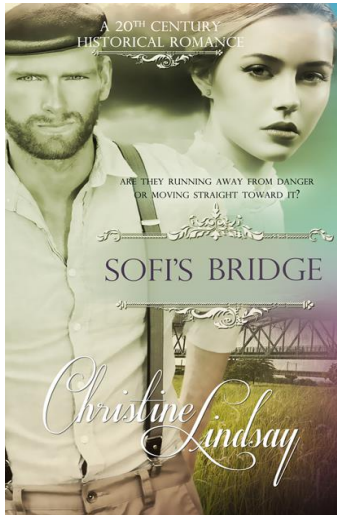


Discussion Questions



Also Available in Paperback:

SOFI'S BRIDGE

Author: Christine Lindsay

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About the Book

Seattle Debutant Sofi Andersson will do everything in her power to protect her sister who is suffering from shock over their father's death. Charles the family busy-body threatens to lock Trina in a sanatorium—a whitewashed term for an insane asylum— so, Sofi will rescue her little sister, even if it means running away to the Cascade Mountains with only the new gardener Neil Macpherson to protect them.

But in a cabin high in the Cascades, Sofi begins to recognize that the handsome immigrant from Ireland harbors secrets of his own. Can she trust this man whose gentle manner brings such peace to her traumatized sister and such tumult to her own emotions?

And can Neil-the-gardener continue to hide from Sofi that he is really Dr. Neil Galloway, a man wanted for murder by the British police? Only an act of faith and love will bridge the distance that separates lies from truth and safety.

TITLE: Sofi's Bridge

Discussion:

Question 1: In Chapter One Sofi doesn't want anyone else taking care of her sister but herself. Why do you think that is?

Answer 1: Sofi is like many people--she is the rescuer in her family. Rescuers are compulsive, often uninvited, helpers who cannot resist the temptation to jump in and try to fix other people's problems. Also known as "Fixers" or "White Knights,

Question 2: In Chapter Three Sofi's mother is at what stage in her grief?

Answer 2: Denial and isolation--a normal reaction to rationalize overwhelming emotions. Hiding from the facts is a temporary response that carries us through the first wave of pain.

Question 3: In Chapter Four Neil says, "I've seen this type of illness before, in veterans coming home from war—a prolonged reaction to a traumatic event." What would we call this in today's terms?

Answer 3: Frightening situations happen to everyone, and we react in a variety of ways, feeling anxious, suffering from insomnia, or replay the tragedy in our minds over and over. This anxiety usually decrease in time and people get back to normal. Post-traumatic stress disorder lasts far longer and seriously disrupts a person's life.

Question 4: In Chapter Six Neil ponders the new medical topic of psychoanalysis--when did modern-day counselling begin in N. America?

Answer 4: Counselling as we know today was birthed in Vienna by Sigmund Freud. Between 1907 and 1913 a number of other doctors in the field developed their own theories, but this was the beginning of psychology and psychiatry as we know it.

Question 5: In Chapter Eight Sofi shows a touch of delayed trauma as well. What grief stage has Sofi remained in that has kept her from healing?

Answer 5: Anger--This intense reaction redirects our grief. We may aim our anger at inanimate objects, friends or loved ones, or even complete strangers. Sofi has used her anger towards Charles but in a positive way by saving her sister.

Question 6: In Chapter Nine we see that Rosella is not just at the denial stage of grief but she has become dependent on laudanum. It was normal back then for doctors to prescribe this, but is this drug dependency a weakness in Rosella from before?

Answer 6: Losing someone we love is one of the most painful trials in life, producing a myriad of emotions—denial, anger, despair. We all go through the stages of grief in unique ways. However, some will turn to alcohol or drugs to blot out the pain which can lead to substance abuse, not something they would ordinarily choose.

Question 7: In Chapter Eleven we see Trina blamed herself for her father's death. What stage of grief is this?

Answer 7: Guilt is a normal stage of grief, for things we've said or done. We may also feel guilt for living when our loved one is dead. As in Trina's case we may feel the added guilt of having been part of the accident that took the life of our loved one. There comes a time when we must forgive ourselves.

Question 8: In Chapter Thirteen we find out that Neil didn't kill Robert Crawford but that his brother Jimmy did. How is Neil's grief over his father's death affecting him?

Answer 8: Like Sofi, Neil is a rescuer or white knight personality. Generally, these well-meaning people pursue careers in professions as medical doctors, teachers, nurses, psychologists, etc. Often trauma can set up a rescuing personality to go the extra mile. In this case, Neil broken over his bad example takes on his brother's guilt.

Question 9: In Chapter Sixteen Sofi and Trina have reached a good stage in their grief. They're talking and sharing about their emotions and understanding themselves better for it.

Answer 9 The stage of acceptance is not the feeling that everything is all right. Most people will never feel all right about the loss of their loved one. Acceptance is knowing the reality that our loved one is physically gone, and we must live in this world where that loved one is missing. Often this will include reorganize roles in our family, re-assigning tasks to others or take on new roles ourselves. We can never replace the one we lost, but we can make new connections, new inter-dependencies.

Question 10: In Chapter Twenty-Seven Neil learns that he can never be the savior or rescuer of his brother or anyone he loves. Who is the only one who can save us?

Answer 10: Acts 4:12 (NIV) Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." Jesus

