the main characters. Next, the author presents how the main characters meet and get to know each other. Finally, at the end of the story, the author explains how the main characters learn the truth about each other and what they agree to do next. This activity will help you reflect on the development of the story.

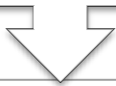
Directions:

1. After you read “Transients in Arcadia,” answer the questions about the development of the story.
2. Write your short answers in the following boxes.

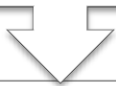
When and where does the story take place? (pp. 62-63)



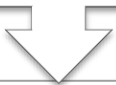
Who are the two main characters of this story? (pp. 63-64)



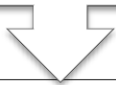
How do the main characters meet? (p. 64)



Why do they go to the hotel? (pp. 64-65)



What are the true identities of the two main characters? (pp. 65-66)



What do the main characters decide to do at the end? (p. 66)









POST-READING ACTIVITY 2: CHARACTERS AND YOU


In the story “Transients in Arcadia,” Madame Beaumont and Mr. Farrington appear to be rich guests staying at the Hotel Lotus. However, in real life they are working-class New Yorkers. In this activity, you will reflect on some special events and analyze the characters in the story.

Directions:

1. Read the events in the left column.
2. In the middle column, choose descriptive words and emoticons from the list below to describe the character’s feelings during each event.
3. In the right column, use words or draw an emoticon to show your feelings about each event.

Possible descriptive words to use

happy 	Negative 	sad 	Angry 	surprised 	confused 	proud 	excited 
--	---	--	--	--	---	--	--

Events in the Story	Character’s Feelings	My Feelings
1. A story about Madame Beaumont was told among the guests in the Hotel Lotus. It was said that she was a woman who had traveled all over the world. (p. 63)		<i>I would be happy if I traveled all over the world.</i>
2. “I hope they don’t discover the Lotus this week,” said Madame. (p. 64)		
3. “I promise myself three more days of this delightful rest,” said Madame Beaumont. “The next day my ship sails.” (p. 65)		
4. “Listen, Mamie. Will you go to the pleasure park on Coney Island with me on pay day?” (p. 66)		
5. And he said, “Forget that ‘Harold Farrington,’ will you? McManus is the name—James McManus. Some call me Jimmy.” (p. 66)		

ANSWER KEY | Transients in Arcadia

Pre-reading Activity 1: Vocabulary Building

- A. This young prince will become the king in the future.
- B. If you rent a sailboat, you will be excited to go sailing along the West Coast.
- C. Madame Beaumont was well served during her stay in the hotel.
- D. I should grow a lotus in my pond for its beautiful flowers.
- E. The hotel guests are usually regarded as transients because they only stay a few days there.
- F. Arcadia is a peaceful place with simple pleasures.

Pre-reading Activity 2: Predicting the Story

Who?

B

What?

D or C

When?

E

Where?

A

How?

C or D

What do you think this story will be about?

Answers will vary.

While-reading Activity 1: Hotel Description

Description of the Hotel Lotus:

Location and Environment	Food and Services	Guests
1. <u>E</u>	1. <u>A</u>	1. <u>C</u>
2. <u>G</u>	2. <u>B</u>	2. <u>D</u>
3. <u>H</u>	3. <u>E</u>	3. <u>I</u>
	4. <u>J</u>	

While-reading Activity 2: Describing the Main Characters

Madame Beaumont:

1. beautiful
2. a perfect guest
3. a sweet and soft person

Mr. Farrington

1. quiet but good clothes
2. pleasant face
3. good manners

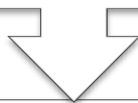
Both

1. not rich
2. alone
3. honest
4. happy

Post-reading Activity 1: Right There

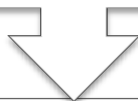
When and where does the story take place? (pp. 62-63)

The story takes place in a hotel on Broadway in New York during a hot summer.



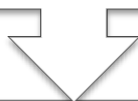
Who are the two main characters of this story? (pp. 63-64)

Madame Beaumont and Mr. Farrington



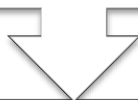
How do the main characters meet? (p. 64)

They meet in the restaurant of the hotel. Madame Beaumont drops something and Mr. Farrington returns it to her and they start talking.



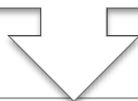
Why do they go to the hotel? (pp. 64-65)

They both want to escape the noise and dust of New York for a few days. They want to live like rich people and stay in a very good hotel.



What are the true identities of the two main characters? (pp. 65-66)

They are both working-class people with jobs in retail. They saved money for a long time for the chance to stay in this hotel.








What do the main characters decide to do at the end? (p. 66)

They decide to go to the pleasure park on Coney Island next pay day.

Post-reading Activity 2: Characters and You

Answers may vary.

Events in the Story	Character's Feelings	My Feelings
1. A story about Madame Beaumont was told among the guests in the Hotel Lotus. It was said that she was a woman who had traveled all over the world. (p. 63)		Answers will vary
2. "I hope they don't discover the Lotus this week," said Madame. (p. 64)		Answers will vary
3. "I promise myself three more days of this delightful rest," said Madame Beaumont. "The next day my ship sails." (p. 65)		Answers will vary
4. "Listen, Mamie. Will you go to the pleasure park on Coney Island with me on pay day?" (p. 66)		Answers will vary
5. And he said, "Forget that 'Harold Farrington,' will you? McManus is the name—James McManus. Some call me Jimmy." (p. 66)		Answers will vary