

Shiloh

Study Guide

by Charles W. Johnson



*For the novel
by Phyllis
Reynolds
Naylor*

CD Version



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Shiloh Study Guide

A Progeny Press Study Guide

by Charles W. Johnson

edited by Andrew Clausen

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PO Box 100, Fall Creek, WI 54742-0100.

www.progenypress.com

Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN: 978-1-58609-351-8 Book

978-1-58609-263-4 CD

978-1-58609-443-0 Set

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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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Questions:

1. To cover up what he has done, Marty begins telling lies. List five lies that Marty tells in these three chapters.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

2. What does Judd Travers say he will do to Shiloh when he finds him again?

3. Judd asserts his right to do what he wants with his dogs:

“[If Shiloh] wasn’t such a good hunting dog, I would have shot him by now.”

“Sheriff would get on you if you do somethin’ like that, Judd.”

“Law never told me before what I could do with my dogs, won’t be tellin’ me now,” Judd says.

What does this dialogue reveal about Judd’s respect for law?

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4. What memory comes back to Marty at the beginning of Chapter 6? Why do you think it comes back to him now?

5. With his conscience bothering him, Marty prays:

“Jesus,” I whisper finally, “which do you want me to do? Be one hundred percent honest and carry that dog back to Judd so one of your creatures can be kicked and starved all over again, or keep him here and fatten him up to glorify your creation?”

The question seemed to answer itself, . . .

What did Marty decide the answer was?

Read Isaiah 29:13, 14. Did Marty really want to glorify God’s creation? Was Marty honoring God with his lips or his heart? Explain your answers.

According to Isaiah 29:14, what is God’s response to mere “lip service”?

6. How does Marty justify saving food to give to Shiloh?

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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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laws that are in opposition to God (one of the ideas behind the American Revolution) is an idea that is still being debated.

13. Answer will vary. In a complicated situation like Marty's one should pray for wisdom or seek wisdom in scripture and from others.

Vocabulary

Chapters 11–15:

1. quarrel; 2. slogs; 3. bargain; 4. turpentine; 5. blackmail; 6. camouflage; 7. omission; 8. wedge; 9. decency; 10. antibiotics; 11. lame; 12. quavery.

Chapters 11 & 12

Questions:

1. Trust is lost between Marty's father and mother. Shiloh has been seriously injured. The people in town think the Preston family is in need of food and that Mrs. Preston is suffering from headaches. The Prestons, Marty in particular, will have to pay for Shiloh's medical bills.
2. Everybody seems to love the dog, and Shiloh breaks down some of the hard feelings in the family. Marty hopes that his family will want to keep the dog and that his dad will make Judd an offer to buy the dog.
3. Someone sees a beagle on Doc's back porch and tells Judd about it, thinking the dog is Judd's.
4. Judd says that the Prestons are responsible for Shiloh's injury and that he sure never caused an injury like this one. While Judd may have mistreated his animals, Marty has to admit that the accusation is basically true.
5. Judd does reach down and pats Shiloh on the head, indicating that there is a compassionate side of Judd.
6. Judd refuses the offer, saying the dog isn't for sale. He claims he's paid good money for a hunting dog and he expects him back by Sunday.
7. Answers will vary.

Chapters 13, 14 & 15

Questions:

1. Marty first thinks about reporting Judd's mistreatment of his dogs. Marty realizes that there's no way to prove it, and there's no way the county will send an investigator to spy on Judd and see if he 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 got 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