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Shiloh

by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

(Dell, 1991)

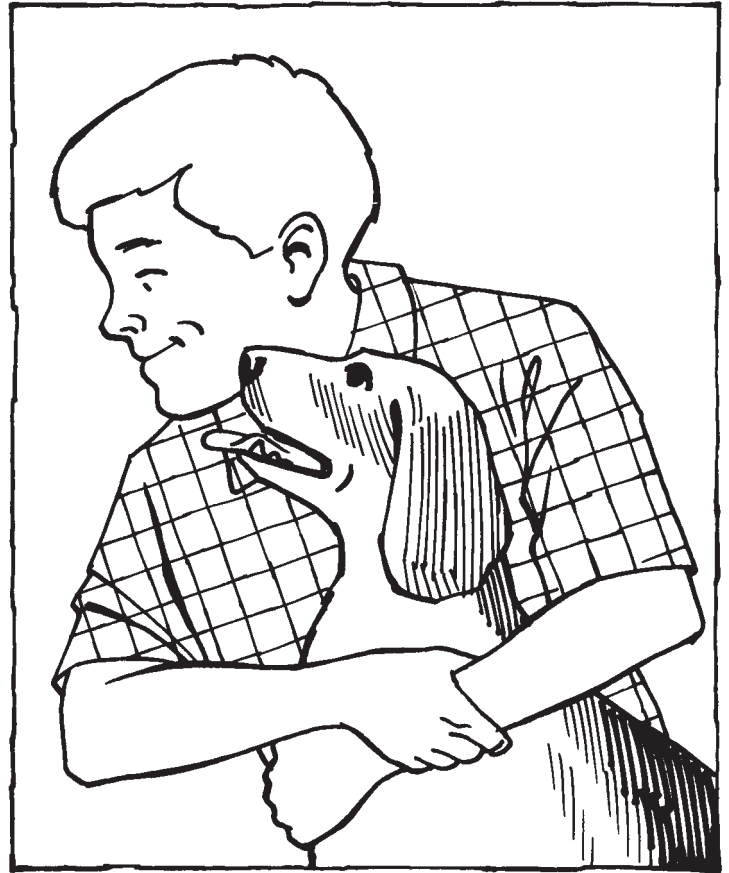
(Available in Canada from Doubleday Dell Seal; in U.K., Bantam Doubleday Dell; in AUS, Transworld Pub.)

Like many of Phyllis Reynolds Naylor's novels, *Shiloh*, set in the rural town of Friendly, West Virginia, grapples with sensitive issues. In this story, Marty Preston, a boy of eleven, must deal with deep ethical questions. Right and wrong, good and evil, and truth and lies all become muddled when Marty finds Shiloh, a stray beagle. Marty is convinced that the dog is being abused by its owner, the mean-spirited Judd Travers. As Marty's love for Shiloh grows, he is determined to keep the dog at all costs. Because his family is poor and without the money to feed another mouth, his parents do not want any pets. Desperate, Marty builds Shiloh a shelter on the hill near his home, hiding him from both Judd and his own family. He spends his days collecting scraps of food for Shiloh and then sneaking off to play with his beloved beagle.

Although happy about Shiloh, Marty is deeply torn about lying to his family and friends. The lies escalate, leaving Marty confused: he must choose between lying or giving Shiloh back to Judd Travers. But Marty is also angry. While most of the people in Friendly know that Judd Travers mistreats his animals, no one speaks out. This conflict is most acute during his conversations with his father when Marty learns that the "grown up" world is not always fair.

Marty's secret cannot last. When Marty's mom catches him and Shiloh, she agrees to keep quiet for one night, implicating herself in the chain of lies. That night, Shiloh is badly wounded by a neighbor's German shepherd. Marty's father takes Shiloh to the town doctor, who stitches the dog's wounds and keeps him overnight.

Soon after, Shiloh returns to the Preston's home. Although his parents decide to return Shiloh, Marty refuses. When he marches to Judd's house early the next morning, he catches Judd illegally shooting a deer out of season. In exchange for Marty's silence and twenty hours of hard labor, Judd agrees to give Shiloh to Marty. Judd tries to renege on his side of the bargain, but Marty's honesty and grit somehow touch him. In the end, they learn to get along, and Shiloh belongs to Marty.



Map Skills: West Virginia

Use the map below to answer the questions on page 14.

