1. \*\*What happens in the story?\*\*

Barbara, eight months pregnant, attends synagogue in 1966 Detroit where Rabbi Morris Adler delivers a Lincoln birthday sermon. A young congregant rises, denounces the congregation's hypocrisy, shoots the rabbi twice, then kills himself. While chaos erupts and people flee, Barbara moves against the crowd toward the shooter but fails to reach him. Later defended as a deranged Communist, the shooter's act becomes part of family lore when Barbara speaks in his defense months later, shocking her relatives.

2. \*\*What is the theme?\*\*

The story explores complicity, witness, and the attraction to radical acts in times of social upheaval. It examines how violence erupts within seemingly stable communities, the tension between suburban Jewish assimilation and authentic belief, and how extraordinary moments reveal hidden sympathies. The narrative questions passive observation versus action, the seduction of passionate conviction even when violent, and how family stories preserve uncomfortable truths about those who "dance to their own beat."

3. \*\*Does it propose other interpretations, in addition to the literal one?\*\*

Rating: 5

4. \*\*Which interpretation is it?\*\*

The story operates as allegory for 1960s American Jewish identity crisis—caught between assimilation and authenticity, suburban comfort and social justice. Barbara's pregnancy symbolizes potential change/revolution she cannot birth. Her movement toward the shooter represents attraction to radical action against complacency. The synagogue's relocation from Detroit to suburbs mirrors white flight. The shooter's act becomes a violent awakening to the "phoniness" Barbara herself recognizes. Her final wish about "carrying a martyr's baby" suggests desire for meaningful rebellion she cannot herself enact.