

Maus I: A Survivor's Tale

My Father Bleeds History

An Introduction

Deb Salter

Art Spiegelman

- ✧ Born in 1948 in Stockholm, Sweden
- ✧ Emigrated to NY with his parents Vladek and Anja in early childhood
- ✧ Parents wanted him to be a dentist
- ✧ He wanted to be a cartoonist
- ✧ Started cartooning professionally at age 16
- ✧ Contributed to many underground comics and magazine
- ✧ Helped create Garbage Pail Kids
- ✧ *Maus I* published in 1986; *Maus II* in 1991
- ✧ Won Pulitzer Prize in 1992



What is it about?

Maus is the recollections of WWII as told by Vladek, a Polish Jewish concentration camp survivor to his son Artie.

It is the story of a historical *genocide* (killing of an entire race) that is now known as the *Holocaust*.

"Holocaust" is a word of Greek origin meaning "complete destruction by fire."

"The Holocaust" names the systematic persecution and murder of six million Jews from 1933 through 1944 (as well as members of other groups targeted by the Nazi regime such as homosexuals, communists, and gypsies).

Hitler's Youth

- Born in Austria 4/20/89; oldest of 3 – ended up with older step-siblings
- Father was illegitimate, leading to questions of grandparents (Jewish?)
- Father incredibly strict & abusive
- Raised Catholic, active in church choir, considered becoming a priest
- Upset by death of younger brother
- He wanted to be an artist; dad wanted him in civil service
- Applied to art school in Vienna; rejected
- Served bravely in WWI

A Brief History of WWII

- ☆ World War I ended with the Germans and their allies losing in 1918.
- ☆ Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party began their activities in Germany the 1920s, but Hitler was also jailed during some of those years for treason.
- ☆ The Nazi Party rose to prominence in the 1930's due in great part to the international economic depression that began in the United States

Hitler's Rise to Power

Hitler's Nazi Creed Spelled Out in *Mein Kampf*

1. Men are not created equal. As the most superior race on Earth, Germans are true creators of culture. Since only they are capable of solving mankind's future problems, the future of civilization depends on them. Therefore, Aryan blood must be kept pure, or these superior qualities will be lost. Marriages to inferior races are forbidden. Germans must create a pure Master Race to rule the world.
2. Jews, the most inferior race, are the true destroyers of culture. They have deliberately invaded and drained all countries of the world of money and power. Therefore, the future of world power rests on either the rightful German masters of the Jews. Germans must save the world by ridding it of this Jewish poison.

Mein Kampf cont'd.

3. Slavs, blacks and Mediterranean peoples rank only slightly above Jews. They are fit to live only as German slaves.
4. The German Master race will take as much land to the east as it needs for **Lebensraum**, or extra living space. Political boundaries are nonsense. If others resist, Germany will use its arms and take land by force.
5. Democracy and majority rule are stupid. The masses are ignorant sheep that need leading by a brilliant statesman. This divinely appointed leader is Adolf Hitler, who will rule the world with a few chosen elite. The Third Reich, or new German empire, will last a thousand years. It will be a Nazi totalitarian state with total control of government and the lives of all citizens.

Mein Kampf cont'd.

6. Propaganda, or a system to spread political ideas, must be used to gain support of the ignorant masses. Since the people are dull and forgetful, propaganda must be limited to only a few points and repeated over and over again in important slogans, It is not important that these ideas be true, for people are willing to believe anything. In fact, the bigger the lies, the better.
7. Force and fear are the only means to keep the masses under control. Reason and argument have no place in the Third Reich.
8. Give the people a single enemy to hate and to blame for all their troubles. Then they will not feel guilty and will aim all their frustrations in one direction. Blame the Jew for everything evil.
9. Thou shalt have no other God but Germany! (Hitler even proposes this to be the eleventh commandment.) Christianity is just a scheme created by Jews. Christian love, mercy, and charity must be replaced.

Negative Jewish Stereotypes in Nazi Germany

- Christ Killers
- Poisoned wells to create Black Death
- Stole Christian babies to eat for Passover
- Not part of the community, strange outsiders without allegiance to any land
- Devil's agents (wear yarmulkes to cover horns on head, along with tails and cloven hoofs)
- Condemned by God to wander world
- Evil money-hungry Jews out to take over world

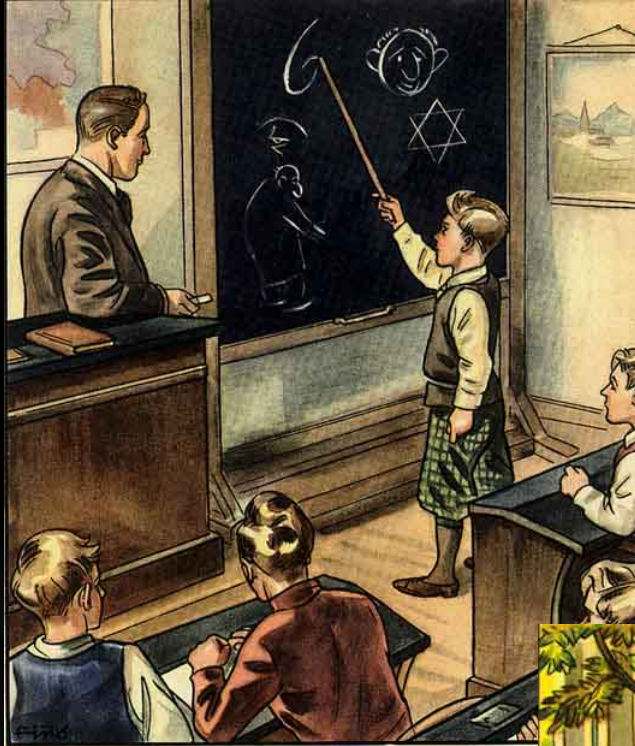


Michelangelo's statue of Moses reflects Catholic vision of Jews by sculpting horns on his head (At the time there was a passage in the Bible about Moses having a halo. At the time it was translated as "horns" because everybody "knew" Jews had horns)

Die Ostzeit



Erzählungen von Ernst Brunn
 Bilder von Fido



„Die Judennase ist an ihrer Spitze gebogen. Sie sieht aus wie ein



„Soßbuerin, heut' hab' ich für dich was Besondere. Schau diesen Stoff an! Das gibt ein Kleid für dich, Soßbuerin, ein Kleid, du wirst darin aussehen wie eine Zarentin, wie eine Fürstin, wie eine Königin...“



„Die Taufe hat aus ihm keinen Nichtjuden gemacht...“



„Der Gott des Juden ist das Geld. Hat um Geld zu verdienen, begehrt er die größten Verbrechen. Er ruht nicht eher, bis er auf einem großen Gelblad sitzen kann, bis er zum König des Geldes geworden ist.“



Wieder sticht das Ilex zu Boden. Langsam stirbt es. Die Juden aber treiben herum und lachen dazu.

How Did Hitler Convince the Germans?

- Focused in schools:
 - Racial Instruction – Aryans perfect race; Jews worst
 - School no longer about education, but indoctrination
 - Teachers were either fired or forced to teach Nazi ideologies
- Curriculum rewritten with a Nazi slant
 - History was based on the glory of German
 - Biology became a study of the different races to ‘prove’ that the Nazi belief in racial superiority was a sound belief...” (Trueman, 2000, para. 4).
- Propaganda, Propaganda, Propaganda

"The German who loves freedom belongs in the National Socialist S.A."





The red words coming from the snake are: usury, Versailles, unemployment, war guilt lie, Marxism, Bolshevism, lies and betrayal, inflation, Locarno, Dawes Pact, Young Plan, corruption, Barmat, Kutistker, Sklarek [the last three Jews involved in major financial scandals], prostitution, terror, civil war.



The Red War.
Mother or Comrade?
Man or Machine?
God or the Devil?
Blood or God?
Race or Bastard?
Popular music or
jazz?
National Socialism
or Bolshevism?

Power Spreads; War Begins

- ☆ After occupying neighboring states and signing a non-aggression pact with Josef Stalin, head of the U.S.S.R., in March of 1939 Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia.
- ☆ On September 1, Hitler invaded Poland and the Russians also invaded Poland two weeks later.
- ☆ In response, Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, and World War II began.
- ☆ In October 1939, Hitler began the euthanasia ("mercy killings") of the sick and disabled, eventually developing gas ovens as a method of death.
- ☆ Leaders in the Nazi party begin to design the "Final Solution" for "the Jewish problem."

Anti-Semitism

- ✧ Nazis believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed "inferior," were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community.
- ✧ More than 400 anti-Semitic laws were put into place to restrict their rights, including access to hospitals, schools, and other public areas.
- ✧ On *Kristallnacht* (the night of broken glass) November 1938, Nazis broke the windows of synagogues, Jewish shops and homes.
- ✧ In September 1941, Jews are required to start wearing yellow stars on their clothing. Soon, to easily monitor and control them, Jews are forced to move into ghettos guarded by Nazis.
- ✧ The US entered the war after Japan, a German ally, bombed Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941.
- ✧ By July 1942, Jews are being transported in large numbers to camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau and Treblinka

A Synagogue Burns During Kristallnacht



Damage to a Jewish Business During Kristallnacht



The Polish Ghettos



Lvov Ghetto

A Typical Room in a Ghetto



Child Labor in the Kovno Ghetto



Krakow Ghetto – Final “Liquidation”



The Killing Camps

- ✧ The Nazis established killing centers for efficient mass murder.
- ✧ Unlike concentration camps, which served primarily as detention and labor centers, killing centers (also referred to as "extermination camps" or "death camps") were almost exclusively "death factories."
- ✧ Prisoners were tortured, shaved, starved, beaten, experimented on, and killed.
- ✧ German SS and police murdered nearly 2,700,000 Jews in the killing centers either by asphyxiation with poison gas or by shooting.
- ✧ Their bodies were then moved (by other prisoners) to crematoriums to remove all trace of their existence.
- ✧ At one point, 6,000 people *per day* were being executed at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out --
because I was not a communist;

Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out --
because I was not a socialist;

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out --
because I was not a trade unionist;

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out --
because I was not a Jew;

Then they came for me --
and there was no one left to speak out for me.

~Martin Niemoeller in 1946

(Pastor Niemoeller was a Protestant clergyman who opposed the Nazi regime.
He was imprisoned in a concentration camp throughout the war.)

A Woman About to be Executed at Belzec



A Crematoria at Bergen-Belsen



Close
your
eyes if
you don't
want to
see the
next
picture.
It's
graphic.

Mass Graves at Bergen-Belsen



Entrance to a Gas Chamber at Auschwitz



The sign says:

Harmful gas!
Entering
endangers your
life.

Shoes & Clothes Taken from the Prisoners on Arrival



A Crate Full of Rings at Buchenwald



The War Ends

- ✧ In 1944, American troops and Soviet troops began to liberate the extermination camps.
- ✧ In the final months of the war, SS guards moved camp inmates by train or on forced marches, often called “death marches,” in an attempt to prevent the Allied liberation of large numbers of prisoners.
- ✧ By 1945, the Germans and their collaborators had killed nearly two out of every three European Jews.
- ✧ Other victims included the Roma (Gypsies), Soviets, other political opponents, homosexuals, and the mentally disabled.
- ✧ On April 28, 1945, Mussolini was captured and hanged by Italian partisans and, realizing defeat, Hitler committed suicide on April 30.
- ✧ May 8, 1945 is VE (Victory in Europe) Day
- ✧ August 14, 1945 is VJ (Victory over Japan) Day

Some Children at Auschwitz During Liberation



American Soldiers with Survivors



Literary Terminology

Maus is:

- ☆ *A Graphic Novel* - a complex story told in pictures and handwritten captions. It is a piece of visual as well as literary art.
- ☆ *An Oral History* - an extended interview where a witness to historical events is asked to recall what he experienced. Someone else writes it down.
- ☆ *A Memoir* - the story of a life written by the participant or another person. These are *testimonies*, and as such they may be partial or not entirely reliable. Yet all history has to be witnessed by someone and is dependent on his or her memory.

Literary Terminology

☆ *Anthropomorphism* – A literary technique in which the author gives human characteristics to non-human objects (usually animals), e.g. the speaking animals in the *Chronicles of Narnia* (C. S. Lewis), the *Wind in the Willows* (Kenneth Grahame), or the stories of Beatrix Potter.

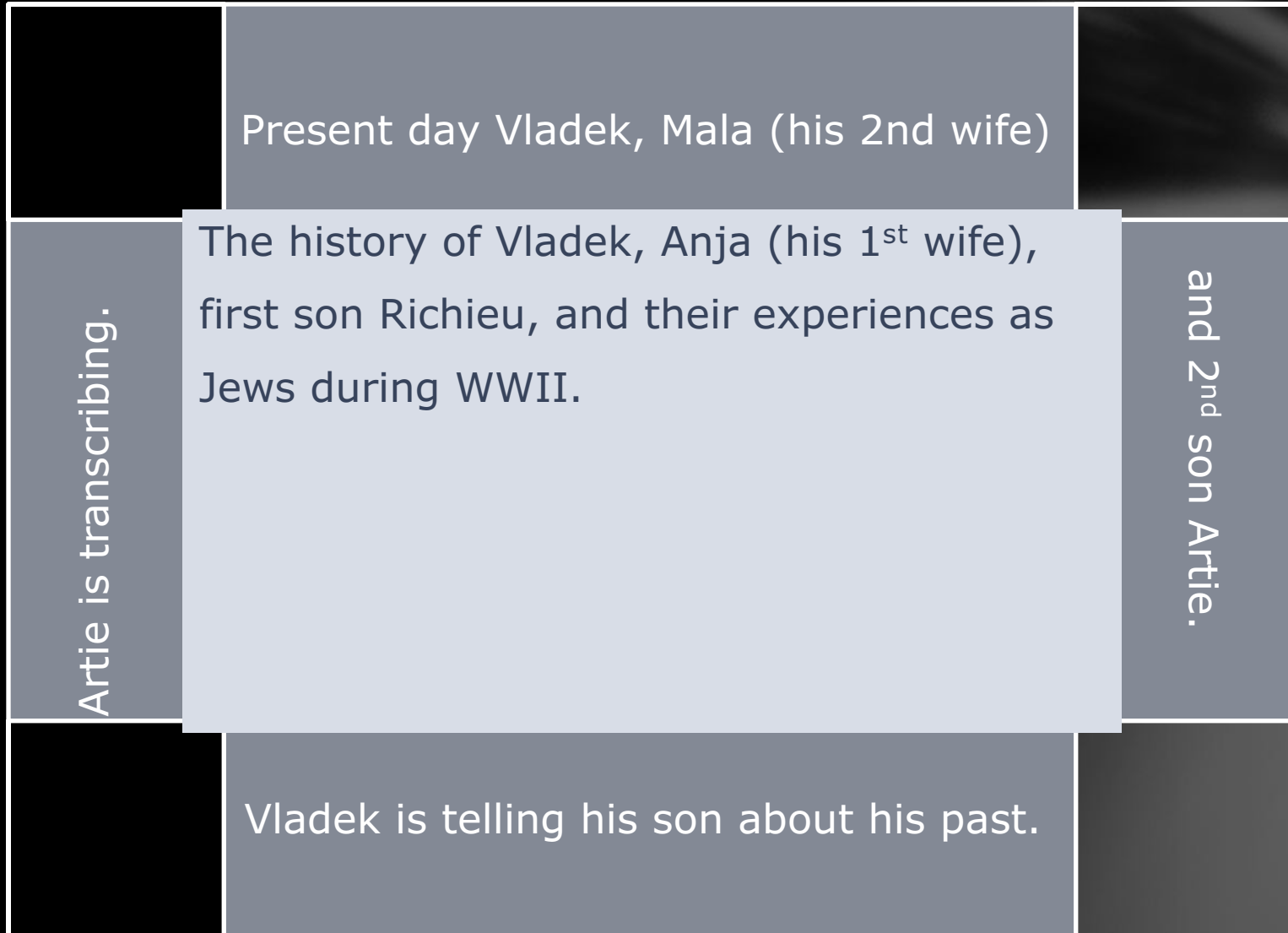
☆ *Mice = Jewish people*

☆ *Cats = Nazis*

☆ *Pigs = Polish people*

☆ *Dogs = American people*

Frame Story



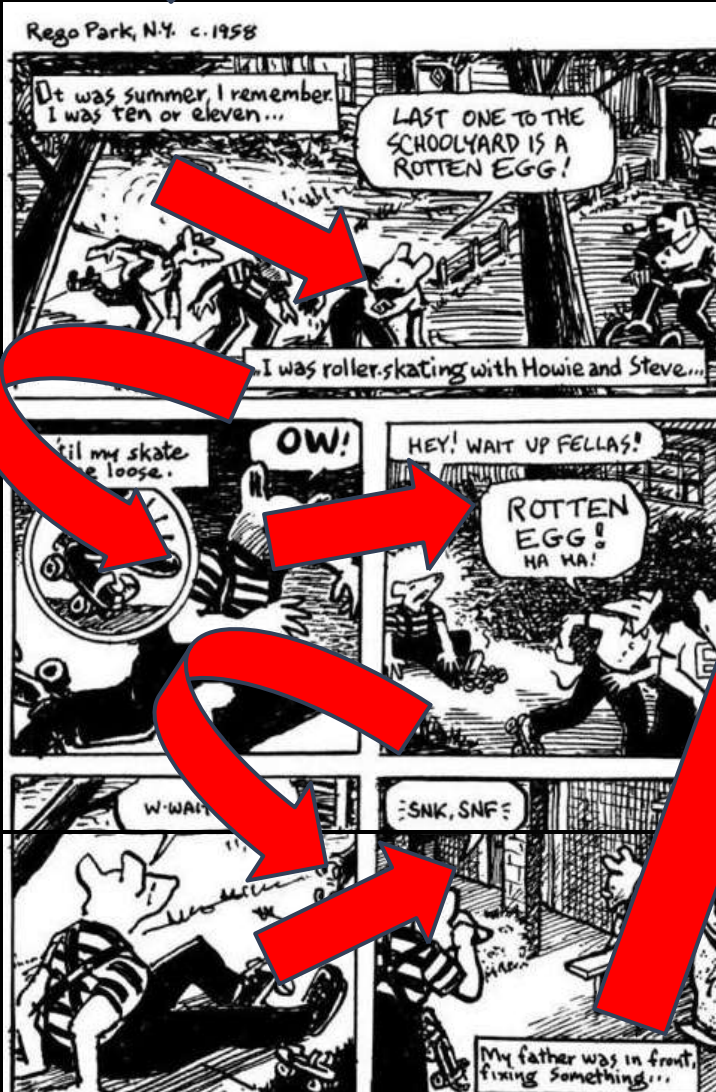
How to Read a Graphic Novel

Graphic novels are like regular stories. They have a *plot*, *characters*, *settings* and all the other elements in stories we read in regular books.

Graphic novels rely on pictures and words to tell the story. These pictures and words are in panels.

- ☆ The panels are read in *sequence* like the way you read the words of a page in a regular book.
- ☆ Now you will look at two pages of MAUS – Don't worry about reading the words, just follow the directions so you know how to move your eyes across the page.

Start here and follow the red arrows.



Graphic Novels: Captions

A caption is information from the author that gives us important information about the setting or what a character is experiencing.

Sometimes a "caption" can appear inside –or outside – the panel.

Captions

Caption #1

Caption #2

Caption #3

Caption #4



What captions tell us about the setting?

What captions tell us about the experiences of a character?

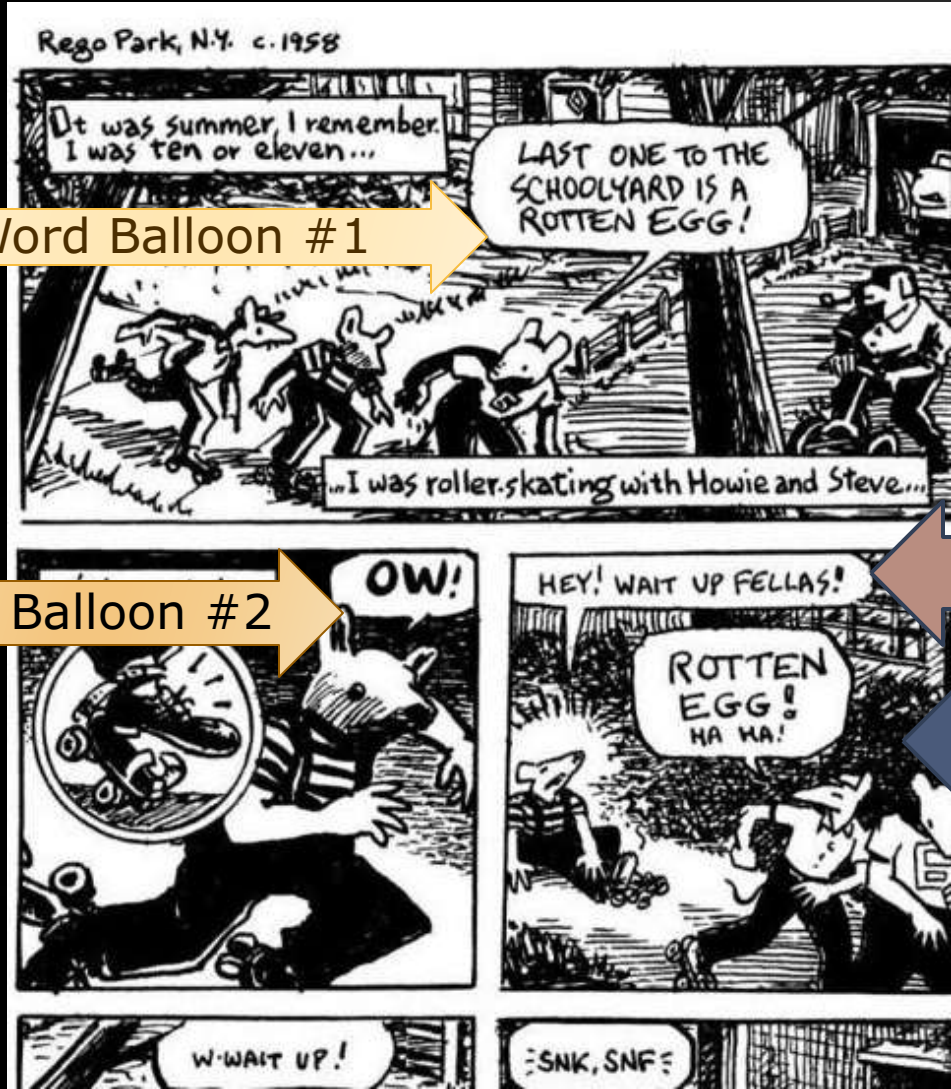
Graphic Novel: Dialogue

Another important part of a graphic novel is dialogue.

- ✧ Dialogue is what characters say to each other. Dialogue is conveyed through word balloons.
- ✧ Each word balloon has a “tail” to let you know which character is talking.

This is the first page of MAUS

(again)



Rego Park, N.Y. c.1958

It was summer, I remember.
I was ten or eleven...

LAST ONE TO THE
SCHOOLYARD IS A
ROTTEN EGG!

...I was roller skating with Howie and Steve...

OW!

HEY! WAIT UP FELLAS!

ROTTEN
EGG!
HA HA!

W-WAIT UP!

SNK, SNF

Word Balloon #1

Word Balloon #2

Word Balloon #3

Word Balloon #4

Is it clear which character is saying the dialogue in each word balloon?

Graphic Novel: Word Size

In the captions and word balloons, some words are emphasized by

being **bigger** or **bolder**.

This lets the reader know that there is a lot of emotion behind these words.

Look at Page One again and identify the emphasized words.

This is the first page of MAUS (again)



Word Balloon #1

Word Balloon #2

Word Balloon #5

What words are emphasized?
What emotions are the communicating?

Word Balloon #3

Word Balloon #4

Word Balloon #6

MAUS: Shadow & Style

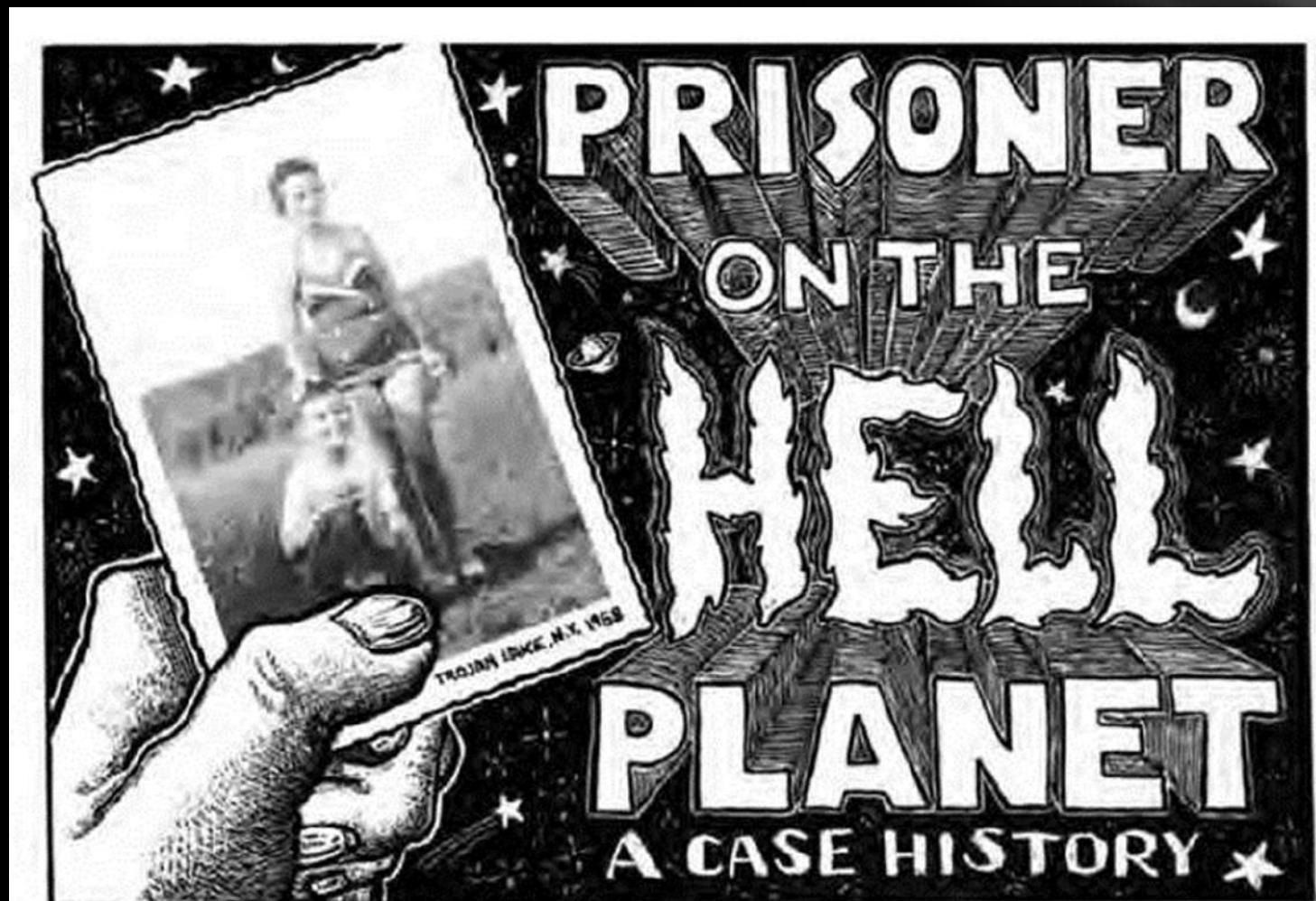
In the pictures, the artist can use devices like shadow and style to help create a mood.

Dark shadows usually create a mood of fear or despair.



MAUS: Shadow & Style

- ☆ The style of the art can also help connect the creator to the reader.
- ☆ In this story, we find out very early the author's mother killed herself.
- ☆ Later on, he tries to tell that story by dramatically changing the style – the way – he creates the art.
- ☆ He even uses an actual picture of his mother with him when he was a small boy.



Why a Graphic Novel?

- ☆ Quite frankly, the horrors of the Holocaust are almost unimaginable. How do we wrap our brains around this level of man's inhumanity to man?
- ☆ As Spiegelman has said (in an interview in *The New Comics*, p. 191): "To use these ciphers [secret codes], the cats and mice, is actually a way to allow you past the cipher at the people who are experiencing it."
- ☆ By using the graphic novel format and animals, he allows us to both distance ourselves from this horror, and also look upon it in a way that we can understand.
- ☆ We'll discuss the animals later. First, let's begin reading.

In Art's Own Words

http://www.pbs.org/pov/inheritance/photo_gallery_special_maus.php

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