disappearing — all for a bunch of crazy rebels who do nothing but stir up trouble!"

"Sometimes what is most dear requires a high price."

"Price? What do you know about price? What do you know about pain? Look at you; you’re young, your whole life is ahead of you. Many people cannot start over — their lives are ruined!"

"I am ruined too, can’t you see?" Patricia screamed. "Don’t you dare tell me that I know nothing of pain. How can you judge?"

The bus was packed now; half of the riders were looking at the two foreigners fight a secret war in a strange language, staring incredulously. The man stood, gesticulating wildly as the bus swayed.

"I judge only the murderers! I judge only those who do not leave when they have the chance! Be glad you are here. Don’t look back. For too long I stood my ground, trying to be neutral, praying to God to bring peace. And then those dirty rebels cost me everything — everything!"

"You have nothing! What is life without freedom? What is peace when those who are oppressed suffer in silence? A spineless peace such as yours is no peace at all!"

"Listen to me; just listen. Tell me why they had to bring the war to my door. Why couldn’t they keep it away from the innocent people? They know our government will squelch them wherever they hide. One morning the planes came, as they did almost every day. I hurried my wife and children out of the house — we normally ran to safety in the fields. My parents did not move. I yelled to them, but they answered, ‘We are tired of running; we are not leaving this time.’ The rebels ambushed the soldiers there, and in the fighting my father was shot in the back and my mother was burned beyond recognition. I knew then that there was little hope, that all was lost."

The man was in tears. Patricia bit her lip, searching for words which did not exist for her.

"I took my savings and my family and left," he continued. "I still remember that last day, those last moments. After leaving the airline counter I walked up to a police officer. He looked at my family and my passport, and I looked at him, closely. Squinting his eyes, he seemed to have doubts. He asked me where I was going. I answered him quickly and confidently. He then lowered his eyes and stamped our passports. While crossing the runway toward the plane, I felt an urge to run back and tell them who I was. I was the patient and law-abiding Salvadoran! Gone for good! But I kept walking, and didn’t look back."

There was a pause. Finally Patricia spoke, "I hope you never sleep at night."

"I sleep soundly," he retorted. "I am alive, and my family is here. As for the rebels,
may they rot in hell! They can kill and be killed until blood covers the entire countryside. I really don’t care!"

Patricia, with her head aching and her vision blurred, bolted from the bus and into a sea of pedestrians downtown.

PART VIII

It was drizzling but that did not seem to deter most shoppers. She wandered along Broadway, her mind racing. She saw only faces — faces of people from every place on the earth. African faces, Asian faces, Latin faces. They all seemed so happy, and she couldn’t understand why. There was no sad longing for home in their eyes that she could read, there was no concern for familiar things lost, for faraway wars. They rushed about from sale to sale, lifetimes apart from where they must have begun. She stopped where an overhang from a store protected her from the rain. She spotted signs in innumerable languages, she heard music blaring from a thousand lands, but somehow she couldn’t believe that any of those things were substitutes for home.

Then something caught her attention. On a corner across the street, singing a familiar song that echoed from her childhood, a leathery-faced old man stood selling roses, roses like the ones she used to admire in the park close to San Jacinto. She ran out into the street; cars swerved to avoid her. Soon she was buying roses, all the roses her money could buy. The man asked why — why so many.

“I never want to forget,” Patricia said simply.

The man watched the pretty young woman board a crowded bus carrying armfuls of roses, smiling as if he understood.

Patricia sat in her bedroom reading a chapter in her biology book. Her sister Maria burst through the door, pulling the snapped telephone cord along with her. Maria plopped on the other bed, continuing a frivolous conversation about something meaningless. Patricia eyed her with contempt for a moment, and then resumed her study. When there was work to be done that evening, the boys helped her get it done — even after her late arrival — but Maria ran off to the park to be with her boyfriend. “She is so hard to comprehend,” Patricia thought. “She has always been so cheerful, always smiling, never caring about little things such as the miseries of other people... But maybe she’s lucky. If you think too much, it can frustrate your life and make the future impossible to bear...”

“Hey, that’s weird,” Maria giggled. “You know that call waiting thing that I had installed on our phone — you know, the one you never use — well, it beeped, and guess what? The call’s for you. I think it’s that cute guy Javier from school.”
Patricia delayed a decision on whether to accept the call. She lingered in that instant familiar to most immigrants, suspended between an old and a new home, and old and a new self. From the window where she now stood, she admired the vase of freshly cut roses in front of her on the sill, breathing deeply to take in their sweet aroma. She thought of the small white box in her closet; in her mind’s eye she skipped along a dusty path lined with mango trees past pastures of grazing goats, a red rose adorning her hair.

Notes
1 slang: girlfriend (used with close friends)
2 a suburb in El Salvador’s capital, San Salvador
3 short for compadres, meaning allies, buddies, friends
4 slang: “Wow!” Expressing excitement or awe.
5 Salvadoran Poet (1935-75)
6 nickname for someone thin
7 slang: dummy, idiot.
8 tropical, oval-shaped fruit, having green skin; sweet, juicy, yellow-green inside.
9 long, green fruit; the seeds are eaten, good with lemon and salt.
TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE
BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON EL SALVADOR

The first people who lived in El Salvador were Nahua Indians who came from Mexico as early as 3000 B.C. Later, other indigenous people settled in the area. Most of the region was inhabited by Mayans from A.D. 100 to A.D. 1000. The Pipil Community took the lands during the end of this period. For 500 years they raised crops, built cities and developed their weaving skills.

The early Mayans depended on farming their corn fields (milpas) for survival and developed highly accurate calendars to aid in planting and harvesting. Their calendar was also used to guide religious ceremonies. The Mayans, unaided by telescopes, tracked planets with great precision thus reflecting a knowledge of math and astronomy.

In 1522, Spain invaded El Salvador. The majority of the Indians were killed and much of their land confiscated. The Spanish replaced the staple food crops with export crops. Initially they planted indigo and cacao, but by the mid-1850s coffee covered the country.

In 1930, Salvadoran peasants, armed with machetes, rebelled against the wealthy coffee-growing families. The military responded by massacring thirty thousand peasants over a two-week period. They peasants were lined up behind churches, thumbs tied behind their backs, and shot. They were buried in mass graves. This genocidal act was expanded by the government to a policy of banning every vestige of Indian culture including language, traditional clothing and music.

In subsequent years, the landowning oligarchy controlled a series of military governments often installed by fraudulent elections. They continued their expropriation of land from small farmers.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the large landowners accelerated their violent takeover of peasant land so that they could produce more coffee, cotton and cattle for the profitable export market. Six families held more land than 133,000 small farmers. By 1975, 40% of peasant families were left with no land at all, not even rented land. Three-quarters of Salvadoran children could not get enough to eat.

Beginning in the 1960s, the Catholic Church helped create the Christian grass-root communities in which peasants, led by a priest or one of the peasants, studied a passage of the Bible and discussed how it related to their own lives. They came to realize that their poverty and hunger were not the will of God but the will of wealthy families. They formed agricultural cooperatives and organized rural unions which pressed their demands for land, affordable prices for credit, seed and fertilizer -- and freedom from repression by the large landowners and their government.

The response of the oligarchy was to accuse the church of promoting communism and instigating class warfare. In 1977, the Reverend Rutilio Grande became the first of many priests, nuns and lay workers murdered for their participation in the grassroots Christian movement.

The 1979 military coup ushered in a junta that promised reforms, but violence from the military and the death squads (composed mostly of off-duty military personnel) reached unprecedented levels. More than one thousand people a month were killed in the first year of the junta. Within a few months after the coup, the real reformers, realizing that power remained with military officers determined to crush all dissent, resigned from the government and joined the opposition.

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The opposition consists of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). In early 1980, more than one hundred and fifty groups, representing hundreds of thousands of teachers, factory workers, professors, farmworkers and others, united to form the FDR. Guillermo Ungo, who had resigned from the junta, became FDR president. The FDR is aligned with the five guerrilla groups that formed the FMLN, the military arm of the opposition. The FMLN takes its name from Farabundo Martí, a militant attorney who organized workers and peasants during the 1920s and was one of the organizers of the 1930 rebellion.

In early 1980, Archbishop Romero wrote a letter to President Carter asking that the U.S. stop aiding the military. He also suggested to the Salvadoran soldiers that they should not kill fellow Salvadorans. In March of 1980, Archbishop Romero was murdered while he was giving mass. Three American nuns and one lay worker were raped and murdered in December of that same year. Over 70,000 people have been killed or “disappeared” since 1979.
VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT - Part I

Directions: Use the meaning of other words in the sentence (or paragraph, and the meaning of the short story as a whole) to help you decide what each underlined word means:

1. The noise of the cars outside Coliseum Street penetrated the profound silence of the morning.
   - **penetrate**: a) to leave  b) to come in  c) smooth
   - **profound**: a) complete  b) noisy  c) to not be lost

2. Deep within the vast maze of tenement buildings, in the loneliness of one of the apartments, Patricia pulled her pillow from under her head and covered her ears with it.
   - **vast**: a) quiet  b) huge  c) something to cook with
   - **maze**: a) open field  b) confusing paths  c) surprise

3. She closed her eyes and enjoyed the feel of the water...a halcyon river flowing gracefully through sloping hills.
   - **halcyon**: a) rough and uncomfortable  b) deep, fast  c) peaceful

4. ...something tingled inside when she thought of him.
   - **tingled**: a) to sleep  b) to have sharp feelings under the skin as from excitement  c) to move or walk quickly like a soldier

5. He would want an answer today; she could stall no longer.
   - **stall**: a) to do later  b) to cry from sadness  c) to do quickly

6. He listened intently, never letting his gaze roam about her body like the others.
   - **intently**: a) having no patience  b) with much attention  c) nervously
   - **gaze**: a) body  b) a wild animal  c) a long look
   - **roam**: a) to run everywhere  b) to travel  c) to stay

7. Somehow, she managed to keep it hidden here, away from her mother and nosy brothers and sisters.
   - **nosy**: a) having large, long noses  b) younger  c) wanting to know others’ personal business

8. The petals, delicate and beautiful, were perfectly dried: frozen in a fragile moment of happiness.
   - **fragile**: a) easily broken  b) strong and hard  c) to show anger

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VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT - Part II

Directions: Use the meaning of other words in the sentence (or paragraph, and the meaning of the short story as a whole) to help you decide what each underlined word means:

1. It was a small, quaint park, filled with roses of every hue.
   
   quaint: a) large, with a lot of space  b) unusual beauty  c) empty
   hue: a) having a good taste  b) faster, quick  c) color

2. Because he seemed sadly preoccupied, she remained silent as they walked, waiting for him to speak.
   
   preoccupied: a) brave, strong  b) thinking of other things  c) full of excitement

3. The two watched each other from a distance made greater by the remoteness felt between them.
   
   remoteness: a) closeness  b) a feeling of being far away  c) love and happiness

4. With a quiet earnestness, Patricia asked, “The park on the street leading to San Jacinto—do you think the roses are still there?”
   
   earnestness: a) wanting to play  b) seriousness  c) wide

5. “Why do you insist on punishing all of us with grief?”
   
   insist: a) to listen quietly  b) to forget  c) to continue
   grief: a) much sadness  b) much happiness  c) a beautiful dress

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT - Part III

1. It was a long run home from the park and she couldn’t be late; everyone would be suspicious.
   
   suspicious: a) thinking someone has done something wrong  b) thankful  c) to believe in the truth

2. It was nearing nightfall, and the silent city was inhabited by grand, barely-illuminated buildings and monuments.
   
   inhabited: a) decorated  b) disturbed  c) lived in
   illuminated: a) very dark  b) having light  c) not strong

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3. She ran past shabby lean-tos where families lived on top of one another, past emaciated dogs on dirt roads — the ghostly period of a country besieged by its own army.

shabby:  a) old  b) clean  c) large  
emaciated:  a) beautiful  b) strong  c) hungry, thin  
besieged:  a) protected  b) to make a decision  c) attacked and destroyed

4. As the curfew approached, the city quickly emptied.

curfew:  a) sunrise  b) legal time to stay off the street  c) time

5. In feverish haste, they scrambled for last buses.

haste:  a) hurry  b) to be sick  c) to walk slowly

6. An occasional automobile whizzed past Patricia with seemingly senseless speed.

senseless:  a) intelligent  b) quiet  c) not intelligent

7. She watched the frightful emptiness—the hours when anything was possible—the arbitrary arrests, disappearances, torture, beheadings, terror.

arbitrary:  a) chosen without good reason  b) legal, important  c) few, not many

8. Once in school, she tried to concentrate but found it hard.

concentrate:  a) to sleep  b) to grow taller  c) to pay attention

9. When Carmen left, Patricia’s mother predicted that the same thing would happen to her own daughters before long.

predicted:  a) to guess the future  b) to laugh or smile  c) to say something is not possible

10. Although she could not speak for her sisters, she vowed that it would never happen to her.

vowed:  a) sang in a high voice  b) wrote on paper to remember  c) made a promise
VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT - Part IV

Directions: Use the meaning of other words in the sentence (or paragraph, and the meaning of the short story as a whole) to help you decide what each underlined word means:

1. "If this dress gets wet, Flaco, I won't be the only one gurgling under water," she hissed menacingly.

   menacingly: a) with respect   b) filled with love   c) as if there is danger

2. He threatened to take her to jail, and she kicked him in his shins.

   threatened: a) to warn   b) to meet   c) to do better
   shins: a) front part of the leg   b) stomach   c) chin

3. On one side were homes resplendent with trees, grassy knolls and flowing pools.

   resplendent: a) poor, old, ugly   b) to hurt   c) shining brightly
   knolls: a) floors   b) top part of a bottle   c) hills

4. "This is an old place," he replied quietly, his reassuring arms around her.

   reassuring: a) dangerous   b) greenish in color   c) giving confidence to someone or trust

5. "Puchica, I have difficult decisions to make. There are not many options."

   options: a) choices   b) soldiers   c) a white bird

6. Armando snipped a red rose from an untended garden close to the road.

   untended: a) taken care of   b) rich   c) not cared for

7. "Some things, if you care for them and cherish them, will never die."

   cherish: a) good to eat   b) to look for   c) to show love and care for
VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT - Part V

Directions: Use the meaning of other words in the sentence (or paragraph, and the meaning of the short story as a whole) to help you decide what each underlined word means:

1. “I got up the courage to ask you out myself, even though I was afraid.”

   courage: a) strength  b) fear  c) enough money

2. Patricia shook nervously, in anguish over what to say to him.

   anguish: a) fun  b) anger  c) pain

3. She began in English but her soul erupted and the words flowed freely in Spanish.

   erupted: a) to become silent  b) to break open  c) to begin again


   countered: a) argued  b) laughed  c) to count with numbers

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VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT - Part VI

Directions: Use the meaning of other words in the sentence (or paragraph, and the meaning of the short story as a whole) to help you decide what each underlined word means:

1. Night—when evil reigns under the cloak of darkness.
   
   reigns:  a) controls  b) makes wet  c) dies

2. Patricia lay sleepless, unnerved by the peaceful drone of a younger sister.
   
   drones:  a) to hit  b) to cut a hole  c) to make a long, low sound

3. No doubt the rebels had been flushed from their encampments in the countryside and had sought safety and supplies in a village nearby.
   
   flushed:  a) to lock up  b) cleaned out  c) wrong

4. These people, numbed from years of random brutality, were always sympathetic to the revolution.
   
   numb:  a) to feel no pain  b) to put away  c) a dry place
   random:  a) private, not belonging to others  b) different  c) not ordered or organized
   brutality:  a) good treatment and behavior  b) bed, painful treatment  c) heavy rains
   sympathetic:  a) agreeable to, welcoming  b) safe  c) changing the decisions a lot.

5. First came the low hum of the planes, and the indiscriminate bombings of homes, churches and schools.
   
   indiscriminate:  a).careless choice  b) unreal, like in a dream  c) having many questions

6. He had owned a small cafe there, and returned after the departure of the soldiers to recoup his losses.
   
   departure:  a) time to arrive or come  b) leaving  c) friendliness
   recoup:  a) to get back after losing something  b) to return  c) to pass over

7. The work of a lifetime had been reduced to rubble.
   
   rubble:  a) trash  b) to make better  c) an enemy
8. He told of how he stood in the middle of the building *strafed* by machine gunfire and cried out to the heavens, his arms outstretched in *supplication*...

*strafed:*  
- a) shot everywhere  
- b) missed, not touched  
- c) kissed  

*supplication:*  
- a) wanting more of something  
- b) asking or praying for something  
- c) to show interest

9. He was a *pitiful* figure standing alone in a *gruesome* picture of shattered bottles, bodies, and blood.

*pitiful:*  
- a) hopeful  
- b) sad  
- c) an evening meal  

*gruesome:*  
- a) pretty  
- b) sharp  
- c) horrible, ugly
VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT - Part VI (continued)

Directions: Find the meaning of the following underlined words by writing their numbers next to the definitions below.

1. The wind around her modest home swirled and whipped dust into a **frenzy**, **obscuring** a night already thick with fog.

2. She heard her smaller brothers **wailing** in fear...

3. Patricia hated to see proud men she loved and respected shrink, become small and **subservient**.

4. Their eyes met for an instant, but he quickly **averted** his gaze.

5. When she looked up again, the sight gave her heart a sudden **jolt**.

6. The officer continued to pace, stopping in front of Patricia, fixing his icy **stare** upon her.

7. "Everyone of those **traitors** against El Salvador will die!"

8. An old toothless woman, the last among them, turned to get a **glimpse** of the helicopter flying up into the thin swirls of fog.

9. A **muffled** cry **distracted** her.

10. She watched a sixteen-year-old girl scream and pound the earth with her fists, an earth too numb from the **ravages** of war to feel the grief...

Definitions:

- **turned**
- **people who go against**
- **their country**
- **to take attention away from**
- **crazy, fast motion**
- **crying**
- **destruction**
- **a quick look**
- **hiding**
- **jump**
- **under the control of**
- **someone else**
- **a long look**
- **softened**
VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT - Part VII

Directions: Use the meaning of other words in the sentence (or paragraph, and the meaning of the short story as a whole) to help you decide what each underlined word means:

1. Often she rode the bus to escape the prison of her life, the stifling cycle of school, work, and home.

   **stifling:**  a) exciting, fun  b) killing  c) fresh, clean

2. “How do you know where I am from?” she **inquired,** curious.

   **inquired:**  a) asked  b) yelled in a loud voice  c) sat, not moving

3. “Many people cannot start over — their lives are **ruined**!”

   **ruined:**  a) growing  b) destroyed, killed  c) painted

4. The bus was packed now; half of the riders were looking at the two foreigners fight a secret war in a strange language, staring **incredulously.**

   **incredulously:**  a clearly understanding  b) not paying attention  c) with surprise, not believing

5. “They know our government will **squelch** them wherever they hide.”

   **squelch:**  a) to get rid of: to throw out  b) to feed  c) to lose and never find

6. “The rebels **ambushed** the Soldiers there...”

   **ambushed:**  a) to give a party for  b) surprised and attacked  c) hid so they couldn’t find

7. ‘While crossing the runway toward the plane, I felt an **urge** to run back and tell them who I was.”

   **urge:**  a) opposite  b) warmth  c) desire, want

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1. It was drizzling but that did not seem to deter most shoppers.

   drizzling:  a) sunny   b) cheap   c) lightly raining
   deter:     a) stop     b) to walk on   c) a place to shop for clothes

2. She spotted signs in innumerable languages, she heard music blaring from a thousand lands...

   innumerable:  a) too few to count   b) the same   c) too many to count
   blaring:      a) sounding soft   b) sounding loud   c) stopping

3. Her sister Maria burst through the door, pulling the snagged telephone cord along with her.

   burst:   a) break   b) open   c) stay behind
   snagged: a) straight   b) broken, cut   c) confused, twisted

4. Maria plopped on the other bed, continuing a frivolous conversation about something meaningless.

   frivolous:  a) unimportant   b) very important   c) studying for a long time

5. She lingered in that instant familiar to most immigrants, suspended between an old and a new home, and old and a new self.

   suspended:   a) put inside   b) taken out of   c) held above

6. ... in her mind's eye she skipped along a dusty path lined with mango trees past pastures of grazing goats, a red rose adorning her hair.

   adorning:  a) taken off   b) making more beautiful   c) falling down