

Misty of Chincoteague Study Guide

Misty of Chincoteague by Marguerite Henry

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Misty of Chincoteague Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1-2.....	5
Chapters 3-4.....	7
Chapters 5-6.....	9
Chapters 7-8.....	11
Chapters 9-10.....	13
Chapters 11-12.....	15
Chapters 13-14.....	17
Chapters 15-16.....	19
Chapters 17-18.....	21
Characters.....	23
Symbols and Symbolism.....	25
Settings.....	28
Themes and Motifs.....	29
Styles.....	32
Quotes.....	33



Plot Summary

Off the coast of Virginia in the 1300s a Spanish Galleon is shipwrecked on an island called Assategue Island. The ship is carrying horses as cargo from Peru to be sold at the market in the new world. The horses survive the shipwreck and thrive on the island and live through the decades eventually becoming feral horses with shaggy coats. Humans eventually make their homes on the sister island across the channel.

In the mid 1900s Paul and Maureen, who are brother and sister, spy the fabled Phantom, a horse that has eluded the pony round up several years in a row. Paul vows to catch her the next year since he is old enough to attend the round up. They both decide to save up money to buy her for themselves so they won't have to sell her. The following months they do odd jobs and work for their grandparents to make money. They live with their grandparents because their parents are missionaries in China.

When the round-up comes around the following year, Paul goes to ride with them and help to catch the wild ponies to be sold at the market. Before that can happen he is told he will have to help build the corrals to house the horses in. The day of the roundup, and on the Island, Paul finds himself under the charge of Wyle Maddox, the leader of the round up. The men at the round up poke fun at Paul and upset him when he is sent off for a straggler horse. He believes they want to just be rid of him. To his luck the straggler horse ends up being Phantom with her foal. He names the foal "Misty" since he mistakenly thinks she is mist when he first sees her.

Phantom runs straight for the others at Tom's Point where all the man are in disbelief that a youngster has brought in the horse that has eluded them so many times in the past. On the way back to the mainland the foal almost drowns since she is so young. It is common practice to make the horses swim back to the main island. Paul jumps in to save the foal and swims the rest of the way with the foal to keep her alive. On shore Phantom comes to protect her foal from the stampede of other horses that are running up the beach. Paul is told to go home and dry off and rest up for the next day. Maureen, his sister, promises to watch after the horses to make sure Misty and Phantom are okay.

On the way, Phantom makes a break for it but doesn't get far because her baby can't keep up with her. Maureen figures out that she and Paul could possibly buy both horses if they put a down payment on them and pay the rest off over the year. Maureen heads home to tell Paul. When Maureen arrives Paul is asleep and when he wakes up is excited by the news. Their grandfather says that there will be a storm later that day, based on the fact that his foot is aching badly. Still, he lets them go to the races to watch and to find the fire chief to buy the horses.

While they are at the races the three-time winner, Black Comet, wins just before the massive storm hits. Paul races to make sure the horses Phantom and Misty are safe. Paul can't find them anywhere until he returns to his Grandpa's truck. Behind the truck is a trailer where Paul, to his surprise, finds the horses. His grandpa had put them in there just before the race apparently. Paul falls asleep in the truck while the storm rages



and the temperature drops. The next morning he is wakened by his grandfather who is astounded by what he has found. Misty, the foal, has snuggled up against Paul while Phantom stands guard nearby.

Paul is sent home to get warmed up and to stave off any colds he might have caught from the lowered temperatures. Maureen goes to visit the horses in the corral later and finds that Misty and Phantom have been sold. She cries. Paul and Maureen are devastated by the news but still can't seem to stay away from the corrals. A boy and his father stop them from their car and ask where they can find the fire chief. The children offer to take them to the chief. They discover that this family is the family who've bought Phantom and Misty and won a raffle for another horse. As it turns out, with the free colt from the raffle, they no longer want Phantom or Misty, so Paul and Maureen get their horses after all.

About half a year goes by and at this point the children are at the point where they can ride Phantom. The reader also learns that Misty, the foal, is very personable, often pulling pranks and being mischievous around the farm. The fire chief pays a visit to ask if they want to race Phantom in the upcoming race against Black Comet. Paul accepts the invitation and starts to train. When the race is nearly upon them Maureen and Paul use a wishbone to see who will get to ride Phantom in the race. Paul wins and goes on to ride in the race. The race is close until the end when Phantom opens up and wins without really trying. The Islanders all cheer and with the money Paul and Maureen receive, they buy an electric toaster for their grandparents. However, the win is bittersweet as Paul realizes that Phantom misses running with the wild horses. He begins to feel sorry that he's captured her.

The day after the race, the wild stallion, the Pied Piper, comes to the farm. He was the stallion that Phantom had lived with for many years before living on the farm with Paul and Maureen. Paul sees how Phantom looks at Piper and makes the decision to release Phantom. Paul releases Phantom, but Misty remains with them. Paul's grandfather tells him later that he is proud of him and that it means that he is growing up.



Chapters 1-2

Summary

Chapter 1

A Spanish Galleon is making its way across the ocean from Peru carrying horses on board. The captain of the ship doesn't like the horses and feels like they are trouble. Sensing the impending storm the horses become agitated. The storm hits and the boat crashes onto the shores of Assateague beach. In the water all the men drown, pulled down by the gale. As quickly as the storm comes, the storm goes. Sensing the shoreline the ponies make it to the beach and collapse exhausted onto the island.

Chapter 2

Once on land the horses realize they are not bound to anything, they are free. Immediately they set off for food, the leader of the herd moving them in a familiar yet unfamiliar direction as if he had been there before. They all stop in a meadow to eat the salty yet sweet sea grass that grows in the meadow. Seasons come and go and with the changing of the season the horses' knowledge of how to survive increases as well. By several generations they look far different than their ancestors did. After a while the horses are discovered by Red Men who are afraid of them and run. Later on, as the years became decades, some people came and built a lighthouse.

Analysis

Chapter 1

The story opens up many years before the main part of the story, as a type of prologue. The reader learns that the horses were boarded onto a Spanish Galleon heading for the new world when a storm erupted just before they reached shore, and it killed all the men while sinking the boat. None survived except for the horses. The horses had come from Peruvian mines and were going to be sold for a high price in the new land. The horses are steered to the land by the head of the herd, a large male horse.

What the reader gains from this initial chapter is where the horses originally came from, the circumstances surrounding their arrival on the island, and the tenacious spirit of the lead stallion. This fierce pride, courage, and the desire for freedom are established in this chapter as it is a major theme and motivation for the horses throughout the centuries.

Chapter 2

This chapter is all about how the horses have adapted to their new home on the island. The Horses grew long thick shaggy coats in the fall and short shaggy coats in the



spring. The chapter starts to speed through decades and the reader starts to see the colonization of the world around the horse's island. The horses have to adapt or change to survive their new environment, like using the sea to soothe and get rid of the flies that plague them. The Red Men that briefly appear are the Native Americans. They ran because they had never seen a horse before. The chapter explains further that the horses have learned how to survive through the harsh months by digging or eating the grass that grows closer to the ground.

Throughout the decades that flow through this novel, the reader can see that there is one constant: family. The strong ties that are formed between the horses, in particular the leaders for their herd, is strong and unbreakable. Several times the reader sees the horses all working together to face adversity, as well as taking care of the young, and dealing with the many obstacles that are an integral part of island living.

Discussion Question 1

In Chapter 1 what is the author's purpose in including the history of how the horses came to be on the island?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the theme of Family as it is exemplified in Chapter 2.

Discussion Question 3

What sorts of adversities did the ponies have to overcome when they came to live on the island?

Vocabulary

galleon, shrilled, quiver, strode, vexation, plucked, latitude, squalls, fury



Chapters 3-4

Summary

Chapter 3

Maureen and Paul play in the sand around Assateague Island. Paul stops to pick up a stick and tells Maureen it is the bone of the Spanish Galleon that crashed many years ago. Maureen realizes he is just kidding and they continue to play as Paul pretends to see the ship. Just behind them they hear sticks break and they go belly down on the beach. Wild horses come to the clearing. Paul watches a horse by the name of Phantom come out onto the beach. Maureen and Paul decide right then that next year they will catch and buy Phantom in the annual pony roundup.

Chapter 4

Paul and Maureen head to their grandfather who is farther down the shore, and tell him about the horses they saw. Grandpa tells them how the horses are wild, and are vastly changed from their ancestors who were shipwrecked there. Grandpa hurries his grandchildren onto the boat to go hunt turkeys for the big dinner tomorrow at the house.

Analysis

Chapter 3

This chapter introduces readers to the main characters of the story: Maureen, the younger sister, and Paul, the older brother. It is explained to the reader that the children's parents are in China at the moment, as missionaries, and that the children live with their grandparents. The horse named Phantom is a horse that no one has ever been able to catch for the Pony Penning Ceremony. Phantom is an older mare and is very cunning. The children are excited to buy the horse if she is caught. Their grandfather tells them that they will have to work to get the money though. He believes that this will teach the children discipline.

Chapter 4

This chapter is short and to the point as their grandfather tells Paul and Maureen about how the ponies became wild and how they are different in appearance and temperament than the original horses. The theme of Family is shown here to the readers and it is obvious the children have strong family ties to the grandfather and love him deeply. This directly parallels the example of family indicated by the horses in the previous chapters. The author would seem to be stating that the feeling of belonging, of having relatives, and caring for one another, isn't just relegated to just the human species.



Discussion Question 1

Why does the Grandfather tell the children that they must earn the money to buy a horse?

Discussion Question 2

How did the ponies become wild and adapt to living on the island?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the theme of Family as it is exemplified in Chapter 4.

Vocabulary

coaxing, bleached, toiling, squinted, fretted, whopper, abruptly, hull, critters



Chapters 5-6

Summary

Chapter 5

During dinner the grandchildren ask their grandfather if they will get more money for each tame pony they sell. Grandfather agrees to pay them 10 extra dollars a head, but only if they are tamed, since tame horses go for more. As weeks and months pass Paul and Maureen take up jobs doing anything to raise the money for their horse. One day grandfather is being helped by Paul and asks him why he wants another pony when the corral is full of them. Paul wants a pony that he will never have to sell. Paul asks his grandfather for an empty stall and his grandpa gives him one on the condition that they maintain it.

Chapter 6

Paul helps in the following weeks to ready the pony grounds for the penning. He makes sure the pens are built well so the horses, most importantly Phantom, won't escape. The morning arrives and Paul is ready to get to the round up. His grandfather tells him to follow what the leader says and not to question him. Then he hands him a chocolate bar. Once on the island the other guys taunt and tease the newcomer, Paul. They ride out and soon they are on the hunt. Wyle Maddox, the leader, sends Paul off to get a stray. Paul becomes angry at this thinking they just want him out of their hair. Suddenly Paul realizes he is on Phantom's trail, and she has a colt. Lucky for Paul, Phantom runs straight toward the pen's direction.

Analysis

Chapter 5

In this chapter the protagonists ask their grandfather to give them a little extra cash if they tame the horses and sell them. He agrees to help them out. This shows the theme of Family and how the grandfather is willing to help them out even though he doesn't know what they are using the money for at first. He trusts that they are using it on the right thing. The kids learn that hard work pays off and when Paul's grandfather asks why they want a horse to buy when he has so many other ones, Paul answers that he wants a horse he will never have to sell. This introduces another theme in the novel, which is that of coming of age. Paul and Maureen want to have the responsibility of owning something 'real'. They feel that they are ready for such a thing, and their grandfather is willing to let them try.

Chapter 6



During the weeks that lead up to the pony penning celebration Paul would spend all his time working and raising money for the purchase of Phantom, whom he's sure he could catch. The Family theme is demonstrated again here as the grandfather passes on knowledge and a candy bar to Paul. Rounding up the ponies has been a tradition on the island and now it is being passed along to Paul from his grandfather. On the Island Paul doesn't fit in with the other wranglers and they all seem to poke fun at him since he is new. This irritates Paul further when they send him off to pick up a straggler. The straggler, unbeknownst to the others, is the fabled horse, Phantom, and she is with her foal. The foal is the reason the mother, Phantom was even caught. Phantom couldn't run away from the hunters as quickly since she had a baby to worry about.

Discussion Question 1

What is Grandpa's relationship with the grandchildren like?

Discussion Question 2

In Chapter 6, why is Paul so upset by the other horse wranglers?

Discussion Question 3

What does the reader infer about the fact that Phantom won't run away and stays to protect her foal?

Vocabulary

mares, suckling, mannerly, pursed, clucked, breadboard, halter, stammered



Chapters 7-8

Summary

Chapter 7

Paul runs Phantom, and the colt he names Misty, into the pen at Tom's Point, much to the surprise of everyone there. The men gather around Paul and ask him the details, and Paul says that it was the colt that slowed her down. Paul is sure that he has captured Phantom. Sitting down, Paul takes out the candy his grandfather gave him and eats it with the other guys before they head back to the town with the horses they've caught.

Chapter 8

People gather on the opposite bank from where the horses are. People are lining up to watch and an old fisherman stands on the piling to be the announcer for the events taking place. Everything is going swimmingly until Misty reaches the water. She is afraid and won't swim so Phantom doubles back and makes her get in. Halfway through the swim Misty is caught in an undercurrent and Paul jumps in to save her. Once on land the colt collapses, alive, but tired. Phantom comes and stands over her to shield her from the stampede of horses. Maureen goes to Paul and tells him that he can go home, that she and grandpa will finish up and he can come back once he is dry and warm.

Analysis

Chapter 7

This was a very short chapter in which the horse named Phantom was caught with her foal. What is significant is that this is a horse that has eluded the men for a few years and here a young boy, a newcomer at that, comes along and captures her. Due to this he earns the men's respect and they all eat. The Theme of coming of age is demonstrated here when the men accept Paul into their fold, making him a man in their eyes. Taking part in the pony roundup is a rite of passage, so to speak, and Paul has done well.

The reader sees that Paul likes being included and viewed as useful and capable. He also shows the reader as well as the men in the story that he is ready to have more responsibility and that he is willing to go above and beyond to make the crossing a success. His commitment to this is seen when he jumps into the water to rescue Misty when she begins to founder in the crossing.

Chapter 8



The Island the horses come from, and the island the men come from, are within swimming distance so the men have the horses swim across the channel to the other island where they are rounded up. Misty, Phantom's foal, is afraid and this causes her mother to double back and coax her in. The foal, not being strong enough, starts to drown and Paul saves her. Family is demonstrated by Phantom's motherly instinct to protect her foal on the land by taking a protective stance over her, sheltering her from all the other horses. Paul is cold and wet and his grandfather fears he will catch a cold so he is sent home. While Paul agrees it is evident that he's worried that someone might try and stake a claim to Phantom and her foal.

Discussion Question 1

How does Paul end up earning the older men's respect on the roundup?

Discussion Question 2

What action on Paul's part indicates that he's more than willing to do what it takes to get the horse he wants?

Discussion Question 3

What is Paul most afraid of when he's sent home to warm up, after the roundup?

Vocabulary

captured, coax, rutabaga, thudded, wisp, unearthly, guffawed, sultry, billowed



Chapters 9-10

Summary

Chapter 9

Maureen watches the ponies as they are herded to the grounds. Suddenly, Phantom breaks from the herd and runs, scaring Maureen. Soon, they find Phantom in the bushes since she can't make a quick get away with her stubby legged colt. Maureen returns home to tell Paul about the two being able to stay together, since Phantom's baby is too young. Paul is asleep at the time but when he wakes up they decide on the plan to talk to the fire chief and about putting money down on the horses. Grandpa, however, says there is a big storm coming as he can feel it in his feet. They may have to wait until it passes to talk to the fire chief.

Chapter 10

Down at the arena Maureen and Paul admire the foal, Misty. Paul states that she is the finest foal around. Behind him the Pied Piper, Misty's father, moves in closer and stares angrily at Paul. Paul, in a soothing voice, says to the Pied Piper that Misty is a beautiful foal. Paul and Maureen end up leaving after this. Maureen cries when she sees all the foals corralled together and looking for their mothers. She goes to the fire chief with her concerns. The fire chief explains that it's a humane way to wean the foals away from their mothers because they are at the age of being weaned off the milk, anyway. Paul and Maureen feel embarrassed about asking and go watch the race.

Analysis

Chapter 9

Maureen is the focus of this short chapter. The reader sees her watching the horses and becoming alarmed when Phantom tries to make a break for it. This indicates how invested emotionally Maureen is in Phantom and Misty's well-being. Maureen hatches up an idea to buy both horses after she sees that the foal and mother shouldn't be separated yet. Maureen thinks that the best way to accomplish this is by putting money down for them and paying it off over time.

What the reader gains from this glimpse into Maureen's thoughts and actions is that not only is Paul invested into the outcome of this roundup, but that Maureen is as well. Both children are beginning to understand the value of the horses and of owning something worthwhile. The theme of Coming of Age is demonstrated in this chapter when Maureen realizes that if they want to buy Phantom that they are going to have to come up with more money than they thought. Instead of giving up or becoming panicked, she calmly and logically formulates a plan.



Chapter 10

The Pied Piper is the stallion leading the herd that Phantom is a part of, and is very protective of his herd. The Family theme is demonstrated in how fearlessly he acts toward everyone to protect his family group. This is directly paralleled with grandpa and his need to protect Paul after he'd jumped in to save Misty. Sending Paul home to dry off and rest, indicates that both father figures care for the safety of the younger members of their 'herd'.

Horses need to be weaned off the milk of their mothers and by separating them, the people force them to mature. Both Paul and Maureen are also being 'weaned' away from their parents, living with their grandparents instead. The children's lack of understanding is evident when Maureen approaches the fire chief about the motherless foals. The children feel embarrassed for being upset but the Chief lets them know he was the same way until he understood it himself. This makes the children feel better and not embarrassed anymore.

Discussion Question 1

What have been the consequences of Paul running out into the storm after the horses?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the theme of Family. How is it shown in different ways?

Discussion Question 3

In what way does the author indicate that the children are maturing?

Vocabulary

jolted, weaving, comical, dejectedly, paraded, whinny, brawny, clutching, bristles



Chapters 11-12

Summary

Chapter 11

Paul and his sister go to see the race. The star of the race is Black Comet, who had won three years in a row. Black Comet wins this race and Paul thinks about how next year Phantom could win. Suddenly the storm that Grandpa had predicted blows in and the spectators flee for cover. Fearing for Phantom and Misty's safety Paul runs to the fields mid-storm to find them. It is so dark that he has to wait for the flashes of lightning so that he has light to search. Not being able to find them he retreats to his grandfather's truck and puts on his grandfather's coat. He hears something in the trailer behind the truck and to his surprise it is Phantom and Misty. Paul climbs in and realizes Phantom isn't going to attack him. Paul ends up falling asleep and waking with Misty's head in his lap.

Chapter 12

Paul is wakened by his grandfather in a soft voice as to not spook the animals. He tells Paul to go on up to the house so he can have something to eat and get warmed up. His grandmother had been very worried about him since he hadn't come home from the storm. Later on that day Maureen makes her way down to the corral where she sees Misty with a sold rope on her neck. This comes as a shock and is an unsettling sight to Maureen. She begins crying. The chief sees her and asks what has happened. Maureen explains about Misty being sold, and the chief asks her why they didn't come to him sooner. Maureen feels bad for the fire chief because she realizes he has never wanted anything since his family is well off.

Analysis

Chapter 11

Paul comes face to face with the theme of Consequences for one's actions when he doesn't go home during the massive storm. Though it was brave and selfless to have gone out in the storm to check on the horses, he did so without thinking and as a result could have ended up hurt. Additionally, he worried his grandparents and sister horribly when he didn't return. He leaves to go home when his grandfather finds him the next morning, and as a result isn't there to tell the fire chief that they want both Misty and Phantom.

The reader also sees that Paul is kind-hearted and cares for the horses. It is also telling that the storm brought them together, and that Phantom recognized the trailer as a place of safety for herself and her foal. As a result, they all spend the night together and Phantom comes to trust Paul.



Chapter 12

Paul's grandfather talks in a soft tone to wake up Paul so he wouldn't spook the animals and possibly get Paul hurt as a result. Maureen learns later that day that they wasted too much time with other things and Phantom and Misty have been sold. The symbol used here is the Sold Rope. The rope symbolizes ownership, and the horses don't belong to Paul and Maureen. Maureen is horrified and starts to cry.

The theme of Loss is demonstrated in this chapter as both children experience the loss of Misty and Phantom, the two horses they most wanted and had dreamed of owning. Likewise, the children are reminded of the loss of their parents, who are living so far away in China. Lastly, Paul is lost in the storm and the others don't know where he is. In all of these instances, loss is shown to be a negative event and something that hurts the person experiencing it.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss Paul's decision to rush out into the storm for the horses.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the symbolism of the Sold Rope and what it means to the children.

Discussion Question 3

How is 'loss' depicted in Chapter 12?

Vocabulary

addled, stickiness, nuzzled, sorrel, gusts, frisking, shrieked, clasped



Chapters 13-14

Summary

Chapter 13

The children are unable to talk about what had happened until the following Saturday when Paul blames himself for their horses being sold. Maureen and he argue over who actually caused the horses to be sold out from under them. Finally they come to an agreement and decide to use the money that they have saved to get their Grandparents an electric toaster, instead. Even though they now have no reason to be at the horse fields they still go. After the day at the corral has ended they are stopped by a boy and his father in their car and they ask where the fire chief is. Paul offers to go and get him. When he does, the chief explains that the man is the person who has bought Phantom and Misty. As it works out, Paul and Maureen luck out as the man realizes he's purchased too many horses, and gives Misty and Phantom back to the chief, keeping only the one colt from another mare. The chief offers Phantom and Misty to Paul and Maureen.

Chapter 14

Mother horses usually teach the colts and foals to trust the humans, but with Phantom and Misty it is the other way around. Misty teaches her mother to trust the humans. She settles into life at her new home, often galloping up and letting the children comb and brush her. Paul realizes Phantom misses the ocean, which she used to get rid of the flies. As a result she allows Paul to flick them off her. Phantom hates metal and Paul tells his grandpa he is embarrassed by not doing a good job teaching her to accept a bit. Grandpa tells him that he couldn't be prouder of the two of them and as long as the horse goes where they want, there's no need to upset her.

Analysis

Chapter 13

This is the chapter in which the children experience a lucky turn of events and end up with their horses after all. The man who bought the two won another one in a raffle ticket contest. Since he doesn't need them all he gives Misty and Phantom back to the chief. This means the kids will get to have their horses after all. Everyone, even the fire chief seems happy at this turn of events and helps them get the horse. The theme of Coming of Age is demonstrated in this chapter as the reader sees the children trying to make the best of the situation, planning to use the saved funds to buy something for their grandparents who are taking care of them.

Chapter 14



Grandfather tells Paul that if Phantom is going where Paul directs her to go then why would he make her uncomfortable by stressing her out with a metal bit. This shows that their grandfather is a man who understands the fact the animals have emotions and feelings and it isn't nice to stress them out over something so trivial. Trust is a big thing in this chapter as it portrays the bond between the children and the horses they are caring for. This trust will lead them in the right direction throughout this book .

Discussion Question 1

What does it show about the children that they have decided to use their money to purchase a toaster for their grandparents?

Discussion Question 2

How do the children end up getting their horses after all?

Discussion Question 3

Describe Grandpa's character. What does Chapter 14 indicate about him?

Vocabulary

blaze, foretop, tingly, bolt, shudder, benefit, girth, vain, wickie, pranced, quivered, neighing



Chapters 15-16

Summary

Chapter 15

Misty is a happy youthful pony who is in love with everything. Misty plays with the other horses who seem to get angry until they realize who is nipping at them. Phantom is often seen looking out towards the bay and toward her island. Paul wonders if she is happy at all. The fire chief comes to visit that day later on and asks if Paul will race in the horse race with Phantom against Black Comet. Paul is excited and tells the fire chief he had hoped since the first time he saw Phantom that he would one day ride in the race with her.

Chapter 16

As July nears, Phantom and her masters keep training for the race in July. Misty is beginning to show signs of being jealous of her mother getting all of the attention, and takes buttons and hats off people so they will notice her. The big question comes up when Paul and Maureen have a disagreement about who is going to ride Phantom in the race. To stop the fighting, grandmother, takes a wishbone and tells the two that whomever gets the bigger piece wins. Paul wins. Maureen tears up again but agrees by saying Paul is the better rider.

Analysis

Chapter 15

Misty plays with the horses that the grandfather has and they all seem to understand that Misty is a playful foal. The chief stops by to ask if Phantom will be racing in the upcoming Pony Penning day race. It has been a year since Paul and Maureen purchased Misty and Phantom. Paul and Maureen have dreamed of the race, since the first day they saw and thought about getting Phantom. Paul believes he can win because many have told him that Phantom is the corporeal incarnation of the wind itself.

This can be considered part of the final rising action for the central storyline. Since the beginning of the story, the kids have wanted to capture the elusive Phantom and race her against Black Comet. Now they will get that chance. The question remains: does she have what it takes to beat the three times champion racer?

Chapter 16

Misty has already shown signs of wanting to be the center of attention so when her mother is getting all the attention she begins to act out by stealing hats and buttons from



people. Maureen and Paul have a bit of an uneasy relationship at the moment while they decide who will ride Phantom in the race. By this time in the book Paul has become more of the main character. So the reader knows that Paul will most likely be the one to ride Phantom. The theme of Family is demonstrated as well as the theme of Dealing with Loss when Paul wins the wishbone pull and Maureen wishes him good luck, even though she is upset by the results.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the plot points thus far.

Discussion Question 2

What are some of the conflicts that have arisen thus far in the book?

Discussion Question 3

Compare Misty's character to her mother's.

Vocabulary

burst, glorious, liberally, nip, thunderous, mettlesome, hankering, chicken coop, whittling



Chapters 17-18

Summary

Chapter 17

Race day arrives and the reader sees Maureen as she makes her way over to Paul who is readying himself for the race. Maureen's grandparents know how disappointed she is that she is not the one to ride Phantom and continue to try and cheer her up. Maureen doesn't really care for their attention as she just wants to imagine herself in the race.

Soon, the race starts and one of the horses, Firefly, takes the lead, but soon Black Comet rushes forward to take the lead again. Phantom comes from behind and in a thrilling ending to the race ends up passing Black Comet and winning by a long lead. Paul is joined by Maureen and the crowd and Maureen says that they are buying Phantom all sorts of ribbons and bows with the money they've won. Paul leans over and pretends to be Phantom and says "How about we buy your grandparents the toaster"?

Chapter 18

The day after the race it rains heavily. Once the rain breaks the children are outside racing Phantom around when they hear a horse bugling through the air. The Pied Piper has come from the island to visit Phantom. Grandpa yells at Paul but Paul instead gets off Phantom, takes off all her reins and straps and sets her free. Misty stays with them and Grandpa tells Paul how proud he is with what Paul has done.

Analysis

Chapter 17

The Theme of Family is demonstrated in this chapter when all of Maureen's family comes to 'cheer her up' when all she wants to do is be by herself so she can feel like she is racing with her brother and Phantom. The islander's root for Phantom because she is a local pony and the people from out of state root for Black Comet. Phantom remains behind the rest of the horses much of the race, seeming to just enjoy running with the others. It dawns on Paul that Phantom misses the wild herd and wants to run with them again. As Phantom begins to gain on the others, Paul can't stop her and she runs her own race. This demonstrates the theme of Freedom. For Phantom, running at top speeds again, under her own control, is the sense of freedom she has been missing. Even though Paul is happy that they have won the race, he is also saddened by his discovery.

Chapter 18



When the Pied Piper comes to see Phantom the Theme of Family is once again revisited as well as facing the Consequences of ones Actions. Additionally, the return of the stallion from her former life also represents her longing to go back to that way of life, her desire for Freedom once again. When Paul releases Phantom to the Pied Piper, she is able to return to a life that she loves. The children have to deal with the loss but they can manage since Misty will stay with them.

Both children indicate that they've matured and grown in that they no longer view Phantom or Misty as property, but as living beings with feelings and desires. They honor Phantom's desire to return to the wild herd, thus completing the storyline and offering closure. At the beginning of the story, both children want to own Phantom and to race her. Now that this has happened, they have no reason to keep her any longer. And, they've gotten to keep a small reminder of her in that Misty, the foal, will remain with them.

Discussion Question 1

What does Paul's revelation during the race say about him?

Discussion Question 2

How is the theme of Family exemplified in both Chapters 17-18?

Discussion Question 3

What was the everyone's reactions to Paul releasing Phantom?

Vocabulary

snuffed, abandon, borne, frenzy, hysterical, thumped, flocked, sidelong



Characters

Paul

Paul is a teenage boy who is just now old enough to go on the pony round up on Assateague Island and catch the wild horses there. Paul is a thin boy who has a forelock like a stallion, and he has black hair. Paul is a good and honest boy who cares for everyone and anyone. Paul and his sister decide to buy a horse named Phantom that Paul had long admired on the island. Eventually he lets her go knowing she is much happier being free. Paul grows from being a boy who only thinks about himself to a young man who thinks about the feelings and desires of others.

Maureen

Maureen is Paul's younger sister. She is also very interested and intrigued by the ponies on the island. She is not allowed to take part in the round up because she is too young. It is implied that even if she were old enough that she would not be allowed to go because she is female. However, she is allowed to care for, train, and ride the horses. As a result she argues for the right to ride Phantom in the big race. She frequently tears up over various incidences which indicates that she is still very immature, and misses their parents who are missionaries in China.

Grandpa

Grandpa is the grandfather of the two main characters, Paul and Maureen. He is an old timer and helps the two get ready for owning a horse. Grandpa also helps Paul learn lessons along the way. Grandpa is an elderly man who has whiskers on his ears, and speaks with a very southern dialect.

Grandma

Grandma is married to Grandpa and is helping to take care of the children while her daughter and son in law are away in China. She is a steady influence on the children and makes sure that they are taken care of.

Fire Chief

The fire chief of the town is also the unofficial mayor and recognized law. He is the auctioneer at the pony round up and officiates over the races each year. He is shown to be a kindly man who listens to the children when they speak with him. He is also saddened when he realizes that the children had wanted Phantom but he'd sold her to



someone else. He respected Paul for his work in the round up and he is a good friend to Paul and Marueen's grandfather.

Wyle Maddox

He is the leader of the pony penning round up on the island. He is who Paul has to listen to on the island and he has a booming voice.

Phantom

Phantom is the horse that had eluded everyone for many years and who Paul finally caught, along with her baby. Phantom is a wild spirit and is eventually released by Paul to go back to the wild where she can be happy and free. Phantom is a golden cream colored horse with a map-like pattern down her front shoulders.

Misty

Misty is Phantom's foal. She has just been born shortly before the round up and as a result is not fast enough to elude the wranglers. Misty was not strong enough to make the swim across the channel and as a result Paul has to jump in and save her. Misty grows up on the farm and seems to like being around people. She is playful, curious, and often takes buttons and hats from people if they aren't giving her enough attention. She has the same color and pattern as her mother.

Pied Piper

Pied Piper is the stallion who is the leader of the herd Phantom was a part of. Pied Piper is very aggressive and territorial. Pied Piper is also the father of Misty and a mate to Phantom. He swims the channel to rescue Phantom at the end of the book.

Father and Boy

These two characters were never named but they were the original owners of Phantom and Misty. But because they won the raffle their circumstances changed and they had to bow out of owning Misty and Phantom.



Symbols and Symbolism

Spanish Galleon

This is the boat that the first horses arrived on way back in the history of the island. This boat crashed and sank along with the crew and only the horses ended up surviving the wreck. The author's purpose in including this backstory on the horses is to show the type of adversity that the ponies must have had to endure and to set the scene for the unbridled and stubborn attitude of the wild horses on the island.

Galleon Stick

When playing along the beach Paul picks up an old weathered stick and pretends that it is part of the long ill-fated galleon. This is used to indicate that both Paul and Maureen are well aware of the legend of the ponies. The author may well be utilizing this as a unifying element between the island's past and its present residents. It also serves as a builder and character development device in that the reader sees the relationship between brother and sister, as well as the fact that the children are well aware of the island's history.

Phantom

Phantom becomes a symbol of freedom and power. The map on her withers symbolizes the states and their freedom. She is fast and unrelenting. When Paul catches and buys her she tames but still can be seen longing for her freedom. Eventually Paul releases her and thus symbolizes that freedom couldn't and shouldn't be stopped. Paul often remarks that there was always that part of Phantom that refused to be tamed. This was shown by the fact that she refused to take a bit in her mouth but instead only accepted a halter and gentle pressure to indicate where the rider wanted to be taken.

Misty

Misty is a symbol of the new world and how it is changing. Misty handles domestication much better than her mother showing that old ways are no longer the ways of the newer generation. Misty does not understand the allure or the lifestyle of a wild horse because she's never known anything different. So, when Misty's mother returns to the wild, the humans in Misty's life wisely understand that it would be cruel to send her out to the wild when she doesn't seem to long for it as her mother does.



Corrals and Pens

These were always built each year to temporarily hold the horses as they are rounded up. The year that the story happens, Paul helps to build the corrals as a rite of passage in readiness for taking part in the roundup. In and of themselves the corrals are only temporary, acting as quick holding pens before the horses can be driven across the channel to the main island. As a rite of passage, Paul has to understand what it is he is about to embark upon and that it is not the romantic job that he'd imagined it to be as a young boy. Likewise, the corrals symbolize the controlling of freedom, which is what Paul (and the others) intend to do with the horses. However, it is also a symbol of freedom and maturity for Paul as prior to this he has not been old enough to be allowed to take part.

Wikkie

This is a finer and softer rope used with Phantom because she hates metallic things. This symbolizes the acknowledgment by both Grandpa and Paul that there will be that part of Phantom that will never be tamed. If they want to ride her then they will have to come to a compromise with the horse instead of trying to 'break' her. The use of the wikkie is their acknowledgement and respect for the horse.

Grandpa's Jacket

This is a symbol of the grandfather always protecting his grandchildren. The Coat offered warmth to Paul during the massive storm. Both Paul and Maureen have been left with their grandparents and do not know when their parents will return from China. Given this situation, both children look up to their grandparents as surrogate parents. Grandpa's coat is an extension of that care and concern. When Paul wraps up in it, it is symbolic of his trust in his grandfather's love for him and that he will be taken care of.

Lighthouse

This was originally put on the island to warn ships to stay off of the shallow coastline. Symbolically, it represents safety and refuge for both Paul and Maureen. The lighthouses are shining representations of human habitation and safety. When Paul, as well as sailors out at sea, look toward the lighthouse they are reminded that there are those who care for them and will come to their rescue when the need arises.

Wall of Piling

The piling was used to watch the horses come across the channel. Also, the old fisherman announced what was happening from them too. From a purely literary standpoint, the piling is also a manmade construction that allows human beings to see



further and as such make plans for future events. The wall of piling also acts as a separation between man and the wild, further underscoring the fact that the men will be removing the horses from their wild state.

Sold Rope

When a horse has been sold after the roundup, a sold rope is placed over the horse's neck. For Maureen and Paul, it means a loss of a dream, as they had been planning to purchase Phantom (and then Misty) for at least a full year. When they see the Sold Rope over Misty's shoulders, they are certain that their dream has died.



Settings

Chincoteague Island

This is the Island that is inhabited by the people who every year go to the neighboring Assateague island to round up the ponies. The main part of the story takes place here as this is where Paul, Maureen, their grandparents, and the rest of the town's people live. No one but the wild horses live on the neighboring island. Thus, there is definitely a separation between the wild and the civilized world.

Assateague Island

This is the island where the first horses from the Galleon washed up and established themselves. After many centuries of adapting and living on the island, the ponies little resembled the fiery war horses that they had originally been in Spain. This island is larger than Chincoteague Island. The pony round up is started on the island and is also where Phantom is released back into the wild by Paul at the end of the story.

Grandpa's House

This is where the main characters stay while their parents are in China. The author describes it as a friendly, warm, and inviting place, where there is always something to do. While both Paul and Maureen miss their parents horribly, they adjust well enough to living with their grandparents, due in large part to the endless amount of things that they can become involved in on the farm.

Pony Roundup

This is a place on the island where all of the captured wild horses are held for sale. Once the ponies are corralled on the adjacent island, they are driven across the narrow channel to the main island where they are offered for sale. The pony roundup also signifies a coming of age moment for Paul as this is the first roundup he's been allowed to participate in because in previous years he'd been too young.

Tom's Point

Tom's Point is the name of the thin strip of land that juts out into the sea. It is where the lighthouse is and is a defining landmark for the island. Everyone orients to that.



Themes and Motifs

Family

The bond between Phantom and Misty shows the theme of Family well and also mirrors the family of Paul in many aspects. Paul has a nontraditional family as his parents are in China and he and his sister are living with their grandparents. Family is a prominent theme throughout as the reader sees the Pied Piper swim to get Phantom. The reader also sees this theme when Phantom allows herself to be caught so she can stay with her newborn foal. Later, she stands over her foal to protect her from the rest of the stampeding horses. She is also willing to sacrifice her freedom to stay with her foal inside of the trailer with Paul, even though she had run away just hours before.

Additionally, the reader sees the interplay between sister and brother, and the grandparents with their grandchildren. It is evident that there is a great deal of concern and care between all of them. When Paul spends the night in Grandpa's truck because of the storm, they are all very alarmed that something had happened to him.

Consequences

By taking Phantom from the wild Paul has to deal with the consequences that Phantom may not be happy and that there has been a lot of stress put on the animals. Initially, Paul has little concern or regard for the feelings of the horses, or their happiness. He only knows that he wants to capture the horse that no one else has been able to capture, and then race her to beat Black Comet. This is very self serving, and these desires end up having consequences.

After he captures Phantom and Misty, he realizes quickly that his actions have now made him responsible in a way that he has never had to be. This ends up having a positive effect on him, however, as he begins to move away from being a self centered little boy to a young man who is able to empathize with others and to care for those animals that are put into his charge.

When he rashly dashes out into the storm to find Phantom and Misty, it isn't because he is actually worried about their well being, but more because he wants to make sure that he is able to stake a claim on them before anyone else gets a chance. However, he places himself in danger and when he is found in the morning, and is sent home, he has to deal with the consequences of losing the horse to another person who purchases the horses out from under him. By not speaking up the day before, by running out into the storm, he missed his chance to tell the fire chief that he wanted the horses.



Coming of Age

Paul has to become a man quicker than he probably thought. When he set his mind to buying Phantom, he and his sister both got jobs to pay for it. Paul also showed this theme when he released Phantom back to the Pied Piper, indicating how much he had matured through the story. He moved from a boy wanting something pretty to a man who understands that animals have feeling and desires too.

Likewise, he matured from his self centered nature to wanting to do things for those he loved. This is evidenced in the fact that he wants to take his race earnings and purchase an electric toaster for his grandparents. In contrast, his sister, who is a few years younger than he is, only wants to take the money and buy ribbons for Phantom's hair. Paul goes through many rites of passage in the book. First, he works on the island doing odd jobs so that he and Maureen can earn enough money to buy a horse the following year. After a year's commitment to this, they have enough money. Then, the next year, he is old enough to help build the pens and corrals that will be needed in the round up. Later, the reader sees him on the roundup, dealing with the other men and joining them in the tradition of the roundup. Lastly, the reader sees Paul as he makes the decision to give Phantom back her freedom.

Freedom

The theme of Freedom is demonstrated heavily in this novel. Through the use of the horses, freedom is shown to be unbridled and spirited. When Phantom consents to being domesticated, it is clear that she is only doing so for her foal's sake. Paul often remarks that he sees the faraway look in her eyes as she gazes toward the island where she came from. This longing for freedom is central to the structure of the novel in that it becomes evident to Paul that in comparison with many things that can be purchased, one's personal freedom is priceless.

The author indicates that Phantom is a symbol of freedom through the pattern that appears on her withers. The pattern is shaped like the American states, and that she is carrying the freedom of America on her shoulders. Given this, then, it is clear that the author wants the reader to understand that it was not a kindness to continue to keep Phantom any longer. Phantom's name, in itself, is another message about freedom. A phantom is a spirit, an elusive, nearly translucent form. The author would seem to be stating that freedom is hard to see, hard to capture, and easily recognized once it is obtained.

Loss

Paul and Maureen's parents live in China and as a result they have had to live with their grandparents. They feel the loss of their parents not being around. The shock and fear of losing Misty and Phantom at the fair is almost too much, but eventually they became the owners. By the end of the book Paul learns that losing something may also be

gaining something in return. He is better able to deal with the loss of Phantom, because he realizes that in some small way he still has a piece of her (Misty) and that he is also releasing his own spirit with Phantom. He understands her need for freedom.



Styles

Point of View

The Point of view is in a third person omniscient, as the reader knows what all the characters feelings and thoughts are. This allows the reader to understand Paul's motivations and to observe his thought processes as he comes of age through his work with the horses.

Language and Meaning

Written for those transitioning into intermediate chapter books, the language is very easy to follow. However, the grandfather's dialect can make it difficult at times to understand, so phrases and idioms that may be unfamiliar are introduced. While they add to the characterization, struggling readers may have difficulty with comprehension.

The language, itself, lends itself to the time period. There is very little mention of modern conveniences such as phones, televisions, or video games. However, it is at least during the turn of the century because there are vehicles and radios. Thus, the language used is fitting for the time in which it is set.

Structure

The story, itself, is separated into 18 brief chapters of about 3-5 pages each. Much of the story is told in a linear fashion, with the exception of the first chapter which gives the reader background on the origination of the ponies on the island. The rising action occurs when the reader meets Paul and Maureen and learns that they want more than anything to capture, own, and tame the wildest mare on the island, Phantom. They succeed in capturing her and taming her, and in the climax of the story, race her in the annual horse race in town. They win. The falling action and resolution occur when Paul realizes that Phantom, while treating them kindly, really wants to return to the wild horses. Paul releases her to return to her herd. Her foal, Misty, remains behind with them.



Quotes

The pressure of the sea swept everything before it. Huge baskets filled with gravel for ballast plummeted down the passageway between the ponies, breaking up stalls as they went by.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1 paragraph Page 14)

Importance: This quote establishes the origins of the ponies on the island, and where they came from originally. It shows that the ponies overcame much adversity and were survivors from the beginning.

Was the Phantom real? Sometimes he wondered. She had never been captured, and the roundup men did sometimes tell tall tales. Some had said she was a dark creature, dark and mysterious, like the pine trees. And some said she was the color of copper, with splashes of silver in her mane and tail. And some spoke of a strange white marking that began at her withers and spread out like a white map of the United States.

-- Paul (Chapter 3 paragraph Page 31)

Importance: This gives the reader some background on Phantom and is one of the initiating conflicts for the story. Paul wants to capture the unconquerable, to have what others could not manage to catch.

Paul and Maureen worked furiously for the Phantom. They caught and sold crabs. They gathered oysters when the tide went out and laid the oyster rocks bare.

-- Narrator (Chapter 5 paragraph Page 50)

Importance: This shows how dedicated the children were to saving up the money to hopefully purchase Phantom if she should ever be captured.

But all the wildness seemed to have ebbed out of the Phantom. She picked her forefeet high. Then she carefully straddled her colt, and fenced in the small white body with her own slender legs.

-- Narrator (Chapter 8 paragraph Page 80)

Importance: This shows why Phantom was captured so easily. She is a loving and dedicated mother and wasn't about to leave her foal behind.

At last Misty sank down in exhaustion. Her head fell across Paul's lap, not because she wanted human comfort, but because she was tired from the hard drive and the swim. The floor of a truck or a boy's lap were all the same to her, so long as her dam was near. It was thus, at dawn, that Grandpa Beebe found them.

-- Narrator (Chapter 11 paragraph Page 112)

Importance: This is when Phantom, Misty, and Paul seek shelter from the storm and all end up in the trailer. They share each other's company and warmth.



Why, she's the Phantom's colt, and Paul and I— we've been saving for months to buy the Phantom, and now we want both her and her colt. And we have a hundred and two dollars," she added breathlessly as she patted the money around her neck.

-- Maureen (Chapter 12 paragraph Page 121)

Importance: This is one of the conflicts in the story. Maureen learns that Misty and Phantom have been sold to someone else.

Well, sometimes I see her leaning out over the fence— not yearning for the grass on the other side of it, but just looking away toward the White Hills and the sea." "And is there something . . .?" Paul asked after a little thought. "Is there something far away about her?" "That's what I mean, Paul.

-- Maureen (Chapter 15 paragraph Page 141)

Importance: This is where the children begin to realize that while Phantom is being kind and gentle with them, she longs to go home...to the island where she came from.

Grandpa slapped his thigh. "Nothin' could be fairer than a pully bone!" he exclaimed. "The one that breaks off the biggest part gits to ride.

-- Grandpa (Chapter 16 paragraph Page 152)

Importance: This is how the children will decide who will get to ride Phantom in the big race.

The crowds grew hysterical. "It's Phantom! Phantom! She won!" But there was no stopping the Phantom! She was flying on around the track.

-- Narrator (Chapter 17 paragraph Page 160)

Importance: This is when Phantom has won the annual race against the three time champion, Black Comet. However, it is also when Paul realizes that Phantom was running because she was remembering doing so with her wild horse family on the other island.

It was strange how gentle Phantom could be. But even in her gentleness there was a wilding look in her eye, as if only her body were inside the corral while her real self lived somewhere far away.

-- Narrator (Chapter 18 paragraph Page 164)

Importance: This is another indication that Phantom is not happy where she is.

Paul was not trying to hold Phantom. He was slipping the wickie out of her mouth. He was giving Phantom her freedom.

-- Narrator (Chapter 18 paragraph Page 168)

Importance: This indicates that Paul has matured and understands that if he cares for Phantom at all that he needs to give her, her freedom.



The air went wild with greeting. Deep rumbling neighs. High joyous whickers. The stallion and the mare were brushing each other with their noses, talking together in soft little grunts and snorts as animals will. At last the Pied Piper nipped her thigh, urging her forward. This time the Phantom did not hesitate. She flew toward her island home. Only once she turned her head as if she were looking backward.

-- Narrator (Chapter 18 paragraph Page 169)

Importance: This was when Phantom returned back to the wild horses. She pauses once to look back, as if she were acknowledging Paul's decision and was thanking him.