



The Bridge *Study Guide*

by Carol Diehn

For the novel
by Jeri Massi



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Synopsis

*“In the night the soldier creeps,
Midway from shore to shore
High above the murky deep
He finds a slender wooden floor.
'Twill one man safely keep,
Whose axe shall end a war.”*

More than a simple tale with a Medieval flavor, *The Bridge* is filled with mystery, courage, and suspense. Princess Rosalynn of Bracken is left in the care of loyal Sir Reynald while the king is off visiting a neighboring castle. Reynald catches wind of an invasion from Folger, the larger country connected to Bracken by an enormous suspension bridge. He sets into motion a plan to save the princess and preserve as much of Bracken from devastation as is possible.

In a state of confusion and defiance, the princess is carried away speedily from the castle by Herron the Rider. Wounded by the enemy, Herron sets Rosalynn down in the forest to find her own way to her father, the king. Thus begins the princess's long, arduous journey through perilous, enemy-filled territory—her life in danger at every step.

In allegoric fashion, the wise woman Rosalynn meets on her journey comforts, heals, and guides Rosalynn much in the same way that the Holy Spirit does for today's believer. Together with Herron they attempt to solve the riddle of the “Castle Guard Song”—a secret which will save the tiny kingdom of Bracken.

Background Information

The Bridge is the first in a series of “Wise Woman” novels written by Jeri Massi. Second in the trilogy is *Crown and Jewel*, a story of Queen Rosalynn and King Herron’s daughter, Princess Rosewyn and her adventure with her grandmother, the Wise Woman. The third book, *The Two Collars*, approaches life in Bracken from the viewpoint of Krea, a foreign slave girl. The Wise Woman offers love, comfort, and truth as Krea struggles with genuine humility and acceptance.

Wise woman stories were popular in the mid-1800s to the early 1900s. These tales often wove adventure and suspense with solid moral lessons. George MacDonald, one of the great writers of the 19th century, made use of wise woman stories in several stories, such as his popular book, *The Lost Princess*.

Many of the wise woman stories have symbolic meaning. From a certain perspective, the wise woman portrays qualities of the Holy Spirit as she prods and encourages her young charges to face truth, act humbly, trust, and obey, all in response to her love, comfort, and acceptance. In *The Bridge*, Sir Reynald willingly offers his life, not only to save Princess Rosalynn but also to preserve the king’s life and the kingdom of Bracken. This aspect of his life and death is symbolic of the death Jesus Christ willingly endured on the cross in order to offer us salvation.

Children are intrigued by stories of kings, queens, castles, and princesses. In *The Bridge*, author Jeri Massi effectively combines the allure of medieval adventure with true moral lessons.

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5. Why does the woman's gentleness and quiet voice reduce the Princess to tears? Read Proverbs 25:15: "Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone." What does this tell us about gentleness?

6. List three things the Wise Woman does to help Rosalynn. What does the Wise Woman mean when she says, "Wrong cannot be undone, but it can be forgiven."?

7. How had Sir Reynald already forgiven Rosalynn before she realized she had wronged him?

8. How did the Woman know about the song of the castle guard? What did she mean when she said "The secret has been too closely guarded"?

9. What two promises does Rosalynn make to the Wise Woman?

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praise, acceptance. The Woman means that we suffer consequences for our actions and reactions, but we may experience forgiveness as well.

7. He told her that her words of accusation had fallen to the ground between them.

8. She was from the country that had built the bridge for Bracken, and it is part of history available to anyone who studies it. It was meant to hold a clue to the safeguard on the bridge, but it had become the mark of the castle guard or royalty, like a password.

9. She promises to abide by and obey anything the Woman says and later promises not to leave the Wise Woman even if it means capture and death.

Chapters 5 & 6

Vocabulary:

1. enclose; 2. followers; 3. peak; 4. grasped; 5. cry; 6. upset; 7. regret; 8. downpour; 9. untidy; 10. hitting; 11. yelled.

Paraphrasing:

Answers will vary.

Questions:

1. greedy, unkind, cruel, wicked, foolish, mean, unwise, rude, etc. The Woman, by her demeanor, wisdom, courage, and finally physical strength, puts the jester in his place and tells him that he must leave.

2. Because she had promised to stay with her. The Woman asks her to stay quietly in hiding.

3. The Woman takes a rope out of a tree trunk where it is hidden and attaches it to a tree. She crosses the flooded gully and footbridge holding the rope. When she was only part of the way across, the Jester appeared and cut the guide rope. Rosalynn is caught by the Jester.

4. Herron

5. Because he was frightened and thought she might be a ghost.

Dig Deeper:

Charts will vary.

Chapter 7, 8 & 9

Vocabulary:

1. g., 2. h., 3. c., 4. i., 5. d., 6. b., 7. j., 8. e., 9. f., 10. a.

Metaphors and Similes:

1. S; 2. M; 3. S; 4. M; 5. S.

Questions:

1. He had come into their room posing as a steward, saying that they had a guest. He did not want to frighten the Princess though.

2. Rosalynn promises herself that when she is queen, Herron shall not want for anything because of the hardships he has endured to find her.

3. strategy = tactics, plan, scheme The strategy of the soldier in the song was to get rid of his armor and horse and find a boat. He then shall take an axe, row midway from shore to shore and climb high to find a slender wooden floor. Then he will use his axe to end a war.

4. Going against the flow of the water in the river.

5. Answers may vary. She is maturing, learning to be patient, much wiser, more courageous, less proud, etc.

6. He cut through a wooden crossbeam. The crossbeam was a pin fastening a beam that held some of the cables of the bridge. The cables will give and not support the swaying as an army marches in step. The bridge will collapse with the invading army upon it.

7. The Wise Woman was thought to be of Folger, and the Princess had promised to stay with her. The Princess stays with her despite the fear and discomfort.

8. Answers will vary. He is sad, thinks that it is wrong, but he admires the Princess keeping her promise, and he is hopeful of her father coming soon.

9. Paragraphs will vary. They should mention that he notices in her eyes that she has grown up.

10. Answers will vary.