



The Minstrel in the Tower Study Guide

by Rebecca Gilleland

For the book by
Gloria Skurzynski

CD Version



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The Minstrel in the Tower Study Guide
A Progeny Press Study Guide
by Rebecca Gilleland
with Andrew Clausen

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Synopsis

It is the year 1195. Roger and Alice live alone with their mother in a tiny cottage. Their father, a knight, left to fight in the Crusades five years earlier and never returned. Sick, feverish, and perhaps dreaming, their mother sends Roger and Alice on a journey to find an uncle they did not know they had. They carry with them their mother's lute. "Show him the eagle carved on the back," she tells her children. "Ask him to come quickly. Quickly!"

But on their journey they are kidnapped by two ruffians and locked in an old tower. With determination, Roger and Alice devise a plan for escape. Alice squeezes through a small window high in the tower and must continue the journey alone. Somehow, she must find her uncle and persuade him to help, and she no longer has the lute to prove her story.

Chapter 8

Vocabulary:

Fill in the blanks with the words below that best fit each sentence.

strides	soothe
chateau	pace
shabby	heir

1. The children watched the cat _____ up and down the window sill.
2. The young man lived in a large, many-roomed _____.
3. Mother rocked the baby to _____ her.
4. The blanket was tattered and _____.
5. A prince is _____ to the throne.
6. Horses take long _____ as they begin to gallop.

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Questions:

1. The very first thing Lord Raimond did was apologize to his sister Blanche. Why? _____

2. Read the following Bible verses:

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

James 1:19b, 20

In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

Ephesians 4:26

Lord Raimond had been angry when Lady Blanche ran away to marry her husband. If Lord Raimond had followed these verses, how would all their lives have been different? _____

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3. What things make you angry? _____

Think about the meaning of the Bible verses. According to these verses, what should you do (or not do) when you are angry? _____

4. Why did Lady Blanche cry? _____

5. How does Raimond describe Lady Blanche's husband? _____

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6. Lord Raimond announces that Roger is his heir and will decide what Alice can or cannot do. What does Roger say? _____

7. What did Roger choose as a design for his banner? What did each thing on the banner represent? _____

Dig Deeper:

8. Read these verses about forgiveness.

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

Ephesians 4:32

“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

Colossians 3:13, 14

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List three different examples from the book where someone shows forgiveness, kindness, or compassion. Write two or three sentences about each one. _____

2. Read Romans 8:28:

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

How do we see this happen in *The Minstrel in the Tower*? _____

Answer Key

Before-you-read Activities:

1. In the middle ages, a minstrel was a singer who sang for a living. A jester was a clown, fool, and comedian, usually in the service of a king or ruler.

Chapter 1

Vocabulary:

Students' definitions will vary.

1. older, more mature, an aged person; 2. daunted, terrified, confused; 3. a stringed musical instrument; 4. having a wearying effect; 5. a singer; 6. place or position of another; grieved, bemoaned; 7. a covering worn over a woman's head, neck, and chin.

Questions:

1. They get along well and love each other.
2. Zara helped care for their ill mother.
3. He had left years earlier to fight in the Crusades and had not returned. They did not know if he was dead or alive.
4. Alice never walked when she could run, and she never stayed on the ground when she could climb.
5. Their mother feared that she was dying and wanted their uncle to take care of them.
6. Answers will vary. He wanted her company.
7. The verse says to obey your parents and honor them. Answers will vary. It is difficult to obey unless you can trust the person you are obeying.

Chapter 2

Vocabulary:

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

Questions:

1. Answers will vary. A pilgrim was one who traveled to a holy place or a shrine. They traveled because of religious devotion, or many times because they hoped for a healing or miracle.
2. To get food, Roger sang for the woman and her daughter.
3. The monkey in skirts.
4. Answers will vary. Aurore was a lovely girl with thick, wavy, apricot-colored hair.
5. Answers will vary. Aurore's expression showed that she was sad about having to cut her hair.
6. Roger reminded Aurore that her hair would grow back. It helped because it gave her hope.

Chapter 3

Vocabulary:

1. The place where roads meet and cross.
2. Crowded together, thick, compact.
3. Someone's or something's territory.
4. A man who fought in the Crusades to win back the Holy Land.
5. The frontpiece of a helmet, usually movable, to protect the eyes.
6. A horse.

Questions:

1. Roger randomly chose the road on the right. Alice obeyed Roger, although she used the daisy to pick the road to the left.
2. He strums a tune on the lute.
3. Answers will vary.
4. He worried about whether his father was dead or alive, and if Uncle Raimond really existed.
5. like a lid on a chest.