

2022湖北高二下学期人教版高中英语期末考试

1.

On a cold winter Sunday, the little man came up to me as I was about to enter the telephone box and asked me whether I had a match.

“I'm sorry,” I said. “I don't smoke, so I haven't any. You'd better ask someone else.” [111]

He looked rather disappointed, hesitated, and then turned away. I watched him walk slowly down the street before I picked up the telephone directory to look up the number I meant to dial. I'm not used to a public call box, so, at my first attempt to get through, the warning pips(嘟嘟声) had stopped before I realized I had to insert a coin. When I was at last able to speak, I was told that the person whom I urgently wanted to give a message to had just gone out. Swearing slightly under my breath, I got out of the box and came face to face with the little man. As he raised his hat again, I could see he was quite bald, and a thin line, resembling a dueling(决斗) scar, crossed one cheek.

“Excuse my troubling you again,” he said nervously. “May I walk along with you a little way? I must tell you the truth. I need help desperately.”

He had an unusually deep voice which suggested a strange combination of shyness and self-confidence. I was conscious of a fairly strong foreign accent and I wondered what country he had actually come from. I said that I had to catch a train in twenty minutes' time, but that he might accompany me to the station.

“I'm going to shock you,” he said suddenly, after a moment's silence. “Can you lend me five pounds? I have no money at all.” I have come across many strange characters during my life and plenty of people have tried to borrow money from me. I have generally managed to avoid lending them any. But, perhaps because of the very directness of his appeal, I somehow had the impression that his need might be desperately urgent.

“I'm sorry,” I replied, “I'm afraid I can't lend you anything, as I'm not in the habit of carrying much money about with me. Don't you think the police might be the best people to ask for help?”

He hesitated, “I dare not go to the police,” he said quietly. “If I do go, they will have to send me home. That's what I'm afraid of. I don't know what to do.” He shook his head rather sadly, raised his hat and left me. I caught my train and soon forgot the incident.

It was three weeks later that I happened to glance at an old evening paper and caught sight of a small paragraph at the bottom of the front page: “The unidentified body of a short bald man, with a deep scar across one cheek, was recovered from the River Thames yesterday. The police believed he had committed suicide.” I then noticed the date: just two and a half weeks before.

It was I who might have been the final cause of his terrible tragedy. For days afterwards the cruelty of my refusal made me suffer continual shame and regret. I swore that I would never again refuse any appeal for help.

21. 【小题1】 At the beginning of the story, the little man approached the author to _____.