



A Shiloh Christmas (Shiloh Series Book 4)

By Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

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A rescued beagle and his boy owner seek love and understanding for their troubled small town in this holiday companion to the Newbery Medal-winning *Shiloh*, from Phyllis Reynolds Naylor.

Christmas is coming and Marty and his rescued pup Shiloh are sure glad about that—for their town is running low on love and understanding and they hope that the joy of the holiday will bring with it the generosity of spirit that's so lacking.

It's been a year since Marty Preston rescued Shiloh from Judd Travers and his cruel ways, and since then, Marty and Shiloh have been inseparable. Anywhere Marty goes, the beagle's at his side, and Marty couldn't be happier about that. Even Judd has been working to improve his reputation.

But just as the townsfolk grow more accepting of Judd, a fire in the woods destroys many homes, including Judd's, and Judd's newly formed reputation. Doubt, blame, and anger spread faster than the flames—flames that are fanned by the new minister, who seems fonder of fire and brimstone than love and mercy. And why are his daughters so skittish around him? And what's happened to Judd's dogs? With Christmas right around the corner, Marty has a lot of questions, and getting the right answers might just take a Christmas miracle.

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor's fourth book in the Newbery Award-winning Shiloh series—following *Shiloh*, *Shiloh Season*, and *Saving Shiloh*—“seamlessly interlaces themes of tolerance, compassion, and forgiveness...[and] explores the interconnectedness of family members, communities, and the dogs they love” (*Publishers Weekly*, starred review).

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 4–7—After nearly 18 years, the beloved Shiloh trilogy becomes a quartet. Fans of the first books will find comfort and similarity in the continuing saga of 12-year-old Marty, his rambunctious beagle, and his family in their rural West Virginia community. The book is set mostly in midsummer during one of the worst droughts on record, and residents are quick to accuse Judd Travers of setting a fire that burns several homes, including his own. Marty's parents reach out to Judd, Shiloh's former abusive owner, offering him shelter while he rebuilds his life and searches for his missing dogs. Meanwhile, Marty and his family grapple with difficult decisions when they suspect the new pastor of abusing his daughters. This is not so much a Christmas story as it is a book about tolerance, acceptance, forgiveness, and recognizing one's own moral compass. In response to Marty's many philosophical questions, his loving and supportive parents offer realistic guidance, advice, and discipline. As expected, Shiloh the dog plays a pivotal role in bringing about a happy resolution for Judd and Marty. VERDICT Though it stands well on its own, *A Shiloh Christmas* will most appeal to those already familiar with the previous titles.—Madeline J. Bryant, Los Angeles Public Library

Review

*"Naylor seamlessly interlaces themes of tolerance, compassion, and forgiveness in this poignant story as she explores the interconnectedness of family members, communities, and the dogs they love." -*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

A new school year brings new friends, new blessings, and new tragedies for the beagle Shiloh and his family. A devastating drought has everyone's nerves on edge, so when a new pastor arrives, pointing to unrepentant sinners as the cause of the drought, local residents begin seeking whom to blame for their misfortunes. Judd, Shiloh's former abusive owner, is one of the easiest targets. So, when a fire destroys several homes, Marty and his family jump in to help all the victims, including Judd, rebuild their lives and their reputations. But a more difficult problem arises when Marty and his friend discover Rachel, one of the pastor's daughters, locked up in the family's toolshed. Marty's parents must decide where the line between punishment and abuse lies. In the end, lessons from Judd's painful past point the way for both parents and children alike. This artfully wrought story of restoration manages to be both hopeful as well as authentic. Shiloh's move from abused pup to well-loved pet is an ideal metaphor for the plot's various redemption stories, which culminate on Christmas day. Perfect for longtime fans of the series and newcomers alike, this Christmas story can be enjoyed year-round. (Kirkus, *STARRED REVIEW July 15, 2015)

Nearly 20 years after *Saving Shiloh* (1997), Naylor adds a fourth title to the trilogy that began with her Newbery Medal–winning *Shiloh*. Set a year after *Marty* and *Shiloh* were reunited in the previous book, this installment begins with a summer drought and makes its way past Halloween and Thanksgiving to conclude with a restorative Christmas meal shared by characters who don't always see eye to eye. Along the way, Marty wrestles with the arrival of a new preacher who focuses on sin and punishment over love and forgiveness (and whose home life raises some tough moral questions for Marty's family), as well as a damaging fire that destroys the home of a newly repentant Judd Travers. Naylor seamlessly interlaces themes of tolerance, compassion, and forgiveness in this poignant story as she explores the interconnectedness of family members, communities, and the dogs they love. (Publishers Weekly *STARRED REVIEW* September 14, 2015)

Gr 4-7-After nearly 18 years, the beloved Shiloh trilogy becomes a quartet. Fans of the first books will find comfort and similarity in the continuing saga of 12-year-old Marty, his rambunctious beagle, and his family in their rural West Virginia community. The book is set mostly in midsummer during one of the worst droughts on record, and residents are quick to accuse Judd Travers of setting afire that burns several homes, including his own. Marty's parents reach out to Judd, Shiloh's former abusive owner, offering him shelter while he rebuilds his life and searches for his missing dogs. Meanwhile, Marty and his family grapple with difficult decisions when they suspect the new pastor of abusing his daughters. This is not so much a Christmas story as it is a book about tolerance, acceptance, forgiveness, and recognizing one's own moral compass. In response to Marty's many philosophical questions, his loving and supportive parents offer realistic guidance, advice, and discipline. As expected, Shiloh the dog plays a pivotal role in bringing about a happy resolution for Judd and Marty. VERDICT Though it stands well on its own, *A Shiloh Christmas* will most appeal to those already familiar with the previous titles. (School Library Journal October 2015)

This is a Christmas story, but first Marty and Shiloh and their family must get through a new-school routine, Halloween, and Thanksgiving, not to mention a drought and subsequent wildfire. As in the three previous books centered on the now-iconic dog Shiloh, the rural West Virginia setting and the relationships among its inhabitants are warmly but unsentimentally drawn. The story is episodic,

with through-lines provided by a new girl in an unhappy home and the continuing (and believable) rehabilitation of Judd Travers. The Christmas Day conclusion provides the best kind of heartwarming: earned. (The Horn Book October 6, 2015)

**"Perfect for longtime fans of the series and newcomers alike, this Christmas story can be enjoyed year-round." - *Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

Naylor concludes the Shiloh saga with a lyrical story of character and redemption. The novel opens in July with a scorching drought that leads to a devastating fire. Shiloh and Marty's house is spared, but Marty is upset about rumors that Judd Travers set the fire deliberately. Even when the rumors are dismissed as false, the community becomes polarized into pro-Judd and anti-Judd factions. The new preacher fuels the growing animosity by labeling Judd an irredeemable blasphemer and sinner. Marty does not like the preacher's hellfire-and-brimstone sermons, especially when he learns how unhappy the preacher's daughters are. All the tensions converge at Christmas when the characters learn that redemption comes in many forms and is available to all. Naylor's characters are well drawn and complex—even the preacher is sympathetic in context. Shiloh has less to do in this title, although in a pivotal scene, he demonstrates that even a dog can learn to forgive. Marty narrates the story through thoughtful observations that explore the events via the lens of his "whys," the questions he has about life. Marty is growing into a responsible young man who learns from his errors but does not come across as preachy or self-righteous. Rather, he steers the simple plot and the quartet to its strong and satisfying conclusion. (Booklist Online *STARRED* November 18, 2015)

About the Author

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor has written more than 135 books, including the Newbery Award-winning *Shiloh*, the Alice series, and *Roxie and the Hooligans*. She lives in Gaithersburg, Maryland. To hear from Phyllis and find out more about Alice, visit AliceMcKinley.com.

Mike Wimmer

Mike Wimmer has illustrated many books for children, including *Home Run: The Story of Babe Ruth* by Robert Burleigh, which was named an ALA Notable Children's Book and was called a "grand slam" in a starred review in *Publishers Weekly*. He also illustrated *Flight: The Journey of Charles Lindbergh* by Robert Burleigh, which received the Orbis Pictus Award for nonfiction. He lives in Oklahoma with his family.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

George Clark:

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Hazel Polk:

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Joe Vizcarra:

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Ryan Barrett:

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