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INTRODUCTION: CONFLICT

Conflicts play a major role in short-story literature. There are two types of conflicts:

Internal conflict:

- An internal conflict is when a person finds conflict within themselves, i.e., **man versus self**.

External conflict:

- An external conflict is when someone struggles with opposing forces and includes:
 - **man versus man**
 - **man versus nature**
 - **man versus society**
 - **man versus fate**

Internal conflict (man versus self):

This conflict occurs when the protagonist faces a conflict with themselves, such as self-doubts, a moral dilemma, or their own nature.



Write an example of this conflict.

External Conflicts

Man versus man: This conflict occurs when two characters are struggling against each other.



Write an example of this conflict.

Man versus nature: This conflict occurs when the protagonist struggles against an element of nature.



Write an example of this conflict.



CONFLICT

Man versus society: This conflict occurs when the protagonist struggles against their community or society at large.



Write an example of this conflict.

Man versus fate: This conflict occurs when the protagonist struggles against events beyond their control.



Write an example of this conflict.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION OF THIS CHAPTER:

Can people's experiences from different times or cultures be relevant and apply to our lives?

Lesson 1: The Guest

Literary Focus: Setting

Lesson 2: The Reunion

Literary Focus: Motivation

Lesson 3: The Collector's Widow, Part 1

Literary Focus: Mystery

Lesson 4: The Collector's Widow, Part 2

Literary Focus: Clues

Lesson 5: Bronx Bomber

Literary Focus: Narrative Nonfiction

Lesson 6: Thunderstorm

Literary Focus: Irony



SAMPLE



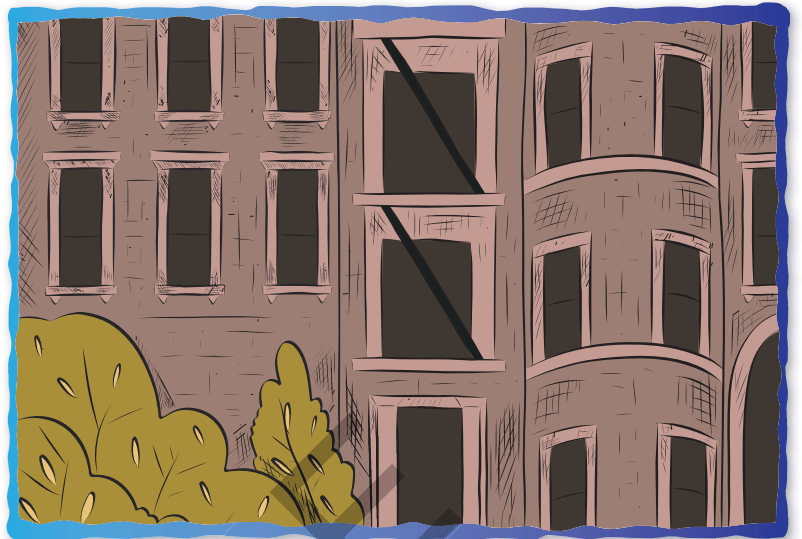
LESSON ONE

CHAPTER ONE

THE GUEST

BY MIRIAM DANSKY
More of Our Lives (Targum Press)

LITERARY FOCUS
Setting



INTRODUCTION

Children like to fantasize about where they'll live when they grow up, like, "When I'm older, I will live in Alaska and play with black bears." As our thoughts and perspectives mature, reality shows us that there are many practical factors that determine where we will live, while the wishful dream locations fade away. Financial feasibility is usually high on the list: Will I be able to afford to buy a property in this area? Geographical closeness to family and friends has an impact, too. Many feel that being close to their parents and siblings is of paramount importance. Others may want to branch out and prefer not to live very close to those they already know well.

An important point to consider is that the type of people one will be surrounded by makes a big difference to their quality of life. As the popular proverb goes, "Ask about the neighbors, then buy the house." Your neighbors are your closest community; be sure you'd be happy to spend years in their company. In the following story, we will meet a character who made a cross-continental move and struggled painfully through it. The stark contrast between her and her surroundings served to highlight her inner values.

LITERARY FOCUS: Setting

The setting of the story is the time and place in which a story happens. A story can take place in the past, present, or future. It can happen in any place on the globe, in outer space, or in an imaginary place. The setting impacts the plot of a story. Certain things are more likely to happen in specific environments.



Create a setting. Explain how it would influence a story's plot.

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HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Russia's history is one of long discrimination towards Jews. Between 1880 and 1914, many Jews left Russia because of pogroms, antisemitism, and poverty. The huge emigration stopped with the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the communist revolution in Russia, and the civil war following it. After the 1920s, a new challenge faced the Jews of the Soviet Union.

When the communists took over the country, the study of religion was forbidden, and many Soviet Jews feared being arrested for observing Jewish practices. Thus, Jewish practices were forgotten as time went on. Except for occasional circumstances or unique windows of time, emigration from the Soviet Union was forbidden under Soviet rule.

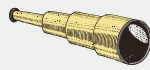
Due to new reforms in the government and the eventual fall of the Soviet Union, people were finally permitted to leave the country towards the end of the 20th century.

In the story *The Guest*, the protagonist, Bobbe, must have left Russia in the early years of the century, while Rosa, the antagonist, left Russia in the later part. This explains why Rosa was not aware of the many laws and traditions of Jewish life.

THE GUEST

Bobbe Teitlebaum lived alone in a tall tenement building in what had once been a vibrant Jewish neighborhood in New York. It was a dark, cheerless house in which she occupied the upstairs rooms. Her apartment consisted of two rooms—a dining area and kitchen and a small bedroom—barely large enough to hold two iron bedsteads and a small bedside table. She had lived this way since coming to New York ten years ago from Seattle. Now that she was alone, a widow, her only son married with grown children of his own, she was satisfied as long as she could hold body and soul together. Her material needs were few. But she spent every spare minute looking out for some member of the family or others in need. ●

New York remained **incomprehensible** to her. An impossible-to-fathom **enigma**. There were the large streets, seething with traffic. Then there was the garbage, lying about the streets as if it were making some kind of statement, as if it had a right to be there. The dark **labyrinths** of fire escapes. And the people were a heaving, pushing, **amorphous** mass of humanity of all colors and sizes, of all shapes and descriptions.



PREDICTION ONE

What will happen next? ●



Quote the words in the paragraph to the left that are examples of descriptive writing. How is using description effective? ●

Handwriting practice lines for the prediction task.

Find an idiom in the first paragraph. ●

Handwriting practice lines for the idiom task.



Sometimes she dreamed she was back in the shtetl in Russia—a tiny village where half the population was Jewish. It had been a good life, though simple; one eked out a living, the men studied in their spare time. Sometimes she dreamt about those hard years in Seattle trying to bring up a growing boy in a secular environment. And then the decision to send Yosef Chaim away to school in New York. She remembered him clinging to her, pleading with her not to send him.

“But Mummy, I’m afraid, afraid...”

But then, she would awake. The sun would be breaking over New York City largely unseen, ignored.

Lately, she didn’t venture out much. One of her main outings for the week was her trip to the corner shop, Goldberger’s, where Mr. Goldberger, a huge figure in his soiled apron, sat wedged behind the till. It was a supermarket now. One had to pick out what one wanted, but he always greeted her with a nod. ●

“So Bobbe, how’s life treating you?” he would ask expansively, as if greeting an old friend.

It didn’t take long for him to total up her few groceries.

“I live, I survive,” she would invariably answer.

Sometimes she met people she knew here, people who knew her son or his wife, Chana, or someone familiar from the small social club she attended on weekends. They all called her Bobbe. For with her small, bowed frame, she was the **epitome** of a Jewish grandmother, symbolic of another era. She was always on the lookout for guests. For she did not take easily to living alone, to being alone, to having no one with whom to share whatever little she possessed of worldly goods.

“Goldene Medinah” is a Yiddish phrase meaning the “golden land.” America was often referred to as such by the Jews living in Eastern Europe. The information they got about America made it sound like a dream place to live in and make a fortune.

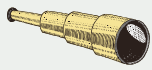
READING CHECK

Describe the life Bobbe used to lead and contrast it with her present-day life.



Notice how the author makes specific word choices to connote certain associations. Point out specific phrases and explain their effect. ●





PREDICTION TWO

What will happen next? ★



Identify some more phrases that have connotations and explain their effect. ★

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READING CHECK

What attracted Bobbe to Rosa?

B

“Kum arein zu mir” is a Yiddish phrase meaning “come along with me.” Yiddish was the mother tongue of most Jews living in Russia during the 20th century.

No husband. Is dead. Son still in Russia. Not let him come.”

“Kum arein zu mir,” Bobbe Teitlebaum answered almost automatically. “I have a place. Fine bed, too.”

So they returned to the small apartment together. Together they trudged up the dark, cheerless staircase.

“Light is broke. Landlord will soon fix,” Bobbe muttered.

“All that I have is yours,” Bobbe proclaimed as soon as they opened the dark door. “My house is yours. My table is your table. My food is your food...”

“But iz so little. You have little,” Rosa interrupted. “How can I take?” her glance taking in the sparsely furnished room.

“I have plenty.” Bobbe waved her hand in a large **encompassing** gesture. “You’re welcome to whatever I have.”

One day in Goldberger’s, from the other side of the shelves, she heard a familiarly Russian-sounding voice breaking over the English words with guttural, harsh, grating sounds. She peeked around the boxes at the end of the row. A dark, heavy-eyed woman was standing, tins in hand, trying to read the unfamiliar labels or perhaps make out the prices. ★

“Shalom aleichem, can I be of help?” she greeted her. The woman looked up. She must have been well into middle age, she judged. She wore a heavy wool cardigan, the ends of which she kept trying to gather with her free hand. She seemed deeply puzzled, her brows knitted together in a heavy look of deep earnestness.

“My name is Rosa. Iz new here. Come from Russia two weeks maybe. Not know a lot,” she concluded vaguely, extending her hand.

“You all alone?”

“Some relatives in Miami. Will call later.



So Rosa stayed. She stayed right through the fall, when the trees, emptied of their leaves, lay against the darkening sky, right through into the thick heart of winter, deep as a snowdrift. Until at last, the seasons turned around and suddenly there was the summer. The summer heat was choking, **stultifying**; it caught Rosa unprepared. Together they sweltered in the high-windowed room. There was no air-conditioning. Rosa could not catch her breath. ●



Identify figurative language in the paragraph to the left. Explain how it enhances the writing. ●

“In Russland, iz different. The heat. This strangles you, takes you by the throat,” she complained, and **simultaneously** fanned herself with a large newspaper especially folded for the purpose. “This iz terrible country. For what we came?” she asked.

Her husband had been an engineer, Rosa confided to Bobbe over the months, a qualified man. When they had applied for visas to leave to Israel, he had without explanation been relieved of his position. Eventually, he had found work as a lift-operator. All day pressing buttons—up, then down, then up again. He felt trapped, imprisoned in his iron cage. There was no way simply to step out. Permission to leave had come too late for him. He had suffered a heart attack at the premature age of 56. Her son and his wife and young child had not yet been allowed to leave. Somehow Rosa had ended up in America.

READING CHECK C
How does Rosa relate to her difficult past?

 **PREDICTION THREE**
What will happen next? ★

“All my life,” Rosa said, “we suffered because we are Jews. My whole family shot by the Germans. Yet, I don’t know for what we suffered.”

Rosa knew some vague facts—a little about the customs, a few words of Hebrew. ★

Bobbe tried to fill the gaps in Rosa’s Jewish knowledge. She spoke to her mostly of our history, stories of famous Jewish men and women, heroes of our heritage, and other stories too, from her long life. Sometimes they spoke in Yiddish, sometimes in Russian, sometimes a strange mixture of languages. Rosa didn’t remember or even understand everything, but she was left with an overwhelming impression of pride. Bobbe was proud of her heritage, proud of her place among this eternal nation. Her faith was simple yet rock-like.



READING CHECK

List several ways Bobbe gave to Rosa.

D



Rosa was included in all of Bobbe's activities. They went shopping together, attended social gatherings together. When Bobbe was invited to her son's house, she insisted Rosa come too. Everywhere the frail, bent old lady and the large Russian woman were seen together.

One day her son spoke to her. He was concerned, he said, about the situation. It had gone on for too long.

"When is she going to find a place of her own? People are talking. They say she is out for what she can get from you—a free bed, a free meal. And she gives you nothing in exchange for this..."

"The good deed, the good deed of hospitality. It brings its own reward. For what more should I ask?" she answered firmly, and turned away.

It was winter again. There had been a heavy snowfall. Bobbe had gone to see the landlord in the next block. He had to do something about the heating. They would freeze to death, she had argued. It was not just for herself she asked, she had a guest.

When she returned, the apartment was quiet. Rosa never went out till about midday. ■

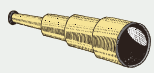
Bobbe noticed a small square sheet of paper on the table. On it the words, "Called Cousin Max in Miami. I go to him now. Thanks for it all, Rosa."

READING CHECK

How did Rosa take leave?

E

Perhaps it had ended as people had said it would. Perhaps she had been, after all, a victim of **duplicity**, of ungratefulness and selfishness beyond her understanding. But somehow, she didn't feel that way. We come, we go, we pass through, we take, we are all guests in this world. She had been privileged to offer, to share, to give. It was far better, she thought, to be on this side of the fence. For she was, after all, fortunate. She had had what to give. And with that, she was content.



PREDICTION FOUR

What will happen next? ■



LESSON ONE

REVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Let us think about the essential question of the chapter: *Can people's experiences from different times or cultures be relevant and apply to our lives?* What ideas have you learned from this story that can help you answer this question by the end of the chapter?

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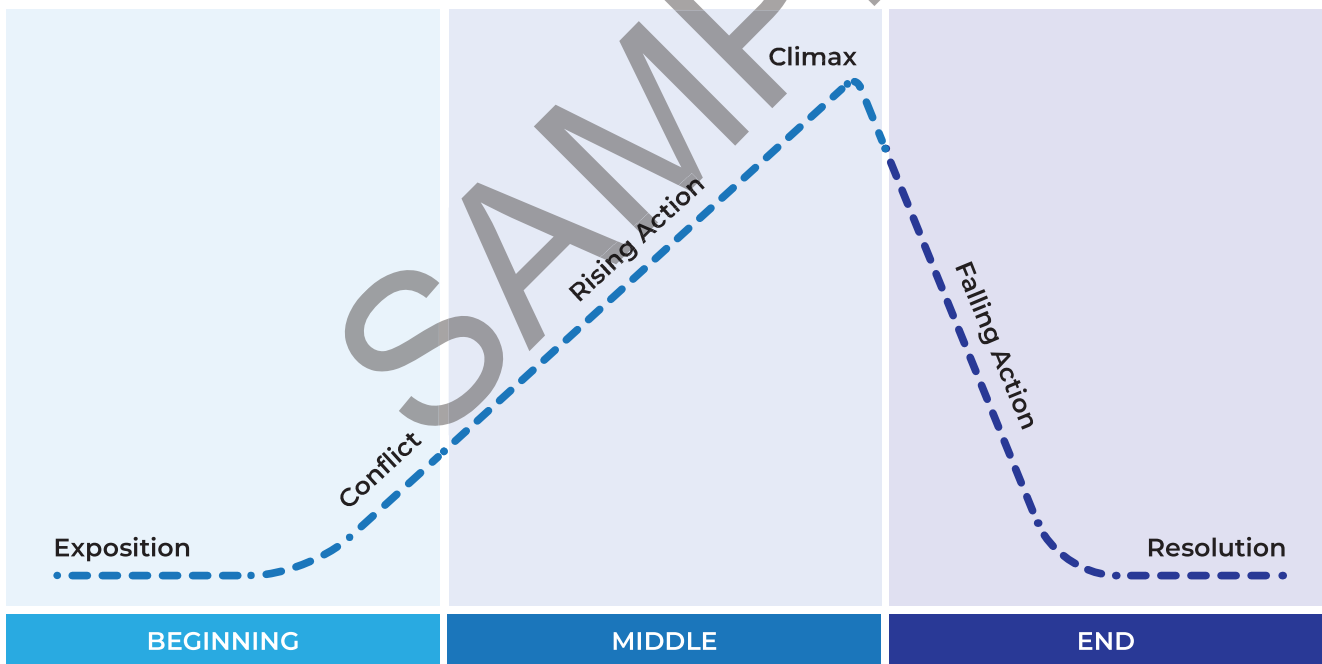
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PLOT



The diagram above shows all the parts of a plot. Use it to identify the parts of the plot in the story.



Exposition

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Conflict

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Rising Action

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Climax

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Falling Action

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Resolution

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SAMPLE

CONFLICT

What is the conflict in this story? What type of conflict is it? Explain your answers.

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THEME

What is the theme of the story?

PROTAGONIST/ANTAGONIST/POINT OF VIEW

Identify the protagonist and antagonist and explain from whose point of view the story is told.

VOCABULARY REVIEW

Choose the best definition of each of the words below using the context in which they are written.

VOCABULARY WORD	QUOTE FROM THE STORY THAT GIVES CONTEXT FOR THE WORD	DEFINITION THAT BEST FITS THE CONTEXT
enigma	"An impossible-to-fathom enigma ."	A. mystery B. experience C. predicament D. difficulty
labyrinths	"The dark labyrinths of fire escapes."	A. lines B. twists and turns C. mazes D. pathways
amorphous	"And the people were a heaving, pushing, amorphous mass of humanity of all colors and sizes, of all shapes and descriptions."	A. large B. formless C. mixed up D. indefinite



VOCABULARY WORD	QUOTE FROM THE STORY THAT GIVES CONTEXT FOR THE WORD	DEFINITION THAT BEST FITS THE CONTEXT
demented	"The carriages of the train, when it arrived, were all scribbled on, as if by some demented delinquent."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. unstable B. crazy C. forgetful D. damaged
delinquent	"The carriages of the train, when it arrived, were all scribbled on, as if by some demented delinquent ."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. young person who commits a minor crime B. robber C. sleuth D. imbecile
epitome	"For with her small, bowed frame, she was the epitome of a Jewish grandmother, symbolic of another era."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. perfect example B. symbol C. picture D. antithesis
encompassing	"Bobbe waved her hand in a large encompassing gesture."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. all-including B. surrounding C. inviting D. questioning
stultifying	"The summer heat was choking, stultifying ; it caught Rosa unprepared."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. simmering B. inhibiting C. over-heating D. burning
simultaneously	"This strangles you, takes you by the throat," she complained, and simultaneously fanned herself with a large newspaper especially folded for the purpose."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. in a quick motion B. at the same time C. with harsh movements D. in desperation
duplicity	"Perhaps she had been, after all, a victim of duplicity , of ungratefulness and selfishness beyond her understanding."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. sadness B. boredom C. loneliness D. deceitfulness

