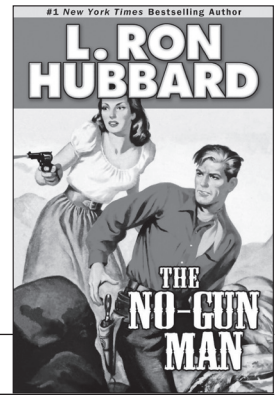


L. Ron Hubbard's *The No-Gun Man* Discussion Guide

(also includes the short story
Man for Breakfast)



STORY SUMMARY & OVERVIEW

In *The No-Gun Man*, mining engineer Monte Calhoun returns to the lawless Superstition country after his father's murder. While others expect revenge against Spiegel and his sons, Monte intends to sell the family mine, take his younger brother Dick back East and leave justice to the law. His resolve is tested when he discovers Spiegel has crippled their mine and Dick has allied himself with outlaw Jeb Grayson. After Dick engineers a confrontation, evidence connects the Spiegels to murder and a scheme to seize the Calhoun property. Monte must confront the difficult boundary between principled restraint, justice, family loyalty and cowardice.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: ARIZONA MINING COMMUNITIES

The story is set in territorial Arizona, in a remote mining district where organized government and law enforcement are only beginning to develop. Superstition has previously seen a circuit judge and Ranger only a few times a year. Captain O'Leary is therefore sent from the Seventh Cavalry to establish enough order for civilian government eventually to take over. Mining communities like the fictional Superstition could develop rapidly around valuable mineral discoveries. Such isolated settlements often faced disputes over mining claims, water, property, transportation and crime. The story also refers to earlier Mexican and Spanish land or mineral grants. Spiegel argues that rights established before American control of the territory must be honored by the United States. Whether his particular document is legitimate becomes part of the plot, but the larger historical issue reflects genuine complications created when territories changed national sovereignty.

CHAPTER ONE: BLOOD FEUD

📖 Monte remembers a time when he believed a man should drink hard, shoot straight and impress other men with his toughness. Discuss how education and exposure to different ways of living can change a person's ideas about strength and masculinity.

📖 Old Darby and others have already decided that Monte is returning to kill the Spiegels before they have even spoken with him. Discuss how difficult it can be for people to escape reputations created by their younger selves.

📖 O'Leary recognizes that a feud depends upon the behavior of both sides. Discuss why one person's decision to avoid conflict may not be enough when others expect or benefit from confrontation.

CHAPTER TWO: DEMONSTRATION IN SHOOTING

📖 O'Leary expects the townspeople to welcome the arrival of organized law, but their attention immediately shifts to Monte and the anticipated feud. Discuss what this reaction suggests about a community accustomed to settling disputes through reputation and violence rather than institutions.

📖 Everything O'Leary hears from the townspeople contradicts the calm and reasonable man he has come to know. Discuss how leaders should evaluate conflicting evidence when reputation and personal experience point toward different conclusions.

📖 O'Leary arrives as an outsider representing territorial authority, while residents already have alliances, grudges and expectations about how justice should work. Discuss why establishing effective law involves more than simply appointing an official.

CHAPTER THREE: BANDITS ON GUARD

📖 Monte proves to be an extraordinary marksman, hitting three running deer at long range after O'Leary misses. Yet Monte has repeatedly insisted that he does not intend to kill anyone. Discuss why possessing the ability to use violence can make the deliberate choice not to use it more significant.

📖 Without Antelope Creek, the Deserter Lode can barely operate. Discuss how control of scarce natural resources can transform an economic disagreement into a much larger struggle involving power, survival and ownership.

📖 Dick focuses upon the bullet holes in his father's back and the conflict with Spiegel, while Monte points to the court findings, the missing money and other possible suspects. Discuss how emotion can influence which evidence people consider most important.

CHAPTER FOUR: YOUNG FIRE-EATER

📖 Monte works to prepare the mine for sale, but his employees interpret his actions as clever deception aimed at the Spiegels. Discuss how strongly held expectations can cause people to reinterpret even ordinary behavior to fit what they already believe.

📖 Dick has grown up in an environment where honor and courage are closely connected with willingness to fight. Compare his understanding of courage with Monte's belief that taking a human life should occur only under extreme circumstances.

📖 Dick decides to forge Monte's letter, believing he is pursuing justice for his father, yet he deceives both Monte and O'Leary in order to force a confrontation. Discuss whether a good objective can ever justify dishonest methods.

CHAPTER FIVE: FORGERY

 Rafferty quits when he realizes Monte genuinely has no intention of seeking revenge. Discuss why some cultures or communities equate courage with willingness to use violence and what might challenge that assumption.

 Dick sees a murdered father who deserves vengeance. Monte remembers a man whose cruelty contributed to their mother's death and warns Dick to consider whether the victim himself had created enemies. Discuss how childhood experience can produce very different family memories.

 Spiegel insists that his claim is legal and ethical, while Monte suspects the document is fraudulent and objects to losing valuable property through questionable legal maneuvering. Discuss why something presented through legal procedures is not necessarily just or legitimate.

CHAPTER SIX: BUSHWHACKING ENEMIES

 Monte still believes that Spiegel's death is not worth becoming an outlaw and spending the rest of his life fleeing the law. Discuss what this reveals about the difference between wanting justice and wanting personal vengeance.

 Monte has been confident that his rejection of violence is reasonable, but discovering that others interpret it as fear unsettles him. Discuss why people's opinions about our courage can exert such powerful pressure even when we believe our choices are correct.

 Monte does not seek out the Spiegel brothers or initiate the fight. He fires only after his horse is shot and he himself is wounded. Discuss how self-defense differs morally and legally from revenge.

CHAPTER SEVEN: QUALITY OF JUSTICE

 The man many considered cowardly survives a three-man ambush while wounded and kills all three attackers. Discuss how one dramatic event can overturn a reputation—and whether the community should have required such proof in the first place.

 The Spiegels' supposed claim turns out to be a copy of the Calhouns' own already-recorded grant. Discuss how greed and overconfidence can cause people to create the circumstances of their own defeat.

 After nearly getting Monte killed, Dick promises to stop harboring outlaws and agrees to attend school. Discuss what he has learned about revenge, responsibility and the consequences of manipulating other people into conflict.

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L. Ron Hubbard's *Man for Breakfast*

Discussion Guide

STORY SUMMARY & OVERVIEW

📖 In *Man for Breakfast*, cowboy Ornamental Johnny Purcell is guarding \$4,000 belonging to the Walking T ranch when a stranger attacks him and steals the money. Johnny pursues the thief into dangerous desert country, where he is wounded, loses his horse and is mistaken for a wanted outlaw by a sheriff who attempts to hang him. Surviving when the rope breaks, Johnny later encounters the real outlaws and kills the thief who robbed him. Despite further wounds, he recovers the ranch's money along with \$5,000 from another robbery. Johnny returns having earned his fellow cowboys' respect—but facing a final ethical dilemma.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: AMERICA SOUTHWEST CATTLE COUNTRY

📖 The story takes place in the cattle country of the American Southwest, where ranch hands might travel enormous distances moving livestock between ranches, military posts and markets. Johnny and the Walking T crew have delivered fifteen hundred cattle to Fort Tollman and are returning home with sixty horses purchased from the Army. The story also reflects the difficulties of maintaining law across sparsely populated frontier regions. Law officers might have to cover large territories, while distance and poor communications made identification of suspects difficult. In the story, those problems are made worse because the sheriff and his deputies are themselves corrupt. They are more interested in recovering stolen money for themselves than in establishing guilt through a legitimate trial.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

📖 Johnny notices the stranger's nervous behavior but reasons that travelers are scarce and that a man should remain civil in such isolated country. Discuss how circumstances can make hospitality especially important and how people can distinguish reasonable generosity from dangerous trust.

📖 Recovering the \$4,000 becomes more than a matter of protecting Johnny's reputation. The money represents the Walking T's ability to operate for another year and Johnny knows the ranch owner has little else upon which to depend. Discuss how responsibility changes when one person's mistake threatens the livelihood of many others.

📖 Johnny's pursues Dead-eye across dangerous desert terrain, climbs difficult slopes and continues even after being fired upon. Discuss when determination becomes reckless and how a person can judge whether the importance of a goal justifies increasing personal risk.

📖 Johnny assumes his exhausted horse is behaving foolishly, only to discover that the apparently inviting water is dangerously hot. Discuss what this incident suggests about paying attention to warning signs that we do not initially understand.

📖 Johnny had fed the stranger, given him water and sold him a horse. The same man now wounds Johnny, steals another horse and leaves him believing he may die. Discuss why betrayal by someone we have helped can produce a stronger emotional response than harm caused by a complete stranger.

📖 Johnny asks to be confronted with evidence and given a legal trial, but the sheriff and deputies prepare to hang him based largely upon assumption and circumstance. Discuss why legal protections are especially important when authorities believe they already know someone is guilty.

📖 The sheriff supposedly represents justice, but the story suggests that he and his deputies want the stolen \$5,000 for themselves. Meanwhile, Johnny—whom they believe to be an outlaw—is actually trying to recover stolen property. Discuss why official authority does not automatically make someone's actions morally right.

📖 Johnny's original purpose is recovering the Walking T's money, but by this point the thief has also wounded him and stolen his horse. Their final encounter becomes a direct fight for survival. Discuss how self-defense, responsibility, anger and revenge can become difficult to separate during violent confrontations.

📖 The money was stolen from the Bird Cage, whose owner was killed during the robbery. Johnny has nearly been killed—and even hanged—because of events surrounding it, while Old Zeke wonders whether there may be no heirs to claim it. Discuss the legal and ethical possibilities: Should Johnny surrender it to authorities, search for heirs, return it to the business, keep it as compensation, use it to help the Walking T, or take some other course? Explain the principles that should determine his decision.

📖 The sheriff wears a badge but attempts an unlawful hanging, while Johnny repeatedly finds himself outside formal protection despite trying to recover stolen property. Discuss what gives authority moral legitimacy.

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