

The Bronze Bow Study Guide

The Bronze Bow by Elizabeth George Speare

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Overview

The Bronze Bow's richly developed characters and universal themes make it one of the most extraordinary books ever written for young adults. Speare creates a story that reveals her respect for the minds of young readers; the novel invites deep thought and contemplation of such fundamental human concerns as love, friendship, religious faith, and how to lead a meaningful life. At the same time, the book is a suspenseful, romantic adventure set in a time of political and religious upheaval. The believable adolescent characters battle their own feelings as they fight Roman oppression. Speare's realistic descriptions of how people lived then bring alive the ancient biblical time in which the action takes place.

About the Author

The daughter of Harry Allen George and Demetria George, Elizabeth George Speare was born in Melrose, Massachusetts, on November 21, 1908.

A member of a large and loving family, she enjoyed a happy childhood full of hikes and picnics in the countryside around Melrose, concerts in Boston, and summer excursions to the shore with her family. During these summer vacations she began writing stories, but family and school obligations usually left her with few opportunities to be by herself and concentrate on her writing.

From 1926 to 1927, Speare attended Smith College. From there, she went to Boston University, obtaining her bachelor's degree in 1930 and her master's degree in 1932. She taught high school English in Rockland, Massachusetts, until 1935 and in Auburn, Massachusetts, until 1936. On September 26, 1936, she married Alden Speare, an industrial engineer, and moved with him to Connecticut. They have two children: a son, Alden, Jr., born in 1939, and a daughter, Mary, born in 1942.

Speare did not begin writing seriously until her children were in junior high school. In 1957 her first novel, *Calico Captive*, was published. Her next novel, *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, won the 1959 Newbery Medal; her third novel, *The Bronze Bow*, won the Newbery Medal in 1962 and was named an American Library Association Notable Book. *The Sign of the Beaver* was a 1984 Newbery Honor Book and in 1984 won the first Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, given to the best historical fiction for young people written by an American and set in the New World.



Plot Summary

The Bronze Bow is a story set in Galilee in biblical times during the Roman occupation of Israel. After witnessing the crucifixion of his father and subsequent demise of his mother, a young Jewish boy, named Daniel, vows revenge on the Romans. His hatred of them is overwhelming and governs his entire life. Daniel's initial attempts at war and love both fail, and he finally accepts the realization that he must choose one of them and give up the other.

The book is designed for young readers, generally fourth or fifth grade and up. However, many adults have enjoyed it as well. The book won the John Newberry Award of American Literature for Children.

Daniel grows up in the servitude of a blacksmith, who mistreats him. He finally runs away to the mountains, where he joins a band of outlaws, who prey on anyone they can using the excuse that they will one day create and equip an army big enough to defeat the Romans. His loyalty to his grandmother and sister motivate him to move back to the village where he grew up, but his ties to the mountain and the freedom they represent continually pull his attention back to his outlaw friends and his vow to see the Romans fall. In the village while, caring for his sister, he organizes a group of young boys, who have the common dream of one day joining the band of men in the mountains. Daniel wants them to be more a part of the actual task he has set his mind to than the petty thievery in which most of the other bandits participate.

During his time back in the village, Daniel begins the slow process of growing up and maturing from a runner for a band of outlaws to a leader of young men. All the while he harbors an overwhelming drive to destroy the Romans in any way he can. He has taken a vow to revenge the deaths of his parents and his sister's possession by demons, and it overshadows everything else in his life. However, Daniel's lack of experience and broad knowledge blind him to the magnitude of the overall task he and others with his viewpoint face.

Daniel befriends a brother and sister from a very different background than what he comes from, and with them and the help of a few notable people along the way,

Daniel eventually meets Jesus. Through some of His words, he believes that Jesus will one day lead them in the quest to overthrow the Romans.

Each time Daniel makes progress towards seeing the real way he has been shown to overcome his own fears, he reverts back to the men on the mountain and delays his personal growth. Slowly, however, he begins to question the real goal of the leader of the bandits, and sees more clearly that the way of Jesus may be the true pathway he is seeking to free himself from his hatred, while at the same time achieving his goals.

On several occasions he tries to understand that the preaching of Jesus means to defeat fear and hatred, not to defeat the Romans with military power. Eventually, with

the help of his process of maturing, he is able to abandon his hate, and in so doing, he can allow love to enter and take its place.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The Bronze Bow is a story set in Galilee in biblical times during the Roman occupation of Israel. After witnessing the crucifixion of his father and subsequent demise of his mother, a young Jewish boy named Daniel vows revenge on the Romans. His hatred of them is overwhelming and governs his entire life. Daniel's initial attempts at war and love both fail, and he finally accepts the realization that he must choose one of them and give up the other.

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Daniel bar Jamin is an eighteen-year-old Galilean, who has run away from Ketzah, the village where he grew up. There he was a servant to a man who beat him regularly, and, knowing he had no chance of getting out of the servitude, goes to the mountain near the village to live in a cave. He is found by a famed warrior, who lives there with a group of men that he is forming into an army. He has been living on the mountain for five years with no contact with the villagers when a boy and his sister make the dangerous trip to the top of the mountain. They are Joel bar Hezron and Malthace.

The three meet and gaze down at the town, plains, and the lake below in the distance. Then, far down the mountain, they see a line of Roman Legionnaires, and they discover that they all hate them and hope the Jews can form an army to drive them away. Joel says he has heard there is such an army forming, and Daniel says that it is true. There are such men in the mountains. Joel and Malthace are excited to hear this, and Daniel goes on to tell them the leader is a man named Rosh, and he is also the one who rescued Daniel when he first fled up to the mountain. Joel says that Rosh is a hero to every boy at school, but that no one has ever seen him or been sure he even existed. He has heard stories that Rosh fought with Judas during the rebellion against Rome and that when his friends were crucified Rosh snuck away and has been hiding in the hills ever since, a hero. Others, however, say he is nothing but a bandit, who robs anyone he can. Daniel replies that he is a very brave man and everyone in Israel will someday know his name.

As their conversation continues, Daniel finds out that Joel has dreamed of joining Rosh. Daniel tells him that he should, that no one will ever find him up here. Joel says it is not as simple as that. He has responsibilities, especially to his father. Daniel realizes that he might feel the same way if he had a family.

As they go down the trail toward the village, Daniel spots a man named Ebol some distance below them. Ebol is one of the people in Rosh's group, a sort of sentry, and he wants to speak with Daniel. Daniel tells the other two to wait on the trail where they are.



Chapter 1 Analysis

In Chapter One the author sets the time period, the place, and relays some of the historical highlights of the period. The character of Daniel bar Jamin is eighteen-years-old and the reader learns some facts of the last five years of his life, and that he is a Jew, who hates the Romans for what they have done to his family and the Jews in general. He was a servant to a master, who mistreated him and has spent the last five years living on a mountain with a group of men led by a legendary hero named Rosh. There is a hint that Rosh is gathering people, who agree with his vision of forming an army to defeat the Romans and to drive them from the area. Daniel finds out that Joel secretly wishes he could run away and serve in such an army under Rosh. However, he laments, he has too many responsibilities to be able to do so.

Immediately in the opening paragraphs of the novel the author sets the stage for a conflict between the Romans and the Jews, and creates two groups of local people, those on the mountain, and those from the town. The groups do not converse, and the men on the mountain are identified somewhat as rough villains prone to stealing from anyone they can.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Ebol tells Daniel that they are needed to help Rosh. They are to ambush a pack train and take one of the slaves it is carrying, a large black man. Ebol tells him they must go immediately, and to get rid of the boy and his sister. Rushing back to them to do so, Joel wants to know what is going on. Daniel tells him to take his sister down the mountain immediately, that there will be trouble here soon, but Joel is defiant and suspects that Rosh is nearby. Joel wants to meet him. When Daniel tells him "No!" Joel continues to be defiant and says that he can go where he wants to, that nobody owns the mountain. Daniel wishes that he would join them, as he admires his spirit, and thinks he has the type of personality they need. At that time a skinny boy comes running up the mountain and tells them that the pack train is coming.

Telling his sister to go back up the mountain and hide, Joel returns to Daniel and states that he is staying. Daniel has no choice but to let him as the train is very close, and he must act quickly. Before he leaves, Ebol tells the boys to stay hidden until the signal, and then he rushes off, disappearing among the rocks almost immediately. Neither boy makes a sound, but Daniel thinks to himself that this is the way Rosh works. Nothing to do for days, and then all of a sudden they are extremely busy.

As the boys see the pack train approach they see the two guards, one armed with a heavy staff, the other a sword, and behind them are two camels pulling a litter. It contains four tradesmen who are followed by slaves, first men and then a few women who are being urged along by men with whips. Both Daniel and Joel are excited, and create an instant bond just before the signal to attack them is given. Several men jump upon the caravan, and Daniel picks the one appointed to him and twists his arm behind him and takes away his dagger. The struggle is brief but efficient, and soon Rosh gives the order to let them all go. Daniel notices that Joel has gotten a bad bruise, and he tells Daniel that a mule kicked him.

Daniel looks at the huge black slave they are about to free. He has bruises all over his body, and he looks extremely powerful, but at the same time, unintelligent.

Rosh approaches Daniel and Joel and wants to know what Joel is doing there. Joel bravely tells him that he has heard Rosh will someday drive the Romans from Israel, and that he wants to be with him at that time. Rosh welcomes him as if he will now stay, but Joel says he cannot now as his sister is with him, and he must return to the village. Hearing this, Rosh tells him "Not after what you've just seen . . . now you stay here." Joel is defiant and says that he will keep quiet, but that he is getting ready to move to Capernaum, and must go for now. Rosh tells him to keep quiet about this and to move to Capernaum, and when the time is right Joel will hear from him. Daniel and Joel exchange a private glance and Joel leaves to get his sister, who is making her way down the mountainside.



The men examine the black slave, who is still in shackles and cuffs. The black man says nothing and they decide he is deaf, dumb, a mute, or all three. Daniel volunteers to lead him on and takes a hold of the chain hanging from his wrists. At the cave that is their headquarters, the men have already named the black man Samson, and Daniel is to be his keeper. After eating, Daniel is told to file off the chains from Samson. While the men protest this, Rosh tells them all that Samson is now one of them, and that there are no slaves on this mountain. He will be freed of his shackles.

While Daniel works with a file to free Samson, he explains to him what a wonderful leader Rosh is, and how more men are joining them all the time to fight the Romans. He can see, however, that Samson does not understand anything he says. As Daniel finishes and the huge man is freed, he kneels down in front of Daniel and puts his forehead to Daniel's feet. Somewhat disgusted by this gesture, Daniel gets him a sleeping robe and they go to sleep where they are.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Rosh and his men are pictured as bandits, living a hard life almost as early cave men. Eating roasted meat with their bare hands, and always being rowdy with each other they seem out of control except when ordered to do something by Rosh. Joel is established as a boy, who can be trusted. He and Daniel create an unspoken bond that appears to be a relationship that will grow in the future. Daniel also has complimentary thoughts of Malthace after having noticed her beauty and grace.

The hatred the Jews have for the Romans is made more evident. Rosh is established as apparently wanting to be the leader of an upcoming war that is being created to drive the Romans out of Israel, and is shown to be successful so far where others have already failed. This is the first real sign of the upcoming conflict to which the book makes reference.

Daniel's character is developed more thoroughly, and he appears as the one of the youngest of the group, and one who is trying to prove himself to be worthy of more responsibility. The character of Samson is introduced, and he is described as a man who is probably much more complex than he appears to be at first.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

A month has passed, and Daniel is still the keeper of Samson. Even Rosh has given up trying to give him orders, as Daniel is the only person he will respond to. Samson is constantly at Daniel's side, and though bothersome at times, he has made life much easier for all the men in the camp by being able to haul more wood and water, and keeping the bellows hot while Daniel turns ore into steel. The others constantly make fun of Samson, but there is no response whatsoever from Samson. While Daniel feels his forced association with the big giant has somewhat distanced him from the others, at times Daniel will smile at him, and he does grudgingly feel some friendship towards him, even though Samson still acts as if he does not hear or understand anything.

One day a man is brought to the cave blindfolded and with tied hands. He turns out to be Simon, who was an apprentice with Daniel. He has come looking for Daniel to tell him that Amalek, to whom Daniel owes servitude, has died, and it is now safe for Daniel to return to the village. Daniel hesitates, and Simon asks him if he doesn't want to see his grandmother and sister, and Daniel is ashamed that he does not. Simon finally convinces him his grandmother should see him if only for one day just to see he is all right. As they leave for the town, Samson tries to follow them, but Daniel finally waves him back up the hill toward the cave.

Daniel finds out that Simon sympathizes with Roth's views and goals, but the two have differences of opinions that make it difficult for Simon to like him. While Daniel tries to convince Simon to join them, he says that there is a need in the village for him as a blacksmith.

After bathing in a pool, the two reach the village just as the first call of the Sabbath is heard. At his grandmother's house a very old lady welcomes him into a shabby house with little furniture or amenities. He then sees his sister, Leah, who is somewhat frail also, but much more grownup and beautiful than the last time he saw her five years ago. After a very meager meal, his grandmother opens the door for a small black goat that hurries over to Leah and immediately goes to sleep in her arms. Daniel hears her tell the goat that he has come home to take care of them.

The little house is very hot and smelly from the oil lamp that lights it, and Daniel is glad when his grandmother gives him a sleeping mat, and he can go to the roof where he always slept when he was here. Before going to sleep he becomes very homesick at the thought of the men around the fire up at the cave.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Daniel and Sampson's characters are more fully developed, and we see the dedication Sampson has for Daniel, hardly ever leaving his side. Samson, the former slave, still



maintains that role though he has basically been freed. There is a sense of drama about him as it is unknown whether he can hear, understand the language, or has any intelligence at all.

Three new characters are introduced. There is Simon, who represents what Daniel ran away from, his grandmother, and his sister. His sister, Leah appears to have a mental or physical challenge (or both.) The author keeps this a mystery at this point. Through the characters of his grandmother and sister, Leah, the beginnings of a struggle within Daniel are begun. The reader sees that Daniel is torn between the need to take care of them and his need to continue to live with Rosh at the cave, waiting for the time they can begin to fight the Romans.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

The next morning is the day of the Sabbath. Simon comes to ask Daniel to accompany him to the synagogue. Daniel hesitates, but Simon is persistent and says that a man from Nazareth is going to visit this morning, and he would like Daniel to meet him. When Daniel goes into the house to change into the cloak Simon has brought for him, Leah runs and, evidently afraid of him, cowers in the corner. She is thought by many to be possessed by demons and has never been seen outside of the house.

As they walk toward the synagogue, Daniel once again asks who they are going to meet, and is told it is Jesus, son of Joseph, and a carpenter by trade, and that he also travels about preaching of the coming of the kingdom.

At the synagogue, Jesus speaks to the largest crowd Daniel has ever seen gathered here.

Jesus speaks and tells the people that the time has come to repent. Daniel and Simon are not certain what he means by that, and, apparently others are also questioning his statement. Everyone seems to want to hear more, be given specific instructions about what to do, but there is no closure to Jesus' words. The people who have just heard him speak and are all discussing what was meant by his statements. Simon tells Daniel that in Nazareth, a group of men questioned whether or not Jesus, a poor carpenter, had the right to say that he was speaking for God. They even went to far as to drag him to the top of a cliff where they were ready to push him over, but at the last minute, for some strange reason, the crowd backed away, and Jesus walked down the mountain unmolested, and seemingly unafraid.

As Daniel walks slowly back toward his grandmother's house, a trumpet blares, and a group of mounted Roman soldiers followed by foot soldiers appears heading his way. As they pass, Daniel begins to yell curses at them, but immediately two men stop him. Daniel tells them that he has taken an oath to fight them. When asked who he is and Daniel tells them, it is apparent that his father was well known.

That night Daniel returns to the rooftop, alone with his thoughts of the day. As he studies the squalor and odor of the town, he decides to return to the mountain, his friends, and the cave. Finally arriving late at night, he finds Samson waiting for him outside the entrance.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Jesus appears for the first time. His appearance motivates the villagers to do something specific at some specific time, but the details are untold by Jesus, and the crowd is left

uneasy. The situation creates a stronger sense of urgency to act against the Romans and the reader senses a coming clash of some kind with the Roman soldiers.

The author begins to create a parallel of symbolism between the top of the mountain where Daniel now lives, and the rooftop of his grandmother where he slept as a boy.

Both represent a vision of the surroundings, the rooftop of the village only, while the mountaintop overlooks the whole area of the valley below, including the village.

The inner struggle Daniel fights becomes more obvious, and there is a sense of loyalty to both his grandmother, and the men who follow Rosh.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Spring finds Daniel restless on the mountain, feeling his not accomplishing anything. He finally decides that he wants to go to Capernaum to look for Joel, and Rosh approves of his plan.

Arriving in Capernaum, Daniel is like a tourist taking in all the sights of the markets with food and cloth vendors, and he goes to the harbor where he is given a cooked fish by a friendly lady. She asks him if he is waiting for the teacher. Not knowing what she is talking about, he says that he is not. She urges him to follow her to hear the "carpenter" speak. When the man begins to speak to the fishermen, Daniel sees that it is Jesus. As Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven to one fisherman who asks, two Roman soldiers appear and enter the group. Daniel's hatred rises, and he cannot understand why no one does anything. He is still more furious when he sees the merchants joking with the soldiers.

Daniel begins his search for Joel, and finally finds his house among the very wealthy houses high on a hill overlooking the bay. He meets Malthace first, and she is dressed beautifully in a robe and sandals with her hair tied back with gold. She does not acknowledge his presence, but merely stares at him. Soon Joel arrives and welcomes him warmly and Daniel sits to eat with Joel and Hezron, his father, as Joel's mother and sister move behind a curtain so they are unseen while the men eat. Daniel's manners at the table embarrass him, but they all try to ignore them.

As the meal ends, Daniel gets into an argument with Hezron about the Jews accepting the fate the Romans have forced on them, but Hezron tells him that all Jews must be patient and accept what has been given to them for the time being. Daniel cannot control his anger and as they continue to argue, Hezron asks Daniel to leave, not come back, and have no more contact with his son. Daniel is sad that he has failed in his errand. He is also sad that he has possibly just lost a chance of losing the only friend he has ever had.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Daniel begins to question the value of him self while he is at his grandmother's house, and, he begins to question the value of himself, as he continues life back on the mountain with Rosh and the others. His inner struggle continues to heighten, as he fails at his task of talking further with Joel. He now has four separate goals in life. The first is to help Rosh overthrow the Romans. The second is to lend support to his grandmother and his sister. The third is to make a real friend. The last is to avenge his parents' deaths. He has thought at two different times that he has never had a real friend.

The house of Hezron, high on a hill overlooking the bay in Capernaum, becomes a site of gained knowledge, just as his grandmother's roof and the mountaintop have become. Here, his argument with Joel's father begins to show more of the rash, uncontrolled side of Daniel, as he wrestles with his various goals.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

As Daniel leaves the house of Hezron, he is in no hurry to return to the mountain. He is thirsty and finds a broken bowl at a well, and takes it to get a drink for himself. As he does so, a Roman soldier rides up on a horse and demands that Daniel give the horse water. Daniel does so, and then the soldier asks for the same for himself. Without thinking, Daniel offers him the bowl with the same water the horse has just drunk. Furious, the soldier kicks at Daniel for his stupidity. Daniel reacts quickly and throws the bowl and its contents in the soldier's face and immediately begins to run off. The soldier yells and throws his spear at Daniel, but Daniel keeps running with loud footsteps chasing him. Finally escaping for the time being, Daniel discovers that he is wounded and is bleeding badly. Not knowing where to go for help, he finds Joel's house. Here he finds that Joel is not home, and Malthace reprimands him strongly for returning. Before being able to explain his reason, Daniel passes out from the pain and loss of blood.

Shortly thereafter Daniel finds himself in a dark room, and Malthace is telling him to be quiet while she gets something for him. She soon returns with medicine and cleans his wound. When Joel arrives he tells Daniel he is glad he returned, but that his father should not catch him in the house. He is given food, and told to sleep, and that he is hidden and safe for the time being.

Chapter 6 Analysis

The reader begins to see the immaturity and uncontrollable quick temper of Daniel. He makes two mistakes in his discussion with Joel's father and the Roman soldier, and these will make successful completion of his personal future missions more difficult.

Daniel has four missions. The first is to assist Rosh in his defeat of the Romans. The second is to assist his grandmother and sister. The third is a new mission, to make a friend in Joel. The last is the continuing one of avenging his parents' deaths. He has twice thought of the fact that he has never had a friend, and feels Joel is the closest he has come, even with their unspoken bond.

As the chapter closes, he appears to have another chance at gaining Joel's friendship, and Malthace lessens her harsh feelings toward him. He begins to call her Thacia as does her brother, Joel.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

As the fever and pain begin to leave Daniel a few days later, Joel reads to him and Thacia from the Book of Enoch. It seems to say to them men should not let other men rule them, and that they should rise up against anyone who would. Joel thinks out loud that maybe they have tried his father's way of patience long enough.

After they discuss this for a while, Joel and Malthace (who he has begun calling Thacia) ask Daniel about his parents. Daniel has not talked about it to anyone for over five years. No one at the cave has ever heard his story. But at Thacia's encouragement he begins to tell them what happened. When he was very young his father was the head supervisor of the vineyards and it was a happy and secure time for Daniel. However, after his uncle and his wife had a baby, his uncle used some of the money he had saved to pay his taxes instead to buy his wife a shawl to wear to the naming of the baby. When the taxman came to collect the taxes, Daniel's uncle did not have enough to pay them, so they put him in the guardhouse. Even though Daniel's father collected enough money to pay the taxes, the Romans made his uncle go to the quarries to work out the difference instead.

Knowing that the Romans would never release his brother from servitude, Daniel's father got six others to help him try to steal his brother from the Romans. They were caught, and the seven men and Daniel's uncle were all crucified in the village publicly as an example to others not do this type of thing.

Daniel's mother spent three days and nights in the cold at his father's grave. Then she became sick and died a week later. Daniel is eight years old when this takes place, and he makes a vow to spend his whole life hating and killing Romans, and he has kept his vow.

His grandmother took care of him for five years, and he went to school, but when her money ran out she sold Daniel to the blacksmith. Daniel also relates how his sister went crazy after the deaths of her parents, and would often turn blue and go into fits. To this day she is still possessed by demons. She has not left the inside of the house for five years.

With the ending of the story, Joel excitedly says that he wants to take the vow also, and with that so does his twin sister, Thacia. The three lay their hands on the Book of Enoch and swear to spend their lives avenging the deaths of Daniel's parents and the freedom of the Jews.

With that, they decide Joel will stay in school so that Rosh will have a man in Capernaum. Joel recalls a small opening in the wall around the house used to bring in grain, and he will make certain it is left unlocked for Daniel if he ever again needs an



escape from the Romans. Thacia tells them that Daniel should mark the entrance with a sign of a bronze bow if he enters the area so they will know he is there.

Daniel decides he is well enough to leave. He leaves the hideout at dawn the next day without anyone knowing he has left and begins to walk back to the mountain.

Chapter 7 Analysis

The author explains the detailed answers to two of the mysteries created to this point. Daniel's Father was crucified along with his uncle, and his mother died of grief a week later. All at the hands of the Romans. The same act is the reason his sister began to have fits and has refused to leave the house for five years.

A new struggle is mentioned when Joel says that he is torn between fighting the Romans and becoming a rabbi. A struggle is also created in Thacia, as she agrees with her brother that she feels the need to assist with the ousting of the Romans. These struggles appear to have been resolved as they take a vow with Daniel to spend their lives avenging the deaths of Daniel's parents.

It is also apparent that Daniel has succeeded in achieving one of goals, that being his desire to make his first real friend. There is also a hint of his growing attraction to Thacia. He thinks he would like to hear her play the harp, but it is obvious that there is more to the attraction than that.

The matter of the Romans' search for Daniel is left open. The reader is left with the thought that there may be more of this search in the future.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Daniel returns to the mountain to recover from his injuries in Capernaum. Much of the time he spends thinking of what happened to him in Capernaum, the growing friendship he made, the vow, and Thacia. He cannot get her out of his mind. He thinks to himself that the only two girls he has ever known are Thacia and his sister, and he feels he doesn't understand either of them. And that possibly, they are a threat to his plans.

Rosh asks Daniel to repair a dagger that is special to him. Daniel realizes he does not have the right parts and tools, so Rosh tells him to go to the village and get them from Simon. Daniel does this, but finds that Simon has closed his shop, and Daniel is told that Simon has left to follow a preacher. The one who had been in the town a few weeks earlier?

Knowing he cannot return to the mountain with the dagger still broken, and suspecting that Simon had gone to follow Jesus, he decides to go to Capernaum to find them. He has some concern that the Romans will recognize him, but feels they won't know him from any other Jewish boy. A fisherman in Capernaum tells him that the carpenter will be right here the next morning. Daniel uses this time to go to the secret entrance to Joel's house, and, before entering scratches the sign of a bow on the wall. Late that afternoon Joel finds him in the passageway.

It is time for Daniel to find Jesus, and he asks Joel if he would like to come with him. Surprisingly Joel says yes, he thinks it worth the risk, but says his father thinks Jesus is dangerous. So the boys take back alleyways to the village of Baithsaida where they meet a couple with a small child, also looking for the house of Simon the fisherman where Jesus is said to be. The small child has a wound that won't heal from where a camel bit him on the hand, and the couple is looking for Jesus to heal it. Daniel is surprised and asks if Jesus is a doctor also. The man dismisses this as a stupid question. They soon find a house situated at the end of a dark alley, and many sick people are waiting outside.

They inquire of Simon, and he soon steps outside and greets Daniel and Joel and asks them inside. In a moment they are standing before Jesus. They are invited to eat with a number of men at a long table, and are served by several women. One of the men asks if they are not to wash their hands first, as is the Jewish custom. Jesus tells them that the food has been prepared with love, and that they should not receive it with their hands but with their hearts.

After the meager meal Jesus goes outside to talk with the sick, and walking among them he heals many. Daniel recognizes the man and woman with the small child he had seen earlier. The boy is healed, his father says. Daniel asks to see the wound, and the



boy shows it to him. It doesn't hurt any more, he says, and his father says the swelling will soon go down also. He is healed.

Back at Simon's house, Daniel, and Joel discuss the evening's events. Simon admits that he hopes Jesus will invite him to join him. Joel notes that Jesus calls all the people the children of God. How can that be, he asks. Many of these people have no ability to fight, and are not worthy of the Law, and they are unclean from birth. But Simon thinks they can still have hope. With this, Joel says that his father is right in that Jesus is not a true rabbi. However . . .

Simon tells Jesus where a blacksmith shop can be located and that he can get the part for the dagger there, so Daniel starts off to finish his chore.

Chapter 8 Analysis

As Daniel returns to the mountain he realizes that he is restless. In Capernaum he found his first friendships, and he misses Joel and his sister even though his struggles continue, as he does not regret his decision to stay with Rosh.

He returns to Capernaum to find Simon and get the part for a broken dagger that belongs to Rosh. Stopping along the way at Joel's house, Joel joins him and they find Simon and at his house once again meet Jesus. While they witness Jesus heal many sick people, a question is raised about why every one the sick that have come to Jesus are not healed. The author has interjected the thought that there seems to be some faith necessary for the healing to occur. That something must come from those who are faithful.

Joel expresses the concern of his father that Jesus is not a real rabbi, and he has seen that Jesus does not strictly follow the Law. The reader is left with a question, however. If not a rabbi, what is He?



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Five days later, Daniel waits on a mountain trail by himself. He is to rob a wealthy man, who passes this way each month posing as a beggar, as he carries his money to the coast.

When he finally arrives, Daniel jumps out and a small scuffle takes place, ending with Daniel taking two daggers from the man and knocking him unconscious in the process. Instead of leaving right then as instructed, Daniel waits for the man to wake and returns one of the man's daggers to him.

Rosh is furious when he finds that Daniel has not returned with both of the daggers. He tells Daniel that it will take money to buy the things they need to defeat the Romans and they must get it from wherever they can. He tells Daniel that there is a weakness in him like a flaw in a piece of metal and that he better remove it or he will be of no help to them when the right time comes to go after the Romans.

Daniel throws himself into his work, and is determined to get rid of his flaw, thinking that his grandmother, his sister, and Thacia are the flaws that he must conquer. But, he also sees a flaw in Rosh's argument. Rosh looks at people for what they can provide him. Jesus looks at all people as children of God.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Not following orders and allowing the wealthy man he robs to leave with one of his daggers, Rosh highlights Daniel's weakness and tells him that he must overcome them or leave.

Daniel's struggles within himself seem to grow more intense once more. When Rosh points out his weakness, Daniel looks to the three women in his life as the culprits for his weakness, and vows to overcome his problems that he feels they are creating. A gap begins between Rosh and Daniel that highlights their different philosophies. Daniel seems to reflect some of Rosh's goals, but also some of Jesus', and he can see why Simon does not completely agree with the methods Rosh uses to obtain his goals. And Joel now represents a completely new concern that Jesus does not follow the Law of the Jewish people, as he feels he should. The reader begins to get the sense that there are at least four forces competing with Daniel's goals.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

One morning Ebol, the sentry, gives Daniel a message scrawled on a piece of pottery. His grandmother is dying. Daniel goes down to the village and finds that his grandmother's house is bolted shut. He is told that his grandmother and sister have been locked inside for ten days. No one will go there because they are scared the demons that possess Leah will affect them also. Daniel would like to just leave, but with the neighbors watching him, he cannot turn his back on his sister and grandmother. He breaks down the door and enters to find Leah curled up in a tight ball of fear, but his grandmother speaks to him briefly. She says, "Daniel - you've come." Then she becomes quiet. Daniel gets a doctor, who says that only her will has kept her alive the last few days. He tells him to forget his grandmother and to concentrate on his sister, who needs him more than ever now. However, Daniel cleans his grandmother and tries to make her more comfortable. Realizing that he must spend the night here, he remembers what Rosh told him about his weakness, and his concern that the women in his life are responsible for it.

With no choice, Daniel sits by his grandmother's side in the growing darkness and quietly talks to her of the time when he and Leah first came to stay with her, and of the stories she used to tell them. Leah is still in the corner, but Daniel believes she is listening and may even have stirred a little. She finally comes to sit beside Daniel and the hold hands, as he recites the Lord's Prayer to his grandmother. Soon afterward his grandmother stops breathing.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Daniel's struggles continue. When his grandmother becomes gravely ill he must go to her. As she dies and Leah comes to sit beside him, Daniel is caught in the accurateness of Rosh's accusations. He knows he could have not come at all, or, he could leave whenever he wants, but he stays, basically alone with his flaw.

Daniel's struggle is compared to Leah's struggle with her demons. Both have something that they cannot completely understand or overcome which hinders their happiness and attainment of their goals.

Struggle within Rosh is also noted. Daniel has been with him for five years, and he evidently loves him. However, he is torn between giving him more responsibility and trusting him completely and suspecting that Daniel's flaw of being too compassionate will one day create problems for Rosh's ultimate goal.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

After his mother's meager funeral, Simon arrives, apologizing for being late. Afterwards, the two talk emotionally between themselves. Simon mentions that he will be staying with Jesus and is concerned that his blacksmith shop lies closed with all the tools going to waste, and no one to fix the machinery of the farmers in Ketzah. He asks a favor of Daniel. Will he take over the shop?

Daniel fights tears and thinks everyone he knows in the village has mapped out his future and that he has no say in it. The neighbors, Leah, the doctor, and now Simon all assume he has come home to stay. He feels shackled by his responsibilities, and always by the conflict within himself between what he really wants to do and what himself expects of him by others, and, to a degree. .

Simon goes on to say that his house is vacant, and since it is attached to the shop, he can live in it and keep Leah there close to him. Looking at the sagging house of his grandmother with its broken door, he feels he has no choice. The situation is made much worse as Simon tells Daniel one more thing. If a legionnaire comes in and needs something Daniel is to serve him. Daniel is horrified at the thought. However, the safety of the entire village and its occupants could depend on Daniel's behavior. Daniel feels that the final nail has been pounded into his coffin. What could make his situation worse?

Daniel returns to the mountain to try to explain his situation to Rosh, who immediately asks if his worthless sister is more important than his countrymen. With that, Daniel says he is returning to the village but while he belongs on the mountain, he will prove himself worthy to the cause in the blacksmith shop in the village.

The next day Daniel gathers what little is worth taking to Simon's house. When it is time to leave, Leah shrinks from the sunlight and refuses to budge. Sometime later a litter arrives, donated by some carpenters to move Leah. Daniel is ashamed that these people who have almost nothing would do this for a neighbor. Not without protest, Leah finally allows herself to be carried to the litter where she is taken to Simon's house, followed by Daniel with their few passions and the tethered goat, and a boy carrying Leah's loom.

Daniel and Leah settle into Simon's house, which is now theirs. Daniel makes good use of the shop and finally has money for the first time in his life. Leah also adjusts to the new surroundings, but still stays out of sight of strangers entering the shop. As Daniel tries to bake bread, Leah surprises him by showing him what he is doing wrong and helping him. Somewhat later, Daniel meets a servant representing a lady, who has been buying Leah's weaving, and he provides her with yarn for more weaving. Then, discovering some vegetables planted in the garden behind the house, Daniel decides to



weed them and harvest what he can. Seeing he is pulling up the young carrots, Leah comes outside on her own to help. All these things domesticate Daniel even more.

Daniel realizes he has exchanged one shadow for another. Instead of the huge shape of Samson following him around, now he has the tiny one of Leah.

A legionnaire enters the blacksmith shop and Daniel must repair a broken bridle ring for him. Daniel is obviously not cordial, but does do the work, taking his time about it. While the man is waiting Leah appears unexpectedly from the garden, and looks very beautiful and radiant with the sun shining behind her long blond hair. As the soldier sees Leah, Daniel slams the door and is infuriated that a Roman has looked upon his sister.

He goes to bed thinking once again of the mountain.

Chapter 11 Analysis

The death of Daniel's grandmother begins to close the door on Daniel's freedom and his future appears to be determined by many in the village without his participation. More and more things fall into place on the side of Daniel's conflict from which he most wants to flee. He feels he is losing the battle. Even worse, he is told he must serve the Romans in order to protect all the people of the village from their wrath and that is going completely against his vows.

Rosh's repeated statement that Daniel is "soft" helps to bring Daniel to a low point in the novel. All of Daniel's struggles appear to be heading in the wrong direction.

Daniel is pulled more into the life in the city as Leah begins to show some signs of improvement. Her weaving apparently has some value, and she surprises Daniel by showing him how to bake bread and work in the garden. However, she still clings to him and cannot bear the sight of other people. Leah, at this point, symbolizes Daniel's lack of freedom and his forced ties to the village in addition to some servitude to the hated Roman soldiers.

The Roman soldier, Daniel, appears to show, at least to some degree, the human side of the legionnaires. However, his overall fierce hatred of them is not diminished.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

A boy about Daniel's age comes into the shop one day to have a scythe repaired. His name is Nathan, and he has a shock of black hair and a weathered face. Daniel notices he has a black eye, and a very defiant look about him. Daniel learns that some of his friends beat him up because his father took a job working for the Romans as a tax collector. That evening Daniel accompanies him on the road home and seven young boys attack them in the darkness. Daniel and Nathan make quick work out of defeating them. After the boys run off, Daniel asks him if he would like to join him in getting even with the Romans.

A few days later, Joel walks into the shop with a boy Daniel has never seen before. His name is Kemuel. Joel tells Daniel that Kemuel feels as they do and wants to join them.

The four boys decide to meet at the blacksmith shop on the third day of each week to discuss their situation.

Once again Daniel, Joel, and Thacia meet, and they decide to make the statement from the song of David their password, 'He trains my hands for war so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.' Soon the numbers in their group exceed nineteen.

One day the Roman soldier returns to Daniel's shop. As Daniel works on the man's stirrup, he seems to be looking around the shop for something. Daniel is worried that he is searching the room for signs of their weekly meetings. Daniel decides the Romans are watching the shop and the house so they decide to move their meetings. They move them to an abandoned watchtower in a cucumber field, and when they do this the observance of the shop seems to stop. Daniel is glad of this, but something he cannot identify bothers him in the back of his mind.

Chapter 12 Analysis

The character of Nathan, who is introduced in this chapter appears to be a close parallel to Daniel and his past experiences in the village. He is the first to join the group that Daniel hopes will soon become a small army. Daniel's fierce pride in this creation and his excitement about telling Rosh are evident.

The boys, who become part of the group that wants to join Rosh, become impatient. Daniel sees what difficulties Rosh faces regularly, as he tries to keep the boys' interested and loyal to the upcoming cause without being able to take immediate action. Daniel begins to see that he has much more to learn from Rosh than he had imagined.

For the first time, Daniel has become a leader of men. He is excited to show Rosh his accomplishment, but also wants to wait until the time is right. Another parallel is created

with Daniel's anxiety and that of the group he has formed. More of Daniel's process toward maturity is apparent.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

One day Joel and Thacia arrive at Daniel's shop. Daniel has someone he wants Joel to meet, so they leave Thacia alone while they go. Upon returning, they find her and Leah talking in the garden and Daniel is amazed because Leah hasn't let anyone see or talk to her in almost ten years. Thacia tells Daniel they have been talking about him but keeps the secret of how she approached Leah. At the first sight of Joel she begins to cringe again, so Joel and Thacia leave immediately, but not before she gives Leah a present of a beautiful embroidered girdle. Daniel realizes Leah has never owned any nice clothes, so he goes to a market and buys her some beautiful blue cloth, some thread, and a needle. She loves the material and soon begins to make herself a dress.

Chapter 13 Analysis

Chapter thirteen is all about Leah. She continues to make small steps in her recovery towards being social as Daniel realizes that he has not looked at her as a real person, who would like to have some material things.

There is a reference to Jesus, and Joel has found that he has more knowledge of the scripture than either boy had imagined. Joel has talked with him, and he was able to answer some of the questions that had been bothering him for a long time. He notes that some of Jesus' thoughts are like that of his father. But he goes one step further and makes his reasoning simple and straightforward to understand.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Leah begins to talk more and ask questions relating to the girls in the village. One day, after Daniel has attended the wedding of Nathan, Leah asks what a wedding is.

Daniel tries to explain, realizing that Leah has no knowledge whatsoever of many of the basic things in life. Her simple analysis of situations that Daniel has not thought about in years begins to make him look at some of the more obvious experiences in his life as possible signs of answers to his dilemma he had previously overlooked. These thoughts make him restless. He knows her questions and her viewpoint are affecting him as Jesus' simplicity affects Joel.

She also asks Daniel of the Roman, who sometimes comes into the shop. She wants to know if the man is lonely and homesick. Daniel explodes and asks how Roman could be anything.

That evening he leaves Leah and begins the long trip up the mountain. With every step he feels his freedom returning. Upon arriving at the camp he and Rosh continue their old debates. Daniel also finds out that the shepherds from the village have beaten two of the men for trying to steal their sheep. He learns that it is becoming more difficult to get meat and some of the other necessities. This surprises Daniel, as he has never thought about life on the mountain being difficult. In addition, he now knows most of the shepherds they have been robbing, and knows those shepherds are not rich men. He struggles with this thought.

About that time Samson arrives with a huge sheep slung over his shoulder, and he and Daniel have a fine greeting. Daniel finds out that somehow Samson knew he was coming. He learns it is the first real meal the men have had in a week, and is told it was no accident that Samson happened to get a sheep just on his arrival. Daniel is told that Samson "hears things that aren't there."

Rosh tells Daniel that he needs to keep an eye on Joel, as that the time is coming soon when he will be needed. Later as he tries to sleep, Daniel lies wide-awake. Trying to get comfortable, he suddenly knows that his body has gotten used to a soft bed, just as his mind has gotten used to becoming lazy.

Chapter 14 Analysis

A question arises relating to Leah and Samson. If Leah could enjoy some material things, could Samson also? She continues to come out of her fearfulness, even asking about the Roman soldier.

The reader also learns that life is becoming more difficult on the mountain. Daniel has not thought about anything but the daily activities there in the past, and is now observant of more of the entire picture of the lives of the men, who follow Rosh.

Twice towards the end of the chapter Daniel refers to his shop as "the narrow cage of his life at the smithy." As the town is almost prison-like to Daniel, the blacksmith shop has become his prison cell.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Daniel continues to go to Capernaum to hear Jesus. He cannot explain why, but something keeps drawing him back to listen to his words. He still does not always understand everything he says, but he is continually drawn back. Sometimes he even tells Leah what he has learned from Jesus and relates the stories he heard. Daniel likes to go in the early morning and it seems like it is a happier time when the fishermen are coming ashore with their night's catch. In the evening the bay is smoky and as the sun goes down, the docks seem dismal and the people seem tired. It is at night that the workmen, who have not eaten at all during the day come and hope for a little hand out, and at night when the sick come to be healed. When Daniel gets home at night he always asks himself the same question. When? When?

One day at the shore a man named Jairus arrives at the harbor and pushes his way through the crowd toward Jesus. Daniel finds out that Jairus is one of the rulers of the synagogue and many of the men present are scared of him. He tells Jesus that his daughter has been sick for some time, but has gotten much worse today.

Jesus immediately begins to walk to Jairus' house with him and a crowd of curious people, including Daniel, following along. As they get near the house a man comes out and tells them they are too late, the little girl has died. The crowd can hear women wailing from the yard, and Jesus is told that he does not need to continue on. Jesus gestures he wants to continue and goes into the house. In the house he goes up to the little girl, who looks like she has died, and he tells everyone it is all right, she is just asleep. With that he quietly tells her to wake up and get out of bed, and she immediately does. When Jesus comes out of the house no one dares ask any questions. They all know, and when Jarius tries to pay Jesus, he refuses to take anything. Daniel relates that he has since seen the little girl walking with her father as though she has never been ill.

Leah asks if Jesus will ever come to their village. Daniel says that he did once, and he may again. She asks him about the crowds, and he can tell that she is so curious she might like to go to see him. When he asks her if she would, she cringes. Daniel tells her that she needs only to hide behind her veil, but she says nothing. It is a big improvement from her actions only a few months ago. Daniel thinks that the visits by Thacia have helped her more than anything.

Daniel gets more and more enjoyment out of his work, and begins to improve the quality of things he makes. Soon he begins experimenting with more art like forms. He takes a small piece of bronze and turns it into a small bronze bow, and attaches to it a tiny bronze pin for an arrow. As he completes it he makes it into a tiny brooch like the women in the city wear. Almost ashamed that he has done this, he puts it away for the



time being. Only later did he realize that he had used his hands that were trained for war to bend a bronze bow.

Chapter 15 Analysis

The author continues to build on one of the main themes of the story, in the kindness and compassion of Jesus. Daniel is surprised by the kindness and equality with which he treats everyone, knowing that Jesus feeds many poor and suffering people each night with what little He and Simon have, and Daniel thinks that even if Jesus does not want to take pay from Jarius, he surely can give it to the poor. Daniel sees, however, that Jesus treats all people equally, children, poor, sick, and rich alike. Therefore, if he does not take money from the poor, he should not take it from the wealthy. Also, Jesus' faith is strong enough that he knows he and the poor, who seek him out will be provided for with only the reliance on that faith. They have no need of money.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Daniel is finally called to the cave to meet with Rosh. There he is given orders to pass on to Joel, and Daniel is somewhat jealous that Joel will be the first one of the group to get a chance to act. Returning to Joel's secret passageway, he tells Joel and Thacia the plan.

A half-Jew, Herod Antipas, who is the appointed ruler over them, is to visit Capernaum to inspect the garrison there. Mattathias, the local banker, will give him a banquet and it is expected that all the wealthy supporters of the Romans will attend. Joel is to find out who will attend and the exact time and place of the banquet, so they will know whom their enemies are and which will likely support the Romans. Joel is to get the information to Daniel, who will pass it on to Rosh.

Surprisingly, Thacia is the one, who eventually comes up with a plan to get the information. Joel is to get some of the finest fish from Simon and peddle them on the street, saying that he will take orders for any special occasion, hoping the kitchen servants will tell him which of their masters is going to the banquet. All this continues to make Daniel wish that he could be the first to act, but he knows Joel is the only one who can carry out this order.

Thacia comes up with another plan to help free Joel for the day. She will dress up to look like Joel, and she and Daniel will leave the city together, talking to the guards on their way out. If anyone suspects Joel of any wrongdoing, he will have an alibi of being out of town all day with his sister. In the meantime Daniel and Thacia will go visit Leah for the day.

The next morning at dawn Daniel goes to the harbor to meet Joel and Thacia. He can hardly recognize Joel, who has dressed up like a fisherman, and the other person is a copy of a slightly smaller Joel. They are all delighted and Joel takes the fish and swaggers off on his errand. Daniel and Thacia, dressed as Joel, leave town and head back for Ketzah.

On the way they begin to discuss the teachings of Jesus. Thacia brings up the point that Jesus may not mean to make war to make the kingdom come. He may mean that if every single person loved each other, there would be no need for war. Daniel interrupts and says that will not rid anyone of the Romans, to which Thacia replies that the Romans must also understand. Daniel is horrified. "*Romans?* You think God loves the Romans?" The thought has never entered Daniel's mind that God might love Romans.

At this time, Thacia begins to question Joel's safety. Daniel assures her that he will be fine, but her doubts linger.



As they walk on they come to two Roman soldiers resting beside the road. They have heavy packs beside them, and one calls Daniel over and indicates he is to pick it up and carry it for him. Daniel and Thacia both know the law states that any Roman could command a Jew to carry his load for one mile. Refusing, Daniel spits on the ground and defies the soldier, who immediately slaps him in the mouth. With that, Thacia steps forward and grabs one of the packs and begins walking with it. Daniel feels ashamed that he has not held his temper and picks up the other pack and begins to follow her.

At the end of the mile the soldiers take the packs and march on. Daniel and Thacia sit beside the road and rest and begin to talk. Daniel admits that his act was foolish, but Thacia finally tells him that she is proud of his action, even though it was foolish. Daniel feels more pride than at any time before in his life. Later that day Thacia and Leah enjoy talking and laughing, and Daniel is very happy watching them from his shop. The sudden arrival of the blonde Roman soldier, who had been there before takes him out of his reverie. When the day is over, Daniel finds a minute alone with Thacia, and presents her with the bronze bow he has created. She is speechless for one of the few times ever, and Daniel knows he will remember this moment for the rest of his life.

Walking back to Capernaum, Daniel thanks Thacia for all she has done for Leah. She asks Daniel if she has ever seen a physician, and Daniel says that she has, and also a man, who was said to have magic power has said an unusual thing. He said that Leah did not want to be cured. She tells Daniel that he must try to get her to see Jesus. Daniel wonders if it is worth it to make anyone aware of the horrible situation they are in, and Thacia tells him that it very well is. She tells him that he must stop looking at the bad side of everything and enjoy being alive in Galilee. As they watch a flock of cranes fly overhead, they briefly hold hands before continuing on their journey.

Chapter 16 Analysis

A specific villain-figure is introduced for the first time in the character of the half-Jew, Herod Antipas. He represents the local authority over the Jews, but answers to the Romans. It is he who must first be conquered, if the freedom the Jews seek is to be successful.

The author continues to build on the theme that Jesus loves everyone, and that everyone must trust and love each other. If this happens, the kingdom will be created. Thacia points that out to Daniel, who is just beginning to understand the deeper teachings of Jesus. However, he continues to scoff at the idea that Jesus could possibly love the Romans.

Daniel's immaturity and recklessness again causes him some misery. Only the swift acts of Thacia keep him from getting into deeper trouble. Thacia begins to take on the role of the wisest among the group, continually putting detailed pieces of the overall picture into place. Her kindness shows more and more, as she begins to think that God loves the Romans, therefore there must be some goodness to them. Her kindness towards Leah continues to encourage her to grow away from her fears, and, for the first



time the possibility that Leah may be the one holding herself back from recovery is mentioned as a possibility.

The reader has possibly seen a slight romantic relationship begin between Daniel and Thacia, and this is now brought into the open, when he presents her with the bronze bow, and also as they briefly hold hands during an especially inspiring moment. At the same time, Thacia shows more of her inner intelligence by pointing out to Daniel that he must not always see things around him in such a poor light. There is beauty in living in Galilee, and she opens the window in Daniel for him to see it.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Soon after, while working in his shop, one of the villagers is talking about the robberies of five houses that happened the previous night. He questions how Rosh could have known these houses contained some of the most wealthy possessions of the village, and how could he have known they would be less guarded while the masters of those houses attended a banquet. Daniel tries to appear uninterested, but does question how anyone would know it was Rosh that was behind the robberies. Then Daniel is told that two men were caught robbing a sixth house. One died immediately, but the other confessed before being killed. Daniel can't help wondering to himself which of his friends was killed.

That evening at the meeting at the watchtower more of the facts of the robbery are revealed. Daniel feels that there should have more meaningful and significant results from Joel's efforts than simple robberies. Joel, on the other hand, is treated as a hero, and Joel states he is going to continue to provide fish to some of the more wealthy families in hopes of hearing more gossip about the masters of these houses.

The fierce loyalty the group feels toward Rosh is evident to Daniel. It appears that he is the only one who has some growing concerns about the motivation behind Rosh's deeds. But, as a whole, the mountain still represents their hope of freedom from the Romans.

The robberies by Rosh continue as Joel is able to get more and more information on the movements of the wealthy. Also, Rosh begins to lose some of his men as protection of the caravans increases. As a result, he begins to need more recruits and so the boys from the village are finally admitted formally into his band of robbers. As they begin to become petty thieves, however, Daniel questions their acts as possibly those of a small band of renegade boys as compared to those of a trained army, as he had imagined.

One evening two boys rush into Daniel's shop with the news that the Romans have left a big "engine" by the road because a wheel broke. It will be unguarded until morning, so Daniel says he will quickly tell Rosh. The boys take the matter into their own hands, however, as they decide to steal it themselves, leaving Daniel out of the decision-making process altogether. They decide to dismantle it and go about gathering tools from Daniel's shop for their use.

Chapter 17 Analysis

For the first time Daniel appears to have some slight doubts about the ultimate goal behind Rosh's activities. As the others in his group more solidly commit their loyalty, the discussions Daniel has had with Thacia about the teachings of Jesus begin to cause a hint of doubt in Daniel about Rosh's real plans. These are more intensified as the boys



begin to commit petty crimes rather than the more grand deeds Daniel had imagined for them.

Now Daniel becomes the more patient one, feeling the boys, who steal small things do so as much for the excitement as for the cause. The question is raised regarding whether the boys have been brought to their current frenzy too quickly.

The reader may also ask if the actions of Rosh have only centered on robberies and attainment of wealth with possibly little regard for the overall goal of fighting the Roman soldiers.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Late one afternoon Daniel sees an unfamiliar figure hurrying toward his shop, but as the figure enters he realizes it is Thacia dressed up to disguise herself. Out of breath she tells Daniel that the soldiers have taken Joel and put him into the garrison, and that he has been sentenced to go east the next morning. Daniel touches Thacia to comfort her and tells her that Rosh will have plans for an event like this.

Rushing up the mountain to the cave, Daniel quickly tells Rosh of the previous day's events. Rosh sympathizes with Daniel only slightly, but without emotion. Daniel can't believe that Rosh doesn't act immediately to try to free Joel, but Rosh says he can't spare even one man to rescue Joel. When Daniel complains to Rosh that Joel deserves to be given a chance, Rosh repeats what he has said before, that Daniel has a soft streak in him, and may be of no use to him. Daniel cannot believe what he is hearing and looks at Rosh differently for the first time. He holds his anger, but tells Rosh that he is no longer one of his men. As he leaves, Joktan leaves Rosh also to follow Daniel. Rushing down the mountain, Daniel feels someone is following them, but every time he looks back the trail is empty.

That night at the watchtower the boys are very agitated and want to find a way to rescue Joel, but they realize that twenty boys cannot defeat the Roman army. Daniel tells them they should not think that way, but should only concentrate on freeing Joel. His plan is to ambush the men on their way to the garrison by throwing rocks down on the guards so they have no idea who or how many are attacking them. Then they will free Joel amongst the confusion.

Before they go, Daniel asks for a vote of confidence in their plan. They all agree to it and name Daniel as their formal leader. With this Daniel feels no pride, only a heaviness of responsibility hanging over him.

Chapter 18 Analysis

Thacia continues to prove to be the most wise of them all in predicting several times that Joel is in more danger than they all admit. She has taken on the role of someone who understands the entire picture while Daniel still remains focused on only one goal.

When Daniel goes to Rosh to get a plan to release and save Joel, Rosh continues to show more and more that he may not be the kind but firm leader Daniel had seen him to be. As he cared for Daniel for over five years, Daniel looked at him as a father, always following his lead. However, as Daniel matures more and more, he begins questioning Rosh's true character and eventually finds that he is not interested in anyone but himself.



In Joktan is a history relating to Daniel's maturity. Initially in the book Joktan is portrayed as a skinny boy, who stutters and is afraid of everything. At this point he has matured and insists on joining Daniel. Daniel shows his support and gratitude for anyone he can get, when he tells the other boys that Joktan will make up their twentieth member.

The band of boys symbolizes a real effort to do something against the Romans besides robbing and planning for their overthrow, and yet they symbolize a lessening of strength of forces from that of Rosh. Compassion begins to surface in the acts of Daniel, and his maturity shows, when he does not confront Rosh physically, but manages to hold his temper.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

The boys take up their positions above the narrow pass through which the group holding Joel must travel. As they wait, Joktan proves his skill in carrying out this type of attack, and Daniel knows that Joktan is the only one among them besides himself, who has any experience in this matter.

Finally the guards arrive at the pass, and the boys begin raining rocks down upon them. But Daniel sees that they are not disorderly as he had hoped, but they regroup immediately and begin their counterattack. In a flash Daniel sees a huge rock dislodge itself, and hit the leader. As he begins to cut Joel free from the irons, something hits him, and he passes out, and some moments later finds himself safely on the mountainside. He realizes that Samson has saved him and Joel but is told that Nathan has died.

As the boys gather they realize Nathan was killed while pulling Daniel up from the path, and Daniel is told that Samson was hit by a spear and then taken by the soldiers, but that he will most likely die soon.

Chapter 19 Analysis

The authority of Daniel is not questioned, as he leads the boys on their first real mission. He proves himself to be brave by taking the most dangerous assignment himself. This is in contrast to how Rosh has been pictured, as Rosh is never placed in any other place except the safety of the cave other than the first incident, when he led the men to rob a slave caravan to get Samson.

Samson and Joktan are proven to be loyal followers of Daniel. The death of Nathan, the only character in the book to have a relationship with a female, is created to show that Daniel's concern that his loyalty to his grandmother, sister, and Thacia may be well founded.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Several days later Daniel finds himself only able to do minor tasks due to the wounds he received trying to rescue Joel. He has much time to think, and he continually feels sorrow in the losing of Samson, Nathan, and for Nathan's new bride. Joktan moves onto the roof with Daniel, but cannot enter the house though he does make many friends in the village. Daniel spends a great deal of time thinking of what he has learned in the last few months. One thing he remembers are the words of Jesus, when he said "They who live by the sword will perish by the sword."

Joel has as not been seen until late one night, when he appears at Daniel's shop. He says that he has told his father everything, and relates to Daniel that his father has forgiven him and told him from now on not to hide in the passageway but that he is welcome in his home. Then he explains to Daniel that he has left home and will not return.

He goes on to tell Daniel that if he cannot stay with him, he will return to the mountain to live with Rosh. He is still committed to the plan to defeat the Romans. When Daniel tells him that Rosh is no longer their leader, Joel asks that Daniel not split from Rosh on account of him. Daniel explains that the plans and deeds of Rosh are not in line with the goal of their group, when it was formed. They cannot go on harming the people of their own village. They are not stronger now than when they started, they are weaker.

He also tells Joel that he must return to his father and then go to Jerusalem and continue his studies as his father wishes. Joel agrees to this, and then asks to present Leah with a present from Thacia. Daniel says he may try, so Joel goes quietly into the room with Leah and lies the present on a chest by the door. Sensing Leah's discomfort, he quietly leaves. Once back in the shop Joel tells Daniel that, if he needs to leave her, he and Thacia will care for Leah.

Then Joel tells him that his father wishes to find a husband for Thacia, as she is now sixteen. She can choose for herself, but she refuses to do so. Joel agrees the he too, must make some decisions. Daniel, in total despair, explains that he will never be able to marry with the vow he has taken hanging over him. He brings up the possibility that Jesus is the leader they have been waiting for and asks Joel to go to him and warn him once more of his enemies. Changing the subject, Joel asks Daniel to go to the Festival of the Day of Atonement, as Thacia will be there, and she would like to see him there also.

After Joel leaves, Daniel realizes that what they have been working for so long is not possible, and it is the darkest day of his life.



Chapter 20 Analysis

The character of Daniel continues to mature with the understanding that the deaths of two people are his responsibility. While he has lived by the sword, the people who died from it are the very ones he cherishes. Worse than that, he understands the group he formed is no longer affective with its discovery by the Romans and they have been going in the wrong direction anyway. Fighting is not the solution to defeating the Romans.

Joel matures also through the experiences, and by explaining everything to his father. Joel's father appears to be much wiser than he had previously as Daniel realizes his vision for Joel is the correct path for him. He is also shown to be compassionate when he decides that Daniel is not as much of a poor influence on his son, as he had previously believed.

Leah also continues to make improvements by at least tolerating Joel's personal message to her, and there is a hint she may even agree to leave the house with Daniel and to venture into public for the first time.

The romantic theme is again strengthened with the message from Joel that Thacia wants him to see her at the festival of the Day of Atonement.

Many of the novel's plots become together in this chapter, and the author opens doors for possible solutions that can combine for the benefit and good of everyone.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Daniel decides he must personally take his warning of impending violence to Jesus. Joel, knowing that Jesus is aware of the message already, scolds Daniel by telling him Jesus has been given the same message by others and that he continues to preach his vision of peace and understanding anyway.

When, by chance, Daniel and Jesus meet and Daniel begins to tell Jesus of his concerns, Jesus changes the subject immediately and asks Daniel what troubles him. Daniel tells Jesus that everything he has tried to do has failed, and that he does not know where to turn. Jesus asks Daniel what he has been living for and Daniel tells him that he wants to free his people, and get vengeance for his father's death. Jesus asks Daniel if he has two goals not one, and Daniel tells him he thinks they are the same, but now not without some of the same doubt he has experienced in the past. With that he tells Jesus the entire story of his parents' deaths and then his meeting of Rosh on the mountain and their preparation for the time, when they can go against the Romans and run them out of Israel.

Jesus understands his philosophy. "An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth." Daniel says the only way he can repay Samson is with vengeance, and Jesus says to him that Samson did not give him vengeance, he gave him love, and that is how he must repay Samson. Daniel asks him how he can love the Romans, who killed Samson.

At this point Jesus explains to Daniel what is necessary to win the battle. It is love. Hate only breeds more hate, but love can breed more love and erase hate. Daniel does not see what Jesus means, and gets up to leave. With that, Jesus asks Daniel to follow him. Daniel is immediately excited and says that he will fight for him to the end. Jesus says that he asks for something much harder than that. He asks him not to fight but to love.

Jesus tells Daniel that a rich man came to him the day before and asked to follow him, but when Jesus asked him to give up his riches, he went away. Jesus makes it more clear to Daniel, when he tells him that he wants Daniel to give up his hate. Daniel still does not understand and says that he has given a vow to fight the Romans. Jesus smiles and tells him that giving a vow to fight the Romans is not a vow of hate, it is a vow of love. Daniel does not believe he can achieve his goals without violence and hatred, and leaves Jesus without agreeing to follow him.

Chapter 21 Analysis

At this point, the lowest level of Daniel's life, Daniel's meeting with Jesus shows his complete concentration on his battle with the Romans. He is given the opportunity several times by Jesus to understand that love, not war, is the answer, but Daniel is too focused on what he believes his vow represents to grasp the significance of what Jesus



tells him. Only after Jesus asks Daniel to follow him does Jesus make him understand that in order to reach the kingdom people must often give up what means most to them. In a rich man's situation it may mean his wealth. In Daniel's situation it must be his hatred.

The author expertly shows the knowledge of Jesus and his compassion and commitment to love. Jesus has the ability to see good and love in every situation that arises. Therefore he has no fear of anything, including violence. As such, he is able to turn Daniel's vow around from wanting violence and war to vengeance through love and understanding and compassion for others.

This highlights the message the author strives to teach through the characters and action of the novel.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

Daniel decides to go to the festival and tries to convince Leah to accompany him, but she will not even consider it. At the festival he sees Thacia, perhaps more beautiful than ever before, and thinks she is looking for some boy, who has become special to her. When she finally sees Daniel, he is just turning to leave, and she rushes up to him. She thanks him for coming but he says he will tell Leah how beautifully she dances. Thacia is hurt that he only came to tell Leah about the festival, and asks him pointedly if he does not see her as more than a girl. Admitting that he does, he goes on to explain that he cannot offer her anything due to his spoken vow. With that Thacia tells him as have others, that there are other ways to fulfill his vow besides hatred and violence. He leaves her miserably, once again not grasping the truth of the whole picture of his options.

Arriving at home he tells Leah about the dancing, and she tries to dance and asks Daniel if he thinks she is pretty. Daniel does, and says that Joel thinks so also. However, Leah seems uninterested in what Joel thinks. She serves Daniel his meal and tells him that she has a surprise for him. After his meal she brings out a basket of the finest fruit Daniel has ever seen. Then she tells him it is a present from Marcus, the Roman soldier, who has visited the shop for work to be done. Daniel becomes overwhelmed with fury that a Roman dared give a gift to his sister. He picks her up and shakes her before putting her down and calming himself. He learns that Marcus comes often, when Daniel is away and talks to Leah from horseback at the back fence. He tells Leah quietly that he will find him and kill him to which Leah bursts into tears, falls to his feet, and begs him not to harm Marcus, who has become her friend. Making Leah vow to never see him or talk to him again Daniel leaves the house and walks through the village all night with only anger on his mind. Returning home, he replaces the anger with shame.

Chapter 22 Analysis

Once again Daniel is blind to the fact that there can be a choice other than violence to appease his vow. Both Thacia and Leah give him the opportunity to turn to other means of satisfying his desire to fulfill his inner drive than through war. He continues to skirt the options presented him by Joel, Jesus, Thacia, and now Leah.

While his temptations to run to the mountain for freedom are obviously past, his retreat to salvation in the village is not complete, as he will not turn completely from the need to fight for victory rather than to seek other means.

Romance is close to Daniel's grasp, but, as with his other personal needs, his inner desire to fight physically overshadows his other thoughts, blinding him once again to his



options. At this point in the story, Daniel seems to represent all the people now and through history that cannot see past their own personal immediate needs in order to achieve true serenity and happiness.

Though Daniel appears to have overcome the loss of control of his temper. He still has immature moments, which take over his personality in favor of uncontrollable hatred and violence.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

Daniel realizes that his outbreak of temper has undone any progress Leah might have made to overcoming her fears, and that the demons have once again taken over her spirit.

He turns to work to try to forget the damage he has caused. While doing so, he begins to once again think about Jesus, and wonders if he would come to drive the demons from Leah. While he knows he turned Jesus down, when he asked Daniel to follow him, he also knows that Jesus in his compassion and love will not turn down his request, so he goes to Capernaum to find Jesus. Arriving at the shore, all the fishing boats have gone. A crippled man tells Daniel that everyone has gone across the lake to follow Jesus. Hundreds followed along the shore, but the crippled man could not follow.

Daniel hurries along the bank in the direction of the largest group of people Daniel has ever seen, and finally catches up and is told that it is the day of the Lord. He soon finds Simon, who tells him that Jesus has left to go into the mountains with instructions that no one is to follow, and that he has given up all hope that Jesus will lead them against the Romans. Daniel does not understand even, when Simon explains that the only thing that keeps people from happiness and fulfillment are fear and hate.

With that Daniel leaves knowing that his only allies now are his own hatred and his vow.

Chapter 23 Analysis

Daniel's stubborn nature and his total commitment to his vow overpower the ability for him to understand the wider view of options to success in the attainment of his goals. The withdrawal of Jesus from Capernaum symbolizes Daniel's inability to recognize the ways he may use love and compassion for others in fulfilling his vows. As Jesus leaves the towns and retreats to the mountains so does Daniel retreat from the help of others and to withdraw within himself.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

While spring brings beauty to Ketzah with its beautiful blue sky, the bright green grass, and colorful flowers, neither Leah nor Daniel see its beauty. They are both wrapped up in themselves, Daniel in his work and hatred, and Leah in her fear. The loom only gathers dust, and once again Daniel becomes a prisoner to his desire to fulfill his vow with vengeance.

One day the goat becomes ill and soon dies. Soon after that Leah becomes ill with fever and the physician, who attends her does not give Daniel much hope for her recovery. Daniel sees a chance for his release from his own personal prison if he no longer has to care for her, but at the same time he feels uneasiness inside. With her death another vengeance must be satisfied. As had Samson, she would die by the sword while not have had any personal experience that led her to that end. Finding a broken piece of pottery and scratching the message on it that Leah is dying, he sends Joktan off to get the message to Thacia.

Three days later he has not heard from Joktan or Thacia, but at the well getting water he sees Marcus, the Roman soldier, who symbolizes his hate for all Romans. Holding his desire to immediately kill him, Daniel temporarily overcomes his violent temper and gains control of himself.

Two days later Marcus again appears, begging Daniel to let him see his sister before he is transferred away from the village forever. Daniel replies that if he tries to enter the house he will kill him. Daniel continues to care for Leah but without much hope. One day as Daniel sleeps fretfully during the day, he sees his door open and Jesus enters in his white robe, with Thacia following behind him. Kneeling together Jesus looks deeply into Daniel's eyes and sees his bitterness of betrayed hopes and pities him. Fighting between his desires to follow Jesus with all his heart and avenging his vow, Daniel struggles to understand once more. Is it possible that only love can bend a bronze bow?

With the ultimate decision made, a lightness seems to lift Daniel and his fears all disappear at once. At this moment Thacia's hand touches his, and she motions for him to look at Leah, who is looking at Jesus though just awakening from a deep sleep. His release from his hatred allows him to offer Thacia all he has within his power to give her. He realizes Jesus has left, and rushes out to thank him. He sees the Roman Soldier, Marcus still waiting across the street to hear of Leah's progress, however, and walks up to him and tells him that his sister will be all right. He then invites him into his house to see her.



Chapter 24 Analysis

The beauty of spring is lost on Daniel and Leah, who are both too centered in themselves to see the good side of life. With the loss of the goat and the probability that Leah will die also, Daniel may be offered freedom to break from his prison. He realizes, however, that he never will be free as long as he harbors his hatred. If he loses Leah he will gain some new hatred to replace an old one.

At this point Daniel understands that both Samson and possibly Leah will have died by the sword however neither of them lived by it, they were just helpless victims of Daniel's need to get vengeance.

On Jesus' visit to cure Leah, Daniel finally recognizes that the only pathway to the kingdom is through love of everyone no matter who they are or what they have stood for. His offer of everything he has to Thacia and the invitation to Marcus to come inside his house are symbolic of Daniel's acceptance of Jesus and his decision to give up hatred.



Characters

Daniel bar Jamin

Daniel comes from a very proud race, the Galileans. He has bold features with sun-browned skin and ever changing dark eyes. He is at first in the servitude of a blacksmith, but is treated badly so he runs away to the hills and lives with a band of outlaws, who are planning to rise up against the Romans, when their strength is sufficient.

The Romans crucified Daniel's parents, and he takes a vow to devote his entire life to defeating them and running them out of Palestine. While he is very intelligent in some ways, Daniel is very slow to embrace the idea that love can achieve far more than war. Time after time he is close to grasping that fact, but his deep desire to follow through with the martial vow he has taken blind him to any path other than violence.

It takes Jesus, Simon, Leah, Joel, and Thacia together to make him understand that he can achieve his goals and remain true to his vow through love.

Joel bar Hezron

Joel is a scribe's son, who has learned to make sandals, but who is to one day become a rabbi. He is a very intelligent boy, who is willing to embrace violence and not afraid to speak his mind. He joins Daniel's cause, but is more open to options of attaining it. He also is continually questioning Jesus' validity as a rabbi, as his teachings of the Law are, in his mind, very specific. Joel is one of the first to realize that Jesus may have a message other than violence and war.

Joel's character is more comprehensive than that of Daniel. Much of this is due to his loyalty to his father and his sister, both of whom are still alive and continue to have an influence over him in his process towards maturity.

Malthace (Thacia)

Joel's sister, Malthace (or Thacia,) is a beautiful young girl with dark, shining hair, striking features and graceful movement. She represents the good side of Daniel, and she turns out to be the most intelligent and understanding of the group. While she wants to fight to oust the Romans from Israel, she is the first one to see the options of achieving their goals through love and understanding rather than through war.

Several times she approaches Daniel with alternate plans towards understanding the teachings of Jesus. Some include his commitment to her, but she cannot get her message through Daniel's need to maintain his personal hatreds.



Rosh

Rosh is the leader of a group of men, whose goal it is to run the Romans out of Israel. He is a large man, basically very rough, but he is also fair. He is known to have at one time been a great and brave warrior, fighting some of the most significant battles against the Romans. He flees and hides in the mountains in a large cave, where he organizes a band of bandits and leads them from there, continually making raids on the villagers and others, who pass near his hideout.

He is the one who rescues Daniel after he flees from his master, who regularly mistreated him. He has a short, thick body with a muscular neck, a matted black beard, his eyebrows often bristle with emotion, and he has small black eyes.

He initially appears to have the necessary leadership to free the Jews from the Roman occupation. His methods, however, harm his own people and may be more for his own advancement than for those of the Jewish people.

He points out to Daniel that he is soft, and may be of no use to him as there is no room for compassion in his plan. His ultimate motives are questioned somewhat as his methods continually cause harm to those he professes to protect.

Joktan

Joktan is the youngest of Rosh's bandits. He's a stuttering, skinny boy, who is generally frightened of most everything. He finally decides to leave Rosh and help Daniel in Joel's rescue.

Samson

A huge black slave that Rosh and his men steal from some tradesmen, who own him is named Samson by the bandits. His dedication to Daniel from the beginning is significant and a symbol of blind love. Samson can evidently not hear or speak, but shows he still has the intelligence and sense of loyalty to serve one person. His lack of communication skills are negated, as he seems to have a "sixth sense" of events which have not yet taken place.

Simon the Zealot

Simon once worked with Daniel as a servant at the blacksmith shop in the village. He finally paid his servitude to Amalek, and has opened his own blacksmith shop. He and Daniel renew their old friendship, and he appears to be a wise man that has considerable knowledge of Jesus.

He is the first friend of Daniel to leave his life to devote himself to Jesus and His cause.



However, he cannot convince Daniel of the advantages to giving in to unquestioning love.

Amalek

The blacksmith that Daniel was an apprentice to in the village is Amalek. He was very hard on Daniel, beating him regularly. He is the main reason Daniel left and remains in the mountains. After he dies it is safe for Daniel to return to the village as Daniel's servitude is forgiven.

Leah

Daniel's sister is fifteen-year-old, Leah. She has beautiful golden hair and bright blue eyes. There is some question of whether or not she is possessed by demons, and she has not been outside of the house for five years, but spends her days weaving at the loom. It is said that she went crazy after her parents died.

As Leah begins a slight recovery from her fear and shyness, she begins to ask very simple questions of Daniel. As a result, she becomes a symbol of the things that exist around Daniel that he fails to see. Her interest in a Roman soldier causes Daniel's hatred to intensify.

Daniel's Grandmother

A very old and frail lady, Daniel's grandmother is extremely poor and ill. When her money ran out she sold Daniel to the local blacksmith. Her dependence on Daniel signifies one of the responsibilities from which Daniel tries to run. She symbolizes much of what Daniel hates in the Romans and their occupation of his village.

Jesus Son of Joseph

Jesus appears as a somewhat young man, but frail from His years of hard toil. Dressed in a white tallith and with a white cover over his head, He has a thin face that seems to be lighted with radiance from within and shows a great deal of intensity. He has a gentle voice, but it carries well and is warm and vibrant and demands attention.

Jesus is first looked upon as a possible leader in war against the Romans. He accepts this role, but not in the ways which the people have at first defined his participation. He teaches that His method is to defeat hatred, not through battle, but through total uncompromising love of every being.



The Sick People

At Simon's house in Baithsaida, many people, who are sick or have family that are sick gather to see Jesus, who is rumored to heal people by talking to them and touching them. Some are healed and some are not. Those with total faith in Jesus may be healed while those with out faith cannot know complete love and do not receive freedom from their illness and pain. These people represent all peoples. Some believe, and some do not. However, they are all still loved.

Legionary in Daniel's Shop

A legionary, who enters Daniel's shop, turns out to be young and has crisp fair hair. His forehead is wet with sweat and his heavy metal helmet has left a crease on his forehead. He turns out to be a very lonely man with very white skin and a beardless face and intense blue eyes whose name is Marcus.

Marcus eventually grows to be the symbol of Daniel's hate for all Romans and of his desire to kill them, but symbolizes the first real sign that Daniel has given up his hatred for compassion, when he allows him to see his sister.

Nathan

Nathan is a boy of about Daniel's age, who has a black eye, and is defiant about standing up for his father. He enters the blacksmith shop to have a scythe repaired. The boy has a shock of black hair and a bony, weathered face. His father has taken a job working for the Romans as a tax collector, and is chastised for this. The boy has many parallels to Daniel. His father could not pay taxes, and his choice was to either sell his sister or take the job working for the Romans. His father is also apparently very soft hearted. He becomes Daniel's apprentice.

Nathan joins Daniel's group, and gets married shortly thereafter. Nathan is the only one of the characters in the book shown to have a relationship with someone of the opposite sex. He dies saving Daniel.

Kemuel

Kemuel is a boy from a wealthy family that Joel brings to Daniel. He wants to fight the Romans. He says he is tired of words and wants action to remove the Romans from Israel.



Jarius

Jarius is one of the rulers of the synagogue. The story is told that he approached Jesus one evening and asked for his help with his daughter, who appeared to be dying. Jesus goes to his house, apparently too late to save her, as he is told upon his arrival that the young girl has died. Jesus enters the house anyway, and apparently, through a miracle, brings the girl back to healthy life. When Jarius offers Jesus payment, he is refused.

Half-Hew, Herod Antipas

Herod is the ruler over the people in this area. As he has the support of the Romans, many wish to be on his good side.



Objects/Places

Grandmother's House

Daniel's Grandmother's house in the village is very shabby and run-down. It has two pieces of furniture that consist of a large chest and a loom. The mud wall that had once separated the room into two has fallen down, and on the mud floor is but one frayed mat.

The house symbolizes Daniel's hate for the Romans, and, at the same time, his need to protect his family members.

Roof at Grandmother's House

The roof of his grandmother's house is where Daniel slept as a boy, and is accessed by a rickety wooden ladder. When he returns to the roof it symbolizes his longing for the men and cave he has left, and can be compared somewhat to the top of the mountain where Daniel lives as it provides a lookout over the village as the mountaintop provides a lookout over the valley. It is significant, however, that the view from the rooftop is only of one small village, where as the mountaintop provides a much broader view.

The Synagogue

The synagogue is a small white building in the center of the village. Upon entering through the low door, one can see that it has rows of low wooden benches for the men, who sit in the order of their trades. A grilled screen separates the men from the women,

Ketzah

The village below the mountain is Ketzah, where Daniel grew up and where his grandmother and sister still live. The village symbolizes Daniel's responsibilities and ties to his past, and he desperately tries to remove himself from its confinement.

Capernaum

Joel and his sister move to Capernaum and Daniel goes there to find them. It is a city on the sea with a variety of houses, busy markets, and a bustling economy. The harbor contains many types of boats from large commercial traders to small pleasure craft. There are many languages spoken here,



Joel's House

High on a hill with the other wealthy houses of Capernaum sits the house where Joel and his family live. Daniel cannot believe his eyes, as he looks at the beautiful courtyard, the room Joel has all to himself, and the appointments more beautiful than Daniel has ever imagined.

Demons

Initially Daniel's sister, Leah, is possessed with demons after her parents both die. However, the symbolism of the unknown is repeated in Daniel, as he struggles to come to terms with his flaws.

The Mountain

The mountain where the cave is symbolizes Daniel's freedom from responsibility and life in the village. It is a refuge for Daniel from new knowledge which competes for his attentions.

The Watchtower

When Daniel decides that the Romans may be watching his blacksmith shop, he decides to move the meetings. His group chooses an abandoned watchtower in a cucumber field owned by the father of one of their members. It is a small round house with a hidden space beneath it. Daniel feels this will be an excellent spot to place the weapons they hope to someday own, and it symbolizes a vision of the future to the group of boys.

The Smithy

The blacksmith shop that Simon gives to Daniel is known as the smithy. As the village is a prison to Daniel, the smithy becomes the "narrow cage of his life." The Smithy takes on the mood of its occupants. It harbors fear, hope for the future, tenseness, solitude, camaraderie, and understanding, among other things.



Setting

The Bronze Bow takes place 2,000 years ago in Palestine during the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius and the time of Jesus Christ's ministry. The people of Palestine live under Roman rule; many regard the Romans as foreign military occupiers, although others take advantage of the new economic opportunities that the Roman Empire provides. The Romans do little to endear themselves to the Hebrew people of Palestine. Jews must always show deference to Roman soldiers: if food is demanded by the soldiers, then the Jews must provide it; if a Roman soldier needs help, then the Jews must drop whatever they are doing and immediately provide assistance. The Romans even enact a law requiring ordinary people to carry the soldiers' burdens during journeys, if the soldiers demand it. For those who profit from the opportunities the vast empire offers to merchants and civil servants, the burdens of military occupation seem less troublesome, but even many of those who prosper would prefer a truly Hebrew government. The novel's action focuses on those who seek to drive the Romans out of Palestine.

The Bronze Bow has four specific locales for the action: the mountains beyond the village of Ketzah, Ketzah itself, and the cities of Capernaum and Bethsaida. The mountains harbor the thieves and cutthroats who follow Rosh, who some hope will lead a successful revolt against the Romans and the puppet government run by King Herod.

These mountains are dry, dusty, and rocky, but because they have caves where people can hide from the civil and military authorities, many of the local Jews see them as a haven from the miseries of oppression. Ketzah lies in a fertile valley full of olive trees and flowers; the village takes its name from the ketzah plant, whose blue flowers yield seeds that are sold as food seasoning. This village is the home of the novel's main character, Daniel bar Jamin.

Capernaum, a real city of biblical Palestine, lies on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Its large dark stone houses are a marked contrast to the mud-roofed ones of Ketzah.

Crowded, seemingly always full of life, Capernaum is the economic center of the area. Farmers of the region sell their wares in town; fishermen ply their trade on the shores of the Sea of Galilee beside Capernaum; and caravans carry in goods from much of the Roman world.

In the novel, Bethsaida is not very distinguishable from Capernaum, although it is a smaller place and its houses do not seem as large and grand as those in Capernaum. Even so, its brief role in the novel is an important one. It is in Bethsaida that Daniel begins his spiritual transformation after hearing of miracles being worked by Jesus.

Social Sensitivity

Given the turmoil in the Middle East today, *The Bronze Bow's* depiction of military oppression in ancient Palestine could spark a discussion of the current Palestine situation, as well as a more general discussion about human rights.

Even if the Romans did bring better sanitation, better roads, and wealth to a region that had been wracked by almost constant warfare, they also became the oppressors, and readers may want to address the major issues of oppression and the desire of people to be free.

The religious aspect of *The Bronze Bow* may be controversial. The novel is undeniably rooted in Christian theology, but its main concept is common to many religions and philosophies—that giving in to hatred is foolish. At the novel's end Daniel is not necessarily a converted believer in Christ; he is converted to Christ's way of thinking about love, hate, and life's priorities.

The depiction of Christ in the novel could possibly arouse controversy among readers. Speare's Jesus is a weary man, burdened with cares, not an untiring superhero who crushes evil wherever he finds it. Possessing great wisdom and an extraordinary understanding of human nature, he works miracles of physical and spiritual healing that present little challenge to the Roman overlords. Some readers may regard this down-to-earth depiction of Christ as irreverent, although Speare's intention is to explore Christ's appeal to his contemporaries.



Literary Qualities

Speare's prose in *The Bronze Bow* has the fluidity, grace, and clarity that mark her other award-winning novels. The impressively researched story comes alive with images of everyday life in ancient Palestine; Speare subtly weaves these details into the action of the novel.

The title *The Bronze Bow* represents the central symbol of the novel. It is taken from the biblical Song of David as quoted in chapter 7: "God is my strong refuge, / and has made my way safe. / He made my feet like hinds' feet, / and set me secure on the heights. / He trains my hands for war, / so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze." Daniel misses the point of this quotation, remarking, "It couldn't really be bronze. The strongest man could not bend a bow of bronze."

Joel, too, misses the point, suggesting that "Perhaps just the tips were metal."

On the other hand, Malthace understands what is meant: "No. I think it was really bronze. I think David meant a bow that a man couldn't bend—that when God strengthens us we can do something that seems impossible." The image of the bronze bow recurs, even in a brooch that Daniel makes for Malthace.

To him, the bronze bow is a symbol of war. It represents a promise from God to give his people strength to overcome their enemies. In this, Daniel is only half right, for the bronze bow actually represents him. Daniel is the unbending avenger, and though others mistake his stubborn hatred for strength of character, his difficulty in distinguishing right from wrong makes him in truth weak inside. When he finally learns to "bend," to be more charitable towards other people, he gains the strength to make the important people in his life happy.

The bronze bow is a powerful symbol, capturing in itself the conflict between violence and war, and understanding and peace.



Themes

Hate and Violence

The central theme of this novel is the struggle to achieve freedom from hate and violence. Daniel tries time and time again to free himself of his fierce hatred of the Roman occupation of Israel. However, his need for the relatively security and safety of the mountain and his outlaw friends overshadow his ability to move successfully from their influence. His vow to avenge his parents' death and the fear in his sister, Leah, are so strong that he is blinded with the need to defeat the Romans physically through war. Very often in the story Daniel is prone to ill-advised rash actions of violence, when he could more realistically achieve even a short-term goal through patience.

Daniel is able to convince others of this need and to lead them on the pathway he feels is right to overcome the occupation of Israel. In doing so he magnifies that same hatred he feels in the minds of others. However, as others do not have such strong need to accomplish this, he is slower than they to see the real pathway to freedom, both inner freedom and freedom from the fear the Romans present.

Daniel's violence is personified in the Roman soldier, Marcus, and is intensified when his sister, whom he feels he must protect, befriends Marcus. Daniel sees her symbolically embrace his hatred of the Romans through her acceptance of this seemingly innocent person. His own hatred is magnified, as he walks through the village all night without releasing much of his anger at her actions.

As in the overriding theme of the story, Daniel's specific acts of violence are the main detractors from the ability to achieve his ultimate goal.

Personal Character

Personal character is studied in depth in several characters, and completely void in others. Daniel is shown to have a great deal of conviction in the vow he once took to avenge the death of his parents. His struggles within himself occur, when he has choices to make for himself. One of the first is to leave the servitude of Amalek. He decides to give up everything including his grandmother's home and his relationship with both her and his sister and move to the mountains where he eventually joins a group of outlaw bandits, who steal with the excuse that they are working towards a cause that many people believe in. As a young person, Daniel's own personal character is easily influenced by those, who profess to share in his goals and the methods needed to achieve them. As he begins to mature, he makes some progress toward analyzing situations he feels he must change. As his character learns more of the teachings of Jesus, he finally can accept what is necessary to understand within himself without compromising his own terms.



The character of Joel experiences many of the same feelings as those within Daniel. There is a significant difference in personal value, however, as Joel must remain true to his father and his sister, with whom he remains very close. This aspect of Joel's character allows him to more objectively analyze situations and their potential outcomes as the influence from others gives him a broader perspective than those of Daniel.

Simon is more open to the teachings and the beliefs of Jesus, as he does not harbor the need for violence as does Daniel. When given an opportunity to give openly to Jesus and to embrace his ways, Simon has less challenge to his personal character, and so he more readily can accept change in leadership and ideology.

Romance

Daniel is inexperienced in the feelings of love and romance at the beginning of the story. Therefore, he is slow in realizing the reasons for his attraction to Thacia, and somewhat rejects them because there is no place for these feeling in his quest for the revenge of his parents. In place of romance, Daniel sees the women in his life to be the cause of many of his personal downfalls. He often reflects on this inner theory, and uses it as a shield to ward off his feelings for Thacia.

As he matures and begins to understand where these feelings are leading, he realizes that he must continue to reject them, as he cannot carry out his vow of vengeance and be true to one person at the same time. Only when he gives up his feelings of hatred can he respond to those of love.

While Leah has no experience in romance either, her attraction to the Roman soldier, Marcus, is a subconscious method for overcoming her withdrawal into herself. When Daniel threatens this relationship, she retracts back into her isolation from others as a method of protecting herself from the need to associate with anyone, even Daniel.

While there is a great deal of love in the novel, the only other reference to romance is extremely slight and relates to the marriage of Nathan. This tragic experience that ends with the death of Nathan and a subsequent widow, intensifies Daniel's resolve to remove himself from the temptations which Thacia represents.



Themes/Characters

Daniel bar Jamin is an unusual hero for a young adult novel. He is bitter, cruel, and angry. Early in the novel, Daniel tells of the events that embittered him and made him flee to the sanctuary of the mountains. His uncle was arrested by the Romans for failure to pay his taxes, and because he resisted arrest, the Romans were unwilling to release him, even after Daniel's father, Jamin, had collected enough money to pay the taxes. In grief and fear, the uncle's wife begged Jamin to help him, and although a peaceful man, Jamin agreed to a foolish scheme to ambush the Romans when they tried to take Daniel's uncle to the city. The ambush was a disaster, and Jamin was captured and then executed by crucifixion.

Daniel's mother watched Jamin die for two days, then died of grief a few weeks later. Only five years old, Daniel's sister, Leah, saw her father on the cross and has ever since been afraid to leave her house. Only eight years old himself, Daniel vowed to hate and kill the Romans all of his life, and when the novel starts, eighteen-year-old Daniel determinedly nurses his hatred.

Unfortunately, Daniel's hatred seems to harm only the innocent. When an apprentice blacksmith, he flees to the mountains and joins a gang of thieves led by the legendary outlaw Rosh. By fleeing, he leaves his grandmother to care for his troubled sister, and the struggle to support and care for her invalid granddaughter breaks his grandmother's health. Daniel's attitude toward this is self-righteous; he feels that his vow of revenge takes precedence over the comfort and well-being of everyone, including his family. Further, he finds his sister's fear of the outside world shameful.

Because he admires Rosh to the point of emulating him, Daniel does not see through Rosh's pretense of being a nationalist leader planning war against the Romans. He does not notice that Rosh often risks the lives of others for capricious reasons. Rosh is a charismatic man, and when he talks of how the wealth gained from raiding caravans and burglarizing homes will pay for an army to drive away the Romans, even the most hardened cutthroats of his band seem to believe him.

Daniel's foolish faith in Rosh, a man who cares primarily about himself, leads him to become cruelly manipulative. To satisfy Rosh and his own carefully nurtured hatred, Daniel asks friends to commit acts of treachery and to unnecessarily risk their lives. For instance, he has his friend Joel spy on people in Capernaum. With Joel's information, Rosh learns of an opportune time to burglarize the homes of the wealthy in Capernaum. Joel, an intellectual who lacks physical prowess or cunning, is arrested and sentenced to slavery. Only when Rosh refuses to help save Joel does Daniel realize Rosh's insincerity. In an effort to right the wrong he has done to Joel, Daniel costs the lives of some of his young village followers, whom he has persuaded to form an underground force in Ketzah. The silent giant black man, nicknamed "Samson," also gives up his life, sacrificing it to save Daniel from certain death at the hands of the Romans when an attempt to save Joel goes awry. Joel is saved, but many suffer because of Daniel's foolishness.



In spite of his flaws, Daniel is a compelling character. He carries the burden of The Bronze Bow's principal theme: the foolishness of vengeful hatred.

Throughout the novel, Daniel's hatred injures the innocent around him. He denies his sister visits from a young Roman soldier, one of her few friends.

Moreover, he refuses to indulge her fears, driving her to retreat even further into herself. Daniel hurts himself with his hatred, too. He denies himself the comforts of friendship and companionship when he returns to Ketzah; his scowls and rudeness probably would deprive him of all customers when he opens his smithy, except that his work is good and the village has few blacksmiths. In addition, he denies himself the love of Joel's sister Malthace, a sensitive, intelligent young woman. He values his vow of revenge over everything else in his life, nurturing his hatred instead of his family, cultivating his hatred instead of his friendships, loving his hatred instead of the woman who could love him.

By the time he begins to attend Jesus Christ's talks, Daniel has begun to realize that his life is empty. His hatred has blinded him to the truth about people, making the selfish thief Rosh into a hero and the Roman soldier who is kind to Leah into a villain. The terrible fight to free Joel finally convinces Daniel that he has been leading a destructive life, and once he relaxes and lets his hatred go, he finds that the example of Jesus offers him a better way of life. His change to a more compassionate, forgiving man at the end of the novel seems abrupt, but it fulfills The Bronze Bow's complex theme.

None of the other characters is nearly so well drawn as Daniel. Rosh is subtly developed through Daniel's eyes. When first seen from Daniel's perspective, he seems like a good leader, serving as a father to Daniel and providing a haven for those fleeing the Romans. His freeing of slaves from caravans seems admirable, but Rosh's true nature reveals itself when he orders Daniel to retrieve his knife and when he frees only the strong slave, Samson, from a caravan, leaving the others to their miserable fate. Daniel's excuses for Rosh wear increasingly thin, especially the notion that people should be glad to suffer at the hands of Rosh and his thieves because the suffering furthers the cause of freedom.

Joel bar Hezron and his twin sister Malthace, also called "Thacia," are contrasts to Daniel. They both would like to help overthrow Roman rule, but their lives are fuller than Daniel's. Joel seems destined to become a rabbi like his father and is basically a peaceful man.

He regrets his lack of courage and resolve and tries to serve the cause of freedom as best he can. He admires Daniel's willingness to take action, but Joel's gentleness and thoughtfulness make him steadier and more trustworthy than Daniel. Malthace's ability to see the good man suppressed in Daniel makes her a somewhat trite female love interest; the woman who knows that there is good beneath the hero's rough exterior is a commonplace literary figure. Even so, Malthace possesses enough individuality to be appealing for her own sake. Her caring for Daniel grows slowly through the book, making it believable and suggesting that there really is something worth loving in Daniel.



The figure of Jesus in *The Bronze Bow* is likely to be difficult for some readers.

Although Speare's point of view is plainly Christian, she deals very little with Christian dogma. The miracles take place offstage, and the followers of Jesus, such as Simon the Zealot, are depicted as ordinary people. Speare portrays Jesus himself as a strong but weary man, burdened both by his own expectations and those of his followers.

Wise and gentle, he helps those who ask for his help. His principal followers are very protective of his health and shield him during meals and sleep; otherwise he would continue to advise and help people despite his own exhaustion.

Jesus appears often in the novel, and Daniel seeks his advice near the end of the book. During his talk with Jesus, Daniel wrestles with his conscience, realizing that his desire for revenge has made him do much wrong. For instance, with Jesus's prodding he discovers that Samson was not a pest or burden but a loyal friend. Of Samson, Jesus says, "He did not give you vengeance. He gave you love. There is no greater love than that, that a man should lay down his life for his friend. Think, Daniel, can you repay such love with hate?" Jesus points out Speare's primary theme, that "it is hate that is the enemy."



Style

Points of View

The story is told almost exclusively in the third person from Daniel's point of view. Therefore, the reader is able to mature along with him, and often share deeply his hatred of the Roman soldiers and the occupation of Israel. It is through Daniel's conversation with Simon that we are able to understand that his sister, Leah, is possessed by demons.

The narrative follows Daniel's perspective, and when other characters' viewpoints are expressed, they are almost exclusively through Daniel's thinking process. His time on the mountain with the leader of the bandits is justified through the care they have given to him, and to the fact that he sympathized with their goals, when he was rescued as a young boy. The reader understands what Simon means at the beginning of the tale, when he explains to Daniel that Simon has a somewhat different viewpoint than Rosh, even though there is of yet no understanding of what Simon refers to.

The twins have a different loyalty than Daniel in that their parents are alive and they have strong ties to them. Daniel sees how important it is to and Joel and Thacia to try to live by the teachings of their father, while at the same time understanding and embracing the ideals of Daniel. Without it being stated, a type of sympathy is created with Nathan, as his background parallels Daniel's quite closely. No record of his love of a girl and their marriage is introduced to the reader, however Daniel sees it as a wonderful thing which appears to be right for them, so it is accepted that Daniel's viewpoint is true.

Settings

Many settings are utilized in the novel and described in detail. The first is the mountain where Daniel meets Joel and Thacia. The view from there represents a view of the whole valley below and everything is described from the natural beauty of the scene to the personal distaste toward the Roman Soldiers patrolling below. This creates a sense of immediate understanding of the hatred the three feel toward the soldiers as opposed to the peace they feel with nature. The scene then moves on to the cave that is the center of activity of Rosh, and Daniel's home at the beginning of the story. While it has a sense of belonging for Daniel, the darkness of the cave represents both the uncertainty of the goals and ambitions of the group and its leader, and its isolation also represents their minority beliefs in the correct pathway to succeed in their goals.

The roof of Daniel's grandmother is pictured much the same as is the mountaintop. From there one can see much of the village of Ketzah where Daniel grew up. As the mountain represents a view of the whole surrounding area, the rooftop represents a view of the whole village and there is a feeling of unity in its occupants. They have the



same dislike and mistrust of the Romans, but they have come to an unspoken agreement as to how to react to their fears. The roof exemplifies Daniel's process of learning how to react in the proper manner so as not to endanger the people in the village.

Capernaum plays a large role in the development of the story. As Ketzah represents a very small village where everyone knows everyone else, Capernaum represents the sights, sounds, smells, and general large city atmosphere. The harbor where Jesus preaches to the fishermen in Capernaum has a very different atmosphere than the large house where Joel and Thacia live.

Simon's blacksmith shop and the attached living quarters play a major role as well. It is here that Daniel experiences a wide variety of emotions, and, eventually grows away from his hatred of the Romans. The shop itself takes on the mood of its inhabitants, as opposed to creating them. When there is fear, such as when the Roman soldier first waits for Daniel to complete his repairs, the shop becomes tense. When Thacia is there, as when Daniel gives her the bow he has fashioned out of a piece of bronze, the shop appears to be sunny and happy. The attached garden in back symbolizes Leah's own growing process of casting away the fears she has kept within herself for many years.

Language and Meaning

The language most often spoken in Capernaum at the time is Aramaic. There is no utilization of the language other than the reference to the months of the year. By specifically avoiding complex references to activities, events, and settings, in foreign linguistic terms, the style is understandable by young readers and adults alike. The reader is led to believe there are many languages spoken in Capernaum, but no specific reference is made to any of them, though Daniel sees and hears a variety of dialects while he is in the market specifically, and the feeling of that experience is understandable without foreign references.

There is also no slang, and all the characters' thoughts and communications are told the same way, except for Jesus. When He speaks, a sense of calmness and ultimate understanding is relayed, and his speeches are often quotes from the bible ... or possibly the bible is quoting Him. This style too reflects the author's choice of conveyance of the messages without offending younger readers.

In this novel the author often uses specific descriptions of the settings using all the senses, and, of course, these are relayed through the senses of his characters. Very few references are made vocally to these scenes between the characters. They are mostly done through a thought process using Daniel as the tool to transfer them to the reader.

Structure

The novel consists of twenty-four chapters. Often a chapter is related to a season. In the beginning of chapter five we are told it is the month of "Nisan," which is springtime, or the month of the first harvest of the winter's crops. The month of "Ab" is summer, and Ebul is noted to be the last month of the summer as "Tishri" is the beginning of autumn and the rainy season. While the changes in these seasons are generally made obvious and their differences noted, there seems to be little symbolism in the actual changing of the seasons to the plot and flow of the story, nor to the general maturation process of its main character, Daniel.

The novel is told in a completely chronological sequence of events, there being but a few flashbacks. These few flashbacks are utilized to explain something which is relevant to the flow of the plot, or, in a very few cases, to the creation of a specific character's viewpoints as opposed to changes in the natural surroundings. This effectively keeps the actions of the story moving smoothly without being distracted by too many details.

The main point of the story, that being Daniel's growth to accept the teaching of Jesus and the abandonment of his need for physical prowess over the Romans, is told in a straightforward manner. Many of the subplots contribute to Daniel's process of casting aside his narrow viewpoint in favor of a more broad translation of the vows that govern his life.



Quotes

"No one is free," said Daniel. "So long as the land is cursed by the Romans." Chapter 1, p.9

"You mustn't be afraid of him. He is our brother Daniel come home. When he milks you, you must be good and stand still. See how big and strong he is. He will take care of us and keep us safe." Chapter 3, p.41

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Chapter 4, p.47

"I say to you, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe." Chapter 4, p. 47

"What is the kingdom of heaven?" he answered. "It is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. Or the kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind -" Chapter 5, p. 57

"My boy," he said quietly, "we have not forgotten. We feel as you do. In his heart every Jew grieves at our captivity. We have need of patriotism like yours. But we have need of also of patience." Chapter 5, p. 67

"I'm sorry things went wrong at dinner today. Father isn't like that, really. It's just that - he's suspected for a long time how I feel, and he's afraid I'll join the Zealots." Chapter 6 p. 75

""But the men of old didn't wait for God to win their battles for them. They rose up and fought, and God strengthened them. Maybe God is waiting for us now. It seems to me we've tried Father's way long enough. What do you say, Daniel?" Chapter 7, p. 78

"Call it what you like," Daniel said impatiently. "All I know is I hate the Romans. I want their blood. That is what I live for. It's all I've lived for since - " Chapter 7, p.80

"After my father died I made a vow. Maybe they would say a boy eight years old couldn't make a vow, a real one that was binding. But I did. I vowed I would pay them back with my whole life. That I would hate them and fight them and kill them. That's all I live for." Chapter 7, p 82

"No," Thacia spoke. "I think it was really bronze. I think David meant a bow that a man couldn't bend - that when God strengthens us we can do something that seems impossible." Chapter 7, p.87



"In this house the food has been given us with love," he said slowly. "Let us make sure that our hearts rather than our hands are worthy to receive this gift." Chapter 8, p.99

"It's better to do without killing when we can. But there's a flaw in you boy, a soft streak. I've seen it over and over, these years. Like a bad streak in a piece of metal. Either you hammer it out, the way you'd hammer out a bubble, or you'll be no good to us. When the day comes there'll be no place for weakness." Chapter 9, p 110

"There is something you will have to lean, my friend. An outlaw may think he is accountable to no one. But in a village every man holds his neighbor's safety in his hands. If a legionary is in a mood for trouble, any excuse will do. A single insult could cost half the lives in the town in the end. This is one thing I must ask of you." Chapter 10, p 112

"This witless sister is more important than your country's freedom?" Chapter 11, p.123

"I will prove your wrong," he said quietly, I will work for the cause in the village. You will see. I belong here on the mountain. I'll never forget that. But now I am going back, and tomorrow I will move into the house of Simon the Zealot." Chapter 11, p 123

"If word went out tomorrow half the village would probably be with us before night. Some because they love Galilee, or hate Romans, and some just because they love a good fight. But would they lose heart? The trouble is, we can't fight tomorrow. We've got to work slowly, and it may take a long time." Chapter 12, p. 137

"He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze." Chapter 12, p. 139

" Daniel," she said slowly. "When you bring a bride here to live with you, what will happen to me?" Chapter 14, p.151

"Yes, I think he would," she said thoughtfully, "I think that for Jesus a lie is impossible, no matter what the reason." Chapter 16, p. 177

"Did you ever think he might mean that the kingdom will come some other way? Without any fighting?" Chapter 16, p.177

"You see, Jesus has made me see that we don't need to wait for God to care for us. He does that now. Every one of us. Jesus says That God sees into our hearts and loves us. If everyone understood that - every man and woman -" Chapter 16, p 177

"They who live by the sword will perish by the sword." Chapter 20, p. 213

"Maybe Jesus is the leader we're waiting for." Chapter 20, p. 220

"Yes. Said Jesus slowly. "An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth. It is so written. We must repay in kind. But Samson has given you all he had. In what kind can you repay him?" Chapter 21, p. 224



"That is not a vow of hate," he said. "Go in peace, my son. You are not far from the kingdom." Chapter 21, p 226

""We vowed to live and die for God's victory. There is more than one way of fighting. Joel sees that now." Chapter 22, p. 231

"I believe he is the Messiah, sent from God," he said. Chapter 23, p. 242

"He will never lead us against Rome, Daniel, I have given up all hope of that." Chapter 23, p. 243

"He says that the only chains that matter are fear and hate, because they chain our souls. If we do not hate anyone and do not fear anyone, then we are free." Chapter 23, p. 244



Topics for Discussion

1. Why does Daniel not know from the start that Rosh is devious?
2. Were any of Daniel's crimes justifiable? Why might freeing Samson be justifiable while robbing the old man is not?
3. Discuss the character strengths of Simon, who gives up his business in order to follow Jesus; Joel, a good student who knows much of Holy Scripture by heart; Malthace, who seems to know what is in the hearts of others; and Rosh, who is charismatic but cynical.

Which of these characters is the wisest?

4. Who is more courageous, bold Daniel or bookish Joel?
5. Do people today still rationalize their bad deeds the same way that Daniel and Rosh do? Describe some of their rationalizations.
6. What do you think of the novel's ending? Does Daniel get off too easily for all the hurt he has caused? Is his change of heart too quick a shift from bitterness to openness to be convincing?
7. Why does Speare include the character of the kindly, lonely soldier who befriends Leah?
8. Why would Speare make her main character so flawed? Were you put off or made uncomfortable by Daniel's personality?
9. If most of the Jews want them to leave, why do the Romans stay in Palestine?
10. What purpose does Nathan's death serve in the development of the story?



Essay Topics

Trace the main events that lead to Daniel's acceptance of love and his rejection of hatred.

Discuss the parallels between Leah and Samson.

Explore the reasons why love and understanding can overcome fear and violence.

Discuss the similarities between the roof of Daniel's grandmother and the mountaintop.

Explain what the cave on the mountain represents.

What purpose does Marcus, the Roman soldier, play in the novel?

Explore the actions of Thacia, which could give the reader the opinion she can see the whole picture more than Daniel or Joel.



Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. How accurate is the portrayal of everyday life for Daniel's era and place in The Bronze Bow? You may need to narrow this down and research a specific aspect of life depicted in the novel. For instance, you may want to focus only on religious customs or the way a smithy would have operated.

2. Find all the times the bronze bow is mentioned. Does it have different meanings in different places in the book? Does its meaning develop in a logical pattern, perhaps shifting from hate to love as Daniel changes?

3. Does Speare's depiction of Jesus match the depictions in the New Testament? Does it most closely match the portrayals in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John? Be sure to cite passages from the New Testament that either agree with or contradict passages in The Bronze Bow.

4. The idea that uncompromising hatred is foolish could easily be presented in a trite, even condescending manner, yet Speare makes it into a rich, well developed theme. How does she do this? By connecting it to her characterizations? By showing the results of such hatred? In other ways?

5. Why does Malthace not take an even more active role in the lives of Joel and Daniel than she does? What were the customs of her time and place that would have at least partly dictated what she could and could not do?

6. Research the city of Capernaum.

What is its history? What made it important in Daniel's time? What were its people like? What was its social structure?

7. Research the history of Rome's rule over Palestine. How did Rome conquer the area? How did it rule the area?

8. About ten years before the events of The Bronze Bow take place, when Daniel was only eight years old, his father was executed for trying to help Daniel's uncle, who had been arrested in a tax dispute. This provides most of the motivation for Daniel's actions in the novel.

What were the tax laws like? Who determined what the taxes should be and what was to be taxed? Who collected the taxes? Why would the Jews view the taxes as oppressive?



Further Study

Commire, Anne, ed. *Something about the Author*. Vol. 5. Detroit: Gale Research, 1973. Summarizes her career and includes comments by Speare about her life and works.

Cosgrave, Mary Silvia. "Elizabeth George Speare—Newbery Award Winner."

Library Journal 84 (April 15, 1959): 1291-1292. Biographical sketch of Speare's life.

Cross, Helen Reeder. "Elizabeth George Speare." In *Newbery and Caldecott Medal Books: 1956-1965*, edited by Lee Kingman. Boston: Horn Book, 1965.

Cross reminisces about her acquaintance with Speare and provides background on Speare's life, noting that for Speare "home still comes first, writing second."

Fuller, Muriel, ed. *More Junior Authors*.

New York: H. W. Wilson, 1963. Speare provides an autobiographical sketch, emphasizing her family life.

Speare, Elizabeth George. "Report of a Journey." In *Newbery and Caldecott Medal Books: 1956-1965*, edited by Lee Kingman. Boston: Horn Book, 1965.

This is Speare's Newbery Medal acceptance speech. In it she discusses some of her concerns about writing *The Bronze Bow* and provides an account of how she developed the character Daniel.

Sutherland, Zena, and May Hill Arbuthnot. "Elizabeth George Speare." In *Children and Books*. 7th ed. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1986. Summarizes *The Bronze Bow*, emphasizing its dark themes.

Related Titles

All of Speare's other novels feature graceful prose and her gift for vivid descriptions. Like *The Bronze Bow*, *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* won the Newbery Medal. It is an exciting and suspenseful novel about a girl, Katherine Tyler, learning to cope with being an outcast in the Puritan society of Colonial America. The book reflects Speare's careful research of the time and place.

Also well researched is *The Sign of the Beaver*, which depicts the friendship between a Native American and a young white settler in eighteenth-century Maine.



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