



Lesson 1

Introduction

Introduction

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KEY VOCABULARY

anti-Semitism
bystander
collaborator
discrimination
Holocaust
ideology
Nazism
perpetrator
prejudice
rescuer
stereotype
victim

OBJECTIVES

- Students will raise and recognize key questions regarding the Holocaust.
- Students will recognize that a bystander makes an active choice.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How is the concept of the “Universe of Obligation” related to the Holocaust?

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will be introduced to the concept of the “Universe of Obligation.” They will examine their obligation to others and how their behavior is a reflection of their sense of responsibility to others.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN AND ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: The Universe of Obligation

Explain to the students that this lesson will ask them to consider the following questions:

- What are your values?
- Where do you see yourself in relation to others in your family, school, neighborhood, community, and world?
- What kind of person are you?
- What kind of person do you want to be?

Explain that this activity will help students understand the nature of their relationships with others and the world in which they live. It will also help them understand the behavior of individuals, nations, and institutions in the past and during the Holocaust.

Distribute the graphic organizer “Your Universe of Obligation.”

Ask students to examine the center circle and think about the concept of self in relation to those to whom they feel a sense of obligation. (You may wish to elicit definitions of the term “obligation,” such as “feeling responsibility to or for others.”)

Ask students to think of each concentric circle as an extension of their “universe of obligation.” Guide students to label the concentric circles in the graphic organizer with the names of those to whom they feel a sense of obligation (individuals, institutions, organizations, etc.). If necessary, model the activity for students.

NOTE: Some of the material written on the graphic organizer may be personal and private. It is important to respect a student’s need for privacy. Ask for volunteers when sharing information.

Have students place this graphic organizer in their folders. You will refer to this assignment when you conclude the study of the Holocaust curriculum.

Activity 2: “38 Witnesses”

Distribute and read *The New York Times* article “38 Witnesses,” an account of the murder of Kitty Genovese in a quiet residential

RESOURCES

- 1 “The Universe of Obligation”
- 2 Reading: “38 Witnesses”
- 3 Quadrant Chart
- 4 Reading: “The Ball”
- 5 Reading: *A Frost in the Night*

neighborhood of New York City in 1964. Ask students to consider the following questions:

- How did the citizens of Kew Gardens, Queens, react to the attack on Kitty Genovese?
- Why did they react that way?
- Could the victim have been saved? If so, how?
- Were the witnesses obligated to respond to the attack?

Activity 3: Quadrant Chart

In the study of the Holocaust, scholars have identified four key roles that defined human behavior at this time: victim, perpetrator, bystander, and rescuer. This activity asks students to reflect on how their own experiences or those of others may fall into one of the four categories.

Distribute the Quadrant Chart. Ask students to fill out the quadrants based on their own life experience or based on the people in the article “38 Witnesses.” It may be helpful to model this activity before asking students to complete the worksheet.

In the final discussion, be sure to connect the quadrant activity with “38 Witnesses.”

Assessment

Students may keep a journal that allows them to look back on their reflections, responses, and questions composed during the course of this study. On some occasions it may be helpful to share responses.

Ask students to address the following question: How is the concept of a person’s obligation to others pivotal to the Holocaust?

Have students make a list of three to five questions they would like answered during the Holocaust Unit.

Homework

Students will read the following literary selections and answer questions in preparation for the next lesson on stereotyping and prejudice.

- “The Ball,” an excerpt from *Friedrich* by Hans Peter Richter
- Chapter 9 of *A Frost in the Night* by Edith Baer

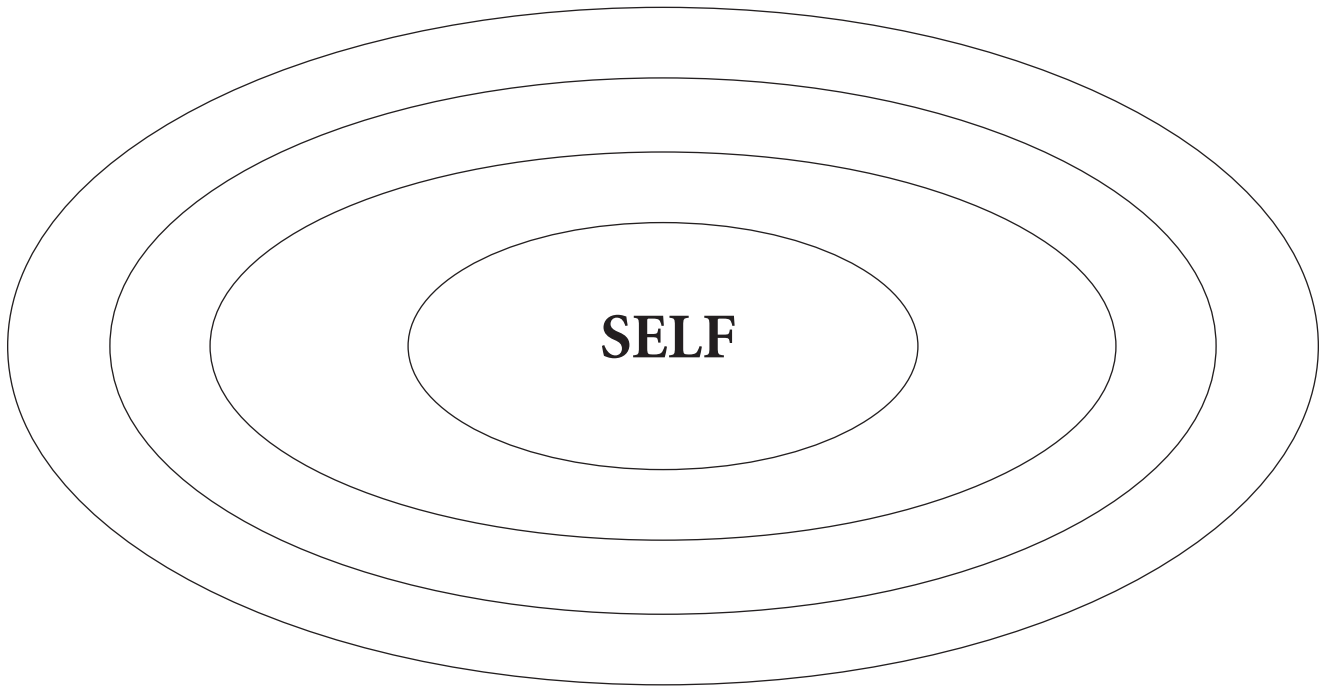
Standards Connection

English Language Arts: 1, 2, 3, 4

Social Studies: 1, 2, 3, 4

DOCUMENT 1

The Universe of Obligation



DOCUMENT 2

Reading: "38 Witnesses"

This account of a murder that took place in 1964, in a quiet residential neighborhood of New York City, appears to have no bearing on the Holocaust. As you work with the material in the Holocaust curriculum, compare the behavior of the thirty-eight witnesses to that of millions of ordinary citizens in Germany in the 1930s. They, too, were witnesses.

The selection is from the *New York Times*, March 27, 1964 .

38 WITNESSES

For more than half an hour 38 respectable, law-abiding citizens in Queens watched a killer stalk and stab a woman in three separate attacks in Kew Gardens.

Twice the sound of their voices and the sudden glow of their bedroom lights interrupted him and frightened him off. Each time he returned, sought her out and stabbed her again. Not one person telephoned the police during the assault; one witness called after the woman was dead.

That was two weeks ago today. But Assistant Chief Inspector Frederick M. Lussen, in charge of the borough's detective force and a veteran of 25 years of homicide investigations, is still shocked.

He can give a matter-of-fact recitation of many murders. But the Kew Gardens

slaying baffles him—not because it is a murder, but because the “good people” failed to call the police.

“As we have reconstructed the crime,” he said, “the assailant had three chances to kill this woman during the 35-minute period. He returned twice to complete the job. If we had been called when he first attacked, the woman might not be dead now.”

This is what the police say happened beginning at 3:20 a.m. in the staid, middle-class, tree-lined Austin Street area: Twenty-eight-year-old Catherine Genovese, who was called Kitty by almost everyone in the neighborhood, was returning home from her job as a manager of a bar in Hollis. She parked her red Fiat in a lot adjacent to the Kew Gardens, Long Island, railroad station,

facing Mowbray Place. Like many residents of the neighborhood, she had parked there day after day since her arrival from Connecticut a year ago, although the railroad frowned on the practice.

She turned off the lights of her car, locked the door, and started to walk the 100 feet to the entrance of her apartment at 82-70 Austin Street, which is in a Tudor building with stores on the first floor and apartments on the second.

The entrance to the apartment is in the rear of the building because the front is rented to retail stores. At night the quiet neighborhood is shrouded in the slumbering darkness that marks most residential areas.

Miss Genovese noticed a man at the far end of the lot, near a seven-story apartment

house at 82-40 Austin Street. She halted; then nervously, she headed up Austin Street toward Lefferts Boulevard, where there is a call box to the 102nd Police Precinct in nearby Richmond Hill. She got as far as a street light in front of a bookstore before the man grabbed her. She screamed. Lights went on in the 10-story apartment house at 82-67 Austin Street, which faces the bookstore. Windows slid open and voices punctured the early morning stillness.

Miss Genovese screamed: "Oh, my God, he stabbed me! Please help me!" From one of the upper windows in the apartment house a man called down: "Let that girl alone!"

The assailant looked at him, shrugged, walked down Austin Street toward a white sedan parked a short distance away. Miss Genovese struggled to her feet.

Lights went out. The killer returned to Miss Genovese, now trying to make her way around the side of the building by the parking lot to get to her apartment. The assailant stabbed her again.

"I'm dying!" she shrieked. "I'm dying!"

Windows were opened again and lights went on in many apartments. The assailant got into his car and drove away. Miss Genovese staggered to her feet. A city bus, Q-10, the Lefferts Boulevard line to Kennedy International Airport, passed by. It was 3:35 a. m.

The assailant returned. By then, Miss Genovese had crawled to the back of the building where freshly painted brown doors to the apartment house held out hope of safety. The killer tried the first door; she wasn't there. At the second

door, 82-62 Austin Street, he saw her slumped on the floor at the foot of the stairs and stabbed her a third time, fatally.

It was 3:50 a.m. by the time the police received the first call from a man who was a neighbor of Miss Genovese. In two minutes they were at the scene. The neighbor, a 70-year-old woman, and another woman were the only persons on the street. Nobody else came forward.

The man explained that he had called the police after much deliberation. He had phoned a friend in Nassau County for advice, and then had crossed the roof of the building to the apartment of the elderly woman to get her to make the call.

"I didn't want to get involved," he sheepishly told the police...

The New York Times Company. 38 Witnesses. © 1964. Reprinted by permission.

Eventually, Winston Moseley, the killer, was caught and sentenced to the electric chair, which, because of the law on capital punishment at the time, meant in effect a life sentence. What remained puzzling to police, newspaper reporters, and psychologists was why nobody called the police earlier. The man who finally placed the first call did so with trepidation, after telephoning a friend to seek his advice. The comments from some witnesses were indicative of the instinct of noninvolvement in contemporary American society: "I didn't want to get involved"; "Frankly, we were afraid"; "I didn't want my husband to get involved"; "I don't know"; "I was tired. I went back to bed"; "Get away or I'll throw you down the steps."

Another response was possibly the most instructive: "The last time I complained to the police, I was sent to a concentration camp." Kew Gardens contained a high concentration of former victims of the Nazis in Europe, and the last thing they wanted was to have anything to do with the police.

DOCUMENT 3

Quadrant Chart

| | |
|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">VICTIM</p> <p>Describe a time someone's words or actions hurt you and you felt like a target.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">PERPETRATOR</p> <p>Describe a time you deliberately said or did something to hurt someone else.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">BYSTANDER</p> <p>Describe a time you did not interrupt an act of prejudice.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">RESCUER</p> <p>Describe a time you interrupted an act of prejudice and became an ally to a potential victim.</p> |

HOMEWORK READING

“The Ball”

In his book *Friedrich*, which portrays the friendship between a Jewish boy and a Christian boy growing up in Germany between 1925 and 1942, Hans Peter Richter poignantly describes the changes in their lives as the community becomes increasingly anti-Semitic in its response to state-sponsored policies. The chapter entitled “The Ball” accurately depicts the discriminatory, destructive forces at work in Germany in 1933.

We ran along the street. Friedrich kept close to the houses: I stayed on the curb. I threw the little rubber ball I'd been given in the shoe store. It hit the center of the sidewalk and bounced high. Friedrich caught it and threw it back to me.

“My father will be home any moment!” he called to me. “I must get back soon. We're going shopping today. Maybe someone'll give me a ball, too!”

I nodded and jumped over a manhole. I waited until a pedestrian had gone by, then hurled the ball back to Friedrich.

Friedrich hadn't been watching. There was a crash.

The ball rolled harmlessly back to me.

Friedrich stared open-mouthed at the smashed shop window. I bent to pick up the ball, not yet believing what had happened.

Suddenly, the woman stood before us. She grabbed Friedrich's arm and began to screech.

Doors and windows opened. A crowd gathered.

“Thieves! Burglars!” the woman shouted.

Her husband stood by the shop door, hands in his pockets, smoking a pipe.

“This good-for-nothing Jewboy here broke my shop window,” she told everyone who cared to listen. “He wants to rob me.” She turned to Friedrich. “But you didn't quite make it this time, did you. Because I'm always watching. I know you; you won't get away from me. You pack of Jews; they should get rid of you. First, you ruin our business with your department stores, then you rob us on top of it! Just you wait, Hitler will show you yet!” And she shook Friedrich violently.

“But he didn't do it!” I yelled. “I threw the ball, I broke your window. We didn't want to steal!”

The woman looked at me, eyes large and stupid. Her mouth dropped open.

Her husband had swept the broken glass into the gutter. He collected the rolls of thread, the stars of black and white yarn, the balls of colorful embroidery yarn from the display case and carried them into the shop.

The woman's eyes grew very small. “How dare you interfere? What are you doing here anyway? Away with you! You don't think you have to protect this rotten Jewboy because you're living in the same house, do you? Go on, beat it!”

“But I threw the ball!” I said again.

The woman lunged at me, without letting go of Friedrich. Friedrich cried. He wiped his tears on his sleeve, smearing his whole face.

Someone had called the police.

Out of breath and sweating, a policeman arrived on a bicycle. He asked the woman to tell him what had happened.

Again she told the story of the attempted burglary.

HOMEWORK READING (continued)

“The Ball”

I tugged at his sleeve. “Officer,” I said, “he didn’t do it. I broke the pane with my ball.”

The woman looked at me threateningly. “Don’t you believe him, Officer!” she said. “He only wants to protect the Jewboy here. Don’t you believe him. He thinks the Jew’s his friend just because they live in the same house.”

The policeman bent down to me. “You don’t understand this yet, you’re too young still,” he explained. “You may think you’re doing him a favor by standing up for him. But you know he’s a Jew. Believe me, we grownups have had plenty of experiences with Jews. You can’t trust them; they’re sneaky and they cheat. This woman was the only one who saw what happened, so . . .”

“But she didn’t see it!” I interrupted him. “Only I was there, and I did it!”

The policeman frowned. “You wouldn’t try to call this woman a liar.” I wanted to explain, but he didn’t let me.

He took Friedrich’s wrist from the woman and led him toward our house, followed by the woman and a long line of curious onlookers.

I joined the line.

Halfway there we ran into Herr Schneider.

Sobbing, Friedrich shouted, “Father!”

Astonished, Herr Schneider surveyed the procession. He came closer, said hello, and looked from one person to another, obviously puzzled.

“Your son—” said the policeman.

But the woman didn’t give him a chance to go on. In one burst she repeated her tales. The only part she left out this time was her insinuation about Jews.

Herr Schneider listened patiently. When she had finished, he took Friedrich’s chin in his hand and lifted his head so he could look into his eyes.

“Friedrich,” he asked seriously, “did you break the shop window intentionally?”

Friedrich shook his head, still sobbing.

“I did it, Herr Schneider. I threw the ball, but I didn’t do it on purpose!” and I showed him my small rubber ball.

Friedrich nodded. Herr Schneider took a deep breath. “If you can swear on oath that what you just told me is the truth,” he told the woman, “go ahead and register a formal complaint. You know me, and you know where I live!”

The woman did not reply. Herr Schneider pulled out his purse. “Kindly release my son, Officer!” he said sharply. “I will pay for the damage at once.”

Hans Peter Richter. *Friedrich* (New York: Puffin Books, 1987), 38–42. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux LLC.

QUESTIONS

1. What does the woman call the boys?
2. According to the woman, how are the Jews ruining her business?
3. The policeman arrives to find out the truth. How does he use his authority?
4. Do you think the narrator and Friedrich will remain friends?

HOMEWORK READING (continued)

“The Ball”

Think about how the story presents evidence of each of the following, and then answer Question 5 below.

- stereotyping
 - the use of intimidation by both the shopkeeper and the policeman, a civil servant, to suppress the truth.
 - Herr Schneider’s role and whether or not he is a victim
5. How does this story illustrate the presence of anti-Semitism at a grassroots level?

HOMEWORK READING

A Frost in the Night

Chapter 9 of Edith Baer's *A Frost in the Night* clearly and painfully illustrates the anti-Semitic attitudes and discriminatory practices prevalent in Germany in the 1930's. Every occasion, including recreational activities, was unfortunately used as an opportunity to spread the hate-filled ideology of Nazism. Children were not exempt from being targets of virulent prejudice, as is seen in this description of a seemingly innocent afternoon of skating.

December turned into January. In the park the frozen pond glittered within the circling hedge of its barren shrubs; and where in summer the swans would glide silently across the water, now the swish of skates and the skaters' voices filled the clear air. Strains of the "Skaters' Waltz" blared from the wooden shed where hot cocoa and sugar wafers were sold. Ella and Eva jointed the line inside, wobbling stiffly on their skates over the mud-streaked planks.

"Hurry, slowpoke!" Ella called back, having shouldered her way to the counter with her customary efficiency. She balanced her steaming cup in her mittened hand and tore the cellophane wrapper off her wafer with her front teeth. "Come on, Eva, if you want to skate some more before dark!"

But when Eva finally had her turn at the counter, she found that she had left her change purse with her school things at home. Visions of the

small red pouch, wedged between the hard cover of her nature study book and the soft, dog-eared one of her Uhland ballads, hovered vexingly in the noise-filled air. She felt in her ski-pants pockets for a stray ten-pfennig piece, but there was none.

Ella, it turned out quickly, had used up her allowance on modeling clay; she was currently on an elephant binge, and Uncle Ludwig would show off her droopy-eared creatures with a deprecating shrug that fooled no one. After a visible struggle, Ella held her cocoa cup under Eva's nose. "Not that you deserve it, Eva—always misplacing and forgetting things. If your head wasn't fastened on to your neck . . ."

Eva glared at her cousin, torn between her dignity and the chocolaty vapors rising irresistibly from Ella's cup. Just as she had shamelessly settled for the latter and bent her head toward that first, tongue-

scalding sip, Ella hastily snatched back her hand.

"Hold it, Eva! You'd better think this over! I mean with Uschi having the measles, I wouldn't want you to catch any germs from my cup."

Eva could have wept with disappointment. With measles at the Upstairs, her mother had been reluctant to let her go skating with Ella, let alone having her drink from an Upstairs' cup! There was nothing left to do but watch her cousin drink up and toss the drained and crumpled paper cup on an overflowing trash can.

"Well, are you coming, Eva?" Ella asked and stalked toward the door. Shivering with cold and self-pity, Eva leaned her elbow against the counter and shifted her feet to ease the pressure of the skates against her soles.

"Hey, Eva Bentheim, don't take up space at the counter if you're not buying cocoa!" a high-pitched boy's voice sang

HOMWORK READING (continued)

A Frost in the Night

out behind her. It was Anton Huber, carefully filling rows of paper cups from a round-bellied pitcher that seemed too heavy for his skinny arms.

“I’m helping Frau Hauff,” he explained, and hastily wiped up a trickle of spilled liquid with a large towel already none too clean. “Sundays and after school. Mother can use the extra money, and”—he grinned the wry smile that crinkled his eyes now and then—“I can have all the hot cocoa I want.” “But your homework, Anton. When do you find time for that?”

It seemed wrong for Anton to spend his free hours working when Eva knew very well how worried he was about keeping up his grades.

Anton shrugged and pushed back a strand of his sandy hair with the crook of his arm. “Oh, I manage. My father is still out of work, and he’s very good at arithmetic. I’m sorry, Eva, you’ll really have to move on. Frau Hauff gives me a scolding when I hold up the line talking to kids from school.” But just as she turned to leave, Anton caught the fringe of her scarf. He scanned her face shrewdly.

“You’ve no money, Eva. That’s it, isn’t it?”

“I left my change purse at home,” Eva mumbled.

Anton tucked the towel under his arm and fished a ten-pfennig piece from his pocket. “Take it, Eva. I’ll get my day’s pay when I’m through tonight, and you can pay me back in school tomorrow.”

“First thing in the morning!” She suddenly realized that she was not only tired and cold but also hungry; her stomach felt queasy and her head swam. “Could you possibly spare another tenner, Anton?” she heard herself ask to her own great surprise, tearing her eyes from the tray full of wafers Frau Hauff was bringing from the other end of the counter. “Just till tomorrow, I promise.”

“It’s in their *blood*, it’s *always* been in their blood!” A tight voice spoke up at her back. Frau Hauff had come up behind her, the tray with the wafers pressed against her cocoa-spattered apron. “Borrowing and lending, charging interest and getting rich on our hard work. Don’t you go around loaning your tenners to the likes of *her*, boy—not as long as it’s tenners

you get from *me*. It’s *her* kind that put your father on the breadlines and ruined the land with their usury and greed!”

Somewhere, just on the other side of the counter and yet miles away in a drift of chocolate-flavored mist, Anton stood staring at Eva, his hand, with the coin between his fingers, suspended in the air as if it were no longer a part of him. A freckled-faced boy in the line laughed overly loud and whispered something to a girl in a white felt skirt. The other children looked away, their faces closed-off, blank. Eva wanted to run; but her feet felt strangely weighted, as if her skates had dug deep grooves into the wooden plank, pulling her down and down.

“Go on, you, don’t hold up those having an honest piece of change!” Frau Hauff shouted, her eyes moist with loathing behind her thick, fogged lenses. Her hand clamped over Anton’s like a vise. A spasm of pain rent his thin face, and the coin dropped from his stiffened fingers and clattered along the counter.

Eva turned and hobbled awkwardly through the receding crowd of staring faces. For a

HOMEWORK READING (continued)

A Frost in the Night

moment she thought she heard Anton call her name, and in the instant before she glanced back, she imagined him calmly pocketing his coin and throwing the soiled towel into Frau Hauff's astonished face. But the coin was still on the counter, glistening innocently in the light overhead, and Anton, bent over the round-bellied pitcher, was filling two paper cups for the freckled-faced boy and the girl in the white felt skirt.

Outside, bright scarves flew in the gathering dusk; skates skimmed the glittering mirror of ice under the floodlights. The strains of the "Skaters' Waltz" filled the air, and at the edge of the park, the white pillars of the Staatstheater gleamed through the evergreens.

She said nothing to Ella, who was in a benevolent mood on the way home (a boy she knew had pitched a snowball at her and she, declining the compliment, had sent him skidding to the ground with a well-aimed fusillade of her own). They walked home slowly under the bare-branched trees, across the lawn where once, long ago, Ella had explained to her the facts of life. It happened on an Easter Sunday morning, Eva recalled. A girl wearing a straw hat with yellow daisies and a velvet streamer down her back had asked Eva "what she was," *katholisch* or *evangelisch*? While Eva stood in confusion, trying to decide between the two unfamiliar words, Ella had

ordered her to tell the girl she was *juedisch*—and that she was never to forget it again. And when she wondered why Ella was so angry, and why the girl in the daisy hat looked at them curiously and suddenly turned on her black patent-leather heels and skipped across the lawn as if she had shrugged some burdensome weight off her shoulders, Ella had unaccountably bent down to her, straightened the bow of her middy blouse, and explained that Catholic and Lutheran children went to church on their holidays and Jews went to synagogue on theirs; and that there was nothing to be ashamed about being different—only about not wanting to tell it.

Edith Baer, *A Frost in the Night*. Copyright © 1980 by Edith Baer. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux LLC.

QUESTIONS

1. How does Eva's dilemma, forgetting her change purse, become a means to introduce a serious situation?
2. What is suggested by Frau Hauff's comments about Eva on page 97?
3. Explain the phrase "...—only about not wanting to tell it." in the context of the excerpt.
4. Consider the concepts of stereotyping, intimidation, and victimization as seen in this story. Compare your findings about these three concepts in *A Frost in the Night* to similar evidence in "The Ball." Note both similarities and differences in how these concepts are presented.
5. How does this story illustrate the presence of anti-Semitism at a grassroots level?

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Acknowledgments

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