

Heart of a Dog Study Guide

Heart of a Dog by Mikhail Bulgakov

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Plot Summary

Philip Philippovich Preobrezhensky is a world-renowned physician who transplants human seminal vesicles and pituitary glands into a stray dog to create a new human species. Although the subject lives, his operation is fraught with disaster as the new creature wreaks havoc on Philippovich's household and Moscow. In the end, Philippovich reverses the surgery and returns the creature back to its former state as a harmless dog.

Philip Philippovich longs to do something amazing, something that will add immeasurably to knowledge of the human body and perhaps create new life. He has a medical practice in Moscow where he treats patients who are willing to do anything he asks of them. He has a younger doctor on his staff, Dr. Ivan Arnoldovich Bormenthal, who worships him and does anything Philippovich asks. Philippovich also has a cook, Darya Petrovna, and a maid named Zina.

One day, Philippovich finds a stray dog in Moscow, and he brings the dog home and names him Sharik. He helps the dog to get healthy and strong in preparation for the surgery to transform it into a new creature. A twenty-five-year old man named Klim Grigorievich Chugunkin dies in a bar fight, and Bormenthal obtains his pituitary gland and seminal vesicles for the operation. The dog survives the operation, and Sharikov is born. The change from dog to human is gradual, but before long he is a full-grown man with some of the instincts of a dog. Unfortunately, however, Sharikov maintains the persona of Klim, who was a thief, a liar, and a scoundrel.

The relationship between Philippovich and Sharikov is quickly strained. Philippovich is already upset about the political changes in Moscow, and the Soviet-sympathizing Sharikov nearly drives him insane. When Sharikov begins stealing in order to obtain alcohol, Philippovich doesn't know what to do about him. A member of the house committee gets Sharikov a job, purging the streets of Moscow of stray cats. Sharikov lies to a young lady to get her to move in with him, and Philippovich decides that it's time to fix the problem.

He reverses the surgery, and Sharikov eventually turns back into the harmless stray dog Sharik. Sharik knows that the doctors have done something to his head, which aches in cold weather, but he forgives them and feels utterly grateful for a good home.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

A dog narrates the beginning of the chapter in the first person. A blizzard swirls through the Soviet city where he lives. He has no collar or tags. He begs for food and forages for it in alleyways, especially near restaurants. A cook, tired of seeing stray dogs hanging around his restaurant, has just thrown a pot full of boiling water on the dog, and the hair on one side of his body is singed off. He is in pain, he's cold, and he's very hungry.

The dog has been a sharp observer of the people around him. He has observed the little ninth-grade typist whose lover takes advantage of her and buys her off with pairs of Persian cotton stockings. He notices how poorly people are eating these days, that they're eating food fit for dogs. Next, he notices a sharply dressed man, a gentleman, but the dog makes his judgments about people by their eyes, not by their clothing. The dog can smell that the man is carrying a package of sausage from the Moscow Agricultural Industries store in his pocket. The dog can tell by looking at the man that he eats well and doesn't steal, that he won't kick dogs. He smells like a hospital and cigars.

The dog humbly approaches the man, and the man takes the sausage from his pocket, unwraps it, and gives a piece to the dog. The man checks for a collar, and upon not seeing one, he tells the dog to come with him. They walk through the streets and arrive at a building with a doorman. The dog is afraid of doormen, but this one doesn't seem to mind the dog entering the building. The doorman tells the man that more tenants are moving into the building, into apartments that are already occupied with other people. The man, whose name is Philip Philippovich, is disturbed by this, but the doorman tells him that all of the apartments will be partitioned into smaller units except for his. The dog follows the man up the marble staircase.

Chapter 1 Analysis

The author Mikhail Bulgakov writes this story from two points of view. The story begins in the first person point of view, with the dog as the narrator. The dog's point of view is italicized. The rest of the story is told from a third-person omniscient point of view, commenting on all of the characters and action, including an outside view of the dog.

The dog has powers of observation and discernment that seem beyond even human powers. Not only does the dog have the ordinarily impressive sense of smell, but he can also read people by their faces. He can look into a human's eyes and tell if the human is brutal, kind, generous, hungry, or sad. The dog has compassion for humans who are down on their luck, but he has no compassion for humans who are cruel to animals or to other humans. This expansion of animal feeling and powers is a remnant of the Romantic movement of the 19th century. Many aspects of the Romantic movement

carried over into the 20th century, and this novel, written in 1925, shows heavy Romantic influence.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Chapter 2 begins with a description of how the dog, Sharik, learns to read in Moscow. At first, he tries to decipher words by their colors, but he soon learns to recognize characters and eventually to read. Interestingly, his education begins when he is shocked by biting into insulated wire. His education begins with pain.

When Sharik arrives at Philip Philippovich's apartment, he is greeted by a pleasant young maid in a white apron. Her name is Zina, and Philip Philippovich asks her to take Sharik to the examination room. The dog becomes frightened by the smell in the examination room and breaks free of Zina's grasp. A man enters the room to help Zina control the dog, and the dog bites the man. The dog is given a shot, and he soon loses consciousness.

When Sharik awakens, he notices that the searing pain in his side is gone. He also realizes for the first time that he has bitten the man, who is stitching up his leg. The man is asking Philip Philippovich how he got such a nervous dog to follow him home. Philippovich responds that he treated the dog with kindness, that it's the only way to get living creatures to respond.

The dog observes as several visitors arrive in succession. One of the visitors asks if Sharik bites, and Sharik is surprised to hear Philippovich say that he doesn't bite. The visitors are obviously patients of Philippovich's. The patients are not mainstream patients. One of them has green hair because of some liquid he was given. Another patient needs an ovarian transplant; Philippovich says they'll use monkey ovaries. She begs him to do the surgery in his private offices instead of the hospital. He tells her it will cost more, and she says she's willing to pay it. A third visitor arrives and speaks with Philippovich about his entanglement with a fourteen-year-old girl; Philippovich advises that he marry her.

Then a group of four young men arrive. They are all similarly dressed and they present themselves as the new house management committee. Philippovich notices that one of the young men is actually a young woman, and he asks her to behave like a young woman. The young people are astonished that Philippovich speaks in the way he does, advising them to wear galoshes and not to mess up his Persian rugs.

They have come to visit Philippovich with the intent of persuading him to give up two of his seven rooms. The young woman tells him that not even Isadora Duncan has a dining room anymore. Philippovich is enraged by this. One of the young men tells him that a complaint will be filed with higher authorities. In response to this comment, Philippovich gets on the telephone and calls Pyotr Alexandrovich, a prominent citizen, to tell him that his surgery is canceled because four young people have just come into his apartment to inform him that he must give up his rooms, so he is preparing to leave the



city. Pyotr Alexandrovich asks to speak to Shvonder, one of the young men. The young man turns beet red as he listens to Alexandrovich, and then the four young people apologize and leave Philippovich. After observing all of this, the dog Sharik wants to worship Philippovich.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Chapter 2 highlights several elements: character development, social tension, and era pop culture. First of all, the reader gets to know Philip Philippovich better. We learn that he is a doctor, and that his clientele is out of the ordinary, possibly the subversive element of the population. Perhaps he helps patients that no one else will take. Philippovich is authoritarian; he will not tolerate untruths. This is seen when his female patient lies about her age and he loses patience with her. He also will not tolerate the antics of the house committee that comes to see him about taking some of his rooms away. Philippovich is very intelligent and can think on his feet. He's also a bit dramatic. While on the phone with Pyotr Alexandrovich, he exaggerates his plight to get his way.

The author highlights significant tension between the house committee and Philip Philippovich to illustrate Moscow's class tensions. The house committee represents the proletariat (the working class), and Philippovich represents the bourgeoisie (the propertied class). The author explains some of the ramifications of Moscow's transformation from a democratic to a communistic state during the early 1920s. Philippovich's rage toward the proletariat reflects the author's own rage.

The young woman on the house committee mentions Isadora Duncan as she tries to explain to Philippovich why he needs to give up his dining room. Isadora Duncan was a world famous American dancer who sympathized with the Soviet Union and moved to Moscow in 1922. Her artistry brought recognition to the Soviet's proclaimed interest in the arts. Ironically, the austere life imposed on Moscow citizens led to her return to the West in 1924. It's therefore comical that the house committee in the novel uses her as an example of Soviet economy when they're trying to persuade Philippovich to give up his rooms.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Chapter 3 begins with an elaborate meal at Philippovich's home. Zina serves the two doctors, Philippovich and Bormenthal, whom Sharik calls "the bitten one." Sharik lies on the rug and eats off of Philippovich's own fork from time to time.

Philippovich gives Bormenthal advice on how to eat, and tells him not to discuss medicine or politics at suppertime, but Philippovich can't help himself and breaks his own rule. He is extremely irritated by the new Soviet order and all of the inconveniences involved with it. He begins a tirade centered on an issue that has been bothering him: the hall stand for galoshes. For many years, there was a hall stand in the building where tenants could leave their galoshes. This prevented water and dirt from being tracked all through the building. In March 1917, the hall stand disappeared, including all the tenants' galoshes, canes, and coats. Philippovich wonders why the rugs have disappeared. Does Karl Marx forbid rugs? Why must everything be so inconvenient now? He thinks that one of the house committee members has stolen his galoshes and wears them around. He also complains that the electricity now malfunctions on a regular basis, whereas it worked perfectly well for many years.

His tirade continues until he is quoting the Bible: No man can serve two masters (Joshua 24:15). The sleepy dog notices the yelling but doesn't mind it at all. In fact, he admires Philippovich no matter what he does.

Philippovich finishes his dinner and announces that he's off to the Bolshoi to catch the second act of Aida. The younger doctor asks how Philippovich manages to do it all, and Philippovich says that he does it all by not hurrying. Before he leaves, Philippovich reminds Dr. Bormenthal that as soon as there is a suitable death, he's to rush something from the table straight to the apartment. In the meantime, they plan on getting the stray dog into suitable shape and making sure his side heals.

Over the next week, the dog continues to feast on good food and gain his strength. He feels like the luckiest dog in the world. He gets hold of the stuffed owl in Philippovich's office and rips it to shreds. Zina thinks Sharik should be whipped for this, but Philippovich says that nobody should be whipped. The following day, they put a dog collar around Sharik's neck and Zina takes him for a walk. At first, Sharik feels ashamed of the collar and leash, especially when he sees the stray dogs. But then, upon noticing how hungry they are, he realizes that that collar and leash mean that he is well taken care of, a gentleman's dog. Darya, the cook, even begins to allow him in the kitchen where he watches her work and eats her scraps. On evenings when Philippovich doesn't go to the Bolshoi or meet with other doctors, he sits in his office chair and examines a jar containing human brains. Sharik calls him "the godhead."



Chapter 3 Analysis

Several Biblical allusions in this chapter show the main character's and the author's disdain for the proletariat. During the dinner with Dr. Bormenthal, Philippovich says, "It is impossible to serve two gods!" This quote comes from the Book of Joshua in the Old Testament, although Philippovich is speaking of the state of the Soviet Union. In the very next paragraph, Philippovich rages on "like an ancient prophet, and his head glitter[s] with silver," thus reinforcing the prophet allusion. The metaphor of Philippovich as prophet comes as he prophesies of economic and cultural ruin for his homeland. Toward the end of the chapter, the dog Sharik refers to Philippovich as the godhead, elevating his status from a prophesying servant of God to an actual god with creative powers, which foreshadows upcoming events.

When Sharik receives a collar and leash, he considers a theme prevalent throughout the story, the theme of freedom vs. comforts. At the beginning of his walk with Zina, Sharik feels ashamed of himself. He holds his tail between his legs and tries to figure out how to get it off, but within minutes he realizes the value of the collar. He sees envy in the eyes of the stray dogs he passes, and even the doorman opens the door for him. He uses a simile to explain his accessory's significance: a dog's collar is like a man's briefcase.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

From the moment he wakes up, Sharik has a dreadful premonition. Zina takes him for a walk, and Philippovich stays at his desk, looking at medical pictures. The phone rings, and Philippovich gets increasingly excited as he talks on the phone. Dr. Bormenthal arrives with an "evil-smelling" suitcase, and Sharik doesn't like all the commotion in the house. Dr. Bormenthal announces that someone died three hours ago, and Philippovich gives Darya orders to admit no one and to take phone messages. He also gives orders that Sharik is not to eat anything, and furthermore, he is to be locked up. They lock him in the bathroom and he howls and feels very afraid.

Then Zina leads him into the examination room where Sharik remembers biting Dr. Bormenthal. Bright lights are on in the examination room, and Sharik describes Philippovich as a priest and the godhead. Sharik doesn't like the look in their eyes. Dr. Bormenthal puts something over Sharik's nose. Sharik calls him a murderer and then begins hallucinating. Someone lifts him onto the table, and then Sharik remembers nothing.

The surgery begins, and Dr. Bormenthal shaves Sharik's head. Zina asks to be excused, and she leaves the examination room. Philippovich cuts into the dog's body and removes the seminal vesicles. Then he saws into the dog's skull and removes the pituitary gland. The dog's pulse falls rapidly, and Dr. Bormenthal has to give him adrenalin to keep him from dying. The dog's seminal vesicles and pituitary gland are replaced with the human specimens brought in by Dr. Bormenthal earlier.

The surgery done, Philippovich falls back into a chair and smokes a cigarette. He calls to Zina to get him clean underwear and a bath. He assumes the dog will die, and then admits that he had been growing fond of Sharik.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Suspense builds as the dog suspects that something is awry. The author gives the readers just enough detail to offer a vague idea of what Philippovich and Bormenthal are going to do, but until the actual surgery, in all its horrible detail, the reader isn't quite sure. This technique allows the reader to identify with the dog more than with the human characters.

Again, Philippovich is compared to religious figures: the godhead, a priest, a prophet. In this chapter, however, he's also compared to a satiated vampire, conjuring up allusions to Romantic-era supernatural figures, such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The contrast between these metaphors is extreme, showing a good vs. evil conflict within Philippovich. This conflict is backed up by his emotional tirades of previous chapters. He wants to eat his gourmet meals and leave his galoshes in the



hallway and be a regular gentleman; at the same time, he becomes a roaring maniac when confronted with the proletariat.

One of Philippovich's character traits is highlighted in this chapter: his iron will. Zina begs to be released from her surgery duties almost immediately because she can't bear to see Sharik in such a state. Even Dr. Bormenthal, who managed to keep hold of Sharik after being bitten previously, loses his cool when Philippovich asks him to inject adrenalin into the dog's heart. At this point, Dr. Bormenthal looks at Philippovich and mumbles to himself, "By God. . .he has no equal in Europe!" He's horrified by Philippovich's iron will.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

However, within six days, Sharik not only appears to be recovering from the surgery, but he also shows signs of significant change. His bark takes on a new sound, he begins losing fur, and he grows longer. By January 6th, his tail drops off; soon after, he begins saying words: "cabby," "no room," and "evening paper."

Dr. Bormenthal feels like he's going mad as he watches Sharik's transformation from dog to human man. Philippovich is ill, so most of the observation and treatment is done by Bormenthal. There are many rumors in Moscow about what is going on with Philippovich. Reporters clamor to see, and the phone rings all day long.

On January 8th, Philippovich admits that his hypothesis was wrong, that the surgery doesn't produce rejuvenation but complete humanization. Sharik now looks like a short, poorly built man with a low slanting forehead. Bormenthal notes that Sharik's smile looks artificial and his laugh is very unpleasant. Sharik begins swearing and saying "bourgeois."

On January 10th Sharik begins wearing men's clothing. His mannerisms and speech nearly drive Philippovich crazy. They teach Sharik how to use the toilet. Sharik shows signs of understanding everyone in the house, he even begins insulting Philippovich. Bormenthal realizes that Sharik knew how to read when he was a dog.

Dr. Bormenthal identifies the dead man whose pituitary gland and seminal vesicles transformed Sharik. His name was Klim Grigorievich Chugunkin. He was twenty-five years old and had been arrested three times. By profession, he was a balalaika player in bars, and he sympathized with the Soviets. He died from a knife wound during a bar fight. Dr. Bormenthal remarks that Philippovich spends hours poring over the description of Klim Grigorievich Chugunkin.

By January 17th, Sharik's transformation into a human is complete. He eats human food, has begun smoking, wears human clothes, dresses himself easily, and converses fluently. Dr. Bormenthal closes his case history, stating that he will begin a new a separate series of observations, appropriate for the new species before them.

Chapter 5 Analysis

The style chapter 5 is much more detached and formal than most of the other chapters. The point of view switches to first person with Dr. Bormenthal writing his observations. Although the writing is largely scientific, occasionally Dr. Bormenthal interjects his own thoughts and feelings: "I swear, I shall go mad." Pulling away from Philippovich allows the readers to view him from another source.



The story began with an intimate portrayal of the dog Sharik. Now, that character appears to be gone, and yet Sharik's body and even his memories are alive in this chapter. The transformed Sharik still remembers the words he learned to read on the Moscow streets. But he also seems to have Chugunkin's memories. A new conflict is introduced here in the middle of the story, the conflict between Sharik and Chugunkin, who now share a body. Although seemingly wise, Sharik was an innocent animal, driven by hunger, instinct, and comfort. Chugunkin represents the lowest form of man, in Philippovich's mind, and so the innocent dog and the hateful Chugunkin must somehow reconcile. This building conflict adds drama and foreshadowing to the story.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

It is now the end of January, and there are notes posted all over the apartment reminding Sharik how to behave. Shvonder (one of the house committee members) has been spreading the rumor that Sharik is Philippovich's illegitimate son, and this must be one of the reasons Philippovich thinks he needs seven rooms. Sharik plays the balalaika (a Russian guitar) "with reckless ease." The first scene in this chapter is dinnertime, and Sharik arrives at the table wearing tight striped trousers with a torn knee, a bright blue tie with a fake ruby pin, and patent leather shoes with white spats. Philippovich is disgusted with his clothing and asks him where he got it. Sharik says that Darya got it for him. During the whole of the meal, Philippovich is impatient with Sharik. Sharik says, "You're getting too hard on me, Dad," and this sends Philippovich through the roof.

Sharik feels that he's unfairly criticized. He understands what happened to him, but still relates more to the dog persona than to Chugunkin, although he talks like Chugunkin, calling the others "comrade." Sharik catches a flea with his fingers, and Philippovich asks where he keeps getting fleas. Sharik says he probably breeds them. Then Sharik asks Philippovich for a document. He says the house committee has been asking him when he's going to register because a person can't walk around Moscow without a registration card. Philippovich reminds him that documents will not be easy to come by as he has no birth certificate; he was a laboratory experiment.

Philippovich has become less and less confident during the conversation and tries to make amends. He asks what they would use as a name and surname. Sharik has already figured this out. He wants to be called Polygraph Polygraphovich Sharikov. Philippovich calms himself down and then asks how he came up with it. Sharik says the house committee helped him come up with it. Shvonder, the house committee head, comes to the apartment to help with the creation of the documents, which, he says, are the most important things in the world. While Shvonder and Philippovich discuss documents, Sharikov whines about how he doesn't want to have to serve in the military, and Philippovich asks Shvonder if there isn't an extra room in the building that he can buy. There isn't.

Later, Sharikov chases a cat into the bathroom and locks himself in there. Clattering and banging is heard outside the door. A window breaks, and a cat jumps out. Now water is coming out from under the bathroom door. Sharikov is frightened because the cat smashed the light bulb and he can't figure out how to unlock the door. By the time the doorman squeezes through the window to shut off the water and unlock the door, the apartment is flooded. Philippovich calls Sharikov a savage, and the doorman informs Philippovich that he needs to pay for the glass in Apartment 7, which Sharikov broke with a stone.



Chapter 6 Analysis

Shortly before Sharik's surgery, the author mentions that nearly all the fleas have left Sharik's fur. Now, after the transformation to Sharikov, fleas have once again become a burden. The fleas symbolize degeneration. As a dog, Sharik progressed. He learned to read and to care for himself, and after he began living with Philippovich, he was exposed to high culture and fed well. As a man, however, Sharikov degenerates, especially as he submits himself to Shvonder's socialist influence. The more Soviet he becomes, the more he gets fleas.

The father/son relationship between Philippovich and Sharikov is further explored in this chapter. Philippovich is very uncomfortable as a father figure to Sharikov. He is openly embarrassed by his creation, and he wants to put as much distance as possible between Sharikov and himself, even asking Shvonder if there is a spare room somewhere in the apartment for Sharikov. Sharikov whines to Philippovich about his treatment, sounding very much like an adolescent. This troubled father/son relationship represents the discord between Russian sympathizers and Soviet sympathizers. Philippovich is very unhappy and uncomfortable with the results of the Russian revolution. He is older and does not approve of the change. Sharikov, a new species, represents the Soviets, which are foreign and disturbing to the father.

The doorman Fyodor becomes a wise, outside observer during the chaos in the end of this chapter. The first time we met Fyodor was the day Philippovich brought Sharik into the apartment. At that time, Fyodor was obviously impressed by Philippovich. Now, that respect seems to have decreased. Fyodor has had to crawl through a broken window to rescue Sharikov and the building during the flood chaos. Now, the playing field has more than leveled, and Fyodor tells Philippovich that he feels sorry for him. They have become "citizens."



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Philippovich, Bormenthal, and Sharikov are sitting at the dinner table. Bormenthal corrects Sharikov's behavior continually, and Sharikov insults them for their bourgeois behavior. Philippovich mentions to Bormenthal that this is not Sharik talking; it's Klim. Bormenthal is surprised by this theory. They talk of what to do in the evening. Sharikov wants to go to the circus; he thinks the theater is boring. Philippovich suggests he read something. He says he has read something by a German about taking everything and dividing it up.

Bormenthal and Philippovich gang up on Sharikov, and he soon becomes confused and overwhelmed by their arguments. Sharikov vehemently defends Shvonder, the head of the house committee. The meal ends in silence after Philippovich asks Zina to throw Sharikov's library book into the fire. Philippovich asks Bormenthal to take Sharikov to the circus, as long as there are no cats on the program. After Bormenthal and Sharikov leave, Philippovich goes into his office and paces back and forth, singing softly to himself.

He finds a glass jar on his bookcase and examines it. It contains the small white lump extracted from Sharik's brain. He stares at the lump, trying to figure out how it has turned his life and his apartment completely topsy-turvy. He locks the jar back into the bookcase and puts the key in his pocket. Then he says, "By God, I think I will," and taps the repeater in his pocket. Then he waits patiently for Bormenthal and Sharikov to return from the theater.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Again, as in the previous chapter, Philippovich's impatience with Sharikov's primitive nature ends in an argument about socialism. The argument ends with Philippovich asking Zina to burn a library book, an action that seems to be contrary to his nature. This shows that Philippovich is so disturbed that he is doing things out of character. Interestingly, he asks someone else to do the burning, avoiding the task himself.

The author uses the adverb "prophetically" in this chapter, referring to a comment made by Bormenthal: "Oh, things won't come to any good in this apartment, I'm afraid." Thus, Bormenthal has become the prophet of "the godhead," Philippovich. In the Old Testament, Jehovah sends his prophets to cry repentance to the people, and in this chapter Bormenthal takes an active role in correcting Sharikov's behavior. He reminds Sharikov of his misdeeds such as pinching a woman on the breast, flooding the apartment, eating a box of toothpowder, and spending time with Shvonder.

The last paragraph foreshadows and builds toward the climax. The reader knows that Philippovich is extremely agitated, that he's been examining Sharik's pituitary gland in



the jar, and that he intends to do something. However, the reader doesn't know what Philippovich intends to do. The end of this chapter leaves Philippovich holding a repeater in his pocket and waiting for Bormenthal and Sharikov to return from the circus. A repeater can be either a watch or a firearm. The next chapter will tell us which definition the author is using.

There is also a literary allusion in this chapter to Faust. At the end of the chapter when Philippovich is alone in his study, the author compares him to an aged Faust. Faust, the protagonist of a German legend, makes a pact with the devil to acquire more human knowledge. The comparison between Philippovich and Faust indicates that his desire for self-fulfillment and knowledge has led him beyond acceptable human boundaries.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

About a week after Dr. Bormenthal took Sharikov to the circus, there is an argument in the household about how to address one another. Philippovich wants Sharikov to address everyone by their names and patronymics, but he refuses to call Sharikov "Polygraph Polygraphovich" because it's a ridiculous name. He decides to call him "Mr. Sharikov," but Sharikov doesn't want to be called "mister," because it's bourgeois. The argument heats up until Philippovich threatens Sharikov that he will serve him no more dinners if the outbursts continue. Sharikov is so upset that he slashes his own cheek with a razor, and Bormenthal and Philippovich have to give him stitches.

Later that evening, Sharikov steals some money from Philippovich's office and comes back drunk very late. He brings two strangers with him and demands that they stay in the apartment overnight as his guests. The doorman Fyodor calls out the militia to get rid of Sharikov's companions. Then Sharikov steals an ash tray and Philippovich's beaver hat and cane. Sharikov blames the thefts on Zina, who bursts into tears upon hearing the accusation. Sharikov begins to vomit, and they all take care of him and then get the household put back in order.

By the time the commotion subsides it is three o'clock in the morning, and the two doctors sit smoking in Philippovich's office, trying to decide what to do about Sharikov. Dr. Bormenthal professes his ardent gratitude and admiration for Philippovich. Philippovich admits that he made a big mistake with the operation on Sharik. He wonders why he thought it necessary to produce a human being when any peasant woman can produce one.

From this experiment, Philippovich concludes that "the hypophysis is a secret chamber which determine the aspect of the given human individual." That is why Klim has taken over Sharikov. Bormenthal volunteers to poison Sharikov at his own risk so that no suspicion will come over Philippovich. Philippovich will not entertain this idea. Bormenthal still wants to kill Sharikov, but Philippovich will not allow it.

They hear noises, and the cook Darya Petrovna appears in the hallway with an angry face wearing nothing but a nightgown. She is dragging something with her, and they realize that it is the drunk Sharikov in nothing but his undershirt. Sharikov has come after her while she was sleeping. Darya calls him "Telegraph Telegraphovich." Bormenthal rolls up his sleeves to hit him, but Philippovich forbids it and says they will deal with him in the morning.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Just when it seems that Sharikov cannot do anything more outrageous, he becomes the full-fledged Klim that Philippovich read about. He begins stealing, drinking excessively,



and taking advantage of women. It appears that Klim's glands have completely taken over the dog, and that the dog is gone. Bormenthal comments that Sharikov is a man with the "heart of a dog," and this is where the title of the book comes from. However, Philippovich refutes Bormenthal's comment, saying that even the heart has now been taken over by Klim.

Bormenthal, who is much younger than Philippovich, wants to kill Sharikov. He feels that Sharikov has no right to live; he is a laboratory experiment, and he's wreaking havoc on Moscow. Philippovich, though, as Sharikov's creator and as an older and wiser man, tries to calm Bormenthal down. This reinforces the God/prophet relationship between the two doctors.

There is also more imagery suggesting that Philippovich is a god figure in this chapter. At the end of the chapter, after all the chaos instigated by Sharikov, Philippovich takes control of his creation, and the Old Testament image is striking: "Philip Philippovich spread his feet wide, so that the azure skirts of his robe flared out, raised his hands and his eyes to the ceiling light in the hallway and cried, 'well, well...'" Azure is a shade of blue, and blue is a color often used to symbolize deity.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

The next morning, Sharikov disappeared from the apartment. Bormenthal goes to the house committee to see if he's there, and Bormenthal argues so vehemently with them that Shvonder writes a complaint to the people's court for their district. Shvonder is upset with Sharik as well because Sharik took seven rubles from the committee and told him he was going to buy textbooks with the money. The doorman Fyodor searches the apartment building but cannot find him. Zina and Darya are very happy that Sharikov has run away.

After three days, Sharikov makes his appearance. He walks into the apartment with a very dignified air, but he smells terrible. He has gotten a job as "director of the sub-section for purging the city of Moscow of stray animals (cats, etc.) of the Moscow Communal Property Administration." Shvonder arranged for this position for Sharikov. When asked about the smell, Sharikov says that he's been choking and choking cats. Bormenthal tries to choke Sharikov, but the others beg him to let Sharikov go.

For the next two days, a truck comes by in the morning to pick Sharikov up for his job, and it drops him off at the apartment in the evening. On the third day, a thin young woman appears at the apartment with Sharikov. Sharikov explains that she's a typist and she's going to live with him in Philippovich's apartment. Philippovich asks the young lady to step into his office, and Bormenthal takes Sharikov to the examination room. The young lady emerges from the office in tears, saying that Sharikov told her he was wounded in the war. Bormenthal and Sharikov argue heatedly, and Sharikov says that he can find a gun or two.

One of Philippovich's patients arrives in the afternoon with a report to show him. The report contains a list of counterrevolutionary activities that Sharikov has reported against Philippovich, things such as asking Zina to throw away the library book and allowing Bormenthal to live in his apartment without forcing him to register with the house committee. The patient notices that Philippovich looks older and grayer than last time he saw him.

When Sharikov returns from work, Philippovich tells him he must get out of the apartment immediately. He invites his own death by making an obscene gesture at Philippovich with his scratched fist that smells of cats. He then takes a revolver out of his pocket and aims it at Bormenthal. Bormenthal then smothers Sharikov with a sofa pillow and instructs Zina and Darya to not let anyone in during the day and to cancel all appointments with patients. Neighbors later reported that lights were on all night in the examination room, but this cannot be verified. Zina sees Bormenthal squatting in front of the fireplace burning a blue copybook like the ones he uses for case histories.



Chapter 9 Analysis

In this final chapter, Philippovich is never referred to as a godlike figure, even with imagery or metaphor. Instead, he is described as weary, stooped, and gray. When Sharikov dies at the end, it is as if Philippovich dies as well, creator and creation cannot exist without each other. While Sharikov is alive, Philippovich morphs into a different creature himself. He is more impatient, higher strung, less tolerant, and less at ease. The more Sharik becomes like Klim, the closer Philippovich gets to death, and it is Bormenthal who separates creator and creation at the end, even cleaning up the mess by burning the case history after Sharikov is dispensed with.

Although Philippovich is not referred to as a god figure in this chapter, Bormenthal still takes on a prophet role. In the previous chapter, Bormenthal expressed his ardent devotion to Philippovich, and in this chapter, he puts his words into deeds. He is willing to put Philippovich's desires above his own welfare. He's willing to go to jail to get rid of Sharikov so that Philippovich can get on with his life. Like a prophet, he puts belief into earthly reality.



Epilogue

Epilogue Summary

Ten days after the fight between Bormenthal and Sharikov, criminal police and an investigating officer arrive to search the apartment of Philip Philippovich and then make an arrest based on their findings. Philippovich is wearing his azure bathrobe, and it's clear that his health has remarkably improved since we last saw him. He asks who is being charged and what the crime is. He's told, "Preobrazhensky [Philippovich], Bormenthal, Zinaida Bunina and Darya Ivanova, on the charge of murdering the director of the purge section of the Moscow Communal Property Administration, Polygraph Polygraphovich Sharikov."

Philippovich asks Bormenthal to bring the dog in. He whistles, and a very strange dog runs out of the office. His fur is growing back in spots and he's walking on four legs. He has a terrible purple scar on his head. The police officers want to know how such a creature was appointed to be the director of the purge section. Philippovich blames it on Shvonder. Philippovich explains that the original surgery was unsuccessful, that it appeared to work for a while, but now the dog is regressing to his former state. The dog still speaks, but he's using fewer words as the days go by and he's beginning to bark more.

The epilogue ends with Sharik's perspective. He is once again himself, and he feels that he's incredibly lucky to be set up for life in Philippovich's apartment. He doesn't understand why he's had headaches lately, but sitting on the rug by the fire helps him to feel better. He feels that there was something shady in his ancestry, maybe a Newfoundland. He still refers to Bormenthal as "the bitten one," and he refers to Philippovich as "the wizard."

Epilogue Analysis

Interestingly, Sharikov's death in Chapter 9 does not mean the death of Sharik. It's true that his glands are no longer living, but the rest of him was supposed to be dead already anyway. When Bormenthal wants to kill Sharikov on Chapter 9, the reader doesn't yet understand that Philippovich means to resurrect Sharik the dog, although the foreshadowing from Chapter 7 points to this conclusion.

At the beginning of the epilogue, Philip Philippovich wears his azure blue robe that indicates his creator status. He has again altered a life, but this time it is more of a resurrection than a new creation. He brings back the dog Sharik that we felt so much pathos for at the beginning of the book. A great deal of this pathos is created by using the first person point of view for Sharik at the beginning and end of the story. The dog's view of Bormenthal and Philippovich brings the story full circle. He calls Bormenthal "the bitten one," putting Bormenthal firmly in his number two spot, and he calls Philippovich

"the wizard" without realizing half of wizardry Philippovich has accomplished on his behalf.



Characters

Philip Philippovich Preobrezhensky

Philip Philippovich Preobrezhensky is a highly acclaimed middle-aged doctor living in Moscow. He is much in demand, and his office is always full of patients, many of whom have socially unacceptable problems and trust him implicitly. Also living in his seven-room apartment are Dr. Ivan Arnoldovich Bormenthal, a maid named Zina, and his cook Darya. Philippovich has been experimenting with the idea of creating human life, and he thinks he can do this by transplanting the pituitary gland and seminal vesicles of a deceased human into a dog.

Philippovich finds a stray dog, Sharik, and brings him to the apartment to improve the dog's health and prepare him for the surgery. His surgery is successful, and the dog begins to take on a human form. Philippovich, always ambitious and confident, begins to lose confidence as Sharikov escapes his control in everything from behavioral issues to childlike rebellion. Philippovich begins to age rapidly, but in the end his coolness and confidence win over and he's able to reverse the surgery and return everything to normal.

Towards the beginning of the novel, the author refers to Philippovich as a prophet. Later, Philippovich is characterized as a godlike figure with creative powers. In the end Philippovich even has control over death and resurrection as Sharikov dies and Sharik is born once more. Philippovich also represents the bourgeois class ousted at the onset of the Soviet Union in the 1920s. He is disenchanted with the proletariat's way of redistributing property and making everything dull and meaningless. Philippovich is in many ways a self-portrait of the author Mikhail Bulgakov.

Ivan Arnoldovich Bormenthal

Ivan Arnoldovich Bormenthal lives with Philippovich and assists him with his medical practice and research. Bormenthal is much younger than Philippovich and idolizes him. He claims there is no better physician and Europe, and he feels honored to work with him. Bormenthal is very handsome, and Sharik the dog makes note of this. The cook, Darya, keeps a picture of Bormenthal in her room.

When Sharik is first taken to Philippovich's apartment, he goes wild in the examination room when the doctors look at his wounded side. In his desperation, Sharik bites Bormenthal, and from then on the dog calls Bormenthal "the bitten one." As the story progresses, Bormenthal takes on a sort of prophet role. He makes several comments about whether or not something is going to work out. He becomes the prophet to the godlike Philippovich. Bormenthal has a quick temper, and he becomes very impatient with Sharikov's folly. Several times, Bormenthal resorts to violence in dealing with



Sharikov. He is therefore a foil to Philippovich, emphasizing Philippovich's age and wisdom.

Bormenthal also does Philippovich's dirty work. After the doctors have turned Sharikov the man back into Sharik the dog, it is Bormenthal who destroys the evidence of their experiment by burning their case study book in the fireplace. Earlier, Bormenthal tells Philippovich that he's willing to go to jail if that's what it takes to get rid of Sharikov.

Sharik

At the beginning of the story, Sharik is a stray dog who is wandering the streets of Moscow in search of comfort and a bite of food. He is an intelligent being, having taught himself to read in order to find food more easily. The first several chapters of the book are written from Sharik's perspective, which helps the reader to empathize with him and believe that he is more than a lab animal. When the story opens, Sharik has just been injured by a cook who throws a pot of boiling water on him. He is cold, hungry, and in pain when Philip Philippovich sees him on the street and offers him a bite of sausage. Sharik proves himself to be loyal, forgiving, and grateful for his treatment. The dog Sharik's persona disappears after Klim's organs are implanted into his body, but he is "resurrected" after the surgery is reversed.

Polygraph Polygraphovich Sharikov

After Klim's pituitary gland and seminal vesicles are transplanted into Sharik's body, Sharikov is born. Sharikov is a combination of a dog's body and a human's brain. After the surgery, Sharik's first-person narrative disappears, and Klim's personality dominates and eventually completely takes over Sharik's body. Sharikov wants to be properly registered with the house committee in the apartment building, and in order to register he needs documents. For the documents, he needs a full name. The house committee helps him to come up with the name Polygraph Polygraphovich, which severely irritates Philippovich. The more Klim's glands take over Sharik's body, the more Philippovich detests Sharikov. Sharikov gets completely out of control, stealing, attacking women, killing cats, and deceiving all around him. At this point, Philippovich decides to reverse the surgery, and the surgery marks the end of Sharikov and the resurrection of Sharik.

Klim Grigorievich Chugunkin

When we first encounter Klim, he has been dead for four hours and Bormenthal has obtained his pituitary gland and seminal vesicles for implantation in the dog Sharik. As Klim's glands take over Sharik's brain, his personality is revealed. Klim is a Soviet sympathizer who works as a balalaika player in bars. He has been arrested and tried for theft three times. He died at age 25 from a knife wound to the heart during a bar dispute. The more Sharikov becomes like Klim, the more Philippovich hates him. The political differences between Philippovich and Klim exacerbate the problems between them, and in the end it is impossible for them to live together.



Darya Petrovna

Darya Petrovna is Philippovich's maid. She is a stout, confident, and not-overly-intelligent woman who will not put up with Sharikov's antics, although the dog Sharik won her heart to the point that she would allow him to nap in the kitchen while she cooked and would feed him delicious scraps. She is married but keeps a picture of the handsome Dr. Bormenthal in her room. Darya provides comic relief to the story, especially during the scene when she drags the drunk and half-naked Sharikov through the apartment in the middle of the night and calls him "Telegraph Telegraphovich."

Zina

Zina is Philippovich's maid. She is young, single, and able, but she is also timid and easily afraid. Zina is the object of Sharikov's torment, and she doesn't handle it well. Philippovich relies on Zina to run the household as well as help him with his medical practice.

Shvonder

Shvonder is a young man who loves the new Soviet order. He is the head of the house committee for Philippovich's apartment building, and he spends a lot of time with Sharikov, teaching him about Marxism and trying to help him. Shvonder gets Sharikov a job as director of the purge section, killing stray cats on the streets of Moscow. Philippovich detests Shvonder and blames much of Sharikov's bad behavior on him.

Fyodor

Fyodor is the doorman at Philippovich's apartment building. He helps Philippovich several times when Sharikov causes problems, even crawling through the window to rescue Sharikov from the dark bathroom he has locked himself into and searching the apartment building when Sharikov runs away after an argument with his "Dad" (Philippovich).

Isadora Duncan

Isadora Duncan is a real person who is mentioned in the story. She was a famous dancer who spent several years in Moscow to support Communism. She is mentioned by the house committee to Philippovich to explain why he can't have seven rooms: not even Isadora Duncan has a dining room.



Objects/Places

Moscow

The entire story takes place in Moscow, first on the streets and then in the apartment of Philip Philippovich Preobrazhensky.

Moscow Agricultural Industries Store

The first time Sharik encounters Philip Philippovich, Philippovich is walking out of the Moscow Agricultural Industries store with a package of sausage.

Stuffed Owl

There is a stuffed owl in Philippovich's office, and Sharik cannot tolerate the owl from the first time he sees it. When he starts to feel nervous, he rips the owl to shreds.

Dog Collar

After spending several weeks with Philip Philippovich, Sharik receives a dog collar and is taken for a walk on a leash. At first he is insulted by the collar, but then he realizes that it's an honor to wear a collar, that it means comfort and security. A dog collar to a dog is like a briefcase to a man.

Philip Philippovich's Apartment

Most of the action in the novel takes place in Philip Philippovich's apartment, which consists of seven rooms, luxurious by Moscow standards but barely adequate for his lifestyle and medical practice.

The Bolshoi

The Bolshoi Theater is Philip Philippovich's favorite escape from work. He goes to the theater even if he has missed the first act.

Galoshes

During the first decade of Philip Phillipovich's residence in the Prechistenka, the building's tenants left their galoshes in the foyer to avoid tracking mud on the marble. Now, with a house committee in control, the galoshes have disappeared. Galoshes come to represent a loss of rights to Philippovich.



Documents

The proletariat gives great importance to documents. Shvonder, the head of the house committee, claims that documents are the most important thing in the world. The necessity for documents prompts Sharikov to come up with a new name for himself: Polygraph Polygraphic.

House Committee

The apartment building's house committee consists of four young people who monitor the tenants and make sure everyone is registered. The house committee helps Sharikov to obtain his job as purger of stray animals (cats, etc.).

Pituitary Gland and Seminal Vesicles

The pituitary gland and seminal vesicles are the body parts that Philippovich and Bormenthal transplant from Klim to Sharik.

Themes

Creation

The theme of creation is followed throughout the story. From the very beginning, Philip Philippovich Preobrezhensky is portrayed as one who gives life. He rescues the tired, hungry, and injured Sharik from the streets and creates a new life for him in his apartment. Later, he takes Sharik and creates a new life once again when he implants Klim's pituitary gland and seminal vesicles in the dog. He has the knowledge and the will to create a new life, but he doesn't have the wisdom not to. Only after the experiment goes terribly awry does Philippovich realize that there is no need for him to want to create a life because the human race takes care of itself. He realizes that it doesn't take a learned scientist to create human life; any peasant woman can create a baby, and many of these peasant-bred humans have become the geniuses who advance the knowledge of the human race.

Several times in the story, Philippovich is portrayed as a godlike figure, which supports the idea of him as a Creator. Sharik calls him "the godhead" and worships him. Philippovich appears in his azure blue robe several times, legs spread wide, looking like a god instead of a middle-aged human. Dr. Bormenthal is in awe of Philippovich's creative powers, and sometimes this awe verges on terror, as during the original operation to turn Sharik the dog into Sharikov the man.

The theme of creation crosses over into the realm of politics as well. During the early 1920s, Moscow was turning from a democracy to a communist state. Those in charge of the government were acting as creators, taking a society, transplanting new ideas into it, and coming up with a new culture, a mix of old and new. The result, in the opinion of Philippovich, is a disaster. Philippovich's comfortable, free way of life is disappearing under the regulations and strangling authority of the new house committee, which is made up of androgynous young people who don't care for anything beyond documents and regulations. If Sharik represents the old society, Sharikov represents the new, and Philippovich can think of no way to solve the political problems except to reverse the surgery and separate the two cultures.

Freedom

The theme of freedom shows itself in many ways in *Heart of a Dog*. The most obvious ways are in the political comments made mainly by Philip Philippovich but by several other characters as well. The political climate in the book is highly charged. Changes are being made to every aspect of citizens' lives. They cannot obtain the same kind of food they could previously. They must change their habits. Their apartment buildings are monitored. They can be reported to committees for uttering counter-revolutionary comments.



Philip Philippovich has always been a successful and highly respected man, and these changes are extremely difficult for him. He doesn't like the restrictions on his freedoms. The house committee is continually getting after him about how many rooms he has in his apartment. They want to use to house other people, but Philippovich needs them for his medical practice.

Likewise, the dog Sharik thinks about freedom when he gets his dog collar and leash at Philippovich's house. Being a stray, he has never worn a collar before, and he feels ashamed to be subjected to it. He feels he has lost his freedom. On the other hand, he realizes that with a lack of freedom comes a certain degree of comfort and luxury. On the street, he could not count on eating every day, but at Philippovich's he is always comfortable and taken care of. For a dog, freedom is a trade-off for comfort. Likewise, many Soviets are finding that although they are denied their freedom, at least they can always count on a minimum standard of comfort.

Prophet/God

The prophet/god theme in Heart of a Dog manifests itself through various characters throughout the story. The most obvious instance of the prophet/god relationship is the relationship between Philippovich and Bormenthal. With his position as Creator, Philippovich is obviously the god figure. Bormenthal, on the other hand, carries out the wishes of the god figure and tells others about the worthiness of the god figure.

Fyodor the doorman also acts as a prophet to Philippovich at times, warning him that things won't turn out well and acting as a messenger or guardian angel to Philippovich's creation, Sharikov. Fyodor is the first character encountered by Philippovich after he brings home Sharik the dog. The doorman bears tidings of the doings of the house committee and takes notice of the dog.

In the end, Philippovich uses his godlike powers to solve the problem created by his initial operation. Bormenthal does not see a way out of the problem besides killing Sharikov, but Philippovich wisely and calmly sorts it all out and then sends his prophet to clean up the mess. Bormenthal burns the pages of Sharikov's case study one by one to destroy the evidence.

Style

Point of View

The story begins from Sharik the dog's point of view, first person. This helps the readers to see the dog as more than an animal to be overlooked or experimented on. We understand that the dog feels pain, longs for comfort and companionship, and experiences hunger and fatigue. The first person point of view also enhances the pathos of the story, helping us to feel empathy for the dog.

The story switches to third person point of view after the surgery that transplants Klim's pituitary gland and seminal vesicles into Sharik the dog's body. Using the third-person point of view for this part of the story pulls us away from the dog. We do not sympathize with Sharikov as we did with Sharik, and we see more clearly the motivations and feelings of the human characters Philip Philippovich and Dr. Bormenthal. This point of view continues through the nine chapters, but the epilogue reverts once again to Sharik's first person point of view. Hence, the story comes full circle, and we find resolution in the resurrection of the dog Sharik.

Setting

Heart of a Dog is set during the early 1920s in Moscow, Russia. It is winter and stray dogs are beginning to suffer from the cold and lack of food. Most of the story takes place in the apartment of Philip Philippovich Preobrezhensky, a wealthy physician who enjoys international repute. Therefore, his apartment is comfortable enough to support a cook and a maid as well as a supporting doctor for the medical practice.

The political climate is highly charged because the Soviets have just taken over the city and changes are evident in every aspect of people's lives. A house committee has taken over the apartment building, and this causes tension among the tenants. Philip Philippovich is disgusted with these changes because they are ruining his comfortable lifestyle and forcing unwanted impositions on his already busy life. In fact, the social setting of the book is more important than the physical setting.

Language and Meaning

The language in the story is largely informal, though the vocabulary is impressive. This translation, done by Mirra Ginsburg, manages to keep much of the humor in the language, such as Sharik's chosen given name and patronymic, Polygraph Polygraphovich. It's important to keep in mind that this book has been translated, and the original would have inevitably had a slightly different flavor.

Dialogue makes up a good portion of the book. Most of the characters in the book are living together in the same apartment, so their speech is as familiar as a family's,



although the relationship of master/servant is evident at every turn. Philippovich frequently breaks off into song, noted by phrases such as, "Toward the sacred banks of the Nile." This is a clever way to show his distractedness or his concentration, depending on the situation. It also shows how comfortable he is around the people he lives among.

Several pages at the beginning of the novel are written entirely in italics. This helps us to understand that the main character is a dog, and that he's giving us some background to the story. Also, one of the chapters is written as a medical log. This is the first chapter after the surgery, and writing it in this manner gives us both a timeline and a taste for the medical nature of the surgery.

Structure

The novel is written in nine chapters with an epilogue. Over these nine chapters, the author switches points of view from first person to third person and also changes style from straight prose to journal entry. The story proceeds chronologically without flashbacks and includes an epilogue, which switches back to the original first-person point of view from the first chapter.



Quotes

"There is absolutely no necessity to learn how to read; meat smells a mile off, anyway. Nevertheless, if you live in Moscow and have a brain in your head, you'll pick up reading willy-nilly, and without attending any courses. Out of the forty thousand or so Moscow dogs, only a total idiot won't know how to read the word 'sausage.'" Page 11

"By kindness. The only method possible in dealing with living creatures. By terror you cannot get anywhere with an animal, no matter what its stage of development. I've always asserted this, I assert it today, and I shall go on asserting it. They are wrong thinking that terror will help them." Page 16

"What an obscene place, the dog thought, but how pleasant! And what the devil did he need me for? Will he really let me stay here? Such an eccentric! Why, he need only blink an eye and he could have the finest dog in town! But maybe I am handsome? I guess I'm lucky! But that owl is trash . . . Insolent trash." Page 23

"That's a man for you, the dog thought with admiration. Just like me. Oh, but he'll nip them in a second, oh, but he'll nip them." Page 27

"Why was the rug removed from the front stairway? Does Karl Marx forbid rugs on the stairs? Does he say anywhere in his writings that the second entrance of the Kalabukhov house on Prechistenka must be boarded up, and people must go around the house and enter through the backyard? Who needs this? Why can't the proletarian leave his galoshes downstairs instead of tracking up the marble?" Page 35

"Oh, no, why lie to yourself, you'll never leave here, you'll never go back to freedom, the dog spoke to himself in anguish, sniffing. I am a gentleman's dog, an intellectual creature, I've tasted a better life. And what is freedom, anyway? Nothing, a puff of smoke, a mirage, a fiction . . . A sick dream of those wretched democrats. . ." Page 48

"His vocabulary is enriched every five minutes (on the average) by a new word, and, since this morning, also by entire phrases. It seems as if they had been frozen in his mind, and now they are thawing out and emerging. Every word that emerges remains in use. Last night the recorder noted 'don't push,' 'scoundrel,' 'get off the step,' 'I'll show you,' 'recognition of America,' and 'primus stove.'" Page 61

"It's a simple business. Write out a certificate, citizen Professor. Certifying such and such, you know, and that the bearer of same is in fact Polygraph Polygraphovich Sharikov, him . . . originating, you know . . . from your apartment." Page 75

"Tell me, please, why is it necessary to manufacture Spinozas artificially when any peasant woman can produce them at any time? Didn't Mme. Lomonosov bear her famous offspring out in Kholmogory? Doctor, the human race takes care of this by itself, and every year, in the course of its evolution, it creates dozens of outstanding geniuses who adorn the earth, stubbornly selecting them out of the mass of scum." Page 103



"I've been so lucky, so lucky, he thought, dozing off. Just incredibly lucky. I'm set for life in this apartment. I am absolutely convinced that there was something shady in my ancestry. There must have been a Newfoundland. She was a whore, my grandmother, may she rest in the Heavenly Kingdom, the old lady. True, they've slashed up my whole head for some strange reason, but it'll heal before my wedding. It's not worth mentioning." Page 122



Topics for Discussion

Discuss freedom. How is Philippovich's freedom hampered by the house committee specifically and the Communists generally? How is Sharik's freedom hampered by the collar and leash given to him at Philippovich's house?

Discuss the religious allusions in the story. Who is described as a prophet? Who is described as a god? Who is described as a priest?

Philippovich explains to Bormenthal that it's impossible to get living creatures to respond to force. They respond best to kindness. Does Philippovich always follow his own advice? Do you think he's correct?

Sharik the dog readily forgives Philippovich and Bormenthal for the surgeries at the end of the book. Do you think animals really "forgive?" Would you forgive someone who did the same thing to you?

Each human character has his or her own escape from reality. Philippovich likes the Bolshoi. Zina likes the movies. Sharikov likes the circus. What would Sharik the dog do for entertainment?

Zina and Darya Petrovna have very similar jobs, but they respond to situations very differently. Compare and contrast these two characters.

Why does Philip Phillipovich get so irritated by the young woman on the house committee that dresses like a man?