

Volume Two

Literature Guide

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A Guide to Eleven Historical Novels



Read, Reflect, Discuss, Write

About Hillside Literature Guides

Read, Reflect, Discuss, Write

Hillside Education Literature Guides include discussion questions and writing prompts for novels and plays. A story synopsis is provided for the teacher as well as teaching tips specific to each particular work. These guides can be used to supplement your reading program or as part of a literature-based reading course.

You may choose to have your students read the novels straight through and save all discussion for after reading. The students may also respond to the reading in response journals after each reading period, writing about what they are thinking about the story. Using a written reader-response helps to provide a more thoughtful discussion at the end of reading because the student has been reflecting as he reads.

About Hillside Education

Hillside Education guides were developed to provide home educators and private schools assistance with using interpretive methods of literature study. This literature study is based on discussion but also includes several levels of writing activities that integrate with literature.

In addition to literature guides, we also publish English texts and supplements and historical novels. Please visit our website for a complete list of our products.

We select a few key books from each year's assignments for formal literary analysis and composition.

Why only a few?

Because reading for pleasure is also a "skill" that we strongly encourage through family read-alouds and independent reading outside of "school time."

Our literature guides teach students to read more deeply, develop good reading habits, as well as teaching a variety of composition skills related to each book.

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**We provide a summary of each book for you, the teacher.
We know you don't have time to read every book,
although if you can, you'll enjoy them just as much as your child does!**

Synopsis

This is a very moving story of a young man who lives at the time of Jesus. He has lost his parents to the cruelty of the Roman rule of Judea and has vowed to fight the evil Romans to the end. He joins a band of renegade Zealots in the hills above his village where his hatred and anger fester. Daniel is called back to the village because of the death of his grandmother. She had been caring for his ill sister, whom everyone thinks is possessed by demons since the time of their parents' death. She fears everything and everyone except her immediate family and has not left the house since the parents died. Daniel must leave the refuge of the hills to care for his sister.

His hatred for the Romans continues, and he finds ways to serve the Zealot cause while working as a blacksmith for the village. He hears of and is intrigued by the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. After hearing him speak, Daniel wonders if this is the Messiah—the one under whose leadership the Jews will throw off the Roman rule and establish the “kingdom.” While he is attracted to the teachings of this Jesus, he keeps an arm's distance; he is confused by the seeming contradictions in what Jesus says. All the while he watches in disgust as the poor and sick flock to Jesus; he has no idea that he himself is in need of healing. In Daniel's one-on-one conversation with Jesus, Speare so beautifully captures the love and sadness of Christ.

Finally, as a last resort to save his sister, Daniel sends for Jesus to see if He can heal her. This scene is the most moving in the book. Jesus appears in the doorway illuminated. As Jesus attends to Daniel's sister, Daniel at last realizes that his hate has been keeping him from the true kingdom. His spiritual ills are healed as his sister is physically healed.

This book is so much more than this synopsis can convey. We can see ourselves in the character of Daniel, needing the healing of Jesus so much, yet not seeing it. Possible themes that your student might see in the book include:

- The need to be open to love/healing
- God is love; hatred has no place in the Kingdom
- The need for and joy of friendship

Many of the guides include activities to prepare for reading the book.

Directing the Study

Before Reading

Further details omitted.

1. Have your student review the story of the Maccabees. This story is referenced many times in *The Bronze Bow*. It is especially important to Daniel and his friends as they adopt the “watchword of the Maccabees.”

Further details omitted.

As well as exercises for during and after reading.

While Reading

1. Vocabulary

2. Discussion

Further details omitted.

After Reading

1. Go over the end of the book discussion questions.
2. Ask the student to “free-write” about the themes of the story and what he thought of them.

Further details omitted.

Discussion questions are provided

Part I

Vocabulary

dejection
formidable
rent
portentous
haggard

Discussion Questions

1. How did Nimrod's people come to be?
2. For what land are Nimrod's people searching?
3. Why does Nimrod sacrifice his horse?
4. How does Nimrod interpret what happens after this sacrifice?
5. Do you think that the land that the White Stag shows to Hunor and Magyar is the promised land they seek? Explain how you know.

This chapter is called "Nimrod the Hunter." Write a description of him.

We include a variety of guided writing assignments and projects related to each book.

Writing Ideas

1. The Thinking Piece or Question Paper

In this technique you pose a question about the story you have just read and attempt to answer the question using your thoughts about the story.

2. Write a character analysis of Daniel.

Thinking: What is Daniel's driving force (motivation) through most of the story? Does he have good qualities that shine forth even though he is warped by hate? Is there anything virtuous in his clinging to the vow he made? Form an opinion about Daniel and state it in one sentence. (For example: Daniel's hatred stops him from being able to live a normal life. Or, Daniel is a virtuous person despite his obsession with revenge on the Romans.) This one statement will become the thesis for your paper.

Writing: Write a paper in which you analyze the character of Daniel in the story *The Bronze Bow*. Begin by naming the story and author and giving a little bit of information about Daniel's part in the story. At the end of this paragraph, give your thesis statement.