

## ADVANCED: STONE FOX | Chapters 1–2

Setting & Overview: Jackson, Wyoming. Little Willy and his grandfather run a potato farm. When Grandfather falls sick, little Willy manages the potato harvest by himself, with his dog, Searchlight, pulling the plow. Little Willy finds out that Grandfather has not paid his taxes for the last ten years and now owes \$500. Little Willy hears about a dog sled race, with a \$500 prize. He uses his college savings for the admission. The expected winner is Stone Fox, an enormous Shoshone with a beautiful pack of Samoyeds, a shrewd man with his own reasons for wanting the prize money. During the race, little Willy and Searchlight are far ahead, but Stone Fox eventually gains on them. Searchlight, though, pulls as hard as she can, and is winning until her heart gives out and she comes to rest ten feet from the finish line. In what has to be one of the most heart-wrenching ends I've ever read, Stone Fox not only does not take the victory, he does not let any of the other competitors finish the race either, the "town looked on in silence as little Willy, carrying Searchlight, walked the last ten feet and across the finish line."

Q: How do Grandfather and little Willy communicate? [chapters 1-2]

A: Grandfather moves his hand for yes or no

Q: How does little Willy prepare for and harvest the potatoes? [chapters 1-2]

A: clean the underground shed, mend potato sacks, sharpen the plow; Searchlight then pulls the plow and they finish the potato harvest; Willy examines the potatoes, stores them, and sells them

Q: Do you agree with Grandfather's advice, "Don't accept help unless you can pay for it, especially from friends"? [chapters 1-2]

Q: How does little Willy prepare for the winter? [chapter 3]

A: he chops the wood, and stocks up on food

Q: Why is Grandfather ill? [chapter 4]

A: he worries about the \$500 he owes from back taxes

Q: What does the bank president, as well as all of little Willy's friends, advise little Willy to do? [chapter 5]

A: sell the farm and pay the taxes

Q: Where does little Willy's entrance fee come from? [chapter 6]

A: his college savings

Q: How does Stone Fox use his prize money? [chapter 6]

A: he buys back the land where the Shoshone used to live

Q: What happens to little Willy's eye? [chapter 7]

A: he goes to pet a Samoyed and Stone Fox gives him a black eye

Q: Grandfather says, "There are some things in this world worth dying for." Do you think land is one of them? What would you be willing to die for? [chapter 8]

Q: How do little Willy and Searchlight run the race? [chapter 9]

A: Searchlight leads because she and little Willy do not need to slow down around curves and they know the track well; little Willy and she are light enough to go across the lake, whereas the other competitors have to go around; and Searchlight refuses to let Stone Fox's dogs outrun her

Q: What are the only words Stone Fox ever says to the white men? These words sound harsh, but what do you think about Stone Fox after he says them? [chapter 10]

A: anyone crosses this line—I shoot

Q: What do you admire about little Willy? [chapter 10]