“Free Fruit for Young Widows”

1. Describe your initial reaction to the first 11 paragraphs. What kinds of emotions did they elicit in you?
2. *STR3.A&E* – What functions do these first 11 paragraphs serve in the plot? Also, why did the story begin with these paragraphs?
3. *SET.2.B* – What function does the story’s main setting, the fruit stand, serve in this piece?
4. *SET.2.C* – How would you describe the fruit stand’s relationship/significance to Etgar and Shimmy?
5. *CHR1.A* – The narrator refers to Tendler as “Professor Tendler” throughout the story. What does this choice reveal about (1) him as a character and (2) his perspective about Tendler?
6. *STR.3F* – One main conflict in the story is Etgar’s internal conflict—how he should feel about Tendler’s actions with the soldiers and with the family. What function does this conflict serve—why is it a central focus of the story?
7. *CHR.1.A* – Review the context for the realization presented in paragraph 78: “It was right then, Professor Tendler...became a philosopher.” In what sense is he a philosopher? Explain why you think he becomes a philosopher—or a killer—at this point.
8. *NAR.4.C* – How, finally, does Shimmy assess Tendler’s actions? Explain how you know.
9. *NAR.4.B* – Though Etgar is not the speaker/narrator of the story, we learn all the context about Tendler as he learns it. Why do you believe the writer chose to set up the story this way?
10. *CHR.1.C* – Shimmy and Tendler, though they fought in the war together, are contrasting characters. In what ways do they contrast one another?
11. *CHR*.*1.C* – This story could have been told simply as Tendler’s without including Shimmy or Etgar. Why do you believe the author chose to include Shimmy as a contrasting character?
12. *CHR*.*1.D* – Shimmy’s provides free fruit to a man who once beat him half to death. What nuance or complexity does this reveal in Shimmy’s relationship with Tendler? Explain how Shimmy providing free fruit helps you to see that complex aspect of their relationship.
13. *LAN7.C&D* – Choose a paragraph in which Englander uses details particularly well to create a mood, and discuss how that effect is achieved through his use of literary techniques.
14. Can you find the story’s theme (or themes) stated directly in a specific paragraph, or is it developed implicitly through the plot, characters, symbols, or some other literary element?