DISCUSSION GUIDE

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One Witch at a Time

BY

Stacy DeKeyser

Author of The Brixen Witch

When magic crosses borders, trouble swiftly follows.

When Rudi goes to market without his father for the first time, he has an important task: to sell his family's cheese and butter. He never thought his pesky neighbor Susanna Louisa would sell his family's cow to a foreign girl—for a handful of beans, no less! And she claims they're magic beans! If they are, it's a magic that doesn't belong in Brixen, and Rudi needs to get rid of those beans NOW.

With some coaching from the Brixen Witch, Rudi and Susanna Louisa set out to return the beans. Luckily, a shortcut appears: a beanstalk that leads them straight to the pretty foreign girl, Agatha, in the frozen village of Petz. She stole the beans from her witch, a terrible giant. Agatha is determined to defeat the giant, and Rudi wants to help her, but he has to save his own village first from the havoc wreaked by Petz magic in Brixen.

Author Stacy DeKeyser's first book about Rudi, *The Brixen Witch,* was a deft update on the Pied Piper's tale. Her imaginative twist on the classic Jack and the Beanstalk story in *One Witch at a Time* will delight readers in grades 3-7.

Praise for One Witch at a Time

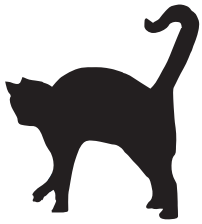
". . . The characters are awfully likable, and this tale is set so believably in a traditional Alpine world that it's easy to go along with the make-believe. A satisfying, stand-alone sequel that will certainly send readers back to read *The Brixen Witch* (2012)." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"DeKeyser creates an interesting world where steadfast rules must be obeyed so as not to upset the precarious balance between the magical and the ordinary. A clever blend of folkloric elements with fast-paced action." —*School Library Journal*

stacydekeyser.com

Common Core State Standards addressed by the discussion questions and activities in this guide are noted throughout. For more information on the Common Core, visit corestandards.org.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Discuss the novel with students using the questions below.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1

- The story begins with Rudi and Susanna Louisa traveling to the marketplace in Klausen. What clues does the author give the reader to indicate where and when this story is taking place? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**
- What happened between Susanna Louisa and the foreign girl dressed in a shearling coat at the marketplace? What does this interaction reveal about the character of Susanna Louisa? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**
- As he races back to his family farm to make sure his cows are safe, Rudi compares the desperate situation in which he finds himself to the time the summer before when the village's children were lured away by the enchanted music of an evil fiddler. What popular tale does the incident with the village's children remind you of? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2**
- What does Oma tell Rudi he must do once she examines the beans with the keyhole markings? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**
- What does Marco the blacksmith give to Rudi and how is this item useful later in the story? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**
- The Brixen Witch shares many important points about the rules of magic. Upon hearing what the witch has to say, Susanna Louisa says, "One witch at a time." What does Susanna Louisa mean by this? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**
- Rudi and Susanna Louisa plant one of the magic beans at the border between Petz and Brixen. What happens after the bean is planted? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**
- How did the snow finch serve as a warning of what could happen to Rudi and Susanna Louisa? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**
- Rudi and Susanna Louisa meet Ludwig once they enter Petz and are surprised to find that the foreign girl who they met in the marketplace is Ludwig's daughter, Agatha. How do Ludwig and Agatha help Rudi and Susanna Louisa complete their task in Petz? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**
- How is Agatha different from the other citizens of Petz? What do her actions against the giant reveal about Agatha? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**

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- Susanna Louisa complicates the mission to the giant's fortress. What are the effects of her actions? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**
- Rudi's grandmother tells him that he must return all "foreign magic" to Petz for things to return to normal again in Brixen. What events make it a challenge to gather all of the "foreign magic"—from the keyhole beans to the eggs that Not-Hildy lays? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**
- There is some question in the story about which character is a witch. Who suspected whom of being a witch? Cite evidence from the story that indicates why a character might be a witch. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**
- It seems that Rudi yearns to be a hero. He is proud of his connection to the Brixen Witch and how he helped save the village's children from the evil fiddler. What episodes from the story show Rudi as a hero? Why do you think it is so important to Rudi to be recognized for his good and clever deeds? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3**
- At the end of the story, the Brixen Witch says to Agatha, "Rules is rules, and nothing lasts forever. Pay attention, and your time will come. You has a choice." What is the witch implying might happen to Agatha in the future? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**

ACTIVITIES

- Create an illustrated setting map that depicts the various settings described in the story. Re-read parts of the story so that your illustrations are informed by the description in the text. Label each area on your map. Make sure that you include: Brixen, the Klausen marketplace, the Berg, the Brixen Witch's cave, Petz, Agatha's house, the Giant of Petz's manor, and the two beanstalks. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**
- Make a dialogue folder. Place an 8.5 x 11-inch piece of paper horizontally (landscape direction) and fold the two 8.5-inch length ends so they meet in the middle, creating two 2.75-inch "flaps." On the outer side of one flap draw an illustration of Rudi's grandmother, and on the outer side of the other flap draw an illustration of the Brixen Witch. Open the flaps and write descriptions of each character on the reverse sides of the illustrations. In the inner section of the folded paper, write a dialogue that you would imagine Rudi's grandmother and the Brixen Witch might have about the situation affecting Brixen in this story. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3.B; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3.B, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.B; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.B; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3.B**

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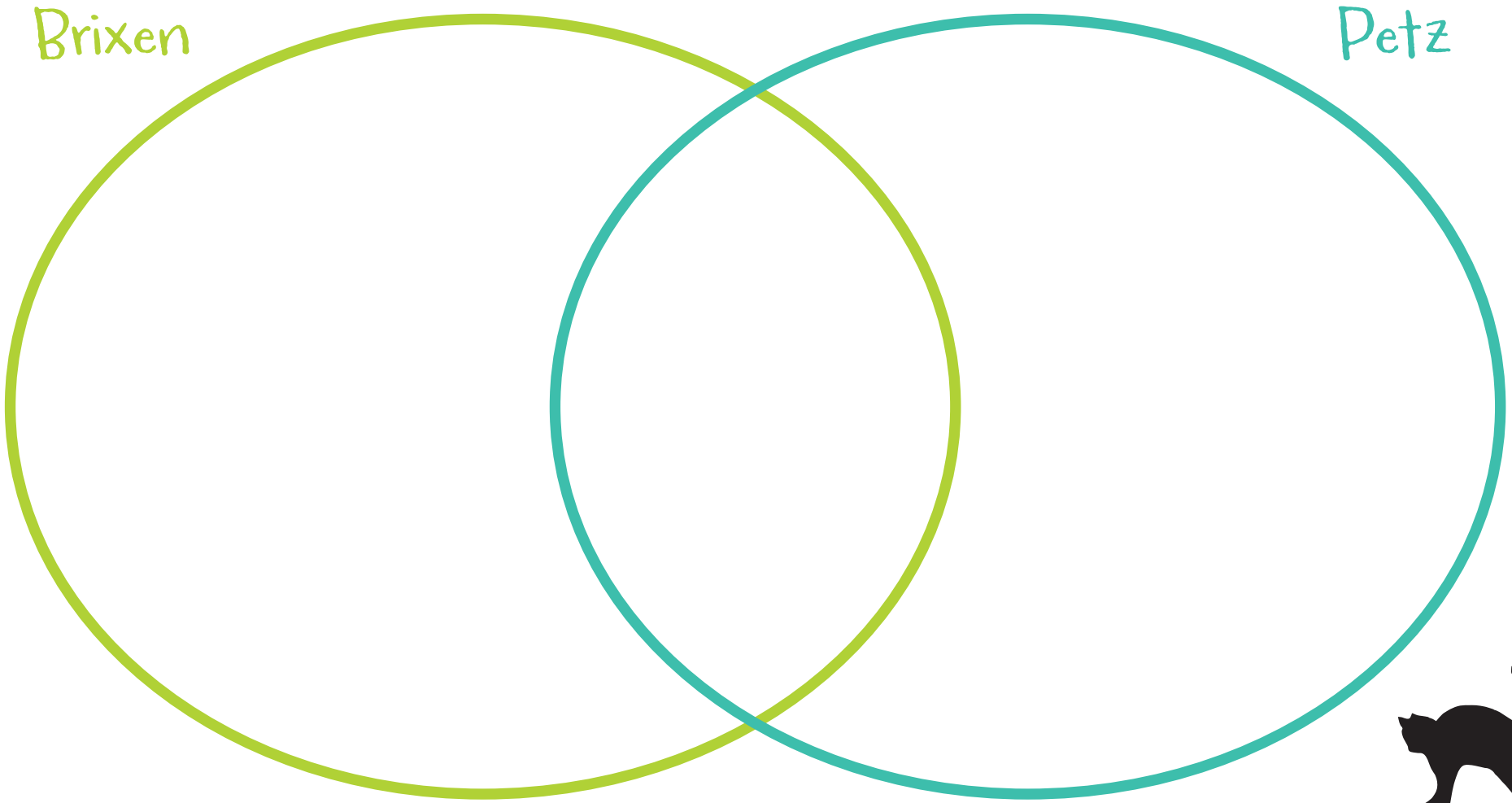
Compare and Contrast

Rudi knows little about the land and people outside of Brixen, until he climbs the beanstalk and visits Petz. Rudi finds many differences and, surprisingly, some similarities between Petz and Brixen. Compare the land and people of Petz and Brixen using the Venn diagram below. Write the elements that the two places have in common in the area where the two circles overlap. Write the information that is unique about each place in the sections where the circles do not overlap.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3



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Where Are They Now?

One Witch at a Time concludes with hints and, in some cases, descriptions of what happens to the characters as the story ends. Complete the chart below with information from the story that describes the outcome for each character.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1

Character	What happens to him/her at the end of the story
Rudi	
Agatha	
Susanna Louisa	
The Giant of Petz	

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Fairy Tale Elements

One Witch at a Time draws inspiration from the classic fairy tale of Jack and the Beanstalk. Hunt through the text to find examples of these familiar elements, characters, and plot events. On the left side of the T-chart below, list the story elements and events from Jack and the Beanstalk that are common to both stories. On the right side, explain how these elements are portrayed in *One Witch at a Time*.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.9; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.9; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.9

Jack and the Beanstalk story element	How this fairy tale element appears in *One Witch at a Time*

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Bookmark and Postcard

Print this page on card stock using a color printer. Cut out the bookmark and postcard below. Send the postcard to a friend and invite her or him to read *One Witch at a Time!*

When magic crosses borders, trouble swiftly follows.

One Witch at a Time
BY Stacy DeKeyser

Trouble has returned to Brixen. Can Rudi undo the damage when a stranger brings a foreign witch's magic into the Brixen Witch's province?

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Magic beans.
A beanstalk.

When magic crosses borders, trouble swiftly follows. Can Rudi set things right before it's too late? Read *One Witch at a Time* by Stacy DeKeyser to find out!

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Write a note and address your postcard on the reverse side. First-class postage required to mail.

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Also by Stacy DeKeyser

978-1-4424-3329-8
Margaret K. McElderry Books/Simon & Schuster

The Brixen Witch

Read the first story about Rudi—*The Brixen Witch!*

A MYSTERIOUS WITCH LIVES on the mountain above Brixen. Rudi's never seen her, and nothing much is ever said about her. It's bad luck to talk of such things.

One day Rudi finds a golden coin on the mountain. When he slips it into his pocket, the weather immediately turns icy. Fearing the witch, Rudi attempts to return the coin, but it gets buried in the blizzard. Rudi is plagued all winter by horrible dreams, and in the spring rats overrun his village. Could this be the witch's revenge?

When a stranger arrives and promises to turn out the rats, the villagers rejoice. But what if his price is too terrible to bear? With a little help from his savvy grandmother and a feisty neighbor, Rudi sets out to match wits with a wily witch in this twisty tale full of magic.

Praise for The Brixen Witch

★ "Fresh and satisfying."
—*Kirkus Reviews,* starred review

★ "Timeless style . . . just right for reaffirming one's belief in the power of story."
—*Booklist,* starred review

The discussion questions and activities in this guide were created by Leigh Courtney, Ph.D. She teaches in the Global Education program at a public elementary school in San Diego, California. She holds both masters' and doctoral degrees in education, with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction.