



LILY'S STORY

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Ages 8 – 12 • Grades 3 – 7



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In **Chapter 1**, pit bull puppy Lily and her mother and brothers have been rescued and brought to a shelter. Shelter president Chelsea Murphy's children—Craig, Bryan, and Maggie Rose—come for a visit. How does Lily being the only girl and the “runt” (or smallest, weakest puppy) in her litter contribute to the special bond she develops with Maggie Rose?
2. In **Chapter 2**, Maggie Rose introduces Lily to some of the other animals at the shelter and explains: “That’s what we do, Lily. We find families for animals who don’t have homes. Like you!” Why is this important work? What might happen to stray, homeless, or abandoned animals if rescue shelter workers didn’t find and help them?
3. Lily meets Missy, a lost Yorkie who has a raccoon bite on her leg. How does Lily help Missy? When Lily sees Missy reunited with her owner, she observes: “In that instant I understood something new. My life here in this place with my mother and my big heavy brothers was a good life, but it was not what a dog needed most. To be truly happy, a dog needed to be like Missy and have a person of her own.” Do you think this is true for your own dog, if you have one, or of a friend or relative’s dog you have observed?
4. What does Maggie Rose’s mother explain about the concept of a “foster failure” in **Chapter 4**, when Maggie Rose says she wants to adopt Lily? Does this change how Maggie Rose feels about adopting Lily? How does Maggie Rose prove, over the course of the story, that Lily should be an exception to the rule about shelter workers (and their families) not adopting pets from the shelter?
5. What do you think about Maggie Rose’s choice to hide Lily in her shirt when potential adopters come to visit the puppies, in **Chapter 5**? If you were in Maggie Rose’s situation, would you do the same thing? Why or why not? When the family interested in adopting one of Lily’s brothers expresses concern about pit bulls being dangerous, what does Maggie Rose’s mother explain to them? What are some of the misconceptions about pit bulls she clears up?





6. In **Chapter 6**, when Maggie Rose's middle brother Bryan tries a harsh training approach with Lily, Maggie Rose says: "Mom says that kids at school are always picking on you, and that's why you pick on me. And it's not fair." Have you experienced, or talked about, situations with bullies? Do you think bullying sometimes is a cycle, in which bullies feel insecure so they pick on, or put down, others so they will feel better about themselves? What do Bryan and Maggie Rose learn about each other in this scene, which starts with the heated argument and ends with Bryan giving Maggie Rose the personal journal?
7. Maggie Rose and Lily go with Maggie Rose's father (who is a game warden) to release Sammy the Squirrel back into the wild, in **Chapter 7**. How does using pinecones to "play catch" with Sammy the Squirrel help Lily finally master the "Bring it here" command Maggie Rose has been trying to teach her? When Maggie Rose and her dad return from releasing Sammy, her dad hears Maggie Rose's oldest brother Craig call his sister a "runt". What do we learn about how Dad feels about this nickname, and how the term relates to Maggie Rose's relationship with Lily?
8. When another family might adopt Lily, Maggie Rose's parents discuss what to do. Maggie Rose's mom feels she needs to follow her own rule that shelter workers (and their families) cannot adopt animals. Maggie Rose's dad sees his wife's point of view, but sympathizes with his daughter, too. If you were Maggie Rose's parents, what would you do in this situation? What are some of the extra considerations for Maggie Rose's mom, since she has to look at the decision from both work and family perspectives?
9. In **Chapter 10**, Maggie Rose's dad invites her to survey a mountain goat herd at Echo Lake, so she won't be at the shelter when the new family visits Lily. Maggie Rose sneaks Lily into a cat carrier and brings her along. Do you think Maggie Rose makes the right choice to do this? Why or why not? How does Lily help rescue the deer trapped in wire fencing, when Lily's dad receives the call from the sheriff's department?
10. In **Chapter 12**, Lily observes that a new man who comes to meet her "...wore fur on his face". What are some of your favorite examples from the story of humorous observations and descriptions Lily shares from her puppy point of view?
11. Maggie Rose wants to keep Lily because she loves her and thinks they belong together, but she also thinks Lily can play an important role at the shelter. Maggie Rose tells Lily: "We're going to try something new. I'll prove to them that you're meant to be a rescue dog." How does Lily prove her skills as a rescue dog in her interactions with kittens Blotchy and Stripes, and Freddie the Ferret?
12. Maggie Rose and her mother are bringing Lily to her new owner (radio disc jockey Johnny Mancuso) when her mom gets a call to rescue some kittens that have been found in an empty apartment. How does Lily help with the rescue? How does she discover and save a kitten the people would have missed?
13. What is the list on the back of the picture and poem, which Maggie Rose gives to Lily's new owner, Johnny? What does Lily do at her new owner's home to show how much she misses Maggie Rose?
14. In the final chapter, Lily picks up the scent of a small, frightened creature hidden under a fallen log, and tries to protect it from an unfriendly raccoon. Why doesn't Lily leave the little creature under the log even when she hears Johnny, Maggie Rose, and Maggie Rose's parents calling for her?
15. After reading the story, do you agree with Maggie Rose that Lily is not just a rescued dog, but also a rescue dog? What did *Lily's Story: A Puppy Tale* teach you about the important role people (and sometimes other animals) can play in helping scared, hurt, and homeless animals?



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