

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Weaver/Holibaugh	School:	Hyatts Middle School
Book Title:	Catherine, Called Birdy	Genre:	Historical Fiction
Author:	Karen Cushman	Pages:	212
Publisher:	HarperTrophy	Copyright:	1994

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

The daughter of an English country knight keeps a journal in which she records the events of her life, particularly her longing for adventures beyond the usual role of women and her efforts to avoid being married off.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

Reading Applications 7

11. Determine and discuss the stated and implied themes, patterns and symbols found in literature.
Comprehension Strategies 7

5. Apply effective reading comprehension strategies, including summarizing and making predictions and comparisons using information in text between text and across subject areas.

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

School Library Journal (June 1994)

Gr 6-9-This unusual book provides an insider's look at the life of Birdy, 14, the daughter of a minor English nobleman. The year is 1290 and the vehicle for storytelling is the girl's witty, irreverent diary. She looks with a clear and critical eye upon the world around her, telling of the people she knows and of the daily events in her small manor house. Much of Birdy's energy is consumed by avoiding the various suitors her father chooses for her to marry. She sends them all packing with assorted ruses until she is almost wed to an older, unattractive man she refers to as Shaggy Beard. In the process of telling the routines of her young life, Birdy lays before readers a feast of details about medieval England. The book is rich with information about the food, dress, religious beliefs, manners, health, medical practices, and sanitary habits (or lack thereof) of the people of her day. From the number of fleas she kills in an evening to her herbal medicines laced with urine, Birdy reveals fascinating facts about her time period. A feminist far ahead of her time, she is both believable and lovable. A somewhat philosophical afterword discusses the mind set of medieval people and concludes with a list of books to consult for further information about the period. Superb historical fiction

Review #2

Booklist (Vol. 90, No. 16 (April 15, 1994))

Gr. 6-9. Like the recent *The Ramsey Scallop*, this is a story of life in the last decade of the twelfth century as seen through the eyes of a young teenage girl. Here the heroine is feisty Birdy, who's been instructed by her older brother to keep a diary so that she may grow less childish. Birdy, the daughter of a minor lord and lady in Lincolnshire, reluctantly agrees, but initially she has nothing more interesting to report than how many fleas she has picked off herself. As the months roll on, however, life becomes more stimulating as Birdy's father tries to marry her off to a variety of suitors. The diary format helps portray the tedium of life in the Middle Ages, the never-ending sewing, cooking, and other chores; the dirt and the illness; and, worse, the lowly role of women in medieval life. But this diary style also inhibits the ability of the characters to come alive. Birdy's is the only real voice. Fortunately, it's a sprightly voice, complete with its own brand of cursing ("God's thumbs!"), that moves the action. Kids can read this on their own or as a supplement to studies of the Middle Ages.

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: **The Midwife's Apprentice**

Author: **Karen Cushman**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable): 11+

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 12/10/07

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)
Literature for Today's Young Adults