**2 Short Story Review**

**A Personal information**

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Mentor: Suzanne Wesselink

**B Answer the following questions in English:**

***The writer***

1 a The writer of the short story is Philip Roth.

b Philip Roth was a Jewish American writer, born on the 19th of March 1933. He died on 22nd of May 2018, aged 95. Popular works written by Philip Roth are: Portnoy’s complaint, the human stain and The plot against America. His first work was: Goodbye Columbus (1959), and his last work was Nemesis (2010). Philip Roth won several prizes, of which the Medal of arts from the White House.

c <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Roth>

***The short story***

2 a The title of the short story is: “The defender of the faith”

b Yes, the title fits to the short story.

c The title fits the short story, because the title refers to Sergeant Marx. He often has to defend his own and the other’s Jewish faith, and that is why he is the defender of the faith.

d I think I would rename the story as: “The Jewish soldiers”, because the people in the short story are all soldiers, and the most important people in the short story are Jewish soldiers. ( Sheldon Grossbart, Mickey Halpern and Nathan Marx)

3 a The story was published in the year 1959, so that was 14 years after the war ended.

b I think the story was significant for the time it was written in, because the short story is about the war and takes place during or just after the war. And it was written not long after the war ended, so the majority of the people who lived then, had experienced the second world war. So that’s why this short story is significant for the time it was written in.

c <https://www.enotes.com/topics/defender-faith/in-depth>

4 a The genre of the short story is short story, faith and war.

b . The genre is a short story, because it only has 25 pages and it says that it is a short story. Faith is a genre, because the decisions made in the story are useally made out of faith. And war because the whole story has something to do with the war, because the protagonists are all soldiers.

c <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_writing_genres>

5 a SUMMARY: After the Allies win the war, sergeant Nathan Marx has gone back to the United States to become Sergeant at camp Cowder, Missouri. A trainee at the camp, named Grossbart, is Jewish. And when Grossbart learns that Sergeant Marx is Jewish as well, he starts to ask him for favours. Such as being excused from the GI party, because it is part of the Jewish religion to go to shul on Friday nights. Marx is not very happy with that, but Grossbart and his friends (Fishpein and Halpern) are very persuasive. One favour after another, Marx gets more and more frustrated. The breaking point was when Grossbart begged Marx to go visit his aunt for a weekend. But when he came back, it seemed that his aunt wasn’t even home.

b I think the writer does have a message for the reader, which is that when faced with difficult choices, we must try to balance our believes and make the right decisions. Because this short story is all about making choices, and other people influencing those decisions.

c What is the main theme of the story? The main theme of the story is taking advantage of your religion

d I do not think that the story has any other themes.

e In the story, the trainee, named Grossbart, asks his sergeant for several favours, of which he all has an excuse related to his religion, which is Jewish. Both the sergeant and Grossbart are Jewish, and that is why Grossbart things that he can take advantage of his sergeant Marx his religion.

f I did not use any (online) sources.

6 a What is the setting (time and place) of the story? The short story takes place in May of 1945, only a few weeks after the fighting had ended in Europe, so shortly after the second world war. It takes at a camp, called: Camp Crowder. The camp is situated in the state Missouri, in the United States of America.

b The story starts by telling when and where it all took place*: “IN MAY OF 1945, ONLY A FEW WEEKS AFTER the fighting had ended in Europe, I was rotated back to the States, where I spent the remainder of the war with a training company at Camp Crowder, Missouri.”*

7 a This short story has a first person narrator, the narrator in this story is Sergeant Nathan Marx. He tells the story with an I-perspective.

b *“I was rotated back to the States, where I spent the remainder of the war with a training company at Camp Crowder, Missouri. Along with the rest of the Ninth Army, I had been racing across Germany so swiftly during the late winter and spring that when I boarded the plane, I couldn't believe its destination lay to the west.”*

8 a Mention three characters in the story, including the most important one(s). Describe their characteristics in three adjectives (i.e. ‘adventurous’, ‘brave’, ‘sweet’, ‘cunning’, ‘protective’). ~Sergeant Nathan Marx: compassionate, straight, brave. ~Sheldon Grossbart: Persuasive, sacred and cunning. ~Captain Paul Barret: directive, harsh, cold-hearted.

b The main hero in this short story is sergeant Marx, because he has been a real hero in the war, and is very good to his people who might or might not even need him.

c There is an anti-hero in this story. Grossbart is the anti-hero in this story, because he takes advantage of his sergeant who is doing good things to him.

9 a This short story is a stream of consciousness, because there are no flashbacks or -forwards. There are no plot twists and very few or no humour is used in this short story.

b I did not use a source.

***C Your own opinion***

10 a+b Although I found it hard to keep reading the story, I found it a quite good story, but just not so entertaining. I noticed that it was an American story, very early in the story, because of the use of grammar and omission of words. So that was a bit confusing at first. I usually like stories from the great war and the second world war, but I liked this one less. That is probably so, because it’s a pretty short story and nothing particularly special happens in the story.

11 If I were to change anything about the story, I would add some plot twist or add some more humour. Because then the story is not so monotonous, and then it would be easier to read.