

Shiloh

Study Guide

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*For the novel
by Phyllis
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Synopsis

While walking near his home, Marty Preston spots a frightened beagle pup. Convinced that his neighbor, Judd Travers, has been abusing the dog, the 11-year-old refuses to return the runaway to its owner. Marty names the dog Shiloh and hopes to keep him hidden from both his family and Judd Travers. Marty struggles with his conscience as he tells lies to keep Shiloh a secret. When Shiloh is seriously injured and requires medical attention, Marty's secret is revealed. Although he is sorry for the trouble he has caused, Marty is not deterred from saving Shiloh. He strikes a bargain with Judd Travers, determined to keep the dog from being abused further. The youngster faces some difficult choices as he learns about honesty, far-reaching consequences, his family, and himself.

Vocabulary

Chapters 5–10:

Match the words on the left with their definitions on the right. Then use each word in a sentence.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1. ___ nuzzle | a. inflamed ridges or bumps on the skin |
| 2. ___ nourish | b. to give honor or praise |
| 3. ___ jowls | c. to promote the growth of something |
| 4. ___ glorify | d. to push the nose against something |
| 5. ___ gunnysack | e. loose flesh around the cheeks or throat |
| 6. ___ envy | f. a bag made of coarse material |
| 7. ___ welts | g. jealousy that someone else has an advantage or benefit |

nuzzle:

nourish:

jowls:

glorify:

gunnysack:

envy:

welts:

Chapters 5, 6 & 7

Characterization:

An author will tell her readers about a character by his actions, what he says, and what other characters say about him. Because everything that happens in *Shiloh* is told by Marty, everything that you learn about the characters in *Shiloh* is revealed by Marty. After each of the characters listed below, write a short description of that character. Then write down Marty's attitude toward that character.

Mr. Preston—

Mrs. Preston—

Dara Lynn—

Judd Travers—

David Howard—

Mrs. Howard—

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7. When Judd gives Marty a ride, what does Judd reveal about himself that helps Marty begin to feel sorry for him?

8. How does the Howards' lifestyle differ from the Prestons?

9. What family embarrassment does Marty deliberately invite at Mr. Wallace's store?

10. How does Marty feel about all of his lies?

Thinking About the Story:

11. When no one in his family questions the truthfulness of his words, Marty says that lying is "easy as falling off a log." Later Marty says "Funny how one lie leads to another and before you know it, your whole life is a lie." What's easy about telling lies? What's difficult about telling lies?

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12. Marty says, “. . . I also know that you can lie not only by what you say but what you don’t say.” What lies has Marty told by what he doesn’t say?

Dig Deeper:

13. The book of Proverbs speaks often about truthfulness and God’s reaction to lying. How does God feel about lying as seen in Proverbs 6:16–19 and 12:22?
14. Marty says that if Jesus comes back to earth, he’ll come as a dog, “because there isn’t anything as humble or patient or loving or loyal.” Read 1 Samuel 15:22 and Micah 6:6–8. Marty understands that God is a God of love and compassion. What other aspects of God has he forgotten about?
15. Psalm 51 is David’s prayer of confession after a serious sin. How do his words in verse 3 echo Marty’s situation?

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really does mistreat his dogs. Marty then considers giving Shiloh to David's relatives in Ohio, but David's aunt is allergic to dogs. Marty then thinks about hiding Shiloh again someplace where no one will find him such as in the abandoned gristmill. But Marty realizes that being locked up in an old building is no life for a dog.

2. Marty decides to go to Judd and simply tell him that he is refusing to return Shiloh.

3. Marty witnesses Judd shooting and killing a doe out of season.

4. What Marty realizes is that he has information that he can threaten to use against Judd unless Judd lets him have the dog.

5. Marty agrees to keep Judd's crime a secret and work for Judd for 20 hours in return for the dog. Answers will vary. Marty is willing to turn a blind eye to Judd's actions (he even helps Judd get the deer back to his trailer) if Marty gets what he wants. He is, in a moral sense, no better than Judd. Marty says, "I'd go to the place I'd do most anything to save Shiloh."

6. Marty considers keeping Shiloh of primary importance. Marty is willing to sacrifice what he knows is right for the sake of getting the dog. He says, "I begin to see now I'm no better than Judd Travers—willing to look the other way to get something I want."

7. Judd makes a work "contract" on a piece of paper. Marty promises not to tell about the deer.

8. Marty realizes that once Judd gets rid of the evidence, he could back off and tell the boy to go ahead and tell the warden. Judd could also deny he'd ever written the grocery sack note. But worst of all is the fear that one day when Shiloh is running in the woods, Judd might put a bullet in his head.

9. Marty figures that his dad wouldn't tell the warden even if he *did* know about the deer, therefore he keeps his promise to Judd.

10. Judd teases Marty by saying he would deny the "handwritin' on the paper" because it was not witnessed by anyone. Marty realizes all he can do is stick to his side of the deal and see what happens. Marty tells Judd, "You and me made a bargain, and I aim to keep my part of it." He knows that Judd could do him all sorts of evil, but Marty is committed to making the best effort he can.

11. Marty begins to try to see things from Judd's point of view and encourages Judd to talk about his interests. When talking about Judd's youth, Judd says that his pa only took him out hunting once or twice when he was little. He says, "Only nice thing about my dad I remember." Marty says, "I suppose there was a fraction of an ounce of sorry for him somewhere inside me. When I thought on all the things I'd done with my own dad and how Judd could only remember hunting, well, that was pretty pitiful for a lifetime."

12. Answers will vary. Most readers will realize that Marty is being as foolish as he is brave. From all that is known about Judd, the neighbor seems cruel enough to do some physical harm to Marty.

13. The first day he simply watches Marty work without offering him anything, even a glass of water. Slowly he makes the work more palatable by giving him some water and by talking to Marty more. Answers will vary.

14. Marty begins speaking kindly to Judd. He has begun to see beyond Judd's cruelty to Judd's humanity. He has learned something about Judd.

15. Judd gives Marty a dog collar for Shiloh, a peace offering of sorts.

16. Judd probably never really disliked Marty in particular. Marty had probably taken Judd's general disposition personally.

17. Answers will vary. Among other things he realizes is that "Nothing is as simple as you guess—not