

Book title

Jam

(from the book collection of The Seven Good Years)

Author

Etgar Keret



Bibliographic information

The short story Jam was published in the newest authors book collection of The Seven Good Years, Fraktura edition, 2018. It is one of the 36 short stories which are divided into seven chapters, and it belongs to the last one of the Seven Good Years.

Author: Etgar Keret

Country: Israel

Language: English

Genres: Short story

Publisher: Fraktura

Year of publication: 2018

Type of release: hardcover

ISBN 978-953-266-927-5

Links (adaptations, reviews, full texts etc.)

- <https://fraktura.hr/blog/pekmez-etgar-keret-sedam-dobrih-godina-uskoro.html>
- https://issuu.com/fraktura/docs/sedam_dobrih_godina_knjigica



- <https://www.iutarnji.hr/kultura/knjizevnost/etgar-keret-moj-sin-ne-zeli-da-ovu-knjigu-citaju-njegovi-prijatelji-i-njihovi-roditelji/7026096/>
- <https://www.express.hr/kultura/u-izraelu-je-izdajnik-za-svijet-je-ubojica-palestinaca-13853>
- <https://www.mvinfo.hr/knjiga/12105/sedam-dobrih-godina>

Theme

The theme of the story Jam is based on the build of a very small, narrow house (width of a hundred and twenty centimeters) in Warsaw, where there was once a ghetto with Jewish kids during WW2 who smuggled food for their families. Talking about the episode from his own family, the author describes the scares that the holocaust left on the people and societies.

Short summary

Being a Jew and a resident in the Middle East, son of holocaust survivors, brother of an ultraorthodox Jew and anarchist fighter for legalizing marijuana. Keret talks about his dream of building a house in Warsaw, the hometown of his mother, place of a ghetto where she smuggled food for her family. On the initiative of a Polish architect, the author realizes his dream and builds a house between a split in memory of his mother's family, killed in WW2. Making her father's wish come true of saving the families name, she had a family of her own. When the house was built, above it there was a sign 'House of Kerete'. The author received a jar of jam from an old lady. That same jam was given by the old lady to the author's mother. She spread the jam on two pieces of bread and for the two little Jew girls who had to be in the ghetto once the Germans took over.

Why is the story appropriate for the targeted groups of RSP readers?

1. It deals with an active, real and unusual event
2. It connects the past with the present
3. It reminds us that trauma brought up from the war, lives within us, and that there are ways to overcome them.



What are the distinguished readers interests reflected by this book/story?

The consequences of WW2 are still present in the minds of the survivals. Every war scares people in similar ways. In the story, we find out how a little girl survived the holocaust and were given a task from her father – your task is to survive the war and make sure our name is not forgotten. The story reveals how you can survive when you feel the responsibility of your closest ones.

Why is this story motivational for the pupils?

Students find out about the bizarre everyday situations and interpersonal relationships which hide unsettled issues, links and consequences.

Is there a historical, political, multi/inter cultural, migrant or similar context recognized in this book/story?

Looking more in depth, the story brings up the problem of the Status of the Jews in Warsaw during the war and the faith of the little girl who lost her family, due to which she spent her childhood traveling to European orphanages after which, she was sent to Israel after WW2. She started her family there, and unfortunately, her children are reliving the war themselves, between Israel and Palestine.

Is there a principle of inclusion reflected in this book/story and does it promotes understanding of cultural diversities and heritage?

In a subtle way the author asks for her readers to focus on details (ex. possibility for the author to build a house in Warsaw and the meaning of the jam), the story reveals the only way to understand differences - tolerance and good will.

The meaning of the title is revealed in the last part of the book, where the lady gives the jam to the author. She does that with the intention to tell the story of her mother, the Polish woman, who once a long time ago gave the same jam spread on bread to two Jewish girls before they had to leave for the ghetto and thus disappear from the city.



METHODOLOGY

Title of Activity

Home and a welcome

Description of educational activity

Duration: 4 x 45 minutes

Students age: 16 - 17 (3rd year of high school)

1. class

Introduction of the class: whole class

Student Homework:

- without an introduction, students need to read the given text by themselves from the book collection, only providing the title, no name of the author and name of the book collection it belongs to.
- The first task after the reading: extract and write down three questions that rise up after reading the story. The students write down their questions and after 3-4 minutes they are given task no 2. From the three questions they have written, they need to choose one they need to find the answer to. Write the question on the board. Possible /Expected questions:
 - What is the setting of the plot – place and time?
 - Who is the narrator? What kind of books does he/she write?
 - How can a house be just a hundred and twenty centimeters wide?
 - Is there another part of the book (extension of the story/plot)?
 - Is the story part of a book collection?
 - Who is the author, to what national literature does it belong to?
 - ...The questions should bring up a discussion. To some questions they should answer themselves if possible, the professor returns back to the text, hints possible answers, or gives answers.

Middle part of the class: divide the class into two groups

Assignments for the groups:



- One group reads the first part of the book again (plot mainly happening in Poland), the second group reads the last part again (plot mainly happening in Poland currently, they should recognize and distinguish:

-The first group: a comic element in a serious action, explaining the purpose of such an element and the "serious" and "ironic" relationship in the text

- The second group: the fragment in which the theme of story is about (says: this is the same kind of jam that her mother spread on slices of bread and now this is the second time, and she hopes that no one will ever force you to leave)

- After the work, group representatives formally present jointly formulated responses

Last part of class: whole class

Student homework:

I read the final part again (I was still eating when my mom called me on my phone. "Where the hell are you? " she asks me with a worried voice which remembered me of my childhood when I was late coming home as I lost track of time playing with my friends. "I'm here, in our home in Warsaw", I tell her as my throat closes up.) and explain and argue whether the author is ironic or serious at the end of the story, and can a the narrow home represent the author's home.

2nd class

Introductory part of the class: whole class

Student homework:

- What kind of welcome did the neighbor receive from Etgar Keret in his story?
" That same night I was sitting in the kitchen of my narrow house drinking a cup of tea, and eating a piece of bread with jam, whose taste was sweet by the kindness of the quester and sour by the memories it brings."
- Discussion about story context

The middle part of class: pairs

Student Tasks: outside the context of the story

- comment on the importance of welcome as a way to host the the guest
- comment on personal experiences related to a welcome
- comment on the practices associated with welcoming us in our environment



- Identify some social events / situations / welcome arrivals
- comment on whether we always welcome everyone - explain your views in pairs
- describe personal experiences related to the given tasks

Last part of class: whole class

Student Tasks:

- Write a composition of up to ten sentences in which students describe and demonstrate what kind of welcome they would show to the three foreign tourists who would wonder around their home

(situation: August, Saturday night around 21 o'clock, you as a student with your parents are in a family cottage isolated. You are sitting on the terrace and see two young men and one girl with their backpacks approaching).

3rd class

Introductory part of the class: whole class

Student Tasks:

- Several students read their compositions
- discussion the topic of readings

The middle part of class: two groups of students

Tasks for groups:

- Two groups will prepare for 10 minutes - they need to explain their views on global issues related to the theme of "home and welcome" (the only teacher's instructions: Link the theme of Jams' story with home and welcome motives on the current, global social level.)
- group representatives will be verbally informed about the student's thinking

The closing part of the lesson:

In the comments it is expected, among other things, to highlight the current political conflict in the Middle East, between Israel and Palestine. The place of Etagar Kereta in today's world literature is to be placed and the motives which are found in the stories.

The following are the tasks for the final, fourth classroom lesson.

Student Tasks:

- Read the two stories from the same collection: What does that man say? and Salama (These are short stories, students can read stories in a very short time if their texts are available)

<https://fraktura.hr/blog/sto-kaze-taj-covjek.html>



4th class

The introduction of the class: the class is divided into two groups (groups divided according to the criterion "which is the most preferred story")ž

Student Tasks:

- Explain the themes of the story
- compare them
- Link them to the Jam story
- Conclude what is common between them
- describe Keret's literary style

Central part of the class: five groups (four students)

Tasks for groups:

- to distinguish two of the most important Keret features as an authors
- evaluate the stories
- Survey of whether the collection of seven good years is acceptable as a lecture title for the next educational period (ex. quarterly)

Final part of the class - end of the teaching unit:

The teacher asks if anyone has independently investigated / learned / read something about the life and work of writer Etgar Keret.

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Support materials: printed story Jam, Salama, What does this man say?

Or:

- <https://fraktura.hr/blog/pekmez-etgar-keret-sedam-dobrih-godina-uskoro.html>
- <https://fraktura.hr/blog/sto-kaze-taj-covjek.html>
- https://issuu.com/fraktura/docs/sedam_dobrih_godina_knjigica

Evaluation and Assessment Method:

Evaluation of the teaching process will be apparent from the survey results conducted on the 4th class (Survey of whether the collection of Seven good years is acceptable as a lecture title for the next educational period (eg quarterly).



Activity Impact on RSP Reading or Reading Motivation:

The chosen stories invite students to understand their personal and family problems. Stories encourage tolerance towards differences and understanding of historical circumstances. Speaking of everyday, most readers with well-known motives, the author reaches the attention of the most demanding readers.

Connection to curriculum

Gymnasium curriculum, 3rd grade:

Croatian language:

language - written and spoken expression, analysis and review

literature - world romance and the Croatian National Revival, the motive of patriotism in romance

Sociology: everyday life in a cultural and historical perspective

History: Second World War and Holocaust

Knowledge, Skills and Competences:

- a) Critical reflection of their actions and actions by other people,
- b) interdependence of people of different nationalities and religious beliefs, acceptance of diversity
- c) collection, selection and evaluation of information; reading, interpreting and evaluating literary texts; showing empathy; debate
- d) communication competences; ability to work in the team, accepting something different and different

Bibliographic reference to be used during the activity

Author: Etgar Keret

Country: Israel

Language: English

Type: short story

Publisher: Fraktura

Year: 2018.

Type of issue: hard cover

ISBN 978-953-266-927-5

Page no.: Story Jam – 4 pg., whole collection 176 pg.





Short description of digital sources (applications, games, webpages, FB pages etc.)

Since the collection of stories is new. In Croatian language published recently, teachers and students can use the story of

<https://fraktura.hr/blog/pekmez-etgar-keret-sedam-dobrih-godina-uskoro.html>

To get more familiar with the author, an interview is suggested:

<https://www.jutarnji.hr/kultura/knjizevnost/etgar-keret-moj-sin-ne-zeli-da-ovu-knjigu-citaju-njegovi-prijatelji-i-njihovi-roditelji/7026096/>

Results

Students will be able to:

- Identify historical facts in current contemporary literary texts
- Critically address intolerance towards others
- Precise articulation of personal attitudes and evaluate the readings
- Understand literary practices and humor in a serious subject

Recommendations

Each war raises similar horrors in people's lives. In the story of Jam, Etgar Kereta, it is known that the little girl survived the Holocaust, actually the author's mother, whose father gave her a serious task - survive the war and make sure our name does not die. The story reveals a way to survive in the toughest conditions when you feel responsible towards the ones you love. The award for perseverance is not absent. In this story, it is a jar of jam which is given by the new polish neighbor as a welcome gift - the Israeli's in Warsaw.

Students sympathize with a girl due to family tragedy, crimes, but also recognize new opportunities for coexistence.