
THINK AND DISCUSS

Understanding

1. For what crime is Wolfer Joe hanged?
2. What is Wolfer Joe's last boast?

Analyzing

3. What is the main conflict of the story?
4. Joe says his betrayal of Annie was good. How might this be true?
5. Why does Wolfer Joe's boast earn him "grim respect"?

Extending

6. How does Wolfer Joe react to the Vigilanters' justice? Is it fair?

APPLYING: Flashback

See *Handbook of Literary Terms*, p. 665.

An interruption in the major action of a story to show an episode that happened at an earlier time is called a **flashback**. Put these events in chronological order, the order in which they happened. (a) Wolfer Joe says that the one good thing he ever did was to betray Annie; (b) Wolfer Joe is sentenced to die because he murdered two miners; (c) Wolfer Joe betrays Annie.



BIOGRAPHY

Dorothy Johnson

1905–1984

A native of Iowa and a graduate of the University of Montana, Dorothy Johnson published many Western novels and collections of stories. Johnson won the Spur Award of the Western Writers of America in 1957; she was also made an honorary member of the Blackfoot tribe in Montana.

COMPOSITION

Reading/Writing Log

Dorothy Johnson uses comparisons in describing Wolfer Joe's thoughts as he waits to see whether Annie will meet him. Johnson's description gives the qualities of living things to human emotions. Find this passage and copy it in your reading/writing log. Choose an emotion and decide what sort of creature you'll use to describe that emotion. Then write several sentences describing the emotion.

Stating an Opinion

If you had to boast about the best thing you ever did, what would it be? Use this boast as the title of a short composition. Explain in your composition what it was you did or did not do, and why your action (or inaction) was so significant.

Writing an Obituary

An obituary is a notice of death, with a brief account of a person's life. Write an obituary for Wolfer Joe. Assume, however, that he had married Annie. Be sure to state the cause of death, as well as a summary of his life and a list of any survivors.