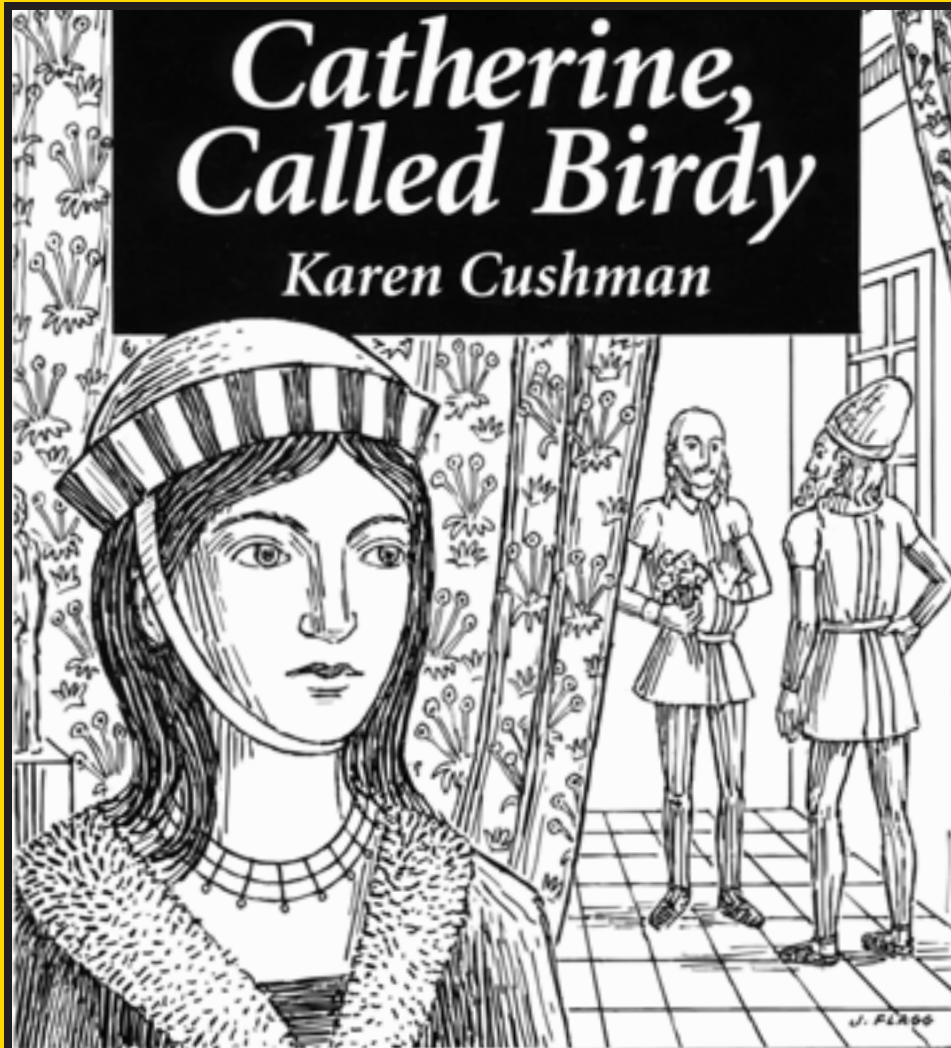


## Novel·Ties



### A Study Guide

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**LEARNING LINKS**

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## For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of lessons to use in conjunction with the book *Catherine, Called Birdy*. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

**Pre-Reading Activities (cont.)**

3. Frustration with friends, family, and society is a normal part of a young person's development. Share some experiences that have frustrated you. How did you deal with your intense feelings? As you read the novel, evaluate Birdy's actions when she is prevented from doing what she would like to do. Compare them with your own ways of coping with frustration.
4. When Birdy considers her family's expectations of her and the marriage she dreads, she writes: "The stars and my family align to make my life black and miserable." Have you ever felt this way? Describe times when you didn't have any influence over situations in your own life.
5. Birdy's story is presented in diary format from Birdy's point of view. Read Birdy's entry on the 24TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER. When you get to the part about her mother and father, remind yourself that because Birdy is telling the story she cannot know what her parents or anyone else is thinking or feeling. Do you think Birdy is really as unappealing as she describes herself in the entry? As you continue to read *Catherine, Called Birdy*, keep in mind that you are seeing the world the way it seems to Birdy.
6. To gain insight into the characters and their time in history, read the "Author's Note" at the end of the book before you begin reading Birdy's diary.
7. Do some research to find out about the medieval theory of humors in which four bodily fluids were believed to determine a person's health and temperament.
8. Find photographs or facsimiles of illuminated medieval manuscripts. Notice the beautiful handwritten words and illustrations and the use of gold leaf and vivid color. Imagine the lives of the monks who arduously copied sacred texts during the Middle Ages.
9. Do some research to learn about the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290. Learn who was the monarch who required this expulsion and what happened to the Jewish population in England. Also, find out what other countries expelled Jews and why these expulsions were ordered. As you read the book, notice Birdy's preconceived notions about Jews and how her beliefs became tempered.
10. Do some research to learn about the Crusades. Find out what they were, when they took place, and what they accomplished. As you read the book, notice references to Birdy's Uncle George and his opinion of the Crusades once he returned.

### September, October (cont.)

5. How does Birdy discourage unwelcome suitors?
6. How does Birdy view her brother's life at the abbey? How do you know this?
7. Why does Birdy describe her friend Aelis as a hawk without and a dove within?
8. Why does Birdy disapprove of the growing relationship between Aelis and her uncle George?

### Questions for Discussion:

1. How does Birdy's contact with the Jewish people who stay overnight in the hall change her ideas about them? Have you ever questioned or changed your ideas about an ethnic or religious group?
2. Uncle George imparted a different perspective on the Crusades to Birdy. What is this different view? Do you think it will change Birdy's mind about taking up the cross and becoming a crusader?
3. To whom does Birdy compare her mother's cider recipe? What problem does she think this comparison explains? Do you agree with Birdy's theory? Why or why not?
4. Do you think there are any remnants of the medieval requirements for lady-like behavior that exist in society today?

### Literary Device: Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a comparison of two unlike objects is suggested or implied. For example:

And I am a plain gray and brown goose.

What is being compared?

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What does this tell you about Birdy's feelings?

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Write a metaphor comparing yourself to a particular bird. Explain your reasoning.

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