

Chapter Charter: Questions to Guide Your Reading



These questions will help you think about the important parts of each chapter.

Chapter 1

- How do you know that Marty likes animals?
- Why isn't Marty's family allowed to have pets?
- What does it mean when Marty gives the dog a name?

Chapter 2

- How does Marty's dad react when Marty tells him Shiloh has ticks?
- If you were Marty, do you think you would be able to mind your own business regarding Judd and Shiloh?
- How would you feel about having to leave a dog with Judd Travers?

Chapter 3

- What does it say about Judd Travers's character that he doesn't name his dogs?
- Do you think Marty should have told Judd Travers that the dog's name was Shiloh? Why or why not?

Chapter 4

- Do you think Marty was right to take Shiloh and hide him? What would you have done?

- Marty does not bring Shiloh back to Judd as he said he would. Is it ever right to break a promise?
- After Shiloh returns, Marty sleeps through the night for the first time in a while. Why?

Chapter 5

- Do you think Marty is right to sneak food from his house for Shiloh?
- Judd Travers says, “He wasn’t such a good hunting dog, I would have shot him by now.” What do you think this comment will do to Marty’s determination to keep Shiloh? What would you do?

Chapter 6

- Do you think it’s okay to lie to some people but not to others? Is it okay for Marty to lie to Judd? Is it okay for him to lie to his family?
- What does Judd Travers tell Marty in this chapter that helps explain the man’s character?
- Do you think Judd Travers is suspicious of Marty? Do you think you would be?

Chapter 7

- Why doesn’t Marty tell David about Shiloh?
- After asking for more cookies for the walk home to give to Shiloh, Marty says to himself, “Seems I’m at the point where I’ll do most anything for Shiloh . . . and right and wrong’s all mixed up in my head.” Do you think there are any easy answers for Marty? For anyone?

Chapter 8

- Marty thinks, “Having Shiloh a secret is like a bomb waiting to go off.” Do you think all secrets are like that?
- What do you think is going to happen after Marty’s mother finds Marty and Shiloh on the hill?

Chapter 9

- Do you think Marty’s mother should tell his father about Shiloh?
- Why does Marty feel both relieved and scared that his mom found out about Shiloh?
- How do you think Marty feels about Shiloh getting hurt when he was supposed to be taking care of him?
- What do you think Marty’s dad is going to do with the injured dog?

Chapter 10

- Why does Marty’s dad make Marty tell Doc Murphy what happened?
- Why does Marty’s dad think that Marty must be keeping other things from him?
- How do you know what’s right and wrong? Do you agree with Marty’s dad that you have to go by the law?

Chapter 11

- What are some of the bad things that resulted from Marty keeping Shiloh?
- How does Marty feel after he tells David all about Shiloh and what happened to him? Does having a friend to talk with usually make things easier?

Chapter 12

- Why did Marty's dad make him tell Judd Travers what happened when Judd came and found Shiloh in their house?
- Do you think there's any chance now that Judd will let Marty have the dog? Do you think there's any chance Marty will give him up? Can you imagine any solution to this problem?

Chapter 13

- Do you think Marty is wise to go alone to Judd Travers's place early in the morning? Do you think Judd would harm Marty?
- How might seeing Judd Travers shoot the young doe help Marty keep Shiloh?

Chapter 14

- Do you think it's right for Marty to blackmail Judd Travers in order to keep Shiloh?
- How is Marty putting other deer in danger by letting Judd get away with killing this doe?
- Marty says that this is and isn't the finest day in his life. Why?
- Do you think Marty's troubles with Judd are over?

Chapter 15

- Do you think Marty should have told his mother and father exactly what happened with Judd? What would you have told your parents if you were in Marty's position?
- Why does Marty feel sorry for Judd? Do you?
- Marty says, "Nothing is as simple as you guess." Do you agree? What happens between Marty and Shiloh to support this statement?



Plot: What's Happening?

"I'd got to the place I'd do most anything to save Shiloh."

—Marty, *Shiloh*

Sh^{iloh} is the story of a boy who falls in love with an abused dog and wants more than anything to make that dog safe, to make him his own.

Eleven-year-old Marty Preston is out walking near his home in the hills of West Virginia when he comes across a young beagle “not making any kind of noise, just slinking along with his head down, watching me, tail between his legs like he’s hardly got the right to breathe.” When Marty whistles and the beagle comes running to him, he and the dog become fast friends.

The dog follows him home, and Marty knows this means trouble. “We were never allowed to have pets. If you can’t afford to feed ’em and take ’em to the vet when they’re sick, you’ve no right taking ’em in, Ma says.” Marty tells the dog to go home. But the dog won’t leave. He lies down under a nearby sycamore tree. Later, when Marty sneaks to the window to see if the dog is still there, the beagle sees him and his tail starts to thump.

Marty is disappointed but not surprised when his father tells him that the dog is probably Judd Travers's new hunting dog and that they have to take him home. During the short ride over to Judd's, Marty wishes this dog belonged to anybody but Judd Travers. He doesn't like the man, and his dislike grows as they approach Judd's trailer and the dog starts trembling in Marty's lap.

"How do you go about reporting someone who don't take care of his dog right?" Marty asks. His dad tells him that many animals are mistreated. "But this one come to me to help him!" Marty says. His father reminds him that people in the hills mind their own business. "If it's Travers's dog, it's no mind of ours *how* he treats it."

When Judd welcomes his dog home with a kick, Marty jumps out of the Jeep. "Please don't kick him like that. Some dogs just like to run." Judd lets him know what he'll do if the dog does run again. "I'll whup the daylights out of him. Guarantee you that."

Marty can't speak all the way home. That night he decides he is going to buy the dog from Judd Travers. He doesn't know where he'll get the money, he doesn't know if Judd will sell, he doesn't know what his parents will say or how he'll get the money to feed a dog, but buying him is the only way he can figure to get the dog away from Judd.

Then Shiloh runs away from Judd again, this time straight to Marty's house, and Marty hides the dog in a pen he builds on a hill behind his house.

At first, Marty finds it easy to keep Shiloh a secret. But it involves more and more lies. And the lying only begins with Judd, who comes looking for the dog one night and leaves without him. Marty lies to his parents, his siblings, and his best friend. He can't seem to help himself. "A lie don't seem a lie anymore when it's meant to save a dog," he thinks, "and right and wrong's all mixed up in my head."

Then one night Marty's mother follows him up the hill after dinner and finds him lying in the pen with Shiloh.

"I wish you'd told me," his mother says. Marty says she'd make him give the dog back, and she reminds him that the dog isn't his. Marty's mother wants to tell his father about the dog, but agrees to wait a day if Marty promises not to run away.

That night Marty hears Shiloh up on the hill. It's clear that he's being hurt. Marty runs up the hill with his father behind him. His father shines a flashlight on the pen. A big, mean German shepherd with blood on his mouth is hunched over Shiloh. The big dog jumps over the fence and runs away. Shiloh, unmoving, is covered with blood.

Marty's dad carries Shiloh to his Jeep. Marty gets in beside him, and they drive to Doc Murphy's. The doctor examines Shiloh while Marty explains who the dog is and what happened. Doc Murphy cleans the wounds, stitches Shiloh, and gives him antibiotics. "The next twenty-four hours, we'll know if this dog's going to live," he says.

Marty asks his father if he can still keep Shiloh. His father says no, that they can only keep him until he is well. "Then we're taking him back to Judd."

Doc Murphy brings Shiloh back the next day. Marty and his family bring the dog into the house and make him a bed in a cardboard box. Marty is very happy to have Shiloh there, in the house. Then Judd knocks on their door one night during dinner. "Ray Preston, somebody told me you got my dog."

Marty's dad makes Marty tell how Shiloh came to be there and how he got hurt. Judd is angry. Marty's dad says what Marty did was wrong, and he'll pay the doctor's bill and make sure the dog is well before returning him. Then Marty's mother asks if they can buy the dog. "That dog's not for sale," Judd says. "I want him back by Sunday."

But Marty isn't willing to let Shiloh go. He decides that the only thing he can do is go and talk to Judd and tell him he won't give Shiloh back. He goes to tell him early Sunday morning. The boy is on his way to Judd's when he sees a young doe shot and killed. Who is shooting deer out of season? Marty wonders. Then he sees Judd Travers stepping out of the woods.

Marty tells Judd he saw what happened, and that there is a two-hundred-dollar fine for killing a doe. Marty says he'll tell the warden unless Judd lets him keep Shiloh. Judd only agrees to the deal if Marty will work twenty hours at his place to pay for the dog as well. Marty quickly consents to this plan.

When he gets back to his house, Marty tells his mom and dad that Shiloh is going to be his. He tells them how he's going to work twenty hours to pay Judd for Shiloh. Marty doesn't tell them about the deer.

Marty goes to Judd's two hours a day for the next two weeks. Judd is cruel and makes Marty work in the hot sun, seldom offering him anything to drink. Marty doesn't care, though. His mind is focused on one thing: owning Shiloh.

By Thursday of the last week, it is clear Marty has won Shiloh with his hard work and determination. When it's time to leave that last day, Judd gives Marty an old dog collar. "You got yourself a dog," Judd says.

That night Marty lies on the grass with Shiloh on top of him. He looks up at the sky and thinks "how nothing is as simple as you guess—not right or wrong, not Judd Travers, not even me or this dog I got here. But the good part is I saved Shiloh and opened my eyes some. Now that ain't bad for eleven."

Thinking about the plot

- Why did Marty want Shiloh so badly? Why couldn't he have him?
- How did Marty try to keep Shiloh?
- How did Marty finally get Shiloh?