

1.

I am an active playgoer and play-reader, and perhaps my best reason for editing this book is a hope of sharing my enthusiasm for the theater with others. To do this I have searched through dozens of plays to find the ones that I think best show the power and purpose of the short play.

Each play has a theme or central idea which the playwright (剧作家) hopes to get across through dialogue and action. A few characters are used to create a single impression growing out of the theme. It is not my intention to point out the central theme of each of the plays in this collection, for that would, indeed, ruin the pleasure of reading, discussing, and thinking about the plays and the effectiveness of the playwright. However, a variety of types is represented here. These include comedy, satire, poignant drama, historical and regional drama. To show the versatility (多面性) of the short play, I have included a guidance play, a radio play and a television play.

Among the writers of the plays in this collection, Paul Green, Susan Glaspell, Maxwell Anderson, Thornton Wilder, William Saroyan, and Tennessee Williams have all received Pulitzer Prizes for their contributions to the theater. More information about the playwrights will be found at the end of this book.

To get the most out of reading these plays, try to picture the play on stage, with you, the reader, in the audience. The houselights dim (变暗). The curtains are about to open, and in a few minutes the action and dialogue will tell you the story.

21. What do we know about the author from the first paragraph?

- A. He has written dozens of plays.      B. He has a deep love for the theater.
- C. He is a professional stage actor.      D. He likes reading short plays to others.

22. What does the author avoid doing in his work?

- A. Stating the plays' central ideas.
- B. Selecting works by famous playwrights.
- C. Including various types of plays.
- D. Offering information on the playwrights.

23. What does the author suggest readers do while reading the plays?

- A. Control their feelings.                      B. Apply their acting skills.
- C. Use their imagination.                      D. Keep their audience in mind.

24. What is this text?

- A. A short story.
- B. An introduction to a book.
- C. A play review.
- D. An advertisement for a theater.

2.

The traffic signals along Factoria Boulevard in Bellevue, Washington, generally don't flash the same length of green twice in a row, especially at rush hour. At 9:30am, the full red/yellow/green signal cycle might be 140 seconds. By 9:33am, a burst of additional traffic might push it to 145 seconds. Less traffic at 9:37am could push it down to 135. Just like the traffic itself, the timing of the signals changes.

That is by design. Bellevue, a fast-growing city just east of Seattle, uses a system that is gaining popularity around the US: intersection(十字路口) signals that can adjust in real time to traffic conditions. These lights, known as adaptive signals, have led to significant declines in both the trouble and cost of travels between work and home.

“Adaptive signals can make sure that the traffic demand that is there is being addressed,” says Alex Stevanovic, a researcher at Florida Atlantic University.

For all of Bellevue's success, adaptive signals are not a cure-all for jammed roadways. Kevin Balke, a research engineer at the Texas A&M University Transportation Institute, says that while smart lights can be particularly beneficial for some cities, others are so jammed that only a sharp reduction in the number of cars on the road will make a meaningful difference. "It's not going to fix everything, but adaptive signals have some benefits for smaller cities," he says.

In Bellevue, the switch to adaptive signals has been a lesson in the value of welcoming new approaches. In the past, there was often an automatic reaction to increased traffic: just widen the roads, says Mark Poch, the Bellevue Transportation Department's traffic engineering manager. Now he hopes that other cities will consider making their streets run smarter instead of just making them bigger.

25. What does the underlined word “that” in paragraph 2 refer to?

- A. Increased length of green lights.                      B. Shortened traffic signal cycle.
- C. Flexible timing of traffic signals.                      D. Smooth traffic flow on the road.

26. What does Kevin Balke say about adaptive signals?

- A. They work better on broad roads.
- B. They should be used in other cities.
- C. They have greatly reduced traffic on the road.
- D. They are less helpful in cities seriously jammed.

27. What can we learn from Bellevue's success?

- A. It is rewarding to try new things.      B. The old methods still work today.