

Chapter Charter:

Questions to Guide Your Reading

Chapter 1

- Who is telling the story? When do you think the events take place?
- The narrator helps the old redbone hound. Have you or anyone in your family ever helped a stray animal? If so, when and why?
- What memories does the old dog stir in the narrator?

Chapter 2

- In what way does the action change? How can you tell?
- Billy wants a pair of hunting dogs. Have you ever wanted anything as much as Billy wants these dogs? If so, what was it and did you get it?
- Would you like to be friends with Billy? Why or why not?

Chapter 3

- What is Billy's plan to get his coonhounds? Do you think it will work? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Billy's grandfather helps him get the hounds?
- What might it feel like to work for two years to achieve your dream?

Chapter 4

- Billy walks about forty miles to pick up his puppies. Would you have gone to pick up the puppies yourself or waited for them to be delivered? Explain your answer.
- How do you think Billy feels as he walks through the town of Tahlequah?

- Why are the people in Tahlequah so cruel to Billy?

Chapter 5

- How does Billy feel when he first sees his hounds?
- Do you think Billy should have fought back when the kids teased and attacked him? Why or why not?
- Why do you think the marshal helps Billy?

Chapter 6

- What is special about the way Billy finally names his puppies? What does this scene tell you about Billy's beliefs?
- Why do you think Billy is so happy to buy gifts for his family?
- Why do Billy's parents want to move to town? Would you rather live in a small village or a big city? Explain your reasons.

Chapter 7

- Have you ever trained a pet? If so, how did you do it? If not, how do you think you might go about training an animal?
- Do you think you would be able to trap a coon as Billy does? Why or why not?
- Why does Papa make Billy take down all his traps? Do you agree with Papa's decision? Why or why not?

Chapter 8

- How does Billy feel when hunting season opens? What events in your life make you feel the same way?
- What is your first clue that Little Ann and Old Dan are great hunting dogs?
- When the dogs trap the raccoon in the old sycamore tree, Billy cuts "the giant" down. Do you agree with his decision? Why or why not?

Chapter 9

- Why is Billy so determined to cut down the tree and get the raccoon? When did you last feel as determined as Billy does to achieve a difficult task?
- How would you describe the relationship between Old Dan and Little Ann?
- Billy describes killing the coon as “savage and brutal.” Do you think people should hunt animals? Why or why not?

Chapter 10

- Why do you think Billy is such a successful raccoon hunter?
- How would you feel if you were Billy, catching so many raccoons?
- Old Dan and Little Ann are clever, determined dogs. What experiences have you had with smart, loyal animals?

Chapter 11

- How does Billy rescue Little Ann after her accident? What does this tell you about Billy’s character?
- Would you have rescued Little Ann if you had been in Billy’s shoes? Why or why not?
- How can you tell that Billy is very religious?

Chapter 12

- Would you like to be friends with the Pritchards? Why or why not?
- Do you agree with Billy’s decision not to tell his parents about his plans to hunt with Rainie and Rubin? Explain your answer. Would you have told your parents?
- Who do you predict will win the bet, Billy or the Pritchards? Why?

Chapter 13

- Do you agree with Billy's decision not to kill the ghost coon?

Why or why not?

- Explain how Rubin gets killed. How did his death make you feel?
- How can you tell that Billy is compassionate, kind, and respectful?

Chapter 14

- What event would make you feel as happy as Billy feels about entering the championship coon hunt? Why?
- Who do you think is more excited about the championship coon hunt, Billy or Grandpa? Why?
- What clues from Chapter 1 suggest that Billy will win the championship hunt?

Chapter 15

- What qualities do Little Ann and Old Dan have that make them such great hunting dogs?
- How would you feel if you were Billy, with so much riding on this contest?
- Imagine that you were one of the judges. Would you have awarded Little Ann first prize in the contest? Give your reasons.

Chapter 16

- Is the contest fair to the hunters, dogs, and raccoons? Why or why not?
- Why are raccoons so hard to hunt?
- Imagine you were Billy. How would you feel at the end of this day?

Chapter 17

- In what way does the weather become a character in this chapter?
- Imagine that you were hunting with Billy. Would you have turned back at this point? Why or why not?
- In what ways are Billy and Grandpa alike here?

Chapter 18

- How do you think Billy feels when he sees Little Ann and Old Dan covered in ice?
- Mr. Kyle says, “You can read every day where a dog saved the life of a drowning child, or lay down his life for his master. Some people call this loyalty. I don’t. I may be wrong, but I call it love—the deepest kind of love.” Do you think the dogs are showing loyalty or love? Explain your answer.
- What do you think Mama and Papa will do with the three hundred dollars that Billy wins?

Chapter 19

- Why do you think Old Dan attacks the mountain lion?
- Imagine you were Billy. If you could relive the scene with the mountain lion, what would you do differently? What would you do the same?
- Old Dan and Little Ann die within a short time of each other. How did their deaths make you feel?

Chapter 20

- How does the family feel about leaving the Ozarks?
- What is the legend of the red fern?
- How can you tell that Billy has come to accept the death of his beloved dogs?