

The Night George Wolfe Died by, Robert J. Conley

George Wolfe was on his way home from a meeting of the National Legislature of the Cherokee Nation, to which he had been elected to represent his home district of Going-snake. The citizens of Goingsnake District, at least a majority of them, had thought that George, a full-blood Cherokee who was fluent in both Cherokee and English and owned his own business, a mildly prosperous general store, would represent all Cherokees well in this time of great tribulation. The United States government was exercising ever-increasing pressure on the small nation, and whites were moving into the Nation in great numbers.

The meeting itself, George's first, had gone well enough, but George was walking away from it with mixed feelings. True, he had been a storekeeper for some time, he had a good education, and he was learning more and more to live like a white man. This night represented his greatest triumph to date, yet George felt emptiness. He remembered his father, who had lived all his life in the old way, had never taken a white man's name, never worn a white man's suit, and never let his whiskers grow. He had always remained Tsalagi, one of the Real People, and he had had a good life. George knew that, and he wondered if he were not betraying his traditions and his father by doing so well in a life modeled on that of the yoneg—the white man.

He was moving toward his wagon, lost in these thoughts, when he ran into someone.

"Excuse me, Sir. I'm very sorry," he said.

"Yeh? Well, whyn't ya watch where the hell y're going?"

Yoneg, thought George, drunken ghoul.

"I shall in the future, Sir. Please forgive me," he said.

"Stupid Indian all dressed up."

"Excuse me," said George.

"Wait just a minute here, Indian," said the drunk.

"It's late, Sir. I'm on my way home."

"I wanna talk to you, you good for nothing."

As George tried to walk around him, the drunk grabbed him by the shoulders and shoved him hard against the wall of the building in the front of them. George took hold of the drunk's wrists in order to wrench them loose, but the drunk pulled one of them away and made it into a fist, which he shoved into George's stomach. Both George's hands went to his middle, and he doubled over. The drunk, having hit him once, and having enjoyed it, decided to hit him some more. His fists went everywhere. George kept his back to the wall, stayed doubled up, and did his best to protect himself with his hands and arms until he could catch his breath. Then, clenching both fists together at the level of his knees, George took careful aim and delivered a terrible double barreled uppercut to the big man's chin. The white man straightened up slowly and gracefully. His eyes glazed. He began to go over backward in a beautiful, acrobatic backbend. His shoulders hit the dirt and his feet flew up off the ground. Then his whole, huge body settled in the dust.

George wiped some blood off his face with the back of his hand. He was unsteady on his feet, so he leaned back again against the side of the building and took a couple of deep breaths. He was about to turn and go on his way when he heard footsteps, followed by the metallic click of the revolver.

"All right. Let's don't have no more trouble here. Just come along with me nice and quiet-like."

George did, and he spent the night in jail. He was not allowed to explain things. No explanation was called for. He was Indian and the other man was white. The lawman, too, was white.

When the deputy marshal opened the cell door the next day and said, "All right, Indian, get out of here, and watch your step from here on," George said, "Ge ga, yo-neg," and it was not George Wolfe who walked out of the jail, for that name stayed behind him in the cell, and he never spoke another word of English.

Annotate "The Night George Wolfe Died" for the following literary elements; mark each annotation in a way to find it quickly later. For example: underline and label, bracket and label, or hi-lite minimally and label – Sample labels are listed in parenthesis below

- i. Context clues for setting (S)
 - ii. Characters who play a role (C)
 - iii. Examples of conflict, both internal and external (Int) (Ext)
 - iv. An example of motivation, something a character does and why (Mot)
 - v. Proof of 1st person, if present (1st)
 - vi. Thoughts of characters to later prove 3rd person limited or omniscient(3rd)
 - vii. Notate where you believe the rising action begins, where the climax is, and where the resolution is. (RA) (CLX) (RES)
- Before the rising action is the exposition, and between the climax and resolution is the falling action.
Remember: Sometimes the elements of plot are not well defined in every short story.

Due Monday – Conflict and Motivation Homework

Read “The Night George Wolfe Died” by Robert J. Conley

Read the story a second time with a focus on the following:

- Internal conflict – occurs when a character struggles within himself or herself, such as to make a decision
- External conflict – struggle between opposing forces that is the basis of the plot of a story
- Motivation – reasons behind a character’s actions

ON YOUR OWN PAPER – The following responses should be written as bullet point type answers, not complete sentences. INCLUDE a heading for each response below and separate each one by a line.

1. List George’s internal conflict and its resolution.
2. List the central (most important/main) external conflict and its resolution.
3. List factors motivating the actions of the *drunk guy*.
4. List factors motivating George’s resolution to his internal conflict.