

CATHERINE, CALLED BIRDY

LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

KAREN CUSHMAN

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

GUIDE WRITTEN BY MARY ELLEN SNODGRASS

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SYNOPSIS

September 1290: On the twelfth, thirteen-year-old Catherine, called "Little Bird" or "Birdy," records details of her family's life—the hangover of her father, Lord Rollo, the sweetness of Aislinn, her mother, and testy relationships with her brothers Robert and Thomas, but not Edward, the dear brother at the abbey. She annoys Morwenna, her nanny, hates hemming linens, and wishes she had been born rich. When her parents introduce suitors, she dislikes the wool merchant from Great Yarmouth and blacks out some teeth to repulse him. A high point in Rollo's year is the quarterly rent collection. Catherine enjoys Perkin the goat boy, but detests helping to make soap.

October: Catherine avoids "lady-tasks." She welcomes Jews, whom the king banishes, and overhears the old Jewish woman telling stories to children. The next morning, when the Jews leave, Catherine wants to accompany them or go crusading like her uncle George. At the harvest fair, she watches a puppet show about Noah and the ark. Villagers rebuild Ralph Littlemouse's home. A handsome man named Rolf courts her. Catherine ruins his opinion. Aislinn prepares gifts for Edward at the abbey. On the eleventh, she miscarries a fifth time.

In Aislinn's place, Catherine goes to the abbey. Edward works in the copy room decorating books. She considers joining a monastery or convent. On the way home, she visits her best friend, Baron Ranulf's daughter Aelis, who has been living at the French court and anticipates an engagement. On return home on the fifteenth, Catherine experiments making new colors and laughs that Thomas Cotter's chicken catches fire and burns his dwelling. On the twentieth, George returns with wondrous stories of the Crusades. Catherine longs to go and tempts Aelis with stories of George. Catherine inscribes her chamber walls with pictures of heaven. George walks with Aelis. On October 31, Catherine enjoys late-night bonfires and roast apples.

November: Catherine begs for soul cakes on the second. Rollo, "the beast," roars as she nears fourteen, the time for betrothal. She doctors Father Huw's boils and blotches. On the sixth, she awaits Aelis, who never arrives. Morwenna assigns extra sewing as punishment. Catherine grows weepy as Aelis spends more time with George. Catherine wonders why people overindulge in ale, then suffer the next day. On the fourteenth, Aelis confesses she loves George. Catherine thinks of her as an "uncle thief."

On the 22nd, musicians celebrate the feast of St. Cecilia. Aislinn tells how she met Rollo when they were both fifteen. For putting wiggly strings in the creamed herring on her birthday on the 25th, Catherine must embroider in her room. She seeks a curse to end George's love for Aelis.

December: Catherine runs off with Gerd the miller's son

to Wooton to watch two thieves hang. She is alarmed that they are only twelve years old. On the Stonebridge Road, she and Gerd observe the king mourning Queen Eleanor on the funeral procession traveling to London. Thomas returns from royal service to spend Christmas at home. By December 6, there are no Jews in England. Catherine is immured in the solar for hanging her bird cages with the women's garments. Bored in cold weather, she makes up songs and is punished for abusing her embroidery. On the 15th, a suitor arrives from Kent. Catherine grunts at him. George leaves Stonebridge. On snowy days, it is too deep for going to mass.

On the 22nd, visiting girls help celebrate Christmas. The next day, Robert arrives. He teases the maids and dogs and torments Catherine. On Christmas Day mummers enact the birth of Christ. The next day, the group chooses Perkin as the Lord of Misrule. On the 27th, she doctors her father and other tipplers. At the end of the month, she rides her mare Blanchefleur and discovers Robert and Elfa snuggled in the hay.

January 1291: Perkin wants to learn to read. Robert and Thomas are illiterate—only Catherine and Edward can read. The Christmas season ends on January 6 with mumming and a Twelfth Cake. On the 10th, Robert takes Catherine's favorite pup. She lists restrictions on women. On the 13th, she learns that Aelis has married the seven-year-old Duke of Warrington. George won't speak of Aelis. He is betrothed to Ethelfritha, a rich widow from York. Catherine feels guilty for cursing George's romance with Aelis. On the 16th, Rollo scares off another suitor. Edgar is lost in the snow for four days. Catherine helps with the lambing.

February: Catherine rescues Peppercorn, a dog driven mad by a fig pit in its ear. Catherine is locked in her room on the third for setting fire to the privy to drive off another suitor—Fulk, the fat son of a Norman baron. Aislinn claims that Fulk left because Rollo won at chess. Catherine fears Aislinn will die from another pregnancy. On February 7, Gilbert and Richard fight at dinner and set the hall ablaze. The next day, seventeen-year-old Roger Moreton is found wounded. He dies on the tenth. The birds choose their mates on February 14. On the 18th, Morwenna and Catherine go to Castle Finbury to visit Aelis, duchess of Warrington, who intends to love George until she dies.

Madame Joanna, the king's bad-mannered cousin, arrives on the 21st. She tells Catherine's fortune and urges her to learn to fly. Joanna dispels Catherine's misconception of court adventures. On the 24th, Catherine is summoned home for Robert's hasty marriage on the 26th to the pregnant heiress of Foxbridges. At the feast, he rescues Rosemary, one of Catherine's favorite pups, and insists he is not so bad as she thought. The next day, she hears of a new suitor—Shaggy Beard's son Stephen.

March: Robert and his bride leave for her manor at Ash-

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ton. Catherine intends to have a proper wedding. She dislikes the holy books that Edward sends for reading during Lent. Thomas of Wallingham brings his family to visit on Friday the ninth on their way to London; Catherine dislikes the pious, prissy daughter Agnes. On Tuesday, Catherine is locked in her room for joining in a spitting contest. The next day, a foster son named Geoffrey arrives, sending Catherine into swoons. Odd William comes on the 17th and writes a world history in Welsh. Catherine writes a Lenten song.

On the 19th, a messenger from Shaggy Beast—Murgaw, lord of Lithgow—dismays Catherine. The next day, she learns that Murgaw himself seeks her hand. Aislinn lectures her on wifely duty. Catherine and Perkin discuss how to run away and earn a living. She envies villagers their choice in marriage.

April: Catherine stalks Geoffrey and learns that he is less ideal. She despises the piety of Holy Week. Aislinn suffers with her pregnancy. The manor fills with Easter guests. On the 17th, Murgaw's agent asks for Greenwood, Catherine's mother's manor, plus silver coins and six oxen. On the third day of negotiations, George returns with Ethelritha. Catherine fears that he drinks and scowls too much. On the 23rd, Aelis comes to see George, who ignores her. Two days later, Catherine plays a halfwit for Murgaw's messengers. By the 27th, she assumes that the betrothal is off. She buys more bird cages and looks forward to spring.

May: After Mayday, Murgaw's agents return. By the fourth, Catherine is set to marry and squabbles with Rollo over the match. She receives more lady-lessons. A Spanish physician fails to cure Aislinn, who suffers headaches. Catherine enjoys William's history stories and legends. He sets out for Crossbridge, where a commoner reportedly woke up speaking Hebrew.

June: On the first, William returns disillusioned that the commoner spoke gibberish. On the second, a message reports the death of Agnes, Robert's wife, and their infant. On the 13th, the family takes Rollo to a London dentist, who relieves his pain. Catherine returns to housecleaning and rejoices that Aislinn is better. Perkin's granny is found dead on the 25th. Father Huw says a burial mass the next day. Catherine impels Rollo to give Meg and Alf the vacant cottage. The deal costs one pig and Catherine's agreement to consider marrying Murgaw. She paints Perkin's granny dancing in Heaven.

July: Meg and Alf marry on the first. The next day, Catherine thinks on her longing for a handsome prince on a white horse. On the fourth, she refuses to marry Murgaw. Rollo locks her in her room. On the sixth, Aelis's husband dies. In mid-July, Catherine's mother suffers swelling. Four days later, Aelis rejoices in widowhood, which frees her to choose a second husband. Murgaw sends a silver toothpick, green gauze headdress, and silver pouch. Stephen sends a bronze knife. George and Ethelritha visit. Catherine begins compiling an herbal. Because George loves his wife, Catherine realizes that she did not curse their marriage.

August: Aislinn grows feverish. Catherine vows to be childless. On the 22nd, the family goes to Bartlemas Fair, where Catherine buys jet beads, a wooden whistle, a bone rattle, and parchment for her herbal. The next day, she detests bear baiting. By trading her silver pouch to save the bear on the 25th, she signals consent to marry Murgaw. On return home, no one will help her fetch the bear. At harvest, she feels as confined as the bear and is locked in her room

for misbehaving. Robert gets the bear, delivers it to an abbey, and pays the abbess with his own silver.

September: Murgaw is set to arrive. On the second, Nan, a midwife, helps Aislinn during protracted labor. A baby girl is born on the fourth. Catherine and Morwenna nurse Aislinn. On the eighth, Father Huw prepares her for death. By the ninth, mother and child thrive. The baby is named Eleanor Mary Catherine. Catherine paints God holding Eleanor on her chamber wall. Meanwhile, Aelis is betrothed to Robert. By the 17th, Catherine is packed and frees her birds except the popinjay, which she gives to Perkin. When messengers arrive, she flees to Ethelritha. Catherine recalls the old Jewish woman reminding her to be herself. Returned home on the 23rd, she rejoices that Murgaw was killed in a brawl over a tavern maid. She intends to marry Stephen in one month.

TIME LINE

- 1260-1290** Teutonic knights conquer and Christianize Prussia.
- 1271-1294** Kublai Khan is emperor of China.
- 1272-1307** Edward I is king of England.
- 1273-1291** Rudolf I is Holy Roman emperor.
- 1277-1294** Nicholas IV is pope.
- 1282-1328** Andronicus II Palaeologus is Byzantine emperor.
- 1290** **June** Ship leaves Scotland to bring back six-year-old Margaret, Queen of Scots, who is living with her grandfather, King Eric of Norway.
- August** Scottish regents sign treaty betrothing Queen Margaret to the English Prince of Wales. Group of English crusaders reaches the Holy Land.
- September** Margaret, Queen of Scots, dies; Edward I orders all Jews to leave England.
- Sept. 27** Earthquake in China kills 100,000 people.
- Nov. 30** Queen Eleanor of England dies.
- Dec. 2** Queen Eleanor is buried.
- Dec. 18** King Magnus II Lockbarn of Sweden dies; Birgir I becomes king.
- 1291** **Feb. 8** Future Portuguese King Alfonso IV (the Brave) is born.
- April 5** Muslims besiege Acre, the last Crusader city in the Holy Land.
- May 8** Acre surrenders.
- May 10** Edward I meets with the claimants to the Scottish throne.
- June 18** King Alfonso III of Aragon dies (called The Do-gooder because he allowed peasants to carry weapons to protect themselves). James II (the Just) becomes king.
- Aug. 1** Swiss cantons create alliance that is the basis for the Confederation.
- mid-August** Templars and other Christian military orders evacuate their remaining outposts in the Holy Land.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A native of Chicago, Karen Cushman was born October 4, 1941, to Arthur and Loretta Heller Lipski and spent her pre-teens in Tarzana, California. She learned to love books in childhood and wrote plays, essays, and short stories. After graduating from Stanford University with degrees in English and Greek, she worked in customer service at Pacific Bell

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and married a professor, Philip Cushman, father of their daughter Leah. After completing an M. A. with her husband in counseling and human behavior from the United States International University, she pursued a second M. A. in museum studies from John F. Kennedy University, where she taught part-time and edited *Museum Studies Journal*. At her husband's insistence, she began a career in freelance writing in 1989 and, following considerable primary research from letters, journals, and personal papers, quickly produced three award-winning novels.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Cushman is one of the many authors who writes as instinct directs her. In 1995, she won a Newbery honor award for *Catherine, Called Birdy* plus a Carl Sandburg Award, Golden Kite Award, Bay Area Book Reviewers' Association award, Cuffie Award, and a best book from *School Library Journal*, *Parent's Choice*, American Booksellers, International Board on Books for Young People, and Young Adult Library Services Association. She quickly produced *The Midwife's Apprentice*, which won a 1996 Newbery Medal for Outstanding Children's Literature, Booklist choice book, New York Public Library recommended book, ALA Best Book, and Best Book for Young Adults. From deft description of young girls in medieval England, she pursued a third book, *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple*, set in a predominantly male California mining camp. She has returned to medievalism for *Matilda Bone*, a work in progress.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To discuss betrothals and dowries
2. To describe the boredom of living in confinement
3. To characterize medieval manor life

4. To acknowledge the importance of autonomy
5. To outline the elements of sexism
6. To recount examples of bargaining
7. To note the value of self-reliance
8. To discuss medieval economy
9. To express the importance of wise choices
10. To analyze the diary as a personal testimony

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To discuss the work of a writer, midwife, nanny, and priest
2. To describe Catherine's sense of humor
3. To characterize stages in Catherine's maturity
4. To discuss treatment of accident, disease, toothache, and birthing difficulties
5. To account for prejudice against Jews
6. To list evidence of animal abuse and mental and physical cruelty
7. To evaluate Catherine's hopes for marriage
8. To evaluate herbs and cures
9. To list images of courtship, betrothal, marriage, and birth
10. To chart events that lead Catherine to give in to matrimony
11. To discuss Catherine's amusements in her chamber
12. To account for punishments
13. To describe how holidays, hobbies, and visits relieve tedium
14. To note the entertainments found at fairs and markets
15. To analyze a girl's relationship with her mother and father

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LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of Karen Cushman's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

diary a daybook or log of sequential activities. Catherine outlines her life in a medieval English manor house from September 1290 to September 1291. The chronological order of events enables the reader to experience the tenor of daily activities, the importance of visitors and long-term guests such as Odd William and Geoffrey, and the color and romance of the Christian calendar. Balancing Catherine's unhappiness, flippancy, and misbehavior are pleasant times, such as mumming and shopping at fairs and the household's delight in holidays, such as All Hallow's Eve, April Fool's Day, Mayday, and harvest time. Details express the value of clothes and tell of unsanitary dining halls and privies, vermin, and the tedium of lady lessons, embroidery, and hemming linen, all part of Catherine's training for wifely duties. Overall, the day-by-day development elucidates cause and effect, showing the gradual discontent of Catherine and her father's growing frustration with her trickery.

historic milieu the setting of fictional events in a real period of history. Set during the Middle Ages, the story centers on an English manor, where a father tries to maneuver his thirteen-year-old daughter Catherine toward matrimony. In the background of the action are dismaying descriptions of saints' lives and martyrdom, veneration of relics, illiteracy, violence, crude behavior, haphazard medical treatment, the Crusades, an abbey scriptorium, reference to Edward Longshanks, anti-Semitism, bearbaiting, and a brief glimpse of the king mourning the death of his queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine.

symbol a concrete object that stands for a complex or abstract idea or relationship. For Catherine, perpetual immurement in her room and the collection of birds in willow cages become a matched set of images. Near the end of her story of betrothal to Murgaw, she is overcome with sympathy for a bear, whose chaining parallels her own distaste for marrying "Shaggy Beard." Having freed the birds and the bear, Catherine is able to adapt her own wings and assert individual strengths in a marriage to Stephen, who supplants his father after an untimely tavern brawl kills Murgaw.

first person narrative a story or a series of actions told from the vantage point of a character at the heart of the action. The story is narrated from within the realm of events by a knowledgeable voice who records them daily without taking time for reflection or recap of precipitating factors. The immediacy of diary style unfolds the story as Catherine lives it, keeping both the narrator and readers in suspense. By the end of the action, the audience feels as if they have participated alongside Catherine and witnessed up close the life of a country girl who is fated to relive her mother's biography.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

Karen Cushman sets her novel in the Middle Ages to illustrate parallels between Catherine's life and current problems with growing up, obeying parents, and choosing a future life. The inner workings of her family's manor demonstrate the hardships of medieval homes. It is cold in winter, walls are depressing, and confinement maddening to an active child who hates embroidery and longs for a friend like Aelis to share pranks and adventures. The surroundings are primitive, as displayed by the privy, pig sty, crude kitchen, and Perkin's granny's cottage.

To contrast the difficulties Catherine faces with Aislinn,

Morwenna, Rollo, and suitors, the author depicts her during free time, travel, and holidays when she feasts with guests, enjoys storytelling, and shares good times with her brothers. At Bartlemas Fair, Catherine attends a puppet show, sees dancers and a minstrel, and purchases jet beads for Aislinn, a bone rattle for the baby, and parchment for writing her herbal. Before the long trek home, she sleeps at a flea-ridden inn and ponders the sad life of a dancing bear, which is going to be baited and attacked by dogs. At home, she enjoys caged birds, who relieve the tedium of punishment alone in her room.

The human milieu of Catherine's time is an intriguing blend of vigor and crudeness. Fighting breaks out in her family's dining hall and sets the house ablaze. Catherine kicks her embroidery downstairs, argues with her father, and paces outside her mother's chamber while a midwife attempts to bring the baby without killing Aislinn. The arrival of a priest to pronounce last rites demonstrates the fearful medical situation that endangers Aislinn and her daughter Eleanor. Less dire is the primitive method of pulling teeth, which Rollo undergoes to stave off pain in his jaw.

CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

For more information about the Middle Ages, medieval Britain, women's history, and other topics and issues arising from the novel, consult these sources:

Books

Carol Adams, et al., *From Workshop to Warfare: The Lives of Medieval Women*

Aliki, *A Medieval Feast*

Malcolm Billings, *The Crusades: Five Centuries of Holy Wars*

Norman E. Cantor, *The Medieval Reader*

James Harpur, *Revelations: The Medieval World*

Vicki Leon, *Outrageous Women of the Middle Ages* and

Uppity Women of the Middle Ages

Tony McAleavy, *Medieval Britain: Conquest, Power, and the People*

Anno Mitsimasa, *Anno's Medieval World*

Colin Platt, *The Atlas of Medieval Man*

Elaine Power, *Medieval Women*

Time-Life Eds., *What Life Was Like in the Age of Chivalry:*

Medieval Europe, 800-1500

Computer Software (Dorling Kindersley)

Castle Explorer

The Medieval Era Through Art and Music (Knowledge Unlimited)

Internet

"Books About Medieval Life," <funnelweb.utcc.utk.edu/~etsulliv/medieval.htm>

"England's Warrior-King Edward I,"

<www.thehistorynet.com/MilitaryHistory/articles/12953_text.htm>

"Medieval Homepage,"

<www.rockyview.ab.ca/bpeak/edge/medieval.html>

"The Middle Ages,"

<pw2.netcom.com/~giardina/medieval.html>

"Middle Ages Internet Links," <mse.byu.edu/mse/InSci/286/>

Videos

Castle (PBS)

Life in the Middle Ages (Knowledge Unlimited)

The Middle Ages (Thomas Klise)

The Middle Ages Series (Knowledge Unlimited)

The Prince and the Pauper (MGM/VA)

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THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in Karen Cushman's *Catherine, Called Birdy* should include these aspects:

Themes

- immaturity
- home problems
- disobedience
- daring
- hobbies
- friendship
- curiosity
- meddling
- confrontation
- accomplishment
- persistence

Motifs

- coping with sexism
- planning a future
- reevaluating personal relationships
- accepting a marriage proposal
- profiting from good fortune

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the journal. Explain each. Month and page numbers allow you to re-read the passage from which the item is taken.

1. Tangled my spinning again. Corpus bones, what a torture. (September, p. 1)
(Catherine swears in typical medieval style, by some aspect of the life and body of Christ, an apostle or a saint. In this case, she invokes the bones of Christ's corpus or body. Other varieties include "ods bodkins" [God's needles or daggers], "good grief," referring to Christ's suffering, and "zounds" [Christ's wounds].)
2. Thought first he spoke in some foreign tongue or a cipher designed to conceal a secret message, but it seems only that his nose was plugged. (September, p. 7)
(During a critical perusal of a potential husband, Catherine has difficulty understanding the words of "Master Lack-Wit" and wonders if he speaks a foreign language or code.)
3. I would much prefer crusading, swinging my sword at heathens and sleeping under starry skies on the other end of the world. (September, p. 8)
*(The Crusades were originally church-approved military expeditions to conquer territory held by non-Christians. The best-known crusades were in Palestine, known as the Holy Land. The First Crusade (1096-1099) captured Jerusalem; the crusaders set up a series of kingdoms, known as the crusader states. Subsequent crusades were aimed at helping the crusader kingdoms fend off Muslim armies. In 1291 an Egyptian army captured the Lebanese city of Acre, the last stronghold of the crusaders in the Holy Land.
Far more successful crusades could be found in northern Europe, where in 1204 the Church sanctioned a move to conquer and Christianize the pagan-held areas around the Baltic Sea. The drive by Spanish Christians to expel the Moors, the Reconquista, received crusade status in 1212, and ended in triumph in 1492 with the*

capture of Granada.

Those who went crusading received absolution for their sins. Famous crusaders included the English kings Richard III, a leader of the Third Crusade (1189-1192); Edward I, who was in the Holy Land when he became king in 1272; and Henry IV, who took part in two campaigns in the Baltic in the early 1390s. Another royal crusader was the French King Louis IX, who led the Seventh Crusade (1248-54) and was made a saint for his efforts.)

4. When he discovers new words, he uses them all together: "This apple/pomme/malus is not ripe" or "Sometimes goats/chevres/capri are smarter than people." (September pp. 11-12)
(Perkin's stringing together of synonyms in English, French, and Latin illustrates an important strength of the language. After the Norman invasion of 1066, the original Anglo-Saxon grammar combined with social terms from the French and governmental and religious terms from Latin to produce a strong, remarkably flexible language.)
5. This is how I will live, making pictures in the scriptorium, although I wish the place were livelier. (October, p. 27)
(A major contribution to world knowledge was the medieval scriptorium, a workshop that produced hand-lettered and illuminated documents, thus preserving literature and records in a period when few could read and write or appreciate history. Some of the parchments were beautifully illustrated with oversized lettering and braided figures around the edge that contained symbols and depictions of everyday life.)
6. The best part of the day was when the mummers came in all wiggled and masked, donkeys and kings and giants, singing and stomping and clashing their wooden swords. (January, p. 80)
(Mumming was a forerunner of formal stage drama. It involved troops of masked figures, amateur actors who traveled from village to village giving mimed performances of religious stories and saints' lives, particularly St. George, England's patron saint.)
7. 29th Day of January, Feast of Saint Julian the Hospitaller, who accidentally killed both his mother and father and in his grief and remorse built a hospital for the poor. (January, p. 90)
(The Knights Hospitallers of St. John, a medical corps during the Crusades, was the Holy Land's only militia. They were organized around 1050 to staff an Amalfi hospital open to male patients of all faiths and origins. Much revered during the crusades and accorded papal dispensation and protection, the members, recruited from pious, but aggressive laymen, shared horses and lived on handouts. Over their armor, attendants wore black vestments marked by a white Maltese cross. They specialized in emergency care and built additional shelters at crossroads and dressing stations at cities in Cyprus, Malta, and England. They staffed St. John of Jerusalem, a 1,000-bed hospital open to male patients and managed by Peter Gerhard (or Gerard), their first rector. A separate facility for women, named the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalene, provided care for female pilgrims.)
8. 1st Day of May, May Day and the Feast of Saint Marcoul, who cures corrupt ulcers, suppurating rashes, and

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other foul diseases of the skin. The loveliest day of the year. To the Maypole haste away, for it is a holiday! (May, p. 145)

(Mayday is traditionally a joyful holiday on which children fill May baskets with flowers and hang them on neighbors' doors. More formal celebrations call for the selection of a May queen and court and dancers to frolic and dance around the Maypole while weaving patterns with ribbons raying out from the top of the pole.)

9. We dressed all in green and yellow to celebrate Whit-Sunday and sang "Summer is icumen in," although it was so cold and rainy that the dancers fought to wear the tree costumes, which are clumsy but warm, and all were wet and bedraggled. (June, p. 156)

(Written in the late 13th century, the Anglo-Saxon folksong "Sumer Is Icumen In" celebrates the end of winter to people who were glad to escape dark, dank huts for pleasurable activities outdoors. Geoffrey Chaucer replicates the seasonal spirit in his "Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.")

10. It is Corpus Christi week and on Thursday the guilds of Lincoln will deck their wagons with flowers and herbs and pull them through the town to the cathedral square, where they will perform their plays about the wonders of Creation and the life of Jesus and I will be there to see! (June, p. 159)

(The Thursday after Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi [Body of Christ] Day, honors the eucharist or communion. Early in Christianity, partakers believed in transubstantiation—a miracle that caused the bread and wine served during the sacrament to change into the flesh and blood of Christ.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the novel.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. What does Catherine reveal in the September section of her journal?

(The humdrum ins and outs of life in the Lincolnshire manor include slight references to fleas, hangovers, and her hated tasks of spinning and embroidering as well as the staff's jobs of harvesting and fishing. By the 18th, she works up to an admission, that Edward her brother wants her to mature by writing her accounts of daily activity. The following day, she negotiates with her mother Aislinn to trade spinning for keeping a journal.)

The 20th of September proves that Catherine has a long way to go. Her rat chasing, broom burning, sulking, and teasing suggest a willful girlishness that annoys her mother and nanny Morwenna. By the 21st, the ominous possibilities of matchmaking begin to dominate the domestic scene. The next day, Catherine states her views on housewifery: "If I had to be born a lady, why not a rich lady, so someone else could do the work and I could lie on a silken bed and listen to a beautiful minstrel sing while my servants hemmed?"

By the 26th, the focus of Catherine's misery takes physical shape. With the arrival of a repulsive suitor, she goes into action to scare him away. The pattern of

shenanigans and punishments begins in earnest, with Catherine scolded and imprisoned in the solar. The last two days of the month, she returns to the everyday events at the manor, naming rent collection, soap making, and observing Perkin's efforts to educate himself.)

2. What does Catherine accomplish at the abbey?

(When Catherine's mother miscarries her fifth child, she is unable to journey to the abbey on a planned jaunt to see her son Edward. She substitutes Catherine, who travels by wagon over a rough road in hot weather on the twelfth of October. On arrival after dinner, she is glad to stand on firm ground. She passes guesthouse, gate, kitchens, dormitories, and storehouses on her way to greet the abbot, who sends a book of saints to Aislinn.)

Guided by Brother Anselm, Catherine reunites with Edward, whose desk in the writing room is the site of meticulous hand labor that produces books one by one in ink on sheets of vellum. Of these valuable works, she says, "Shelves lining the walls hold books and scrolls, some chained down as if they were precious relics or wild beasts." Catherine observes Brother William mixing colors and suggests some of her own recipes. The bustle and importance of copying texts changes her life. She concludes with some hesitation, "I decided to run away to an abbey. This is how I will live, making pictures in the scriptorium, although I wish the place were livelier.")

3. How does Catherine help with Eleanor's birth?

(When Aislinn reaches the precarious end to her confinement, Catherine is self-absorbed with her doom, the pending marriage to "Shaggy Beard." Labor begins on September 3. On the 4th, Catherine comforts her mother and dispatches someone to fetch Nan, the midwife from the village. In the interim, Catherine sings and bathes her mother's face. At the end of 48 hours of Aislinn's pushing and groaning, Catherine can see the top of the infant's head. To ease the birth, she gives her mother wine laced with wallflowers.)

At evening on September 4, Eleanor is born. Catherine remarks, "I cleaned the spittle from her mouth and the blood from her body, wrapped her in clean linen, and laid her next my mother, who wept from joy and exhaustion." Nursing duties require treatment for fever and massage with poppy ointment and oil of violets. As an aid to Aislinn's sleep, Catherine offers honeyed wine. To preserve the baby, Catherine hangs garlic and rowan over the cradle and watches over the infant's breathing.)

4. Why does Catherine pity the dancing bear?

(At Bartlemas Fair, Catherine is so moved by the plight of the bear that she compares it to an eagle with clipped wings. The animal's pelt is "moth-eaten and scrawny" and its life a misery of prodding, pinching, and "silly tricks for fairgoers." She deplores its clumsy effort to earn money for the bearkeeper and is appalled that "a pack of dogs" will be set against the bear to "see who cries and bleeds and dies first." The barbarity is an outgrowth of wagering. To the cruel practice, Catherine remarks, "How can we think ourselves made in the likeness of God when we act worse than beasts?"

During the shopping excursion with Morwenna, Catherine bargains with the bearkeeper and tries "to make him see the wrong in sacrificing a bear whose only crime is not wanting to dance for strangers." Her tender-

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heartedness forces her to make a hard decision—spend the pouch of silver Shaggy Beard sent and accept his marriage proposal in exchange for setting the bear free. At length, she closes the deal, noting, “The owner has agreed to keep him for seven days while I fetch the silver from home and think on what to do with a bear.”)

5. How does Catherine learn wifely behaviors?
(Catherine takes a dim view of “lady lessons,” which force her into an unnatural primness and self-control. She goes to her room for sessions of embroidery. On May 8, she writes, “It is impossible to do all and be all a lady must be and not tie oneself in a knot. A lady must walk erect with dignity, looking straight before her with eyelids low, gazing at the ground ahead, neither trotting nor running nor looking about nor laughing nor stopping to chatter.” In addition, the ideal lady keeps her hands folded in her lap, lifts her dress from the floor, and hides her smile. Catherine concludes, “A lady must have six hands!”)

The restraints of womanly behavior dismay Catherine. She summarizes that ladies must constantly seek the middle ground—don’t look too proud or humble and don’t talk too much or too little. As proof of maturity, ladies can’t show anger, sulk, scold, overeat, overdrink, or swear. The strictures send Catherine to the barn in exasperation.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretive Level)

6. What does Catherine learn from women?
(The most valuable lessons in ladyhood come from Catherine’s mother. A sweet, compliant wife, Aislinn keeps peace in the family, loves her sons and husband, and counsels her daughter on seemingly behavior. She never resorts to yelling and thumping, as Rollo does when he is angry with Catherine. Aislinn gives her daughter a slight insight into her own marriage to Rollo, when they were both fifteen. Aislinn’s cool demeanor and pragmatism set an example that appears to have little significance to Catherine, yet lie at the subconscious level, goading her on toward refinement and propriety.)

Signs of Aislinn’s influence arrive near the end of Catherine’s journal. She participates readily in treating Aislinn’s headaches and attending her two-day labor in birthing Eleanor. Like a little mother, Catherine hovers over the cradle and observes her little sister’s breathing. As the day of betrothal nears, Catherine chafes inwardly, but stops her wicked misdeeds, running away, and verbal outbursts. At the right moment, she recalls the old Jewish woman saying, “Remember, Little Bird, in the world to come, you will not be asked ‘Why were you not George?’ or ‘Why were you not Perkin?’ but ‘Why were you not Catherine?’”)

7. How does Catherine summarize her quandary?
(As marriage looms, Catherine misinterprets the teasing of Aunt Ethelfritha, who suggests running away to Ireland or Cathay. To herself, Catherine compares her situation to the dancing bear and caged popinjay. She can’t live on her own, but she also can’t submerge her real personality in some fake performance of ladyhood. She concludes, “I am no minstrel and no wart charmer but me, Birdy, Catherine of Stonebridge, daughter of Lord Rollo and the lady Aislinn, sister to Robert and Thomas and Edward and little Eleanor, friend of Perkin, goat boy

and scholar.”)

Taking a broader slant, Catherine declares that she resembles the Jews, “driven from England, from one life to another.” She remarks with surprise, “and yet for them exile was no exile.” The secret is attitude, for they “take their lives, their families, their people, and their God with them, like a light that never goes out.” The best of both worlds, she surmises is “At home even in exile.”)

8. What aspects of Catherine’s world are limited by her gender?

(Catherine is aware that females have little choice in where they go and what they do. She longs to fight in the crusades like her uncle, become an illuminator in a scriptorium, and mimic Perkin and Gerd’s freedoms, even if they are lower class. On January 11, she lists the things that girls can’t do: train horses, be monks, laugh out loud, wear breeches, drink in ale houses, cut their hair, wear nothing, and enjoy solitude. To these she adds, running, sliding on ice, sunbathing, and marrying whom they choose.)

On July 24, Catherine escapes self-pity to think over women in general. She notices “how many male saints were bishops, popes, missionaries, great scholars, and teachers, while female saints get to be saints mostly by being someone’s mother or refusing to marry some powerful pagan. It is plain that men are in charge of making saints.” The entry ends without the obvious extension that young girls are made into wives and mothers at the behest of men.)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. What does Catherine reveal about herself in song?
(Catherine’s lively wit bubbles forth on the feast of her namesake, Saint Catherine. In a two-stanza song, she asks for blessing and acknowledges that the saint did a good deed by being holy. In the depths of a December storm, Catherine sings a riddling song that asks why fingers are different lengths, the reasons for aging and cold, and, with a quick glance inward, “What will become of me?”)

During the gray days of Lent, Catherine bemoans “no feasts, fairs, or visiting minstrels.” Without custard and roast beef and entertainment, she composes a four-stanza song remarking on the gloom and grief of the season. With typical Christian rejoicing, she anticipates the gaiety of Easter, the anniversary of the day that Christ returned to earth. With her typically cynical wit, she murmurs, “I wanted to end with lines about hope but can think of no rhymes but rope, soap, pope, and mope, and none of these seem to fit the song.”)

10. Account for the nickname Birdy.
(Throughout the novel, Cushman emphasizes Catherine’s confinement to her parents’ discipline and to social constraints. She keeps caged wild birds, whom she eventually frees, rescues a dog from a fig pit in the ear, and worries over a tattered bear that is slated to be attacked by dogs. To Catherine, the penning, abusing, and tethering of animals is akin to the anguish she feels as her father parades suitors before the family and makes deals for her future.)

The fact that Catherine is named Birdy suits the untenable situation that she pours out in her journal. With little or no say in her marriage arrangement, she chafes

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against the social prison that limits her choices. When Madame Joanna impels her to spread her wings and fly, Catherine misinterprets the injunction. When the prophecy begins to make sense, it comforts her that she has her own strengths to fall back on. By being herself she can assure some happiness, even if she lives far away and her choices are limited.)

Questions 11 and 12 (Creative Level)

11. Outline the history of midwifery from ancient times to the present. Note the importance of midwives to humble people and those living outside metropolitan areas, where hospitals and doctors are readily available. Name important midwives, particularly Mary Breckinridge, creator of the Kentucky Frontier Nursing Service.
12. List the inventions that made medieval life less onerous, particularly knitting, silver-backed glass mirrors, and the moldboard plow.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Art

Using desktop publishing or other media, design contrasting murals or posters to demonstrate these pairs: shopping at a fair and being locked in a bedroom for punishment, decorating a wall and kicking embroidery down the stairs, sniffing yarrow and offering three pigs for a dowry, conspiring with a friend and making love spells, Aelis's weeping for George and Catherine's father negotiating with Shaggy Beard, and helping with lambing and choosing a Lord of Misrule.

Drama

1. Pantomime wooing scenes between Catherine and potential mates. Illustrate how she uses gesture, facial expressions, tricks and pranks, and discourtesy to scare off the men her father chooses for her.
2. Draw stage settings to dramatize a crucial scene, such as welcoming a baby daughter into the family, painting a bedroom wall, treating a hangover, setting birds free, cleaning up after a fire, learning needlework, watching mummers perform, and welcoming a brother home. Include a list of characters, props, music, make-up, costumes, and lighting necessary to the scene, e. g., herbs, embroidery frame, cages, dogs, Twelfth Cake, platters of meat, paint, brushes, candles, blankets, lute, string, rushes, and flagons of wine.
3. Select a saint whose life would make an interesting or intriguing holiday pageant, for example, Euthymius, Crispin and Crispinian, Catherine, Hyginus, or Marcellus.

Education

1. Compose an extended definition of home schooling. Select lessons from your own classes that would end Catherine's boredom by introducing her to new ideas, for example, health and hygiene, women's history, music, creative writing, word processing, or geography.
2. Construct a notebook in which Catherine compiles what she has learned about herbs and health treatments. Add your favorite mixtures for cough drops, bath salts, pot-pourri, hot tea, soap, skin balm, or shampoo.
3. Write a theme in which you propose a school for local children in which Catherine teaches young villagers what she has learned about herbs, painting, religion, travel, and creative writing.

4. Explain to a small group how Catherine learns by doing. Characterize opportunities to observe experts and to develop personal competency, such as assisting her mother during childbirth and discussing types of ink with an illustrator in an abbey scriptorium.

Geography

1. Create a website or bulletin board contrasting settings described or mentioned in the text.
2. Using examples from the text, define shire. List England's divisions and name principal cities in each.

History and Social Studies

1. Study the layout of a typical abbey, especially the chapel, library, infirmary, and herb garden. Include reference sources on the life of St. Anselm. Contrast the pros and cons of living in a closed community. Explain why Catherine is drawn to the scriptorium.
2. Lead a discussion of Bartlemas Fair. Contrast modern mall shopping or buying by mail from catalogs with Catherine's shopping for the manor and buying personal gifts and trinkets.
3. Make a time line of the history of Whitby Abbey. Compare it with other religious sites of the British Isles, particularly Iona, Clonmacnoise, and Lindisferne.
4. Describe aloud the interdependence of a medieval village. Discuss valuable citizens, particularly the midwife, priest, cooks, bakers, goat boy, and messengers. Account for the excitement over a fair.
5. Provide a Christian calendar to accompany the book. Include dates that are identifiable in current terms, e. g. Epiphany (January 6), Lady Day (March 25), All Fools Day (April 1), May Day Eve (April 30), May Day (May 1), Whitsunday, Midsummer Eve (June 23), Midsummer Day (June 24), St. Swithin's Day (July 15), Lammas Day (August 1), All Hallow's Eve (October 31), All Saints Day (November 1), Martinmas (November 11), First day of Christmas (December 26), and Childermas (December 28). Separate dates such as Shrovetide, Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, which are moveable feasts depending on the placement of Easter. Locate your own saint's day.
6. Explain in a paragraph how you would assist unfortunate children such as Perkin. Add information about monasteries and convents that accepted waifs and about workshops that kept young helpers in exchange for bed and board. Note faults of the system, particularly exploitation of child labor, physical and emotional abuse, hunger, and exposure to cold, disease, and workplace hazards, such as the manor fire.
7. Summarize the reasons for the canonization of these saints: Apollonia, Kevin, Edburga, Ethelwold, Bartholomew, Stephen, Scholastica, Simeon Styles, and Genevieve.

Language Arts

1. Using desktop publishing, compile a pronouncing glossary for the novel to explain these terms: mugwort, khan, Saracen, rowan, chamomile, brigands, almoner, gittern, timbrel, quince, joust, *waes hail*, benedicite, kirtles, marzipan, betony, anise, rue, sloe, nuthatch, lapis lazuli, cumin, draughts, privy, farrier, samite, ermine, and cipher.
2. Compose a short speech in which you describe

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medieval trades that became last names, for example, Steward, Fletcher, Smith, Weaver, Baker, Miller, Bailey (from bailiff), and Reese. Using the telephone directory as a source, add others, such as Cooper, Wright, Tanner, Fuller, Fisher, Hunter, Thatcher, Mason, Singer, Wright, Bishop, Priestly, and Cook.

3. Explain briefly these images: Lord of Misrule, Odd William, island of Albion, toothworm, elf-shot, warble fly, and the great khan.
4. Describe in a short speech the significance of one of these quotations: "After the laughter and the joking and the dousing of the fire, I, of course, was caught and blamed," "I am who I am wherever I am," "Edward works in Paradise," "There are no Jews left in England today," "we can neither of us live alone and free and survive in this world, but we might wish for a cage less painful and confining," and "All of the world is celebrating Midsummer Eve, eating and drinking and dancing in the fields. I cannot, filled as I am with dread over this marriage business."
5. Draw a cause-and-effect diagram illustrating how Rollo, Morwenna, and Aislinn differ in methods of disciplining Catherine. Show patterns of bullying in which the father overpowers the girl and how the mother offers motivation, wise guidance, and solace.
6. In a descriptive theme, contrast the hardships of living in a small cottage with life in the manor. Express Catherine's sympathy for people at the lower end of the social scale, for example, her kindness to the newlyweds and her compassion toward Perkin.
7. Explain in a short speech the possibility that Catherine will be happy and content with her husband. Suggest the elements of home management, raising livestock, and motherhood that will appeal to her.

Psychology

1. Explain to a small group the need for a worthy marriage. Discuss why Catherine rejects the first selections. Propose the type of man who would enjoy her lively personality, word games, riddles, and trickery.
2. Lead a debate about tormenting animals. Compare bear-baiting to current circus acts, rodeos, animal film stars, and petting zoos. Determine the best way for a community to prevent cruelty.
3. Make an oral report on the theme of self-esteem. Explain why Catherine swears and plots pranks. Determine why Catherine takes comfort in the Jewish woman's question, "Why were you not Catherine?"

Science and Health

1. Analyze the problems of childbirth. Explain why long labor or faulty position of the fetus endangers mother and child. Explain why Nan baptizes the child before it is born. Describe modern methods of monitoring and preventing labor difficulties, including prenatal care, genetic profiles of the parents, fetal heart monitor, amniocentesis, sonography, blood samples, and avoidance of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
2. Compose a short report on medieval nutrition. Name the foods that make up a varied diet, particularly lamb, jellied eel, bread, cheese, apples, herring pie, omelette, mulled cider, stuffed figs, turnip soup, pickles, herbs, wine, and ale. Explain how modern diets differ in variety, quality,

and availability of fresh meats and produce.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Dramatize in a short skit a conversation: Rollo's questions to Nan about Aislinn's lengthy labor, Perkin's longings for education, Shaggy Beard's description of Catherine to Stephen, Catherine's reacquaintance with her older brothers, Edward's labors for Brother Anselm, and Morwenna's advice to Catherine on marriage.
2. With a web design or flow chart, explain the relationship between the owners of a manor and villagers. Indicate how each benefits the other in supplying the table and protecting the neighborhood from predators.
3. Role-play the part of a fair vendor, innkeeper, king, lord, herder, baker, painter, illustrator, wool merchant, bear-keeper, abbot, minstrel, knight, brewer, jousting, hospitaler, saint, stable boy, or priest. Explain why so many jobs in the Middle Ages were limited to men. Act out the role of Anna Comnena, Clara of Assisi, Saint Bridget, Joan of Kent, Margaret Kempe, Queen Margaret of Scotland, Marie de France, Khadijah, Eleanor of Aquitaine, or Hildegard of Bingen, all influential women of the Middle Ages. Discuss how the jobs of midwife and herbalist were better suited to women.
4. Discuss how Catherine's life would be different today. If she had chosen not to marry, what would her options have been? What type of educational institution might she have enjoyed?
5. Compose an informal dialogue illustrating Catherine's gradual maturity and acceptance of her role in society. Indicate bad habits that she gives up, especially swearing, complaining, playing tricks, disobeying, meddling in other people's lives, destroying property, and running away from responsibility.
6. Make an oral report on medieval architecture. Point out comforts of the manor, such as the great dining hall and fireplace for entertaining guests and celebrating holidays. Contrast the inconvenience of privies, rushes on the floor, free-ranging dogs, lack of running water, fleas, and cold.
7. Explain how childbirth and medical care changed after people learned more about disease, parasites, sanitation, genetics, nutrition, conception, and human anatomy.
8. Illustrate methods by which children choose a career and lifestyle. Contrast Catherine's interest in drawing and writing with Wat's role as farrier, Edward's job in the scriptorium, the bearkeeper's work as an entertainer, Father Huw's task as confessor, Meg's position at the dairy, and King Edward Longshanks importance as monarch of the realm.
9. Discuss the effects of love and acceptance on children like Catherine. Express her tensions as the time of matrimony threatens to end her childhood. Discuss why she concludes that she is "prepared to love [Stephen]."
10. Analyze the wording, rhythms, and themes of Catherine's verse. Describe how she includes references to nature and her own emotion into songs of holidays, seasons, and everyday activities.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Explain how medieval marriages were arranged among

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- upper class families.
- List examples of Catherine's misbehaviors and the punishments she earns.
 - List the major faults of characters, including Rollo's ill temper, Robert's lust, and Catherine's trickery.
 - Summarize the types of information that Catherine incorporates in her journal, particularly religion, superstition, and everyday festivities.

OTHER WORKS BY KAREN CUSHMAN

The Ballad of Lucy Whipple (1996)

The Midwife's Apprentice (1995)

RELATED READING

Marguerite de Angeli, *The Door in the Wall*

Avi, *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*

Lois McMaster Bujold, *Barrabar* and *The Spirit Ring*

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

Donna Cross, *Pope Joan*

Monica Furlong, *The Wise Child*, *Juniper*, and *Robin's Country*

Elizabeth Vining Grey, *Adam of the Road*

Robert Heinlein, *Friday* and *Podkayne of Mars*

Mary Frances Hendry, *Quest for a Maid*

Elizabeth Curtis Klause, *Alien Secrets*

E.L. Konigsburg, *A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver*

Elizabeth Moon, *Once a Hero*

Howard Pyle, *Men of Iron*

Elizabeth George Speare, *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*

Mary Stewart, *The Crystal Cave*, *The Hollow Hills*, and *The Prince and the Pilgrim*

Rosemary Sutcliff, *Knight's Fee* and *The Witch's Brat*

Frances Temple, *Ramsey Scallop*

Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Prince and the Pauper*

T.H. White, *The Sword in the Stone*

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Stevenson, Deborah, "Review," *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, June 1994, p. 316.

"What People Wrote about the Midwife's Apprentice," <www.soemadison.wisc.edu/ccbc/midwife.htm>

CATHERINE, CALLED BIRDY

VOCABULARY TEST

Using the words in parentheses, compose a sentence about each name, item, event, or place listed below.

1. tonic (camomile) _____

2. September (plagued) _____

3. sails (billowing) _____

4. abbey (abbot) _____

5. comb (horn) _____

6. bed (solar) _____

7. manor (privy) _____

8. Aelis (circlet) _____

9. Tuscany (martyred) _____

10. calendar (Whitsunday) _____

11. Saragossa (racked) _____

12. Joanna (wimple) _____

13. proverbs (soothsaying) _____

14. Ashton (fens) _____

15. herbal (parchment) _____

16. Lent (sevensnight) _____

17. stoned (brigands) _____

18. dancing (Jack o' the Green) _____

19. heart (wormwood) _____

20. monks (relics) _____

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (30 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a place from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| ___ 1. A dancing bear is to be baited. | A. stocks |
| ___ 2. Ethelfritha gives advice on running away. | B. York |
| ___ 3. A merchant is punished. | C. London |
| ___ 4. Copyists add illuminations to texts. | D. solar |
| ___ 5. Queen Eleanor's body will be honored and buried. | E. privy |
| ___ 6. A wool merchant returns from courting Catherine. | F. Crusades |
| ___ 7. Baron Ranulf's daughter lives until her betrothal. | G. Bartlemas Fair |
| ___ 8. Catherine is forced to remain indoors. | H. Great Yarmouth |
| ___ 9. George learns useful phrases. | I. Stonebridge |
| ___ 10. A peddler sells willow cages. | J. Greenwood |
| ___ 11. Roger Moreton is discovered after the fire. | K. Crossbridge |
| ___ 12. Fulk is rescued. | L. scriptorium |
| ___ 13. An heiress dies along with her infant. | M. French court |
| ___ 14. Aislinn's property tempts the agents of Murgaw. | N. buttery |
| ___ 15. A commoner appears to speak Hebrew. | O. Ashton |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- ___ 1. In Lincoln, the tooth puller relieves Rollo's pain.
- ___ 2. Catherine frees all the birds but her popinjay.
- ___ 3. Meg and Alf claim that Perkin's granny is elf-shot.
- ___ 4. Catherine grunts to William, who flees from courting her.
- ___ 5. Thomas comes home for Christmas and teases the servants.
- ___ 6. At the mumming, Catherine plays a part in the story of Noah and the ark.
- ___ 7. Few people watch the hanging of two young boys.
- ___ 8. Catherine turns to her mother for comfort after returning from the hanging with Gerd.
- ___ 9. Robert has a hasty marriage because he refuses to pay a dowry.
- ___ 10. Catherine accuses Aelis of putting a curse on her uncle.

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Part III: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Supply a name to complete each of the following statements.

1. _____ helps Catherine deliver Eleanor.
2. _____ suffers her fifth miscarriage.
3. As _____'s wife, Catherine will no longer fear Shaggy Beard.
4. After Perkin's _____'s death, Meg and Alf claim her cottage.
5. Madame _____ tells Catherine's fortune.
6. _____ surprises Catherine by asking to marry Robert.
7. _____ of Wallingham is over-refined and prim.
8. _____ wants to learn to read.
9. Aislinn regularly visits _____ at the abbey.
10. _____ prays for Aislinn as she lies near death.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain Catherine's various names, including Aelgifu.
2. Describe how residents of the manor spend Christmas.
3. Discuss the type of work that Odd William and Morwenna perform.
4. Explain the importance of Catherine's herbal and songs.
5. Compare Aelis, Agnes, Joanna, the Jew, and Ethelfritha as friends and advisers.

CATHERINE, CALLED BIRDY

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Identification (20 points)

Identify the speaker (a) and the person who is being addressed (b) in each of the following quotations.

- _____ 1a. My daughter, the lady Catherine, my pride and my joy, will honor the man she weds,
_____ 1b. not the other way round.
- _____ 2a. Daughters and fish spoil easily and are better not kept.
_____ 2b.
- _____ 3a. Let us then . . . go watch John Swann unload kegs at the alehouse.
_____ 3b.
- _____ 4a. Even the lowest of beasts is not vile all of the time.
_____ 4b.
- _____ 5a. Just because she doesn't flap her wings all the time doesn't mean she can't fly.
_____ 5b.

Part II: Cause and Effect (20 points)

Finish each statement below by stating a reason:

1. Catherine and her father are alike because _____

2. Aislinn sets Catherine a poor example of wifely happiness because _____

3. Catherine misjudges people because _____

4. Abbeys, bird cages, and a chained bear are significant because _____

5. Being a lady in a country manor is not always elegant because _____

6. Catherine's tricks are harmless because _____

7. Punishing Catherine by putting her in her room is effective because _____

8. Crude behavior and coarse language in the novel gives a good view of the Middle Ages because _____

9. Catherine would have benefited from more schooling because _____

10. Manners were not refined at Stonebridge Manor because _____

CATHERINE, CALLED BIRDY

Part III: Plot Assessment (30 points)

Place an X by any statement below that is true of Rollo:

- 1. suffers a toothache.
- 2. claims to honor and value Catherine.
- 3. summons Nan to help Aislinn.
- 4. tutors Geoffrey.
- 5. refuses to give up Greenwood.
- 6. witnesses the hanging of two young thieves.
- 7. returns safely from the Crusades.
- 8. accepts Meg's bargain for Perkin's granny's cottage.
- 9. collects quarter rents.
- 10. strikes Catherine in the face.
- 11. worries about Aislinn and the baby.
- 12. spoils Catherine with fine clothes.
- 13. considers sending Catherine to the French court.
- 14. goes to Catherine for a cure for too much ale.
- 15. reads aloud during Lent from three holy books.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- 1. Discuss why Catherine decides to bargain with the silver pouch.
- 2. Analyze the importance of Catherine's nicknames.
- 3. Account for Catherine's romantic dreams.
- 4. Describe how Catherine's family gets along together.

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. G | 6. H | 11. N |
| 2. B | 7. M | 12. E |
| 3. A | 8. D | 13. O |
| 4. L | 9. F | 14. J |
| 5. C | 10. I | 15. K |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F |
| 2. T | 7. F |
| 3. F | 8. T |
| 4. F | 9. F |
| 5. F | 10. F |

Part III: Sentence Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| 1. Nan | 6. Aelis |
| 2. Aislinn | 7. Agnes |
| 3. Stephen | 8. Perkin |
| 4. granny | 9. Edward |
| 5. Joanna | 10. Father Huw |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1a. Rollo | 4a. Catherine |
| 1b. messenger | 4b. Robert |
| 2a. Rollo | 5a. Joanna |
| 2b. Catherine | 5b. Catherine |
| 3a. Catherine | |
| 3b. Agnes | |

Part II: Cause and Effect (20 points)

Answers will vary.

Part III: Plot Assessment (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. X | 6. | 11. X |
| 2. X | 7. | 12. |
| 3. | 8. | 13. |
| 4. | 9. X | 14. X |
| 5. X | 10. X | 15. |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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