



Jo Joe: a Black Bear, Pennsylvania story

Sally Wiener Grotta

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As a child, Judith Ormand was the only Jew — and the only Black — in a small insular Pennsylvania mountain village where she was raised by her white Christian grandparents. Now, she must reluctantly break her vow to never return to the town she learned to hate. During her one week visit, she buries and mourns her beloved grandmother, is forced to deal with the white boy who cruelly broke her heart, and is menaced by an old bully who threatens worse. But with her traumatic discovery of a long buried secret, Judith finds more questions than answers about the prejudice that scarred her childhood.

A free **Study Guide for *Jo Joe***, for book clubs, teachers and other book discussion groups is available from the publisher Pixel Hall Press.

About Black Bear, Pennsylvania

Jo Joe is set in the fictional Pocono Mountains village of Black Bear, Pennsylvania. Black Bear was created as a literary folie à deux by Daniel Grotta and Sally Wiener 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. However, every Black Bear story stands alone, as a separate story that doesn't require knowing anything about the town from previous stories.

The first Black Bear story was **Honor** a novella by Daniel Grotta. Both Jeff Smith and his curmudgeonly father-in-law AH Engelhardt from **Honor**, play key roles in **Jo Joe**. Daniel Grotta's novel **Black Bear One**, about the adventures, foibles and complicated relationships of the town's volunteer ambulance corps, will be published in 2015. Members of the ambulance crew include Jeff Smith from **Honor** and Joe Anderson and Rabbi David of **Jo Joe**.

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