

Discussion Guide

The Bridge Home by Padma Venkatramen

1. Many of the events in *The Bridge Home* are told in flashback and Viji tells the story in direct address (by using the second-person point of view). Why do you think the author chose to write the story this way?
2. Viji and Rukku's parents are isolated from their own families. What is the reason for this? And how does not being connected to aunts, uncles, cousins, and other extended family affect the two sisters?
3. Viji knows that some aspects of her life will be so much harder if she runs away with Rukku, but she proceeds with her decision anyway. Why?
4. How do Viji and Rukku come to view the deserted bridge as their new home? How does this place offer more peace than their life with Amma and Appa? How is the bridge a more difficult place to live?
5. After a long, hard day of struggling to find work, Viji says, "We were in plain sight. But we were invisible." What does she mean by these words?
6. There is a moment where Viji savors an orange, slowly peeling it and breathing in its sweet scent, hoping to make it last. Why is this a key part of the book?
7. Why does Viji share fairy tales with Rukku? How do Viji's stories change after meeting Arul and Muthu?
8. In what ways do Arul, Viji, Rukku, and Muthu act like the children they are? In what ways are they forced to grow up?
9. When Celina Aunty says she can provide shelter and education to the children, why are the boys distrustful of her offer?
10. Just before the Diwali festival, a girl assumes Viji and Rukku are beggars and offers them cookies. How does the girl's charity make Viji feel?