



Saving Marty

by Paul Griffin

Saving Marty can be read independently by older kids leading up to a group discussion or consider listening to it as an audiobook as a family. The [audiobook](#) includes a performance of all the songs in the book.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. This book is set in a small farming town in southwest Pennsylvania. Compare and contrast this setting to where you live. How is your daily life similar or different than Renzo's and Pal's?
2. Describe the friendship between Renzo and Pal and the friendship between Renzo and Marty. How are they the same or different? Discuss a friendship that is important to you and what role you play in the friendship.
3. Describe Renzo's relationship with his mom and his grandfather, Double Pop. How are these relationships different? Who else helps to fill the void left by his dad?
4. Early in the book, Double Pop says about Marty, "His family is gone, and he's a bit lost, trying to fit in. He's looking for his best friend, and he's chosen you." How could this same description apply to Renzo or Pal?
5. We never meet Marty Ventura, Renzo's dad, but we get to know him through his letters and songs. Describe Marty, the dad, in three words. How do the letters and songs give Renzo a connection to his dad?
6. The army has two sayings about heroes, "Heroes go to heaven" and "Don't be a hero." What do these mean to you? Are they contradictory? Why or why not?
7. On page 104, Renzo asks Pal, "How do you write songs like that? You sang it like you lived it." What's a song that makes you feel like it was written for your life? What role does music play in your life?
8. How did you feel when Renzo's mom revealed the truth about what happened to his dad? Is it the answer you were expecting? Was she right in not telling him until now? Discuss Marty Ventura's last letter to his wife. How could Renzo's dad be known for the light and joy that he brought others and yet feel such "rain" on the inside?
9. By the end of the story, whom does Renzo consider his heroes? There are several characters that either change or are different than they initially seem (e.g. Keeth, Mr. Mason, and Mr. Taylor). Are any of these characters heroes?
10. Discuss the meaning of the title and its connection to the themes of heroes and friendship. How does Renzo save Marty? Why does he decide to take him to the Heavenly Hills Animal Sanctuary? How does Marty save Renzo and change his family's situation? Could the title refer to his dad as well as the pig?