

Study Guide *Montana 1948*
By Larry Watson

Setting: Bantrock, Montana, 1948, population less than 2 thousand

Characters: *Give a brief description for each*

Wesley Hayden:

Gail Hayden:

David Hayden:

Frank Hayden:

Gloria:

Marie Little Soldier:

Julian Hayden:

Len McAuley:

Daisy: *Len's wife*

Ollie Young Bear:

Chapter 1 – Questions

1. What was life like in Montana in 1948?
2. What does 4F mean? Why was Dave's father a 4F?
3. What disappointed Dave about his father's job?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
4. What is a brogan, fedora & a Stetson?

5. What type of gun did the sheriff have and how did he get it?
6. Why was Wes, David's dad, a sheriff instead of an attorney?
7. Why did Dave's mom want his father to move away and change jobs?
8. How does the narrator, sum up his grandfather's personality?
9. The narrator says, "The chimed schedules of school and church," what does he mean by this?
10. Dave says, "I felt a contentment outside human society that I couldn't feel within it," what does he mean?
11. The actual story begins with?
12. How does Dave's mother feel about illness? Give an example from the story to illustrate her feelings.
13. The narrator says, "Her eyes seemed darker than ever, all pupil, black water that swallowed light and gave nothing back." Who is he describing, and what is he saying about this person? This is an example of what literary device?
14. Marie from the beginning does not want to see a doctor, the Hayden's believe this is because...
15. What is Marie's diagnosis?
16. What does David do as an act of defiance to his father?
17. Compare the brothers, Frank and Wes, how are they similar, how are they different.

Frank	Wes
a.	a.
b.	b.
c.	c.
d.	d.

18. Why does Gail have to come into the bedroom with Dr. Hayden?
19. What is the real reason Marie did not want a doctor?
20. Wes asks Gail, “Why are you telling me this, because I’m Frank’s brother? Because I’m your husband, because I’m Marie’s employer or because I’m the sheriff?” What are the implications of his statement for each role?

Brother:

Husband:

Employer:

Sheriff:

21. David says, “Charming, affable Uncle Frank was gone for good.” What is he saying about Frank?
22. What does Daisy confirm, about Dr. Hayden?
23. Gail asks Wes, “You never said you didn’t believe it. Why is that? Why?” What is she asking?
24. How does Wes go about obtaining hard evidence to support or reject Marie’s claims?

Chapter 2 – Questions:

1. What three facts lead Dave to know his father was investigating Marie’s accusation?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. Considering all of Ollie Young Bear’s accomplishments, why does Dave think he would not have been admitted as a member of the Elks?
3. Why did David like to bowl with his father?
4. Why didn’t Dave like Mr. Young Bear?
5. What is Marie’s one criticism of Ollie Young Bear? Why did she feel this way?

6. What music reminded Dave of Marie and why?
7. Why is Dave asking his mother about his father questioning Marie, when he knows full well what is going on?
8. Why does Dave feel they will never go to Yellowstone for a vacation?
9. What observation does David make about his grandfather on page 69?
10. How does grandfather pass judgment on Wes's statement about the wind?
11. Grandfather says, "Frank has always been partial to red meat," what does he mean by this statement? What does Grandfather know?
12. How does Dave feel about his Aunt Gloria?
13. Why were all of David's guns single shot?
14. Why did Dave feel he "needed that", when he shot the magpie?
15. What thoughts go through Dave's mind as he gets his uncle's head in his gun's sight?
16. What does Wes tell his wife about his conversation with Frank?
17. When does Wes think Frank will be punished for what he has been doing?
18. Marie is found dead, what is the diagnosis?
19. Len and Dave talk, what does Len say about the difference between his granddad and father being a police officer?
20. What does Dave see the night Marie died?
21. How does Wes process what his son has told him about his brother Frank?
22. Why is it important if Len also saw Frank in the Hayden's yard, the night Marie died?
23. In David's dream, what does he see the Indian's of Bentrock doing?

Chapter 3 – Questions:

1. Where is Marie going to be buried?
2. Wes tells Gail, “I’m doing something.” What does he mean by this?
3. Dave informs us how his father works a case, what does Wes do when he is investigating a case?
4. Where does Wes bring his brother Frank, and why?
5. Why is David disappointed with his father and their man to man talk about Uncle Frank? What happens?
6. What is his father telling him about paint and houses? What is he communicating to Dave with this story?
7. Why does David feel sorry for his father and wonder what his father’s childhood must have been like?
8. Grandfather takes out a cigar from his pocket, what does Dave think he is looking for instead? Why?
9. What does his grandfather accuse his father of doing?
10. What accusations are being made against Uncle Frank?
11. What mental agony is Wes going through at this time?
12. Whom is David instructed to keep locked out of the house?
13. What makes David cry the night his uncle is arrested?
14. What are David’s thoughts as he goes to town to run an errand for his mother?
15. Why does David’s Mom load the shotgun?
16. Who comes to help Dave’s mom?
17. What will be the final charge against Uncle Frank?
18. What does Dave’s mom want now?

19. What does Wes decide to do with Uncle Frank now?
20. Why does Len say, “This will make Mercer county look like the Indian wars and the range wars combined. We’ll be a long time coming back from this.”
21. How does Gail suppose that Frank killed Marie?
22. Why does Wes change his mind, and return from the basement without Frank?
23. What is Frank doing that night in the root cellar? Why?
24. What is the significance of the golf ball story?
25. The next morning what does Wes find in the basement?
26. Why does David take his time climbing the stairs to tell his mother the news?
27. Why does David feel that his uncle has done the right thing for everyone?
28. How did David finally feel about his uncle?

Epilogue – Questions:

1. Why did Gail Hayden say, “I cannot continue living here?”
2. Who else knew the truth about Frank’s death?
3. What has happened to Hayden family?
4. What are David’s thoughts about the divide in the family?
5. Where do the Hayden’s go after leaving Bentrack?
 - a.
 - b.
6. How do Len McAuley and grandfather die? How does David explain this?
7. What is David’s happiest memory of Marie? Why?

8. What do you make of Wes shouting, "Don't blame Montana", when Dave's wife Betsy questions him?
9. Is there any other possible way this story could have ended, without the break up of the Hayden family? Explain.
10. What was the point of no return for the family? Explain.
11. Who is the protagonist of this story? _____
What is a protagonist?
12. Who is the antagonist? _____
What is an antagonist?
13. If you had to sum up the theme of this story in one sentence, what would you write?