

A Study Guide  
for  
Shelby's Story

A Puppy Tale by  
W. Bruce Cameron

Study Guide Written by Judith Robben, M.A. in Education

Chapter 1

(L.4.4) Vocabulary: encountered, extraordinary, urgent

1. (RI.4.1 Details & W.4.2.B) Provide evidence from the text that shows Shelby is connected to a chain and not free to roam around the yard. Use quotation marks to properly quote the text.

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2. (RL.4.1 Inference) Do you think the person who put the brown stuff down on the ground liked dogs and puppies? Use a detail from the text to support your inference.

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3. (RL.4.1 Inference) What do you think the “dark-colored glop” is that the puppies love so much? Use a detail from the text to support your inference.

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4. (Details RI.4.1) What is the main reason the puppy returns to the hole a second time? Use a detail from the text as evidence for your answer.

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5. (Character Thoughts RL.4.3) Explain the puppy’s mixed feelings about leaving mother to go through the hole a second time. Use details to explain why she had different thoughts about leaving.

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Chapter 2

(L.4.4) Vocabulary: contraption, lure, mingled, seized, succulent, enticing

1. (RL.4.1 Inference) From the narrator’s point of view, what are the following objects being described by the author?

“Two round black things— wheels—spinning very quickly”	
“metal boxes on wheels”	

2. (L4.5 Figurative Language) W. Bruce Cameron writes, “Stomachs are a lot of work.” (p. 25) What type of figurative language is this statement? What two things are being compared?

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3. (RL4.1 Inference) After a few encounters with people, the narrator learns that people usually have food; yet she chooses to stay away anyway. What can you infer about her trust for people? Use at least one detail to support your answer.

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4. (RL4.1 Inference) What kind of truck does the narrator decide to follow? What clues in the text are evidence?

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Chapter 3

(L.4.4) Vocabulary: gallop, ventured, crevices, intrigued, oblige, coaxed, aggressive

1. (RL.4.3 Character Analysis) Describe how Megan’s approach to the narrator was so different from all the other people she had met. Choose a character trait to describe Megan and 2 examples from the text to support her character trait.

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2. (RI.4.1 Details) What actions show that the narrator is starting to trust Megan at the end of Chapter 3? Cite at least two details from the text to support your answer.

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#### Chapter 4

(L.4.4) Vocabulary: warily, adoptable, ordinary

1. (RL.4.1 Inference) Why do you think the narrator “falls” for Megan’s bribe and decides to jump in the truck?

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2. (RI.4.1 Details) Where did Megan take the narrator? Use details to support your answer.

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3. (RI.4.1 Details) At the end of Chapter 4, the narrator begins to show a trusting personality. Find evidence in the text to support this character trait. Use at least two details to support your answer.

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Chapter 5

(L4.4) Vocabulary: longingly, affectionate, scavenging, barreled, content

1. (RI.4.1 Details) How can you tell that Megan is a caring person? Cite at least two details from the text.

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2. (RI.4.1 Details & W.4.2.B Quotation Marks) The narrator's name is revealed in Chapter 5. What is her name? Use quotation marks to quote the text as evidence for your answer.

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3. (RL.4.1 Inference) What can you infer about "dogs with wheels where their back legs should be?" What kind of dog could this be?

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4. (RI.4.8 Author's Purpose) W. Bruce Cameron writes, "Greeting dogs made people happy. Greeting people made dogs happy." (p.64) What is the author's purpose for writing these two statements? What does the author want the reader to realize?

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5. (RI.4.1 Details) What are the two requirements for Shelby to prove that she can be trusted?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

6. (RI.4.1 Details) As a reader, what exciting news is revealed at the end of Chapter 5 about Shelby?

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Chapter 6

(L4.4) Vocabulary: snarl, pack (dogs in a pack), irritably, flank, extraordinary

1. (RI4.1 Details) List all five members of Shelby’s instant family (pack) including Shelby.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_

2. (R14.1 Details) What clues in the text tell the reader that Shelby is now in a warmer climate?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. (L4.1 Adjectives and Verbs) W. Bruce Cameron leaves the reader in suspense when he describes an outside creature that Shelby spots. List at least two adjectives and two verbs that are clues which help the reader discover what this creature could be.

Adjectives	Verbs

And the creature is a \_\_\_\_\_.

4. (RL.4.3 Compare Characters) Shelby begins to realize the benefits of belonging to a pack in addition to having a person. Compare the qualities of a dog pack to having a person (from Shelby’s perspective). Use details from the text in your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. (RI4.1 Details) Explain 3 reasons Shelby feels grateful at the end of Chapter 6.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you think Shelby would have felt grateful if she had never been homeless? Explain.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 7

(L4.4) Vocabulary: sternly, boldly, intently, bewildered, baffled

1. (RI4.1 Details) What are the 4 jobs that Shelby learns in Chapter 7?

Shelby's Jobs

Which of these is most challenging for Shelby? Explain using details from the text.

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2. (W4.3.C Summarize) Summarize the 5th job that Shelby learns, which involves a big wooden box. Be sure to use transition words like first, second, third.

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Chapter 8

(L4.4) Vocabulary: unsteadily, avalanche, frantically, smug, pleadingly, suspiciously

1. (RI.4.1 Details and Humor) Author W. Bruce Cameron uses some humor in Chapter 8 when Shelby talks about Teresa and how humans are so clever. Explain his humor with details from the text.

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2. (RI.4.1 Details) Why are Teresa, April, Bruce, and Cathryn training Shelby at the beach? What are they preparing her for? Be specific with a detail from the text.

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3. (L.4.5 Figurative Language) Find the simile on p.108 that also reveals the author's humor about himself.

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4. (RI.4.1 Details) Why do you think the humans keep changing the rules during training on the beach for "Dig?" Why is the buzzer being used during training?

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5. (RI.4.1 Details) Why does Shelby think digging Bruce up from the sand is dumb? Use a detail from the text that explains Shelby's thinking.

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Chapter 9



(L4.4) Vocabulary: clambering, roughhoused

1. (RL.4.1 Inference) What do you think Shelby is explaining when she says, "Some were clambering up small mountains of the white stuff and sliding back down." (p.117)

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2. (RI.4.1 Details and RL4.1 Inference) How can you tell that Shelby is at a movie filming scene? List at least 3 clues that help the reader make this inference.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

3. (RI.4.1 Details) What type of work did Shelby perform for her first movie scene? Explain what she had to do.

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Chapter 10

(L4.4) Vocabulary: alertly, reassuring

1. (RI.4.1 Details) Why is the command, "Go Mark," so important for a movie dog, according to Teresa? Be sure to paraphrase Teresa's explanation.

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2. (RI.4.1 Details) On the second day of movie shooting, when in the quiet town, what two types of work did Shelby perform?

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3. (RL4.1 Inference) After several days pass, Teresa takes Shelby to a new place for Training. One of these places has water, but it is not as big as the beach. W. Bruce Cameron writes, "Instead, this water rushed past as if in a hurry

to get somewhere.” (p.135) What can you infer about this type of water? What clues in the above sentence help the reader determine what type of water this is?

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4. (Humor) How does the author use humor in the last line of Chapter 10? Explain this humorous line.

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### Chapter 11

(L4.4) Vocabulary: carcass, tension, drowsily conscious, gingerly

1. (RI.4.1 Details) Why did the men run to the truck and dive into the back?

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2. (RI.4.5 Problem/Solution) Can you think of a way to make a ham squeak that would be safe for a dog? Explain your invention.

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3. (RI.4.1 Details) Why does Shelby have to dig up a fake mule carcass? Paraphrase Cathryn’s explanation.

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4. (RI.4.1 Details) Why did Shelby stop digging on the first attempt?

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5. (RI.4.1 Details) Does Shelby respond better to people’s groans or to soft voices? Find a detail to support your answer.

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6. (RI.4.8 Author’s Purpose) What message is W. Bruce Cameron trying to relate to the reader about Shelby’s personality when she struggles to get the carcass out of the hole? (Hint: who does Shelby respond best to and who does Shelby want to make happy?)

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Chapter 12

(L4.4) Vocabulary: reluctantly, inspired, confidently

1. (W.4.7 Research) Research the difference between a movie screenwriter and a movie director. Write their differences in the chart below. How are their jobs different?

Movie Screenwriter	Movie Director

2. (W.4.3.C Summarize) Summarize how the movie crew filmed the scene where the dog and Big Kitten (a cougar) share a steak. How did the movie producers get a dog and cougar to actually share a steak without fighting? Be sure to use transition words like first, second, third in your summary.

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3. (RL.4.3 Describe Event) Explain why Bruce says, “She’s a dog. . . . They don’t do serious.” (p.163) Why is Bruce laughing at Shelby’s behavior while the others groan when the bag tears and the apples roll?

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Chapter 13

(L4.4) Vocabulary: contentment

1. (RI.4.1 Details) Explain why this day is Shelby’s big day. Provide two tasks that Shelby must perform.

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2. (RL.4.3 Describe Event) Describe how Shelby will perform the avalanche scene. In your details from the text, be sure to also include how the movie producers made a fake avalanche.

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3. (RI.4.1 Details) Why is Shelby frustrated with the word “Cut!”? Use details from the text to support your answer.

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4. (RL.4.3 Explain Event) Why is Shelby not obeying the command “Come” when she is inside the cozy room?

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Explain how Teresa finally got Shelby to come out of the cozy room and dig through the snow.

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Chapter 14

(L4.4) Vocabulary: urgently, panicked, generated, fondly, premiere

1. (RI.4.1 Details) Why was Shelby digging in the wrong place according to the movie crew? What caused the confusion? Use a detail in your answer.

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2. (RI.4.1 Details) When Shelby returns home, she discusses what a home means to her. What 3 things make a home for Shelby?

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3. (RI.4.1 Details) Shelby gets a bath, a brushing, and a visit with all her old friends. Where was she going? Explain the occasion.

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4. (W4.1.a.b.c Opinion Writing) Does first person point of view change your opinion of a dog? How has your opinion of dogs changed from the beginning to the end of Shelby's Story?

My opinion of dogs at the <b>beginning</b> ....	My opinion of dogs at the <b>end</b> ....

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5. (RL.4.3 Character Analysis) Shelby has a very warm and friendly personality. Choose 3 character traits to describe Shelby, and provide details from the text to support these character traits.

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6. (RL.4.1 Inference) Shelby's thoughts guide the reader through a dog's life. Many of Shelby's thoughts are about Teresa and how she wants to make Teresa happy. Do you think dogs can sense their owner's feelings such as: sadness, happiness, excitement? Use details from the text to support your inference.

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