



Sharing Snowy

Marilyn Helmer

illustrated by Kasia Charko

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AR Quiz # 128005

About the Book

More than anything in the world, Ali wants a pet cat for her birthday. Unfortunately her brother Jay is allergic to cats so the family cannot have a cat in the house. But Ali has a house of her own, a clubhouse hidden among the trees in her backyard. The clubhouse is Ali's favorite place to play, and the only person she shares it with is her best friend Sam. One day Ali discovers that someone else is sharing the clubhouse too. To her delight, the new resident is a beautiful white cat who she names Snowy. Ali decides that the clubhouse is the perfect home for Snowy. But in the end, Ali is faced with a much more important decision. Is the clubhouse the perfect home for Snowy and is Snowy really hers to keep?

About the Author

Marilyn Helmer is the author of many children's books, including picturebooks, early readers, novels, riddle books and retold tales, as well as numerous short stories, articles and poems. Aside from writing, Marilyn's favorite pastimes are reading, pursuing one of her many hobbies and, of course, collecting new story ideas. Marilyn and her husband Gary share their home near Fergus, Ontario, with a cat named Misty who rules the household with an iron paw.

About the Writing

The inspiration for *Sharing Snowy* came from a friend's experience with a small mouse she found in her grandmother's house. Marilyn's friend wanted to tame the mouse, so she secretly left out crumbs and cheese for it. All was well until her grandmother found out, and the mouse was quickly banished to the outdoors. As a writer Marilyn always has her eyes and ears open for new story ideas, and friends and family have provided her with some good ones. With her friend's experience in mind, Marilyn came up with a different cast of characters and setting, and so the story of Snowy and Ali was born. The challenge was to develop a series of situations that could actually happen. For example, how could Ali keep Snowy a secret? Could she provide Snowy with everything she needed? In the end, would Ali make the right decision about Snowy?

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections*Prereading Ideas*

- The main character, Ali, desperately wants to have a cat, but she can't have one in the house because her brother Jay is allergic. Do you have allergies or do you know someone who does? What are some of the precautions we can take to avoid the problems allergies can cause?
- Taking care of a pet is a big responsibility. What are some of the things you can do to keep a pet healthy and happy?
- If you could have your very own clubhouse, where would it be? What would it look like? What would you put inside it?
- Have you ever had a secret you wished you could share with someone, but you didn't because you were afraid it might get you in trouble?
- Pretend that you have your all-time favorite treat but there is really only enough for one. Your friend comes over. Would you share with your friend or put your treat aside to eat later? Why?

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Sometimes Ali gets annoyed with her little brother Ben. Do you have a brother or sister who does things that make you cross? What kind of things do they do?
2. Did Ali do a good job of taking care of Snowy? What would you have done differently?
3. If you lost a pet, what things could you do to help find it?
4. Sharing is not always an easy thing to do. Give some examples from the story of how Ali learns to share. Give some examples of ways that you share.
5. Do you think that, in the end, Ali made the right decision about Snowy? Would you have done the same thing?

Suggested Activities

- Make a poster about a lost pet. You can use a photo of your own pet or one cut from a magazine. What words would you use to attract people's attention?
- Find out about organizations like the SPCA and the Humane Society to discover how they look after lost and abandoned pets.
- Write and act a new scene at the end of the book about what happens when Ali meets Mrs. Banks.
- Pretend that you are Snowy and write a letter to Ali telling her how you feel about living in the clubhouse.
- In small groups, make a clubhouse in the classroom. If there isn't a lot of space, you can make a model of one. You could make your clubhouse from cardboard, empty boxes, Popsicle sticks or blocks of wood. What else could you make it from? What could you put inside?
- Make a booklet called "My Pet." If you don't have a pet of your own, you can make one up. Draw a picture of it. Make a list of the things you would need to take good care of your pet. You can draw pictures of those too or cut photos from magazines and paste them into your booklet. Don't forget to give your pet a name! Things like food, water, exercise, play, grooming, regular veterinary care should be mentioned.

Other Titles and Websites of Interest

Fog Cat by Marilyn Helmer (Kids Can Press)

Lost Cat by Tad Hardy (Houghton Mifflin)

Lost in the Snow by Holly Webb (Stripes)

Come Back, Cat by Joan Nodset (HarperCollins)

Nini Here and There by Anita Lobel (Greenwillow Books)

Rescue Pup by Jean Little (Orca Young Readers)

Hobo Finds a Home by Kevin Coolidge (Edgecliff Press)

Sable by Karen Hesse (SquareFish)

Berta: A Remarkable Dog by Celia Barker Lottridge (Groundwood Books)

Silly Chicken by Rukhsana Khan (Viking Juvenile)

Emma's Yucky Brother by Jean Little (HarperCollins)

My Friend Has Allergies by Nicola Edwards (Chrysalis Education)

The Peanut Butter Jam by Elizabeth Sussman Nassau (Health Press)

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Dinosaurs on the Beach

Reviews

“A great start to chapter books...A sweet book cat lovers and young girls will enjoy.”

—Tucson Unified School District

“Helmer is a warm and inviting writer who is not prone to writing down to children.”

—*The Hamilton Spectator*