

STUDY GUIDE

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JO JOE BY SALLY WIENER GROTTA

This study guide is provided free of any charge to book clubs, teachers and others wishing to conduct a group discussion about *Jo Joe*, a Black Bear, Pennsylvania novel by Sally Wiener Grotta.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

The following are the author's suggested discussion questions.

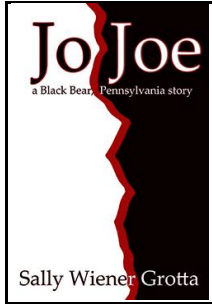
- ◆ Is there a difference between prejudice and bigotry?
- ◆ Do you know anyone of mixed race and/or religion? How do you think their lives are different from yours?
- ◆ Do you think Joe made the right choice when they were children? Why?
- ◆ If Joe and Judith had married, would it have lasted? Why? What do you think their life together would have been like?
- ◆ Why didn't Joe become like his father and brother? Is bigotry and hatred inherited?
- ◆ Would the story have been different if they had gone to high school today rather than 20 years ago? In what way?
- ◆ Does being Black affect Judith's Judaism? Does being Jewish affect her identity as a Black woman? How?
- ◆ How would Judith's life have been different if she had been raised a Christian?
- ◆ What do you honestly think of the grandmother? In what ways was she right and/or wrong?

If your group develops other questions that prove to lead to energized, interesting discussions, please share them with us, and we may add them to future iterations of this study guide.

CONNECTING WITH THE AUTHOR

Sally Wiener Grotta is available to chat with book clubs, classes and other discussion groups about *Jo Joe*, as well as on photography, publishing and writing in general. While she can accept only a limited number of personal appearances, we can also help your group (minimum of 8 people) arrange for a phone or Skype conference call with her.

ABOUT *JO JOE* BY SALLY WIENER GROTTA



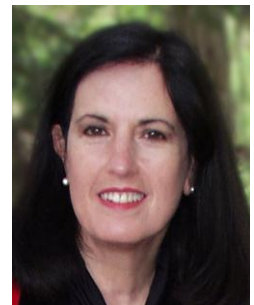
Jo Joe is a mystery of the heart about Judith Ormond, a young mixed race Jewish woman. Twenty years earlier, violence and hatred had driven her away from the small Pennsylvania village where she was raised by her white Christian grandparents. Now, she must break her vow to never return. During the one week visit, she's forced to deal with her first love who cruelly broke her heart and is menaced by an old enemy who threatens new brutalities. But with her discovery of a long-hidden secret that her grandmother had kept from her, Judith finds more questions than answers about the bigotry that scarred her childhood.

ABOUT BLACK BEAR, PENNSYLVANIA

Black Bear is a fictional village in the Poconos Mountains created as a literary *folie à deux* by Sally Wiener Grotta and Daniel Grotta. Both Daniel and Sally are dipping into the same pool of invented locale and characters to write a series of separate stories and novels that will, eventually, paint a full picture of the diversity of life and relationships in a small mountain village. *Honor*, a Black Bear novella by Daniel Grotta was published in 2012. The next Black Bear novel will be *Adam V* by Daniel Grotta, which will be published in 2014.

ABOUT SALLY WIENER GROTTA

Sally Wiener Grotta is the consummate storyteller; her work reflects her deep humanism and appreciation for the poignancy of life. As an award-winning journalist, she has authored many hundreds of articles, columns and reviews for scores of glossy magazines, newspapers and online publications. She has also co-authored numerous non-fiction books with her husband, Daniel Grotta; her next novel (which will be published in late 2013) will be *The Winter Boy*.



Sally Wiener Grotta is a frequent speaker at conferences and other events on the business of writing, as well as on photography and the traditional tradespeople of her *American Hands* narrative portrait project. She welcomes invitations to participate in discussions with book clubs (occasionally in person, more often via Skype or phone), and to do occasional readings. You can also connect with her on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and/or Google+. (Find the links on www.PixelHallPress.com/Jo_Joe.html)

ABOUT PIXEL HALL PRESS

Pixel Hall Press is a small boutique publishing house whose focus is on discovering literary gems and great stories that might have otherwise been overlooked. Our mission is to publish books that energize the imagination and intrigue the mind, and to be a conduit between readers and provocative, stimulating, talented authors.