Plot Synopsis for “The Furnished Room”

1. Late one evening, a young man rents a room in a New York City boarding house.
2. He asks the landlady if she has ever rented to a girl called Eloise Vashner.
3. The landlady answers that she cannot recall the name.
4. Deeply disappointed at his failure to find his beloved, the young man slumps into a chair in his room.
5. He suddenly becomes aware of the scent of Eloise’s perfume and begins a frantic search through the room for any sign of her presence.
6. Further questions to the landlady result in the same negative reply.
7. The young man returns to the room, makes it airtight, turns on the gas, and waits to die.
8. Meanwhile, the landlady tells a friend about him, commenting that she did not tell him that the previous tenant of his room, Eloise, committed suicide only last week.

Literary Analysis Challenges for “The Furnished Room”

How does the setting of this story function as a character?

How might this line relate to the theme of the story: “The tiny fingerprints on the wall spoke of little prisoners trying to feel their way to sun and air.”

O. Henry uses inflated diction (overly elegant, pompous, and wordy language). Copy 2 examples of it from the story and paraphrase each using as few words as possible without altering the meaning of the sentence.