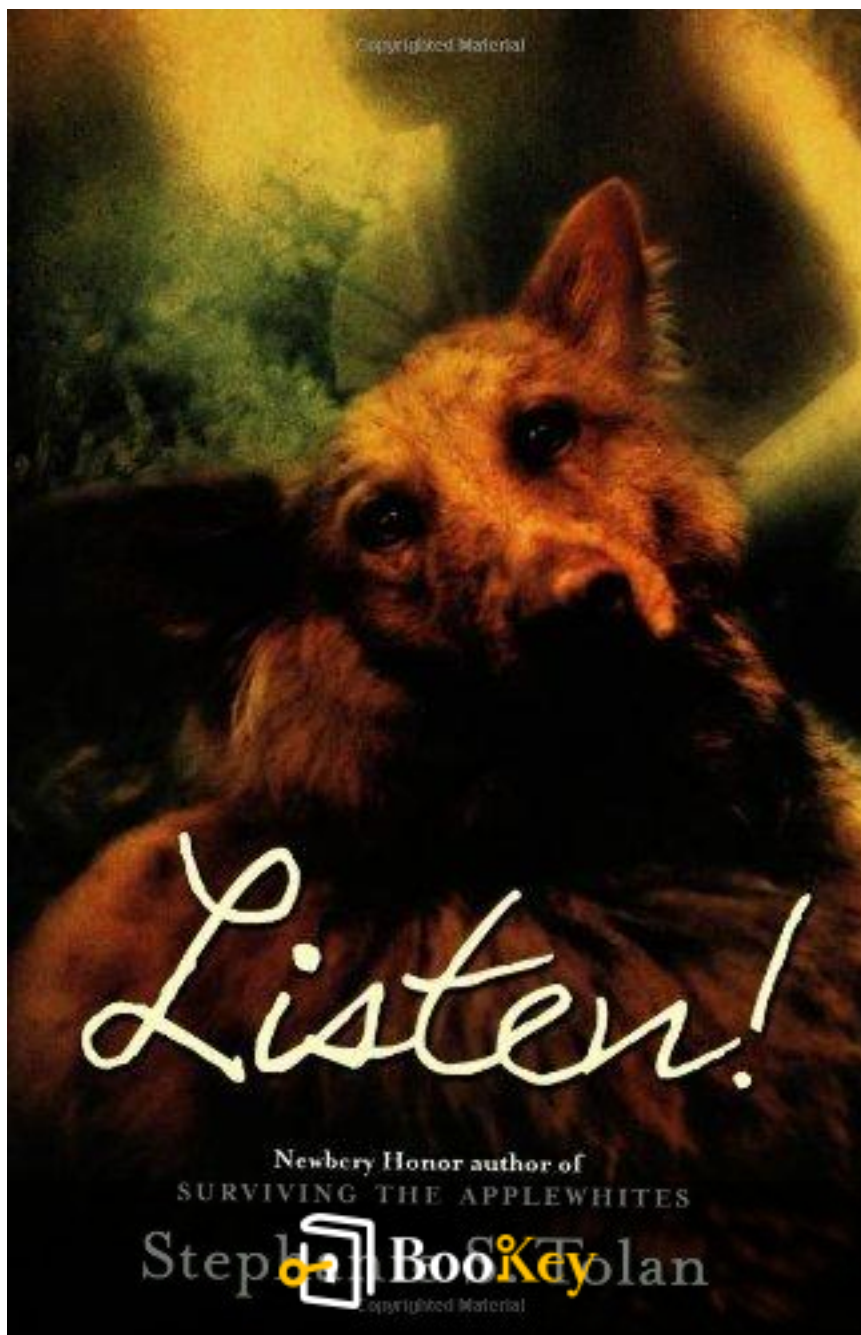


Listen! PDF (Limited Copy)

Stephanie S. Tolan



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Listen! Summary

Understanding the power of listening in relationships.

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About the book

In "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, readers are invited into a compelling world where the delicate threads of connection and understanding are explored through the eyes of a gifted child who feels profoundly different from his peers. As the protagonist grapples with the challenges of being misunderstood, Tolan deftly unveils the profound importance of empathy, communication, and the transformational power of truly listening to one another. This heartfelt narrative not only illuminates the struggles of those considered 'different' but also challenges us to reflect on our own perceptions, urging us to open our hearts and minds to the stories that lie beneath the surface. Prepare to be moved as Tolan challenges us to embrace the beauty and complexity of human experience, ultimately prompting a deeper appreciation for the kinds of listening that can change lives.

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About the author

Stephanie S. Tolan is an acclaimed author and advocate for gifted and twice-exceptional children, renowned for her ability to weave thoughtful narratives that delve into the complexities of childhood and the challenges faced by exceptional individuals. With a rich background in both education and writing, Tolan has dedicated her career to exploring themes of identity, acceptance, and the transformative power of storytelling. Her works, which include novels, essays, and articles, are characterized by insightful character development and a deep understanding of the emotional landscapes of her young protagonists. Through her engaging and often poignant tales, Tolan not only captivates readers but also raises awareness about the unique needs and potential of gifted youth.

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Chapter 1 Summary: 1. Dog

In the opening chapter of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, we meet Charley, a twelve-year-old girl grappling with the aftermath of a traumatic car accident that has left her physically and emotionally scarred. As she walks along a dam, trying to build strength after being confined to a wheelchair, we get a glimpse into her strained relationship with her father, who insists that she must exercise and return to "normal." His bossy demeanor contrasts sharply with Charley's yearning for independence and her frustration at being forced into societal expectations.

As Charley navigates the dusty road, she reflects on the summer she will miss out on with her best friend Amy, who is heading off on a trip that will separate them. The bond they shared, filled with plans of swimming, movies, and amusement parks, is overshadowed by Charley's sense of betrayal—she feels abandoned as Amy pursues a new opportunity without her. This highlights themes of friendship, loss, and the struggle to accept change. Charley's pain is not just physical; it's intertwined with feelings of loneliness and a longing for the past. Her attempts to cope are symbolic, from jamming her walking stick into the ground to releasing her anger through physical exertion.

The chapter crescendos with a moment of connection and wonder when Charley spots a mysterious dog in the woods. Its wild beauty captivates her,

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and for a few fleeting seconds, all else fades away. However, the dog vanishes just as quickly as it appears, mirroring Charley's own feelings of loss and her struggle with the realities of her life. This encounter sparks a glimmer of hope amid her turmoil. Overall, the chapter sets the stage for Charley's journey of healing, as she faces not only the physical challenges of recovery but also the complex emotional landscape of growing up and moving forward after trauma.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of embracing change and finding hope amidst turmoil.

Critical Interpretation: As you navigate your own life's challenges, remember that, like Charley, embracing change can lead to unexpected moments of hope. When faced with situations that seem overwhelmingly difficult, take a moment to reflect on the beauty around you, just as Charley found solace in the fleeting appearance of the wild dog. Allow yourself to feel the pain and anger, but also open your heart to the possibilities that lie ahead. Embracing change might push you out of your comfort zone, yet it can also lead to personal growth and deeper connections with others, helping you to forge a path towards healing and resilience.

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Chapter 2 Summary: 2. Promise

In Chapter 2 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, Charley finds herself reflecting on a wild dog she saw earlier while enjoying a walk around the lake. The chapter kicks off with a chance encounter with the Davis family in their SUV, which leads to a conversation about a stray dog named Wolfie, who has been evading capture due to his fear of people. Mrs. Davis and her children, Jeremy and Bethanne, fill Charley in on the dog's unfortunate circumstances; he's malnourished and cautious, making it difficult for anyone to approach him. The conversation deepens Charley's empathy for Wolfie and ignites a desire to help him, although she grapples with her lack of experience in caring for dogs.

Mrs. Davis shares how they've tried to involve Animal Control to catch Wolfie, but he's just too clever for them. As notions of rescuing Wolfie swirl in Charley's mind, Mrs. Davis expresses hope that someone will take him in. Jeremy's skeptical remarks about the challenges ahead don't deter Charley; she feels a magnetic pull towards the wild dog. Despite initially backing away from the idea of keeping a dog, Charley reflects on the captivating, wild essence of Wolfie that stirred something in her heart.

As their meeting concludes, Charley becomes determined to try and find a way to lure him with Sadie, the friendly golden retriever belonging to the Davis family. Mrs. Davis hands Charley a can of dog food, supporting her



plan and sending her on her way. Charley and Sadie set off down the trail, and she can't help but feel both anxiety and excitement about the possibility of rescuing the wild dog. As they navigate the uneven ground, Charley encounters struggles with her limp but carries on, heartened by the thought that Wolfie might be following behind.

By the end of the chapter, Charley glimpses the wild dog slipping through the trees, hinting at a growing connection between them. The themes of empathy, resilience, and the yearning for companionship shine through in Charley's determination to save Wolfie, illustrating her internal conflict and bravery as she steps into the unknown.

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Chapter 3: 3. The Woods Trail

Charley faces her challenges as she navigates a gritty trail, using her walking stick for support while battling her pain. After descending a steep hill, she approaches Hawk Pond, where memories of her mother, a renowned nature photographer who died in a plane crash, flood her mind. The moment is bittersweet and filled with the struggle to keep those memories at bay. Poison ivy thickens the trail, symbolic of the lingering presence of her mother that Charley both longs to escape and cannot ignore.

While her dog Sadie plays in the water, Charley grapples with her past, reflecting on her mother's obsession with capturing nature. She recalls their shared moments, overshadowed now by grief and loss, as she tries to focus on her present task. As she rests by the pond, memories drift back, recalling specific photographs her mother took, reminders of the bond they shared.

A wild dog crosses her path, embodying fear and neglect, prompting Charley to confront her feelings about rescue and responsibility. She wants to help him but feels an emotional barrier, struggling with her own ability to take on

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Chapter 4 Summary: 4. Feeding

In this chapter of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, we follow Charley as she embarks on a journey that intertwines her feelings of solitude, resilience, and the connection she finds with a wild dog she names Coyote. As she and her playful companion, Sadie, make their way along the trail, Charley reflects on their surroundings and the wildlife that is usually scared away by Sadie's exuberance. Although she hasn't seen Coyote since their last meeting at Hawk Pond, the thought of him lingers in her mind, igniting hopes and fears within her.

Charley experiences both physical and emotional fatigue during the trek; she stops to rest on a boulder and eventually a tree stump, contemplating abandoning her intention to bring food to Coyote. Yet, when Sadie splashes mud on her during their walk, it brings a moment of joy amidst her fatigue, highlighting the bond between them. This playful incident also reminds Charley of her love for nature photography, where patience and stillness are crucial.

Upon returning home, Charley is greeted by the familiar sights and sounds of her surroundings, including barking from the neighbors' German shepherds. But it's Coyote's appearance that deeply resonates with her; his cautious, wild demeanor sparks a sense of connection and sympathy from Charley, who sees herself reflected in his cautious behavior. She actively

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decides to feed him, gathering a bowl of dog food and stepping outside, her heart racing with anticipation.

Despite her efforts to coax Coyote out, he initially hesitates, clearly wary of the situation. Charley watches from the window, struck by the mix of hunger and fear displayed by the wild dog. Her determination to care for him strengthens as she discusses her plans with Sarita, the household help. Sarita acknowledges Coyote's presence and raises concerns about how Charley's father might react to her intention to bring the dog into their home.

Throughout the chapter, themes of connection, the struggle for companionship, and the duality of wildness and domestication emerge. Charley's resolve to care for Coyote symbolizes her yearning for a bond in a world that often feels lonely. As the chapter closes, it's clear that Charley is ready to fight for her desire to welcome the wild dog into her life, showcasing her emerging independence and compassion.

Key Points	Description
Character	Charley
Companion	Wild dog named Coyote and playful companion Sadie
Themes	Connection, companionship, wildness, domestication
Journey	Charley experiences solitude, resilience, and the bond with Coyote

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Key Points	Description
Reflections	Charley reflects on nature, wildlife, and her feelings during the trek
Moments of Joy	Sadie's playful mud splashing brings joy amidst fatigue
Homecoming	Charley returns home with a sense of comfort, except that she's deeply affected by Coyote's presence
Determination	Charley resolves to care for Coyote despite her father's potential disapproval
Conclusion	Charley's companionship with Coyote symbolizes her yearning for connection and emerging independence

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Chapter 5 Summary: 5. Night

In Chapter 5 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, we find Charley settling into bed, watching television when her father, Paul Morgan, comes home. Their conversation turns to Charley's desire to rescue a wild dog named Coyote, whom she feels a deep connection with. Her father is hesitant, insisting that taming a wild dog isn't advisable and suggesting that a puppy would be a better option since it would lack the scars of a troubled past. Charley vehemently argues that Coyote is not dangerous; he's just scared and alone. This reveals her determination and passion to help the dog, demonstrating a maturity beyond her years.

Paul eventually relents, agreeing to let her bring Coyote home, but with a stern warning about the potential dangers. His concession highlights a turning point in their relationship, as he acknowledges Charley's emotional needs while still expressing concern for safety. As Charley drifts off to sleep, she visualizes Coyote in the woods, sensing an underlying loneliness in both her and the dog.

However, her restful night quickly turns into a nightmare that transports her back to chaotic scenes, reminiscent of her past experiences in the hospital after her accident. The panic grips her as she recalls feelings of desperation and confusion, attempting to escape an overwhelming darkness. Her vivid dreams reflect her unresolved trauma and the lingering fears that



overshadow her recovery journey.

Charley finds comfort in breathing techniques taught to her by Tony, a physical therapist, to mitigate her panic. Despite her efforts, the memories of her accident and the pain of her injury resurface, reminding her of the fragility of memory and identity. These themes of trauma, the longing for connection, and the struggle to heal are interwoven throughout the chapter, showcasing Charley's complex emotional landscape and determination to reclaim her life. Ultimately, she drifts into sleep with the hopeful image of Coyote by her side, a symbol of both her yearning for solace and her fight against the shadows of her past.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Determination to Connect and Heal

Critical Interpretation: Imagine embracing the courage to face your fears, much like Charley does with her determination to save Coyote, the wild dog. This chapter inspires you to recognize that your own struggles and traumas, while daunting, are part of your journey toward healing. Just as Charley connects with Coyote's pain and fights to bring him home, you too can seek out the connections that foster your recovery and growth. It reminds you that even in the presence of fear or uncertainty, your passion to help others and yourself can illuminate your path forward. So, let Charley's dedication serve as a beacon, urging you to not only confront your past but also to build bonds that empower you to reclaim your identity and embrace the possibility of healing.

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Chapter 6: 6. The Taming

In Chapter 6 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, we join Charley as she embarks on an ambitious plan she calls "The Taming," marking June 11 on her calendar with a bold red "2," symbolizing the start of her mission to win over Coyote, a wild and frightened dog. Charley, who longs to bring Coyote into her life—safely in her room at night—believes that with patience and love, she can change his perception of humans from fear to trust.

Charley heads to the pet store with her housekeeper, Sarita, feeling anxiety about the car ride, reflecting on her complicated feelings about safety and control. At the store, the vibrant displays filled with various pet supplies make her feel conflicted; she doesn't want Coyote to be just another pet. While shopping, Sarita enforces the rule of dry dog food, believing it's the practical choice, but Charley feels a yearning for more thoughtful care. As they navigate the aisles, Charley makes selections—dishes, a nylon collar and leash—while struggling to gauge Sarita's silent opinions.

After the shopping trip, Charley ventures out to the woods trail to collect

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Alex Walk

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Chapter 7 Summary: 7. One Week

In Chapter 7 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, we find Charley grappling with her ongoing mission to befriend Coyote, the elusive dog she has been feeding for a week. Standing at the dining room window, she watches Coyote cautiously approach the food bowl she placed at the end of the driveway, continuing to demonstrate the same wariness he exhibited when they first met. Despite her best efforts, Coyote remains terrified and distrustful, prompting Charley to reflect on the traumatic past he might have endured before finding refuge at Eagle Lake.

As Charley observes Coyote, she begins to understand that her strategy of simply feeding him isn't enough. Unlike wild animals that become more comfortable around people through food, Coyote associates it with danger—and this realization disheartens her. Adapting her plan becomes necessary, especially with the insight shared by the townspeople about Coyote's behaviors and past. Though Mrs. Hobbes mentions that Coyote previously followed other dogs around the lake, indicating that he indeed desires companionship, his fear makes it hard for him to approach Charley.

Charley is also dealing with her own discomfort from a poison ivy rash. She reluctantly tries a home remedy suggested by Sarita, which surprisingly works, giving her some relief. Sarita's playful teasing about knowing everything leads Charley to consider using play as a way to connect with

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Coyote rather than just food. Inspired, Charley decides to engage Sadie, her loyal dog, in play to entice Coyote out from the safety of the trees. When she throws a stick for Sadie, Coyote watches intently, revealing a glimmer of interest that suggests he wants to join the fun.

As the dogs play, Charley witnesses the first signs of confusion and curiosity from Coyote. When the chase ensues, Coyote begins to come out of his shell, barking and joining in. During this playful encounter, Charley feels a profound connection with Coyote, realizing that despite his struggles, he craves the companionship of a family. The chapter underscores themes of trust, companionship, and understanding as Charley navigates both her aspiration to nurture Coyote and her growing bond with Sadie.

Ultimately, Charley's journey evolves from merely feeding Coyote to seeking a deeper relationship—one rooted in trust, play, and understanding that perhaps a simple game could finally help him see her as more than just a threat. As she contemplates how to transfer the bungee cord connection from Sadie to herself, it's clear that the path to winning Coyote's trust will require more than just routine; it will demand creativity, patience, and love.

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Chapter 8 Summary: 8. Sadie

In Chapter 8 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, Charley sets off on a walk, only to find her friend Sadie chained up and unable to join her. Instead, Coyote, the other dog, lies nearby, hesitant to follow Charley as he is drawn to Sadie's presence. This moment reflects a key theme of the story: the connection between spirit and companionship. Charley understands that Coyote needs Sadie to feel secure, much like she relied on her friend Amy during her first day of middle school.

Deciding against conventional dog-training methods, Charley prioritizes their bond over strict obedience. She releases Sadie and watches as the two dogs joyfully reunite and play, ultimately leading into their familiar walking routine. However, Sadie's playful nature takes a turn when she grabs Charley's walking stick, mistaking it for a toy. Charley wrestles with Sadie to reclaim the stick, leading to a humorous and frustrating chase that sees Sadie drop the stick into the pond.

Charley's irritation grows as she contemplates how to retrieve the stick without getting into the poison ivy patch or the water. Yet, she soon realizes walking without the stick isn't as difficult as she feared, marking a significant moment of personal growth and progress. The chapter concludes with Charley reflecting on her journey and noting how Coyote has always stayed close to her, suggesting that perhaps the stick had been more of a



crutch than a necessity. The chapter captures a pivotal moment in Charley's development, illustrating her evolving independence and understanding of the interconnectedness of companionship and trust.

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Chapter 9: 9. Two Weeks

In Chapter 9 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, Charley experiences significant changes in her interactions with her wild dog, Coyote, and faces some internal struggles as she tries to understand him better. Initially, Charley feels a connection with Sadie, her dog, and wonders if Sadie intentionally took away her walking stick because she sensed Coyote's fear of it. Although Mrs. Davis dismisses this notion, Charley believes there might be a deeper, spiritual connection, an inkling that artistic play is at work.

After giving up her stick, Charley enjoys special moments with her father and the dogs while discovering new paths and challenges on their walks. Coyote begins to change; he transitions from a wild being to a more dog-like creature who can smile and appears increasingly comfortable around Charley. As summer intensifies, Charley adjusts her walking time to avoid the heat and shifts her routine to enrich her bond with Coyote. In a bid to train Coyote, she devises a plan inspired by Jane Goodall's work with chimpanzees, believing that spending time in Coyote's territory might lead to

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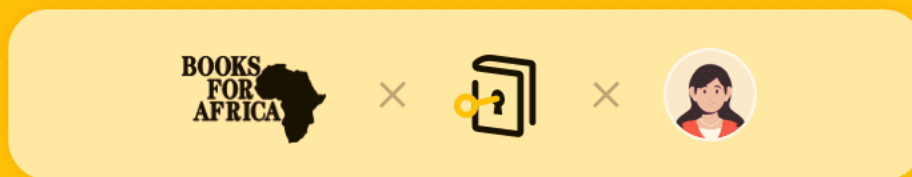
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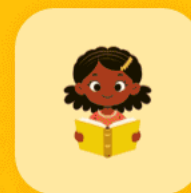
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Chapter 10 Summary: 10. Rain

In Chapter 10 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, we follow Charley as she navigates her feelings of loss and longing during a rainy day. The chapter opens with Charley vividly dreaming of a serene moment with Coyote, her dog, and the comforting presence of her deceased mother. This blissful escape is abruptly shattered by the reality of waking up to the relentless sound of rain, which symbolizes both her sadness and the isolating void left by her mother's absence.

Charley finally gets out of bed, reflecting on her father's current disposition, which is a stark contrast to the collaborative joy they once found in cooking meals together. He seems overwhelmed and disinterested, tapping into Charley's own frustration over his inability to engage with life post-tragedy. Even though Charley can handle things herself, she feels the weight of their unspoken tension and the emotional distance that has grown between them.

Determined to fulfill her responsibility to Coyote, Charley gears up for a walk despite the weather. As she steps outside, she embraces the sensory experience of rain—the smell, the sounds, and the soft colors of nature. Yet, she soon discovers that Coyote is missing. When she finally finds him, drenched and muddy under a picnic table, she calls out to him, sensing his reluctance to embrace the rain. Together with Sadie, the neighbor's dog, they set off on the trail, but Coyote appears somewhat distant.

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During her hike, Charley faces a sudden setback after tripping and falling into a patch of poison ivy. Struggling with both physical pain and emotional turmoil, she feels an outpour of tears that mixes with the rain. This moment signifies a breaking point for her, revealing deep-seated grief that she has been holding back.

In a surprising turn, Coyote comes close to her, his gentle touch igniting a profound connection between them. It's a moment of unspoken communication, where Charley realizes that there is still a bond between her and the living beings around her. She reflects on the teachings of her mother, urging her to "listen," not just to the sounds of nature but to the deeper emotions within herself.

As Charley regains her composure and rises to her feet, she acknowledges Coyote, thanking him—an indication of her rekindled strength and recognition that, while she carries the burden of loss, she is not alone. The chapter beautifully intertwines themes of grief, the search for connection, and the profound impact of nature, highlighting Charley's journey toward healing and her determination to embrace life despite the clouds of sorrow that linger.

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Chapter 11 Summary: 11. Trees and Stones...

In Chapter 11 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, Charley Morgan grapples with the emptiness left by her mother's absence while living in the family's modified house at Eagle Lake. The chapter opens with Charley standing in a dim hallway, staring at her mother's studio, a space filled with memories but now cloaked in silence and dust. Her mother, who once filled this room with life and energy through her photography of nature, had mysteriously vanished after a plane crash, leaving Charley to navigate her grief alone.

After watching her friends Sadie and Coyote swim away, Charley finds herself feeling isolated and aimless, unsure of what to do with her day. She tries to distract herself with chores and entertainment but ultimately descends into the studio, compelled by memories of her mother's voice urging her to "listen." The act of opening the door to the studio becomes a significant moment for her—a confrontation with her past.

Inside, she's immediately struck by her mother's photographs of Eagle Lake, which cover the walls, and she reflects on her mother's belief that all of nature's wonders could be found in their surroundings. Charley discovers a collection of photos and framed work, particularly a notable image of a stump she named the "fairy castle." This photograph symbolizes her childhood imagination and the magical experiences she once shared with her mother. Each glimpse of the photo evokes vivid memories of enchantment,



highlighting Charley's deep sense of loss since her mother's departure.

As Charley explores the studio, she observes the remnants of her mother's work, now turned into remnants of a life packed away. In particular, she notices a new book titled "Trees and Stones Will Teach You" that her mother had authored, reinforcing the bond they shared through nature and her mother's legacy as a photographer. The title quote strikes a chord, hinting at the lessons nature holds and the wisdom Charley seeks in the midst of her sorrow and confusion.

The chapter encapsulates themes of loss, memory, and the enduring connection between Charley and her mother, even in her absence. Charley leaves the studio feeling conflicted but takes the book with her, symbolizing a desire to hold onto her mother's spirit and the hope of discovering answers to her many unanswered questions. Through vivid imagery and poignant reflections, Tolant encapsulates the emotional landscape Charley traverses, making the reader acutely aware of the fragility of life and the strength found in nature's lessons.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The enduring connection to nature helps in processing grief.

Critical Interpretation: In the heart of your sorrow, remember that nature is a teacher, offering solace and wisdom as you navigate through loss. Just like Charley discovered her mother's spirit through photographs and memories, you too can find healing in the beauty around you. Each tree, each whisper of the wind holds lessons, reminding you that even in absence, love and connection persist. Embrace these moments; they can guide you towards understanding and peace.

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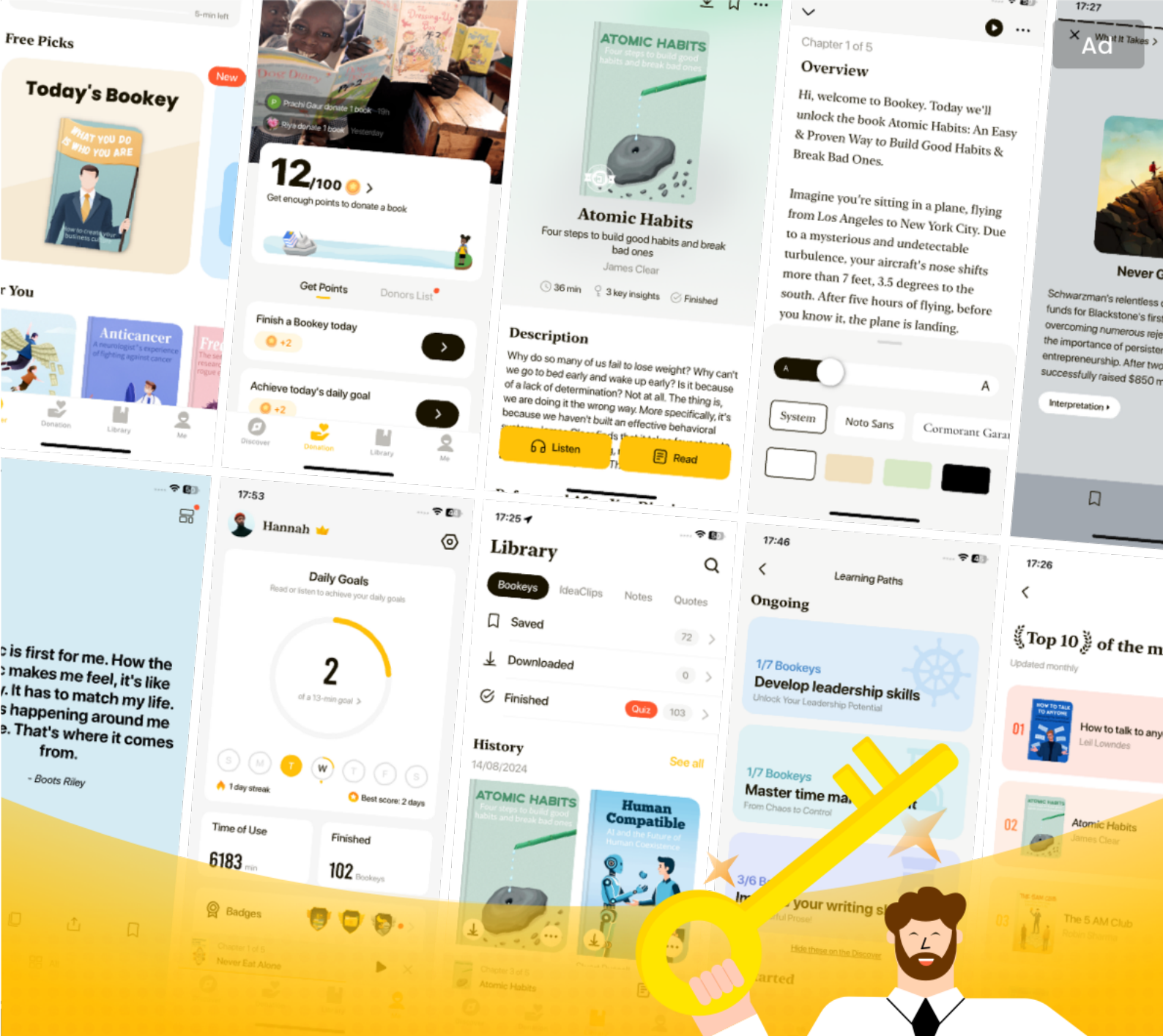
Chapter 12: 12. Photographs

In Chapter 12 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, Charley finds herself deeply engaged with a book of her late mother Colleen Morgan's photographs, stirring a flood of emotions and memories. As she lies on her bed, listening to the rain, she contemplates the abrupt absence of her mother and the memories of their time spent in nature together. The book becomes a portal that connects Charley to her mother, showcasing Colleen's stunning photography of the natural world, which always surprised Charley with its unique perspectives.

As she flips through the pages, she reflects on the artistry behind her mother's work, marveling at how Colleen could capture fleeting moments that escape the ordinary eye. Charley feels a longing to understand her mother's choices, particularly why she pursued photography and what drew her to the rainforest before her untimely departure. Each photograph reveals layers of meaning—like a cedar waxwing delicately passing a berry to another, or a ladybug towering over blades of grass—reminding her of the small miracles in life that her mother cherished.

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Chapter 13 Summary: 13. Miracle

In Chapter 13 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, we find Charley enjoying a peaceful afternoon by the lake, having lunch with her faithful dog Sadie and a wary but curious Coyote, a wild dog that she has been trying to befriend. As Charley shares her leftover sandwich crusts, the warmth of the moment is interrupted when Sadie's owner, Bethanne, calls for her, prompting Sadie to eagerly swim across the lake. Coyote usually follows her, but this time he makes an unexpected choice — he decides to stay with Charley instead.

This moment becomes a pivotal point for Charley, as she realizes that Coyote is starting to bond with her, choosing her over his instinct to follow Sadie. To reward Coyote for his decision, she carefully goes inside to retrieve some liver, his favorite treat. Charley's heart races with excitement and hope as she returns to the terrace, speaking gently to Coyote. Their interaction is filled with nuance; she barely breathes, too afraid to make any sudden movements that might scare him away.

With a series of tender exchanges involving liver, Coyote gradually inches closer, and there's a heartwarming climax when he finally takes the liver directly from her hand, signaling trust and connection. This act brings tears of joy to Charley's eyes, and she is overwhelmed by the moment, whispering encouragement to him. However, once the treats are gone, Coyote returns to his spot under the camellia bush, demonstrating the mixed emotions of

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wildness and trust.

Charley shares the news of Coyote's choice with Mrs. Davis, reinforcing her sense of accomplishment and progress in building this unique relationship. Later that evening, despite Coyote's absence as she checks on him, Charley discovers a sense of fulfillment. Sarita, her friend, assures her that it has been a good day, but Charley knows it has been more than good; it has been the best day she's had all summer, full of growth, connection, and the small miracles that come from patience and love. This chapter beautifully encapsulates themes of friendship, trust, and the bonds that can form between humans and animals, highlighting the delicate dance of connection and choice.

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Chapter 14 Summary: 14. Watchdog

In Chapter 14 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, Charley begins her day with excitement when she sees Coyote, the wild dog she has been befriending, standing at her driveway. She greets him warmly, but he hesitates to approach, clearly still feeling skittish and vulnerable since Sadie, his canine companion, is not around. Charley understands that Coyote has a different disposition when alone, haunted by the dangers of the wild. Her comforting words help him take a cautious step forward, reminding her of her own experiences of waking up to new realities after change.

As the chapter unfolds, Charley observes Coyote's growing comfort in their shared space, marking the territory he now claims as his own. The interactions between them begin to shift from cautious meetings to more confident exchanges; Coyote gradually accepts food from Charley's hand, a significant step in their relationship. Meanwhile, he displays his protective instincts, barking at a fishing boat that passes by, showcasing how he sees his environment more as a territory rather than a dangerous wilderness.

Their routine settles into a comforting pattern of morning exchanges, sharing moments with Sadie, and observing the dogs' unique ways of communicating. Charley finds joy in these interactions, feeling as if she could document the subtleties of their relationship like a wildlife researcher. However, the tranquility is disrupted during the Fourth of July as fireworks

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pop in the distance, sending Coyote into a panic. He disappears, reminding Charley of the fragility of their bond and the unpredictable nature of his wild instincts.

Despite her worries and the lingering fears that he might not return, the chapter concludes on a hopeful note. The next day, Charley finds that Coyote has come back, having taken care of himself in the wild while she fretted. This reinforces the themes of survival, trust, and the bond between humans and animals, illustrating the delicate balance between nature and companionship. Charley's journey with Coyote continues as she navigates her connection with him, learning more about trust, independence, and the lingering bonds that tie them together.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embracing Vulnerability in Relationships

Critical Interpretation: In this chapter, Charley's patient approach to Coyote highlights the beauty of embracing vulnerability in relationships. Just like Coyote hesitates at first, you might find yourself holding back in your interactions due to fear or past experiences. Yet, Charley's encouragement teaches us that allowing others to slowly gain your trust—and in return, offering them your own trust—can foster deeper connections. By stepping beyond your comfort zone and accepting the uncertainty that comes with opening up to others, you not only cultivate trust but also discover a profound sense of strength and resilience within yourself, paving the way for richer, more meaningful relationships.

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Chapter 15: 15. Five Weeks

In Chapter 15 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, Charley finds herself lost in memories as she looks through her late mother's book, captivated by a photo of a fairy ring of mushrooms in the woods. This image stirs deep feelings of nostalgia and loss, reminding her of the magical childhood moments spent exploring nature with her mother. Although she once held onto childish beliefs like fairies, she now feels an overwhelming desire to escape into the woods, away from the painful reminders of her mother's absence represented in the book.

Reflecting on her life over the past two years, Charley realizes how much she has distanced herself from the familiar woods of Eagle Lake. Influenced by her family's changes and her new life focused on school and friends, she has neglected her connection to nature. With Coyote, her beloved dog, now staying on her side of the lake, she decides to re-enter the world of the woods, recognizing how much both she and Coyote have missed those wild adventures.

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Chapter 16 Summary: 16. The Pine Grove

In Chapter 16 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, we find Charley navigating a transformative summer filled with complex emotions. The chapter begins with Sarita giving her a letter from Amy, which Charley has little desire to read. Despite Sarita's encouraging intentions for Charley to socialize more, she prefers the solitude of her connection with Coyote, her loyal companion. Charley reflects on how her feelings toward Amy have shifted; instead of bitterness, she finds a kind of acceptance, realizing she is having a better summer without Amy's presence.

The next morning, Coyote leads Charley on an adventure through the woods, pushing her to explore beyond familiar trails. As they venture into the forests, Charley decides to leave the trail and forge her own path into the thick undergrowth. She stumbles upon a magical clearing known as the Pine Grove, a serene and enchanting place that feels entirely separate from her everyday life. Here, the atmosphere is calm and mystical, with tall trees creating a natural space where Charley can relax and connect with nature. She experiences a deep sense of peace, enhanced by the sounds of wildlife and her own rhythmic breathing.

As Charley explores, she becomes increasingly aware of the interconnectedness of nature. Her thoughts drift to Coyote, and she imagines him hunting, leading to a brief vision of him chasing deer through the

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woods. This moment emphasizes Charley's bond with Coyote and highlights themes of freedom, connection to nature, and the simplicity of childhood adventures.

Eventually, the comfort of the Pine Grove fades, and reality sets in as Charley decides to return home. She is eager to shed her jeans and the heat of the day. The chapter closes with Coyote appearing, muddy and bloodied from his own escapades, creating a vivid image that mirrors the wild, untamed adventures of their summer. The narrative beautifully captures Charley's growth, her evolving relationship with nature, and the joy of discovering new places while grappling with her feelings of loneliness and companionship.

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Chapter 17 Summary: 17. Touch

In Chapter 17 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, Charley experiences an intense connection with Coyote, the wild dog she has taken in. The chapter opens with Charley feeling a chill despite the heat, as she grapples with the reality of a cut on Coyote's nose—a wound she envisioned in her mind before seeing it in person. This moment sparks a profound realization for Charley about her ability to perceive Coyote's world, blurring the lines between imagination and reality.

As she returns home, her thoughts drift to her father's skepticism about her previous fantasies. She longs for someone to confide in, but feels isolated since her mother, who might have believed her, is no longer around. Instead, she finds solace in flipping through her mother's photography book, connecting with the way her mother viewed nature through a unique lens—particularly as she sees images that resonate with her recent experiences.

Watching Coyote and her other dog, Sadie, play outside, Charley reflects on the intimacy of touch. For Charley, petting Coyote becomes an emotional breakthrough; she finally touches him after many days of keeping her distance, paralleling the admiration of Jane Goodall with her work with wild chimpanzees. This simple gesture becomes a moment of triumph and connection, symbolizing Charley's growth and understanding of both herself



and her wild companion.

Themes of connection, the boundary between reality and imagination, and the significance of touch permeate the chapter. Charley's struggle with her abilities and her relationship with the memory of her mother highlights her journey toward acceptance and understanding of her own emotions and experiences. By the end of the chapter, Charley not only acknowledges the intimacy that comes with her relationship with Coyote but also appreciates how vital these experiences are in shaping who she is becoming.

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Chapter 18: 18. Regular Dog

In Chapter 18 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, Charley wakes up full of hope after petting Coyote the day before, but as the day unfolds, it becomes clear that nothing has truly changed. Coyote continues to keep his distance from Charley, seemingly more skittish than ever. The absence of Sadie, who is likely chained up while the Davises are at church, further isolates Coyote, and Charley is left feeling disheartened.

As Charley shares her experience of petting Coyote with her father over Sunday brunch, he insists on getting Coyote a collar and taking him to the vet for necessary vaccinations. Charley's heart sinks at the thought of forcing a collar on Coyote or taking him in a car, fearing he would associate it with past trauma. Her mother, Sarita, tries to reassure her, noting that Coyote's life is already much better with them than it was before.

Despite her worries, Charley makes progress when Coyote begins to accept liver treats from her hand, but he still avoids her touch whenever she has the collar nearby. She devises multiple strategies to capture Coyote with the

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Chapter 19 Summary: 19. Survivor

In Chapter 19 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, the story focuses on Charley's journey with Coyote, her newly adopted dog, as they navigate the challenges of his health and their evolving bond. Charley prepares for a vet visit, hoping to make the experience as stress-free as possible for Coyote. She gives him a tranquilizer pill hidden in liverwurst to ensure he remains calm when Dr. Frazier, a kind and efficient vet, arrives for a checkup. Charley feels both anxious and proud as she secures the rabies tag on Coyote's collar, signifying his official membership in the Morgan family.

However, the narrative takes a sudden turn when Charley learns that Coyote has heartworms, a potentially deadly condition. This news terrifies her, but Dr. Frazier reassures her that with treatment, Coyote has every chance to survive. Despite her father's initial reluctance when he hears about the treatment's cost, he ultimately supports Charley, affirming Coyote's worth and fighting spirit.

The chapter also explores Charley's reflections on survival, catalyzed by her desire to visit Tree, a significant landmark by the lake. She sets out in a canoe to connect with Tree and, symbolically, with her own feelings of resilience. As she paddles, Coyote follows her along the shore, exhibiting a newfound willingness to swim and explore. When Charley reaches Tree, she feels an emotional connection, recognizing the life force within it, and she



longingly wishes to impart some of that strength to Coyote.

Amid all the worry and uncertainty, this chapter highlights themes of survival, connection between humans and animals, and the inherent resilience of life. Charley's determination to care for Coyote mirrors her own journey of growth and the sacred bond they share, underscoring the idea that true strength lies in community and love. As Charley reaches out to Tree, she feels a comforting acknowledgment, suggesting that nature has its own way of answering and supporting those who seek it.

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Chapter 20 Summary: 20. Two Steps Forward

In Chapter 20 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, we find Charley in a cozy but rainy evening at home on the first of August. As the storm rumbles outside, Charley finds herself lost in thoughts of Coyote, the wary dog who has slowly started to trust her. Earlier in the day, Coyote had made a significant leap by seeking shelter close to the house, a sight that fills Charley with hope.

Determined to care for him, Charley decides to venture out to give Coyote a bedtime snack. Despite her father's surprise at her late-night mission, she brushes off his concerns, motivated by the thought of how much Coyote needs the food after a long day without eating. Equipped with a big dog biscuit, she calls for Coyote and is thrilled to see him emerge from the woods to sit at her feet, accepting the treat. This marks a monumental moment in their relationship.

Emboldened by this success, Charley quickly formulates a plan. She gathers some liver bites, deciding to spend the night in her mother's studio to give Coyote a chance to bond with her in a safe environment. She carefully prepares the space, dimming the lights and propping the door open so that Coyote can enter whenever he feels ready.

In the midst of the storm, she calls to Coyote, enticing him with the liver.



After some hesitation, he finally crosses the threshold into the house, a move that fills Charley with a mix of joy and apprehension. Respecting his need for autonomy, she reassures him that he can come and go as he pleases. Coyote consumes the liver and then, with a sense of cautious acceptance, lies down at the open door.

As the storm recedes, Charley gets into bed, reflecting on the day's events. The chapter beautifully captures Charley's deepening bond with Coyote, showcasing themes of trust, patience, and the small yet significant steps required to build relationships. This chapter closes with a sense of triumph as Charley realizes she has made tangible progress—Coyote is finally inside the house, a symbol of their unfolding connection.

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Chapter 21: 21. Amy

In Chapter 21 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, the story unfolds through Charley's reflective and emotional morning after a rain-soaked night. She wakes twice, noting her loyal companion, Coyote, peacefully resting on the floor. His presence brings her comfort, reminding her of the bond they share. Charley dreams of a future where she can invite him into her home fully, but for now, she is content with their current arrangement. The setting is vivid, with sunlight illuminating the wet leaves outside, echoing Charley's growing connection to her surroundings.

After breakfast and a walk with Coyote, the rain returns, prompting Charley to seek entertainment indoors. She opens her laptop and discovers a message from her friend Amy, whose absence has weighed on her. The email, written in a light and conversational tone, reveals Amy's experiences away at tennis camp and her longing to reconnect with Charley. Despite some playful complaints about camp life and a new friendship with the older waterskiing instructor, Amy's authentic sentiment shines through. She expresses her apologies for leaving, and Charley feels a thawing of her previously held

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Chapter 22 Summary: 22. Time Together

In Chapter 22 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, time feels fleeting for Charley as she realizes she only has two weeks until school starts. This urgency prompts her to spend as much time as possible with Coyote, the coyote she's been taming. Charley moves some of her belongings into the studio where she sleeps each night, and Coyote often cuddles beside her. Despite her father's concerns about humidity damaging the studio, Charley insists on keeping the screen door open so Coyote can familiarize himself with the interior.

On Day Sixty of The Taming, Charley wakes up to find Coyote lying calmly at the end of her bed, and when she pets him, she feels a significant bond deepening between them. This emotional connection surprises her and brings tears to her eyes as she shares the moment with her friend Sarita. Charley's walks with Coyote become more observant, as she finds beauty in the small things around her, like a fly cleaning itself, encouraging readers to appreciate life's simple wonders.

As summer unfolds, Charley's confidence grows, and she finds herself joining friends for fun at the lake, where she jumps into the water despite her leg scar, proudly referring to it as a "battle wound." Coyote, initially distant from humans, begins to adapt to their presence, even feeling comfortable greeting Charley's father when he comes home. Charley cleverly encourages

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this friendly behavior by persuading her father to give Coyote dog biscuits, promoting a bond built on trust.

Near the end of the chapter, Mr. Heyward compliments Charley on her progress with Coyote, acknowledging how much he has changed. Charley proudly affirms that he is indeed a different animal, symbolizing her growth and the depth of their unique relationship. This chapter beautifully encapsulates themes of connection, personal growth, and the intricate bonds that can form between humans and animals, revealing the transformative power of love and patience.

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Chapter 23 Summary: 23. Gone

In Chapter 23 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, Charley wakes to find her beloved dog, Coyote, missing. Initially, she tries to reassure herself, believing he is simply exploring the woods or visiting neighbors. However, as time passes, her anxiety deepens. Charley envisions Coyote wandering into danger, and despite her father and Sarita's comforting words, she struggles to shake off a growing sense of dread.

Determined to find him, Charley walks Sadie, her other dog, down the trail to look for Coyote. But the usually vibrant sights and sounds of nature seem unsettling; everything feels off. Charley even injures herself on poison ivy while distracted by worry, contrasting sharply with Sadie's carefree joy. Their walk is marked by Charley's frustration at her own helplessness and Sadie's oblivious happiness, which irritates her further.

When Charley meets Mrs. Jensen, who shares reassuring stories about her own dog, Bo, and his wandering tendencies, Charley finds temporary comfort. She clings to the hope that Coyote will return like Bo always did. Throughout the day, despite Charley's attempts to distract herself with swimming and memories of happier times with her family, the absence of Coyote looms heavily. The laughter of her friends at the lake and fond recollections of her mother only deepen her sadness, reminding her of everything she has lost since the plane crash that took her mother and altered



her father profoundly.

As night falls, Charley waits with liver in hand, calling for Coyote, but the darkness around her feels hollow and filled with despair. The chapter encapsulates themes of loss, longing, and the bond between a girl and her dog, highlighting Charley's emotional struggle as she grapples with fear and memories of happier days. Her hope hangs tenuously as she faces an unsettling silence that underscores the chapter's poignant tension.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The bond of companionship provides solace during times of distress.

Critical Interpretation: In times of fear and uncertainty, like when Charley anxiously searches for her missing dog, the bond we share with our companions can be a source of immense comfort. Just as Charley finds a moment of hope through Mrs. Jensen's stories about her own dog, we too can seek solace in the connections we've built with others. Those relationships remind us that we are not alone in our struggles; they serve as a beacon of hope to guide us through tough times, encouraging us to remain resilient in the face of adversity and reminding us that love, in any form, can help heal our deepest wounds.

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Chapter 24: 24. Four Days

In Chapter 24 of "Listen!" by Stephanie S. Tolan, Charley finds herself engulfed in a world of worry and longing as she searches for her missing dog, Coyote. The chapter opens with a vivid dreamlike sequence where Charley chases a fading figure and finds herself at a lake, hinting at her deep-seated fears and memories tied to loss. Now on the fourth day of Coyote's disappearance, she navigates the familiar yet transformed landscape, reflecting on the passage of time with a calendar marking the days without him.

Determined not to give in to despair, Charley embarks on her daily walks, carrying treats and whistling for Coyote, all while battling anxieties of what might have become of him. Despite her efforts and the passage of days, her hope begins to wane as she struggles with the haunting thought of Coyote's fate. The vibrant descriptions of nature highlight the changes in the world around her, symbolizing that nothing remains static, and echo her internal struggles with love and loss.

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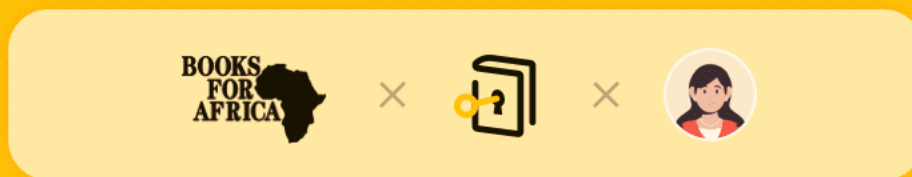
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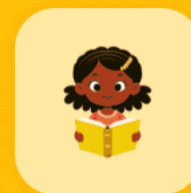
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Chapter 25 Summary: 25. Home

As Charley arrives home amidst a heavy downpour, she's soaked and shivering, but there's a glimmer of hope waiting for her inside. Sarita greets her with warmth and excitement, revealing that Mr. Heyward has news about Coyote—a gold dog with a green collar has been spotted near the high school, and Charley's heart races with the thought of finding her beloved pet. Sarita advises her that they can't chase after him; Coyote is a survivor who may find his way home on his own.

Charley imagines Coyote navigating back through the storm and feels a strong connection to him, believing he will return. After changing into dry clothes and expressing gratitude to Mr. Heyward over the phone, Charley waits anxiously by the window. As dusk falls, she excitedly sees Coyote coming down the road, muddy and tired but unmistakably back home. Overjoyed, Charley calls him in, preparing a bowl of liver that she's had ready since he disappeared. When Coyote hesitates to eat until she steps away, a flood of emotion envelops Charley. Her father, Paul, joins her, and together they watch Coyote eat with relief and affection.

Later, Charley ventures into her mother's studio to find a digital camera she intends to use for documenting her summer with Coyote. Memories of her mother's resistance to technology resurface, reminding Charley of her mother's determination to embrace change while still honoring traditional

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methods. As she sets out to capture her experiences, she also discovers old books that belong to her mother. Feeling a sense of responsibility, she decides to reposition them, one for her father and one for Sarita.

In this moment of reconnection with her mother's legacy, Charley envisions a future where she will wake up with Coyote beside her, ready to embrace the art and memories her mother had cherished. It's a chapter filled with themes of resilience, connection, and the journey of finding one's place after loss, underscoring Charley's growth and determination to honor her past while looking forward to new beginnings.

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Chapter 26 Summary: 26. Sixty-nine Days

On the afternoon of Day Sixty-nine, Charley faces the bittersweet end of summer vacation as she prepares for school the next day. After a phone call with her friend Amy, Charley feels a mix of joy and apprehension, especially regarding introducing Amy to Coyote, the wild dog she's been taming. While she finds comfort in the connection they share, she realizes Amy has become somewhat of a stranger in Coyote's eyes.

Charley has carefully planned her school routine, hoping that managing school and Coyote's taming will come naturally, but uncertainty lingers. Meanwhile, Sarita, the caretaker, immerses herself in a jigsaw puzzle, prompting Charley to ponder the other woman's past. After a hesitant inquiry, Sarita shares a painful memory about her son, who suffered a tragic fate. Listening to Sarita's story deepens Charley's appreciation for her and the experiences that shape their lives, encouraging her to be more inquisitive about those around her.

Later, an unexpected arrival draws Charley outside—a delivery of Coyote's doghouse from her father. Overjoyed, Charley revels in the idea of giving Coyote a safe place, underscoring her father's thoughtfulness. The father-daughter interaction is lighthearted, filled with humor and warmth, hinting at a rekindling bond between them after a period of tension.



As the day progresses, Charley finds solace in being by the water with Coyote. She contemplates the return to school and the impending heartworm treatment for Coyote, feeling the weight of the future—and the uncertainty it holds. A sense of peace washes over her while she spends time with the natural world, reflecting on the beauty around her and her love for Coyote, who continues to adapt to life by her side.

In this chapter, themes of connection, healing, and the passage of time resonate deeply. Charley's growth is illustrated through her relationships with both Coyote and the people in her life, suggesting the importance of understanding, compassion, and patience as they all navigate their respective challenges. As Charley embraces the present moment with Coyote, she learns to appreciate each day as it comes, cherishing the bond they share and the hope for what lies ahead.

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