

Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe Study Guide

Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe by Bette Greene

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Plot Summary

Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe, tells the story of eleven-year-old Beth Lambert who is a bright and capable girl and has a giant crush on Philip Hall, "the cutest boy in school". Beth's mother realizes that her young daughter is very bright and has a lot of promise and warns her against filling her head up with thoughts of Philip instead of concentrating on school work. Beth is thrilled that Philip strums his guitar for her when she comes over to his family's dairy farm every evening after school to do his chores. Beth often wonders to herself if she is number two to Philip's number one at school because she holds back due to her feelings for him. By the end of the story, she knows the answer to that question.

Reality hits when Beth is not invited to Philip's birthday party. Beth is no shrinking violet and confronts Philip about this effrontery. He tells her that he could only invite boys to his party because if he invited girls, the other guys would tease him. Beth points out that as president of the Tiger Hunters Club, it is strange that he has no fear of tigers—which he will never in a zillion years confront in rural Arkansas—yet he is afraid of girls and being teased about them. Beth gets her point across and Philip tells the other Tiger Hunters members that if they show any fear of girls they will henceforth be known as 'fraidy cats instead of tiger hunters.

The two youngsters are drawn to each other yet both have a competitive streak that often puts them at odds. Philip helps Beth build a vegetable stand and helps her sell produce. She scolds him for eating some of the inventory and for the stand being nearly destroyed by his dairy cows. They both head their team in a challenge relay race that never takes place because Philip gets lost in the woods. It is through Beth's ingenuity and observant nature that she is able to rescue him. Despite their frequent annoyance and frustration with each other and their occasional fits of anger, their friendship endures.

The grand finale of the year covered in the book is the 4-H club competition at the county fair. Beth and Philip both enter the young calves they raised in the competition and wind up head-to-head in the final elimination round. When Beth bests Philip and wins the blue ribbon, he tells her that he is not hurt because she won rather because it's not easy to lose. The two friends decide to enter the square-dancing competition as partners and this time will win or lose together.



Chapter 1: Philip Hall Likes Me. I Reckon Maybe

Chapter 1: Philip Hall Likes Me. I Reckon Maybe Summary

September: While Beth Lambert is eating a breakfast of grits, her mother tells her not to have her head filled up with that Hall boy. Beth is smart, her mother tells her, and she needs to pay attention and learn at school. Don't be dumb about Philip Hall, she tells her. But Beth responds that Philip Hall likes her—he always invites her over after school. Of course he invites her over, her mother tells her, she does all his chores. But Philip plays songs for her on his guitar all the time she's working.

Beth and her sister Annie say good-bye to their father, who is working outside as they walk by on their way to the school bus stop. The road to the bus stop is dusty from lack of rain. Beth's mother taught her to walk on the side of the road in the grass so she doesn't get her clothes all dusty from the road. Just then, she sees Philip ahead at the blacktop waving and yelling to her to hurry up, that the bus is coming. Beth begins running down the dusty road but Annie refuses to run. By the time she arrives at the bus stop, her clothes are filled with dust and she has a speck of dust in her eye. Philip begins laughing—he was just teasing about the bus.

When the bus does arrive, Philip sits down by his friend Gordy instead of by her. She sits with her friend Bonnie. They both hear Philip talking about his birthday party on Saturday. Beth is sure she will be invited and will tell Philip to invite Bonnie because she, Beth, is Philip's best friend. At recess, she makes the same promise to several other girls. She is sure her invitation was in the mail. On the ride back home on the bus that evening, Gordy teases Philip about Beth being his girlfriend. Philip makes a face and denies his friendship with Beth. Beth is proud that she is number two in every subject at school. Philip Hall is number one. She wonders if she somehow lets him be number one because she likes him so much.

Beth is silent as they walk home, finally telling him that it hurt her feelings that he denied their friendship. Philip assures Beth that she is his best friend. When Beth checks the mail, she is disappointed that there is no invitation from Philip. She runs to his farm and confronts him about it. He tells her he couldn't invite girls because they other guys would tease him. Only members of the Tiger Hunters' Club were invited. Beth begins to laugh. Philip, President of the Tiger Hunters' Club, is not afraid of tigers—who will never be any threat in Pocahontas, Arkansas—but he is afraid of teasing words about a girl.

At school on Monday, Beth tries to ignore Philip. After school, he is waiting in line for the bus and calls her over, telling her that she and her friends can get in front of him in line. He announces to his friends that from then on that any member of the Tiger Hunters'



Club who is afraid of girls is a 'fraidy cat. Beth smiles, thinking that Philip is the cutest boy in school.

Chapter 1: Philip Hall Likes Me. I Reckon Maybe Analysis

Philip Hall is aware that Beth Lambert has a huge crush on him. He exploits the feelings she has for him by asking her do his chores every night after school. She willingly complies with his wishes, which for her provides another opportunity to be with him and build their relationship. The story hints at the probability that Beth allows Philip to be number one in every subject at school and if she applied herself she could take the top spot. The inference is that she holds back, allowing him to excel because she likes him so much. The book was written in 1974, but the story appears to take place in a time before it was in vogue for a female to outdo a male—especially a male for whom the female has a romantic interest. Philip is probably aware of her potential to surpass him and keeps her in line by playing with her emotions.

Reality comes to Beth when she learns that Philip is having a birthday party and that she was not invited. His weak argument is that the other boys will make fun of him. Even though Beth thinks that Philip Hall is the cutest guy in school; she is too spirited and confrontational to be totally taken in by him.

Beth turns the tables on Philip by belittling his fear of openly admitting to being her friend. She compares his fearlessness of tigers—a foe he will never confront in the region—to his fear of girls. Although her response was not tactical or calculated, it had a positive impact on their relationship. He tells his boy friends that henceforth any Tiger club member who is afraid of girls is a coward. Beth is pleased with his change of attitude but there are undoubtedly more rocky times ahead in their budding friendship.



Chapter 2: Case of the Missing Turkeys

Chapter 2: Case of the Missing Turkeys Summary

December: Beth has a dream that she is the number one student in class and that Philip is happy with her success. While eating some cornbread, Beth walks outside and talks to her father, who is repairing the fence that encloses the turkey yard. He tells her that another ten turkeys are missing. A chicken hawk is too small to be the culprit and a fox wouldn't be able to get to the birds. Beth's father convinces her that a six-foot high fence would be impossible for a fox to jump over.

Beth and her father find a coat button and mechanical pencil on the ground but no bones or blood that would indicate a predator got to the turkeys. Her father thinks she might be on to something when she suggests that perhaps a low-flying airplane is scaring the turkeys, making them take flight and flap their ways right out of the yard. Their search of the surrounding area for wayward turkeys is unsuccessful.

The family goes into town that afternoon where Miss Elinor Linwood, Calvin Cook and his fat son, Calvin, Jr., are all gathered. Miss Lindood is telling Sheriff Nathan Miller about seeing a large man, eight to nine feet tall, with huge hands. The sheriff assures her that whatever she saw was not the Monster of the Mountain. Beth's mom pushes her past them, reminding her not to listen to other people's conversations.

There had been other sightings of the Monster of the Mountain over the years. It started in 1938 after a Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus train derailed. The police were searching the region for days without letting anyone know what or who they were searching for. Reverend Ross had commented that Gorilla Man, a featured creature in the circus, never again appeared in the circus after that derailment.

After the family returns from town, Luther, Beth's fourteen-year-old brother, is anxious to see his pigs. He is sure they missed him, but Beth challenges him about pigs really being capable of missing humans. He tells her that when she's old enough, she'll understand. On Sunday, the family is eating breakfast before church. Beth's father is satisfied that he has thwarted the turkey thief with some well-placed kerosene lamps. Unfortunately, when he checks his flock, he finds that another six birds are gone. He writes a letter to "Turkey World Magazine" asking them for an answer. That night, Eugene stays on guard at the turkey yard.

Beth asks for Philip's advice about the missing turkeys, but he tells her that it isn't safe to scout around the woods after a sighting of the Gorilla Man—but he adds that he, of course, isn't afraid of him. He agrees to meet her that night after everyone is asleep. When she arrives at their meeting place, Philip isn't there yet but soon appears with a flashlight and a BB gun. They are sitting on a hard tree branch in the freezing wind as two men, driving a pick-up, arrive at the turkey yard. Beth has Philip run to the house to wake her father. She watches as the two men take long sacks into the turkey yard.



Philip had left his gun with Beth, who takes it and aims it at the men, telling them not to move. The one man, who turned out to be a large boy, screams that he doesn't want to be shot. She recognizes them—it is Calvin Cook, the town butcher, and his son. Beth's parents and brother run out. Eugene holds a rifle on the Cooks. Calvin pays him for the missing turkeys but Eugene sends Luther to get the sheriff anyway. Calvin, Jr., blames Beth for getting them into trouble.

Chapter 2: Case of the Missing Turkeys Analysis

Beth shows her heroics by sitting outside in the dark night to find out who is stealing her father's turkeys. The family depends on the turkeys for their livelihood, and it's a financial hardship on the family when they lose some of the flock. Eugene Lambert runs a turkey farm and the earnings from the flock are apparently their only means of support.

Although Philip is spooked about the story of the Gorilla Man, once again he wants to prove to Beth that he's not afraid. He comes armed with a BB gun when they meet in the dark. Beth proves to be braver than Philip as she is the one who confronts the thieves—none other than the town butcher and definitely not the legendary Gorilla Man—who are stealing the birds. Beth is not afraid to stand up to Calvin, Jr., who blames her for his misfortune. She reminds him that it was his father's greed that got him in the spot—she is defending her family's property.

Beth has a dream about being number one in class, which Philip congratulates her for. In reality, Philip would probably not be happy about her excelling past him in class. At this point in the story, it seems as though Beth might be braver and smarter than Philip. Although deep inside she has an inkling about her behavior, she hasn't fully recognized yet that she is allowing her emotions to make her take a back seat to Philip.



Chapter 3: I Never Asked for No Allergy

Chapter 3: I Never Asked for No Allergy Summary

February: Beth and Philip get off at the school bus. As Beth starts to cut through the field, Philip warns her that she might step on an icy patch and fall. She isn't worried—she's got a collie puppy waiting for her. Philip responds that maybe her father wasn't able to trade turkeys for the puppy. Beth is undeterred and continues home, spotting her freshly painted house in a light green shade. The year before, her father had sold three hundred turkeys and over forty pigs. They had a good year and were able to afford to get their weathered house painted something that was important to her mother.

Beth can see that her mother is on the porch. Her mid-section is growing wider as the baby inside her grows. But Beth has only one new-born in mind—the puppy. Her mother won't tell her if her father got the puppy or not—just keeps telling her to go into the kitchen. The slight smile in her mother's eyes gives Beth the answer she wants and she goes racing into the kitchen. She immediately spots the rust and white colored puppy who is so friendly that Beth decides to name him Friendly. Beth starts sneezing and hacking and by that evening, her eyes are red and watering and she has a wheezing deep in her chest. Her mother is very concerned about her condition.

Dr. Brennan stops by that night to pick up some turkeys. He checks Beth's chest using his stethoscope and asks her when her symptoms began. She tells him that it was when she first met Friendly, her new puppy. Dr. Brennan gives her the bad news that Friendly is making her sick and that he must be returned to the original owner. Beth protests—she loves Friendly and Friendly loves her.

The next morning, Luther and Anne are outside playing with Friendly. Beth begs her mother to keep the puppy. Her mother tells her that life isn't always what people want it to be. It was decided. For her health, Friendly is going to be returned to Mr. Grant's kennel that evening. She finds out from a book at school that she may not be allergic to a short-haired dog. At the kennel, as Beth holds Friendly close to her, Mr. Grant tells her that he did happen to have a chihuahua in the kennel that she could take home.

On the way home, the puppy stands on its hind legs to look out the truck windows which inspires Beth to name him Tippietoes. Unfortunately, Beth begins sneezing again and her eyes begin to itch. At school, her teacher, Mrs. Johnson gets the reference book down for her again. It tells her that people allergic to dogs with long and short hair may not be allergic to poodles because they don't shed.

That evening, the family drives to the kennel and exchanges Tippietoes for a white poodle puppy who Beth names Puffy. During the drive home, Beth begins to sneeze again. Her father turns the truck around and heads back to the kennel to the strong protestations of Beth. The next morning, Beth begins to accept that she can never have a dog because of her allergy. That evening after school, she is surprised to see her



grandmother standing on the porch when she comes home. She learns that her mother had a baby boy and runs in to see him. As she holds him, she calls him Baby Benjamin. Her parents both repeat the name and decide that's what they will indeed name him Benjamin. The entire time Beth holds Benjamin, she didn't sneeze, not even once.

Chapter 3: I Never Asked for No Allergy Analysis

Beth learns that she can't have everything she wants. Her mother tells her that life isn't like that. She has to give up three puppies because she's allergic to them. But she gets a new arrival in the form of her baby brother, who she is allowed to name. She had been the baby of the family until Benjamin's arrival and she has a new role and new responsibility as a big sister. She takes it seriously and promises to love and take care of. Beth learns a lot from the incident with the puppies and takes a major step toward maturity. She learned as much about her problem as possible tried out various solutions, and through trial and error, came to the ultimate realization that she was allergic to all dogs. Beth's exercise was a building block in problem-solving that would help her in the future as she confronts situations and problems as an adolescent and as an adult.

Beth's parents show appropriate parental care for their youngest child. Although they want her to be happy and have a puppy, by their actions they illustrate to her that the most important priority is her health. Her mother, who has probably had to work through many disappointments in her life, tells Beth, "In this life you got to be happy about the good things and brave about the bad ones." In this chapter, Beth lived those words - she was forced to be brave about the puppies and was happy with the arrival of her new baby brother.



Chapter 4: The Elizabeth Lorraine Lambert & Friend Veg. Stand

Chapter 4: The Elizabeth Lorraine Lambert & Friend Veg. Stand Summary

April - June: Beth recalls what Dr. Brennan told her parents when he came by to check on her. "Whole town is proud of this youngun". Dr. Brennan was so impressed with her bravery in the face of the thefts by the Cooks and her "undeniable talent" that he offers to help her get into college when the time comes. He and his friends will put up half the money for her college education if her father could finance the other half. She tells her sister Annie that she wants to become Randolph County's first veterinarian. Eugene is worried because he is not sure he could come up with half the money for college tuition for Beth.

Beth is trying to think of ways to make money for college. Annie tells her that she's tired of people saying how smart Beth is. Beth tells her she's just as tired hearing how pretty Annie is. Beth recalls seeing a picture of a roadside vegetable stand in the Saturday Evening Post magazine. She can envision the vegetable stand's name - Elizabeth Lorraine Lambert & Friend Veg. Stand - the friend being Philip. She rushes out and tells her father to plant more vegetables.

Eugene grows a large crop of robust vegetables and on the first day of summer, Beth and Philip build their stand out of rickety orange crates. Philip is a little annoyed that his name isn't on the sign and is merely represented by the the term "Friend". Beth points out that she did all the work. Their first customer is Mr. Putterham, owner of the Busy Bee Bargain store in town. He buys a large amount of produce and when he drives off, Beth is one-dollar and ninety-five-cents richer. She and Philip are thrilled—jumping up and down and hugging each other.

After Beth returns from getting more vegetables, she sees a car stopped by the stand up ahead. She rushes to the stand just as they're driving off. Philip tells her they didn't buy anything but she sees that the last watermelon is gone. She looks around and sees the rinds in the ditch. She's scolds Philip for eating the inventory. There is a dry spell, but finally a red pickup stops and the man makes a few purchases. His truck is marked "Walnut Ridge Gulf Station". Beth mentions her grandmother lives on route 67 there. He offers to drop the kids off there since he'll be going past her house. Grandma isn't home, so the kids ride back with the garage-man when he comes back by.

When the stand comes into sight, it is surrounded by cows—they are Philip's family's dairy cows. They're eating all the vegetables. The cows had consumed all the corn and destroyed a few melons and Beth is very upset. When Beth tells the family about the incident later, they all laugh and tell her not to blame Philip. She gets upset because they seem to like him better than her. She runs to her room, unable to stop her tears.



Later, she sneaks out of the house and walks to the stand. She throws the ruined vegetables in the ditch. She thinks about how her father planted all the vegetables, how her sister encouraged her, how her mother helped her weed the garden, how Luther helped repair her cart and even how Philip helped her build the stand and sell the vegetables. She picks up the damaged vegetable stand sign and wipes the dirt off the word "Friend".

Chapter 4: The Elizabeth Lorraine Lambert & Friend Veg. Stand Analysis

Beth is becoming a legend in her own time. Dr. Brennan told her parents that the whole town was talking about her bravery with the turkey thieves. He recognizes that she is special, which boosts her self-image. He plants the idea of college in her mind. And even though she is only eleven, she is wise enough to start thinking of ways to make money. She is flattered that Dr. Brennan offered to pay for half her college tuition, but she knows she has to help her father because he won't be able to afford the other half. She wants to go to college but she doesn't want to burden her father with the expense.

Beth feels upset when her vegetable stand is almost destroyed by Philip's cows. Even though it wasn't Philip's fault, she is so angry at his cows that she blames him, too. She feels bad when her parents take up for Philip. She feels all alone in her anger and worry. When she has time to be by herself and think things over, she realizes that her parents and her sister and brother have helped and supported her in her vegetable stand venture and that by extension, they all support her goal of attending college. She also realizes that Philip has been a good friend which is symbolized by her wiping the dirt off the portion of the sign that reads, "Friend".



Chapter 5: The Pretty Pennies Picket

Chapter 5: The Pretty Pennies Picket Summary

July: The Blakes' green pick-up arrives at the Lambert's house. Luther is dressed in his Sunday's finest. He only pays attention to the arriving vehicle when the beautiful Ginny alights from the truck. Ginny is accompanied by Susan, Esther and Bonnie - who along with Beth and Ginny, are all members of the Pretty Pennies girls club. After partaking in some lemonade and snacks, Beth calls the meeting to order. Bonnie, the most outspoken of the group, complains that the only business they cover is gossiping about the boys in the Tiger Hunters' Club. The others agree. Beth takes offense at Ginny's suggestion that the club needs a new president.

To save her presidency, Beth suggests a fun idea. They should challenge the members of the Tiger Hunters' club to a relay race at the Old Rugged Cross Church annual picnic the next month. The girls could make their own special uniforms to wear, including T-shirts with the words, "The Pretty Pennies Girls Club of Pocahontas, Arkansas" embroidered across the chest.

That weekend, the girls buy their T-shirts and embroidery thread at Mr. Putterham's Busy Bee Bargain store. The girls begin working on their T-shirts and meet the next week at Ginny's house. As they are sitting in a circle on the floor, they hear a loud bang. They find a note attached to a large rock that was thrown on the porch. The note challenges them to a relay race on that Saturday at the school yard. It is signed by Philip Hall, President of the Tiger Hunters' Club.

With the embroidery completed on her shirt, Beth's mother sends her to bed to rest up for the race the next day. Her mother promises to wash it for her. The next morning, her mother is visibly upset when she has to tell Beth that the shirt shrunk to "midget size". When Beth meets the other Pennies at the school yard, they all have tales of shrunken shirts. Beth thinks that Mr. Putterham will give them their money back. Bonnie doubts it, saying he'd run his own mother down in broad daylight.

Mr. Putterham has no sympathy for Beth and her tale of shrunken shirts. That's what they get for buying cheap shirts, he tells her. Beth tries to make their case but he orders her and the girls out of his store. Philip is understanding and agrees to put off the race until the picnic. He is angered about Mr. Putterham's behavior, calling it robbery. The kids go tell Sheriff Miller about the incident. They follow him to his house where his toddler is playing in the yard. The T-shirt the baby is wearing had been purchased at the Busy Bee last week—only it had been adult-size and shrunk when it was washed. The sheriff tells the kids that selling bad merchandise can make a merchant lose customers but it's not against the law.

The kids form a picket line in front of the store. They persuade customers to go elsewhere to shop by showing them their shrunken shirts. Mr. Putterham steps outside



and demands to know what they're doing. Beth is waiting for Philip to speak up but he is silent. She tells Mr. Putterham that they are picketing his store. He tells them to leave but Beth tells him they will stay until they get their money back. All the members of the Pennies and Tigers club begin chanting, "Give back the money", in unison. With no options, Putterham gives the girls their money back for both their shirts and the ruined embroidery thread.

Chapter 5: The Pretty Pennies Picket Analysis

Beth is not only smart and brave, she is a natural leader. When her presidency is challenged, she digs down deep and creates a way for the Pennies club to be satisfying to its members. The girls follow her lead and are enthusiastic about challenging the boys to a relay race instead of just gossiping about them. Beth is challenged when all their T-shirts shrink. She leads them in picketing Mr. Putterham's store until he agrees to give them their money back for inferior merchandise. She is proving to be a strong person who stays true to her convictions.

Beth is disappointed that Philip doesn't speak up when they are confronted by Mr. Putterham, who demands that they leave the front of his store. Beth shows her true leadership when she speaks up to Mr. Putterham, always in a respectful way, but insisting that they be treated fairly. In the end, she wins the battle that will undoubtedly lead to her growing reputation in the town. Perhaps Beth will finally come to the conclusion that she has more going for her than does Philip Hall.

Beth is a risk-taker and stands up for what she thinks is right. She is in touch with an internal deep sense of justice that is part of her make-up.



Chapter 6: The Old Rugged Cross Church Picnic

Chapter 6: The Old Rugged Cross Church Picnic Summary

August: It takes quite a bit of coaxing by Beth to finally wake Annie up for the church bus that will take the family to the picnic. Finally, everyone is ready and they walk together to the blacktop, joining the other families, including the Halls, who are waiting at the bus stop. Reverend Ross personally welcomes each person aboard. The Pretty Pennies, with their newly embroidered shirts from Logan's Store, sit in the back together.

The Pretty Pennies and Tiger Hunters get into a shouting match about who will win the race. Beth and Philip agree that if the Pennies win, the Tigers have to act as their personal slaves for a week and if the Tigers win, the Pennies have to hand over their new shirts. Later, Beth worries about the deal she made. If the girls have to give up their shirts, she'll be in hot water. The bus arrives at Hardy, Arkansas, the site of the picnic. Beth takes off her sandals, huaraches that she borrowed from Annie, to wade into the lake. Philip takes one of the sandals and throws it to Gordy. The boys play keep-away with Beth until Philip ends the high jinx and returns the sandal to a worried Beth.

After most of the people are finished with their picnic lunches, Reverend Ross passes out cups of ice cream. Gordon complains to Mr. Hall that they can't start the relay race without Philip, the Tigers' president. People start to look around and realize that the last anyone had seen Philip was down by the lake. His father panics and the others run to the lake and start looking for him. No one pays attention to Beth, who is sure that Philip hiked up the mountain since he sometimes refers to himself as the King of the Mountain.

Beth takes off toward the mountain, which was a lot farther away than it seemed. Fatigued from the climb and suffering from a blister on her heel, she begins to question the wisdom of her actions. But she knows she must push on. She starts calling for Philip but questions her chances of finding him among the acres of pine tree forest. Just when Beth is ready to give up, she hears Philip's voice. She follows it until she finds him sitting up against a tree, his foot badly injured. He had tripped on a branch and fell against a rock. He isn't able to walk, so Beth becomes his human crutch. He puts his arm around her shoulders and lifts his one leg up as they walk. He's heavier than she thought, and they have to rest quite often. Finally reaching the bottom of the mountain, they are both exhausted.

The two hobble over to an idle tractor that's sitting nearby. The kids finally get the motor cranking, with Philip at the controls. As they arrive at the picnic site, everyone is astonished but overjoyed to see Beth and Philip return. Mrs. Hall drops to her knees,



thanking the Lord for returning her son. Mrs. Hall gave Beth a big bear hug, grateful for finding and returning her son. Mrs. Hall is too upset to talk to Philip for the time being. He's confused—does she hate him or love him? Beth says that "we—I mean she—loves you".

Chapter 6: The Old Rugged Cross Church Picnic Analysis

The importance of the relay race and who wins it is diminished by the missing Philip. The kids are shown that their bickering and one upsmanship is meaningless when they fear that Philip may have drowned. Beth is proven to be not only smart, but observant. She noticed that Philip often claimed, in his bravado, to be King of the Mountain. With the mountain looking right down at her, she decided it was plausible and logical that the King of the Mountain had gone to the mountain. Since everyone else was caught up in their panic about the missing Philip, no one would listen to her. Once again, Beth displays independent thinking as well as intuitiveness and tenacity as she finds her way through the pine forest on her way up the mountain to find her missing friend.

Beth quickly figures out the best way to get the injured Philip back down the mountain. Although it is quite a challenge for her to let the heavier Philip lean on her to get back down, she perseveres. And it is Beth, exhausted and unable to help Philip any longer, who spots the tractor as a way to get back to the others. Beth lets her true feelings slip when she assures Philip that "we love you" when she meant to tell him that his mother loves him.



Chapter 7: The Calf-Raising Contest

Chapter 7: The Calf-Raising Contest Summary

September: Philip is the President of the 4-H club. He calls the meeting to order and asks everyone to give a report on how their project for the county fair is coming along. Bonnie reports that the dress she is making is ready for judging. Ginny spoke next about the vegetables she's entering in the canning contest. Gordon gives his report on tractor maintenance. Beth is sure if anyone wins a ribbon, it will be Gordon. She is sure she'll be next to talk about the progress of her calf, Madeline. Instead, Philip brags about his calf. Even though she's a girl calf, her name is Leonard because she's as brave as a bull. Beth chimes in that Leonard will be Leonora when she grows up and gives milk. Everyone, except Philip, thinks Beth's remarks are funny.

Philip keeps droning on about his calf and what he feeds her. Finally, Beth has to interrupt him, asking if she can tell the group about her calf. Her calf was small when she was born but now weighs more than the average three-month-old calf. Philip tells her not to count on any blue ribbon. She tells Philip that he's afraid of her calf beating out his in the competition. That evening, her mother notices that Beth seems a little upset and has no appetite. Beth takes a treat of cornbread out to Madeline. Thinking of her argument with Philip, she unintentionally bops Madeline in the head. She's sorry and the calf seems to understand that she was really thinking of another head she'd like to bop. Ever since Beth turned twelve, she has been thinking that it was important for her to beat out Philip - not so much to win but because her losing would give him too much satisfaction.

By eight o'clock on Saturday morning, the entire Lambert family, including Madeline, are on their way to Mountain Village for the annual Randolph County Fair. After they arrive, Beth leads Madeline to the prep area. Philip enters the area with his calf and, as he passes Beth, reminds her that calf-raising is for boys and that his calf, Leonard, is going to take top honors. As the competition is about to begin, Beth notices that she is the only girl among the eight contestants.

As they lead their entries around in a circle, the judges check the animals' hooves, ribs, udders and chests. Calves that don't measure up are eliminated and soon the contest comes down to Beth and Philip. After giving the finalists another look, to thunderous applause from the Lambert family and the Pretty Pennies, the judge announces that Beth and Madeline are the winners. Beth is awarded the blue ribbon and five dollars. Philip is awarded the red ribbon and three dollars.

Even though she is thrilled and praised by her family and friends, Beth feels a little sad that Philip is upset at his loss and is avoiding her. As evening falls, everyone is preparing for the square dance. All the other Pretty Pennies have dancing partners except Beth. Beth goes to the stalls and pours her heart out to Madeline. Suddenly, Philip appears in Leonard's stall. Beth doesn't know exactly what to say but apologizes



to Philip for winning. He tells her that he's not a baby and is not unhappy that she won the blue ribbon. It's just that losing takes some getting used to. She urges him to join her in the square dancing competition. He's reluctant to enter another contest with her. She assures him that this time, they are in it together—they either win or lose together. She grabs his hand and they run off together to the square dance.

Chapter 7: The Calf-Raising Contest Analysis

Beth continues her winning ways in the 4-H competition at the annual county fair. Beth is maturing and coming into her own. She indicates a self-acceptance when her thoughts reveal that after turning twelve, she is more comfortable in excelling. Part of her feelings result from self-pride since she is actually less concerned with winning than she is in denying Philip the satisfaction of defeating her. She is working her way through some complicated and confused feelings which are all part of the maturation process.

Beth ventures into new territory when she decides to raise a calf for the F-H competition. Her other girlfriends take a more traditional path in the contest by entering into the sewing and canning competitions. She has enough confidence to enter a field where all the other contestants are boys even though her best friend, Philip, reminds her that calf-raising is for boys. But she is undeterred as she is certain that she had done her best in raising her calf who she feels measures up to the calves that were raised by the boys.

The story concludes with a little give and take on the part of the competitive friends as well as signs of growth and maturation. Philip admits that losing is difficult but he assures her that he is not really bitter about her win. Beth tells him she's sorry that he didn't win. The ending shows the two competitive youngsters arriving at a truce and entering the square dancing contest as a pair. They are willing to fail or succeed together which indicates that their relationship has developed into one of trust and mutual admiration.



Characters

Beth Lambert

Beth Lambert is the main character of *Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe*. She is an eleven-year-old youngster who has a big crush on "the cutest boy in school", Philip Hall. She feels flattered that he invites her over every evening after she finishes her chores so she can do his chores. She defends him to her mother by pointing out that he strums the guitar for her the entire time she is working.

Beth is a very bright young girl and is number two in every class at school. Philip Hall is number one, but she wonders to herself if she might be holding back because of her feelings for him. Beth is not only smart, she proves time and again that she is brave as well. When some of her father's turkeys are missing each morning, she and Philip stake out the turkey yard after dark. When they see that two men are stealing the fowl, it is Beth who holds Philip's rickety BB gun on the perpetrators. She gains quite a reputation in town for her bravery. Even Dr. Brennan comments how the whole town is proud of her. He is so impressed with her brave actions and her obvious intelligence that he offers to pay for half of her college tuition when that time comes around.

Beth has a competitive spirit, as showcased by her eagerness to challenge Philip and his friends in a relay race to be run against her and her girlfriends. She and Philip go head to head in the calf raising competition at the County Fair. Beth is a natural leader, which is illustrated when she forms a picket line in front of the store where she and her friends were cheated out of money. Again, her bravery is front and center when the proprietor confronts the kids and she is the only one brave enough to speak up and confront him about his unfair actions.

Beth learns that allowing her talents and abilities to shine does not damage a friendship. She also learns that a true friend supports and enjoys the success of another friend.

Philip Hall

Philip Hall is the object of Beth Lambert's affection. He is, according to Beth, the cutest boy at school. Philip exploits her feelings for him in several ways. Everyday after school, Beth rushes over to his farm after finishing her chores. In exchange for her doing all of his chores, he strums his guitar for her the entire time she is working. Philip is number one in his class but only because Beth Lambert, the number two student, holds back because of her tender feelings for him.

Philip is a tease and is well-aware of the impact he has on his young friend. One day he causes her to run at full speed down the dusty road to the bus stop as he hollers and waves her, indicating that the bus is coming. When she gets there, full of dirt, he tells her he was just teasing. But there's only so much the spirited Beth will take. Philip steps over the line when he fails to invite her to his birthday party. Philip wants to avoid any



teasing by his pals for inviting a girl. Beth confronts her idol and tells him that as President of the Tiger Hunters' Club, he shouldn't be afraid of girls.

Despite some of his high jinx, Philip is at his core a nice boy. He teases Beth, but when it goes too far and Beth shows signs of real hurt - like when he and Gordy are threatening to throw her sandals in the lake - Philip calls a halt to it. Philip learns to depend on his little friend. It is Beth who rescues Philip from a bad spill on a solo hike he takes up the mountain. When Beth realizes she must shine on her own and display her own abilities in their best light, Philip realizes that a good friend applauds and supports a friend's talents and abilities.

Mrs. Lambert

Mrs. Lambert, Beth's mother, realizes that her daughter is very bright. She warns her against filling her head up with thoughts of Philip Hall instead of concentrating on her studies.

Eugene Lambert

Eugene Lambert, Beth's father, supports his family by raising and selling turkeys. He is impressed when Beth stakes out the turkey yard one night and confronts some turkey thieves with a rickety BB gun.

Annie Lambert

Annie is Beth's older sister. She is tired of everyone always saying how smart Beth is. Beth tells her she's constantly irritated by everyone telling her how beautiful her older sister is.

Luther Lambert

Luther is the eldest child in the Lambert family. He helps his father raise a small herd of pigs and he repairs a cart for Beth that she is using for her vegetable stand venture.

Calvin Cook

Calvin Cook is the town butcher. He and his fat son, Calvin Cook, Jr., are confronted one dark night by little Beth Lambert holding a BB gun on them while they are in the process of stealing her father's turkeys.



Beth's Puppies

In the short span of several days, Beth has three puppies: Friendly, a collie; Tippietoos, a chihuahua; and, Puff, a poodle. Beth is unable to keep any of the puppies because of an allergy. Soon after returning the last puppy, her mother has a baby brother, Benjamin, who doesn't make Beth sneeze, not even once.

Mr. Putterham

Mr. Putterham is the stingy proprietor of the Busy Bee Bargain store in town. He sells Beth and her girlfriends T-shirts that shrink to "midget size" on the first washing. Beth organizes a picket line against him when he won't return the money finally forcing him to refund their money.

Dr. Brennan

Dr. Brennan gives Beth that bad news that she's allergic to dogs. He is so impressed with Beth's talents and abilities that he offers to pay half of her college tuition when that time comes about.



Objects/Places

Pocahontas, Arkansas

The story of Beth Lambert's eleventh year takes place in and around the small town of Pocahontas, Arkansas. The Lambert family buys supplies in Pocahontas every Saturday.

Lambert Turkey Farm

Eugene Lambert raises and sells turkeys on the family farm. It is the family's chief source of income and they are concerned when their turkeys begin to mysteriously disappear.

Hall Dairy Farm

Beth Lambert has a big crush on Philip Hall. He lives with his family on a dairy farm that is located next to the Lambert turkey farm.

The Elizabeth Lorraine Lambert & Friend Veg. Stand

To raise money for her college fund, Beth recruits Philip to set up a vegetable stand and help her sell produce. Philip is a little annoyed that his name is not on the sign and that he is represented just by the word, "Friend."

The Old Rugged Cross Church Picnic

The Old Rugged Cross Church picnic is held every year in Hardy, Arkansas. The Reverend Ross and the church bus pick up all the families for the short trip to Hardy.

Ozark Mountains

At the the Old Rugged Cross Church picnic, Philip goes off by himself for a hike up one of the nearby Ozark mountains. He is injured during his walk and is rescued by Beth, who helps him hobble back to the picnic area.

Busy Bee Bargain Store

Beth organizes a picket line in protest of the unfair treatment of her and her friends by the Busy Bee Bargain Store. The proprietor, Mr. Putterham, is eventually forced to refund the kids' money for the inferior products they bought from him.



Randolph County Fair

Beth and Philip each raise a calf for the livestock competition at the Randolph County Fair. Beth winds up besting Philip, winning the blue ribbon for her entry.

Tiger Hunters' Club

Philip is the president of the Tiger Hunters' Club. It is a club of brave young boys who aren't afraid of the tigers who they might encounter in rural Arkansas.

Pretty Pennies Girls' Club

Beth is the president of the Pretty Pennies Girls' Club. The girls are bored with their main activity - talking about the boys in the Tiger Hunters' Club - when Beth suggests they challenge the boys to a relay race.

Mrs. Johnson's Class

Beth and Philip are both in Mrs. Johnson's class at their school. Philip is number one in the class, but everyone suspects that Beth could be number one if she didn't hold back because of her feelings for Philip.



Themes

Friendship

The underlying theme pervasive throughout the story of Beth Lambert, the eleven-year-old main character of *Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe* is true friendship. Beth is a loving child who is close to her parents and loves and appreciates her family. At the tender age of eleven, she is following the natural course of maturation by seeking friends and building relationships outside her nuclear family.

Since she has been the baby of the family for all of her eleven years, Beth wants something she can love and care for—just like the care and protection she has enjoyed during her life. She decides that a puppy would be the perfect object for her affection. She goes through a series of three puppies—one she even names Friendly—in an effort to find a breed of dogs that will not make her sneeze. Unfortunately, through trial and error, she learns the bad news that she is allergic to all dogs. She grows up quickly after this incident, having to accept the fact that she cannot have a puppy. Happily, her mother has a baby brother soon after the incident, and with his arrival, Beth finds an even better and more important being to love and protect.

Beth has many friends in a newly formed girls club called the Pretty Pennies, but the main friendship that is showcased in the story is Beth's friendship with Philip Hall, the cutest boy in school. Through the course of the story, both youngsters learn what true friendship is. They realize that their talents, achievements and abilities do not have to stand in the way of their budding friendship and that a strong bond can withstand the natural ups and downs of a relationship and the many unexpected barriers that are encountered.

Self-Worth

At the tender age of eleven, Beth Lambert is struggling to find her identity and her rightful place at her school and in her community. Although she is a spirited youngster who is open and honest, her sense of self is in the development stage as the story unfolds. Beth has a giant-size crush on neighbor and school-mate, Philip Hall. Her naivete is readily apparent when she tells her mother that in exchange for her doing all of Philip's chores every evening after school, he strums the guitar for her the entire time she is working.

Beth's internal signals make her wonder whether Philip has actually earned number one student status in her class at school or if she, as the number two student, has allowed him to take center stage in the academics arena because she represses her own abilities so that Philip can ascend to the top. Even though she doesn't realize it, she must sense that his ego is fragile and that he would be somewhat destroyed if she beat him out. Perhaps she's right, but she could be mistaken—it could just be her misguided



and misinformed interpretation. Beth's fundamental fear probably lies in the possibility of his rejection of her if she outdoes him.

The story of Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe covers a year in the young girl's life as told by Beth herself. As she matures, she begins to shed her reluctance to achieve, especially where Philip is concerned. As she challenges him and meets him head to head in a county fair competition, she begins to realize that it is positive and healthy to display her talents and abilities and that a true friend will support another friend's accomplishments. Beth comes into her own with a new self-worth, arriving there without conceit or mean-spiritedness. In the end, she is able to balance her leadership skills and talents and a growing friendship with Philip, who also matured in the year in which the story takes place.

Facing Adversity

Beth Lambert, the eleven-year-old main character in Bette Greene's Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe, faces many challenges in the account of a year in her life. First, she must decide if her idol, Philip Hall, likes her for herself or because she so willingly does all his chores. She also questions herself. Does she allow Philip to be number one in all the classes at school while she settles for number two? Do her feelings hold her back from achieving her rightful position so that he can have the limelight? Beth wrestles with the confusion of these internal emotions.

Eugene Lambert, Beth's father, is facing a problem with missing turkeys from his turkey yard. Since the family's sole source of income is from raising and selling of turkeys, the missing fowl present a serious problem for the family. Beth enlists Philip to help her stake out the turkey yard in the dark night. Philip comes armed with his rusty BB gun that reportedly doesn't even shoot straight. When the two-legged turkey thieves appear, Philip runs in the house to get Beth's father. Beth is left with the BB gun but has the gumption to hold the gun on the men until her father appears. It was quite a fearless act for an eleven-year-old to hold two big men at gunpoint in the dark of night.

When Beth is faced with a merchant who is cheating her and her friends out of a refund, Beth shows tenacity and leadership skills when she organizes a picket line in front of the store. When the proprietor insists that they leave the front of his store, Beth is the sole voice that speaks up and confronts the man about his unfairness. Although she is respectful to the adult, she is unyielding in her compelling appeal for justice.

Beth is faced with another challenge—this time a physical one. She rescues Philip when he hurts his foot on a hike up a mountain. Since Philip is unable to put much weight on one of his legs, the much smaller Beth must act as his human crutch in order to return him to the adults down below who can tend to his injury.

Beth doesn't go looking for trouble but trouble seems to find her. But in each and every case, Beth faces the challenge and her quick-thinking and courage see her through it.

Style

Point of View

Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe, by Bette Greene, is told in the first person narrative by the story's protagonist. Eleven-year-old Beth Lambert tells the story of one year of her life—beginning in September at the start of a school year through the next August, when she wins a blue ribbon at the annual County Fair. More important than her winnings, is the self-confidence she develops and leadership skills that emerge during the year.

The majority of Beth's thoughts and emotions are focused on the cutest boy in school, Philip Hall. Her thoughts reveal all the uncertainty and confusion she has about her feelings for him. Beth's intelligence and self-awareness shine through in revealing thoughts such as her speculation that she is only the number two student to Philip's number one status because of her emotional attachment to him.

In the year-long account of her life, Beth shows a marked development on both the emotional and maturity levels. She begins as a youngster with a big crush on a boy who is sometimes on her side and sometimes an adversary. As she grows and encounters new experiences, however, she begins to see things more clearly. She realizes that if she and Philip are to develop a relationship, it must be one on equal footing. If her abilities, talents and intelligence are threatening to him, then any relationship between them is doomed. Philip matures in the year-long saga as well. He becomes a friend who ultimately supports the winning ways of his friend, Beth.

Setting

Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe takes place in rural Arkansas. Beth Lambert and her family live on a farm on the outskirts of the small town, Pocahontas, Arkansas. During the summer months, references are made to the oppressive heat and humidity in the region. The road leading to the school bus stop is so dusty from lack of rain that the children walk on the side of the road in the grass so that they don't kick up the dust on their clean clothing.

Her father, Eugene Lambert, raises and sells turkeys—which is the major source of the family's income. Beth's friend, Philip Hall, lives with his family on a nearby dairy farm. Many of the scenes take place in the Lambert family home, which is apparently small since the living room doubles as the bedroom for the eldest child, Luther.

The turkey yard is the scene of a crime. Eugene notices each morning that several of his turkeys are missing. Beth and Philip stake out the turkey yard one dark night and confront the two-legged culprits. Beth organizes a picket line and confronts Mr. Putterham, the stingy proprietor of the Busy Bee Bargain Store, for not refunding money for inferior merchandise that he sold Beth and her girlfriends.



At a church picnic in Hardy, Arkansas, Philip goes off alone on a hike up one of the Ozark mountains. After he is missing for an alarming length of time, Beth goes looking for him, trudging her way through acres of the pine forest on the mountain before she finds the injured Philip. The only positive aspect of the incident is the relief of the increasingly cool air as she ascends the mountain in the oppressive August heat. The story concludes at the Randolph County Fair, where Beth and Philip enter a livestock competition and that evening, enter a square dancing contest as a couple.

Language and Meaning

Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe takes place in rural Arkansas where Beth Lambert lives with her parents and siblings on a turkey farm and Philip Hall lives on a nearby dairy farm with his family. The charm of the story is enhanced by the author's generous use of humor which is interjected throughout the tale. Nerves get the best of Beth when she is the only youngster brave enough to speak up to Mr. Putterham, the owner of the Busy Bee Bargain store, who cheated the kids by selling them inferior merchandise. She calls him Mister Putterjam... Putterdam... and Putterpam. When she finally gets it right, she tells him he got it right, too, by refunding their money.

When Beth tells her older sister, Annie, that she wants to become Randolph County's first veterinarian, Annie tells her that Miss Elinor Linwood, who hadn't had a piece of meat in her mouth since she choked on some roast, already had that distinction. Beth is irritated that a judge at the county fair calls her "girlie". How would he like it, she thinks, if she called him "manlie"? When Beth is the only girl in her group without a dance partner at the fair, she aptly describes her isolation: "With everybody paired as though waiting to enter the ark, being separate was noticeable".

There are lyrical flourishes in the story as well. For example, when Beth is trying to stop herself from crying, she relates that "My voice sounded right next door to tears". Waking from a fleeting dream about Philip, Beth explained that it "Dissolved like a raindrop into a freshly plowed field".

The language of the African-American characters in the story is written in the common vernacular of the time and region. Even the title of the book is written in this speaking style. This jargon is noticeable throughout the novel. One example is, "Life don't always be the way we want it to be. Life be the way it is. Ain't nothing we can do". The children of the families are referred to as "chilluns." The use of the vernacular does not detract in any way from the story; rather, it enhances the tale's down-home quality and charm.

Structure

Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe by Bette Greene is separated into seven titled chapters. A month is indicated as a sub-heading for each chapter providing a time-frame for the story. The book covers approximately a year in the life of protagonist Beth Lambert and her family and friends. The first chapter begins with September and the seventh and last chapter ends with the events of the next August. Beth is eleven when



the story begins, and near the end she comments about turning twelve. The development of Beth's self-confidence and tenacious character is easily contrasted between the story's beginning and its end.

The story chronicles the growing pains experienced by two youngsters who are drawn to each other and genuinely like each other but are always in the throes of some kind of competition. The tale illustrates the growth not only of the two youngsters but the maturation of their relationship as well. Most of the chapters are devoted to Beth's feelings and uncertainty about herself and about her relationship with Philip, "the cutest boy in school". The first chapters illustrate how Beth holds back and allows Philip to excel and be number one in class. As time passes, Beth who is very bright and a natural leader, begins to realize that true friendship means supporting the success of the other and begins to shine and enjoy her own achievements.

The satisfactory pace of the novel is facilitated by the adventures of the youngsters, the down-home charm of the story-telling and the humor that is interjected throughout.



Quotes

"Respect don't keep company with greed."
Chap. 2, p. 34

"Life don't always be the way we want it to be. Life be the way it is. Ain't nothing we can do."
Chap. 3, p. 46

"In this life you got to be happy about the good things and brave about the bad ones."
Chap. 3, p. 52

"Being smart can sometimes be a burden."
Chap. 4, p. 57

"Ain't nothing wrong with ambition... The Lord Jesus had it aplenty."
Chap. 4, p. 57

"Old Putterham is so cheap he wouldn't give nobody nothing, not even a kind word."
Chap. 4, p. 63

"What Mr. Putterham is you talking about? The only Mr. Putterham I know wouldn't apologize to his ma if he ran her down in the broad daylight."
Chap. 5, p. 79

"The Tiger Hunters raced to the edge, pulling off shoes, throwing off shirts to touch the tippy-most points of their toes to the water with all the courage of a turkey in a thunderstorm."
Chap. 6, p. 96

"I'm going to glue a stop light on the tip of my tongue. Least thataways I'll have a red light telling me to stop my mouth before it goes roaring off into trouble."
Chap. 6, p. 99

"We faced the green cloverleaf poster with the H on every leaf and with the strength of our fifteen voiced recited: I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to greater service, and my health to better living - for my club, my community, and my country."
Chap. 7, p. 113

"One thing I never did like was being called 'girlie.' About the only folks who do that are big fat men. How would they like it if we girlies got to call them 'manlies'?"
Chap. 7, p. 120

"I thanked God in advance for all the trouble he was about to go through on my account, and I told him that there wasn't any real rush. 'You can take your time, Lord. Five, even

ten minutes would be fine with me."
Chap. 7, p. 131



Topics for Discussion

What are the different ways in which Beth and Philip compete? What makes Beth hold back from being number one in her class? How does Philip take advantage of Beth's crush on him?

What are the different theories that Beth and her father have about the turkey thefts? Who is stealing the Lambert's turkeys? How are they caught?

What problems does Beth have with puppies? Why can't she keep any of them? What are the three kinds of puppies that she takes from the kennel?

Who is going to help Beth with her college tuition? What plans does she have to make money for her education? Who helps her?

What does Beth think of which will keep the other members of the Pretty Pennies Girls Club happy? What happens to the T-shirts they buy at the Busy Bee Bargain Store? What does Beth and the other kids do when Mr. Putterham treats them unfairly?

What animal does Beth raise for the 4-H competition at the County Fair? Who is her main competitor? What competitions do the other Pretty Pennies enter into at the Fair?

Why does Beth feel sad after she wins the blue ribbon at the County Fair? How do Beth and Philip resolve their differences? What is the final competition they enter into together?