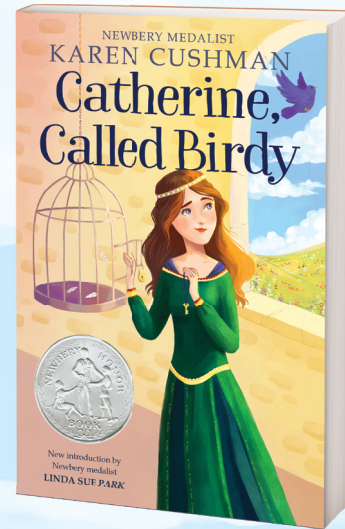


Catherine, Called Birdy

BY NEWBERY MEDALIST
KAREN CUSHMAN



About the book: The historical fiction classic, told in the form of a diary, has drawn in generations of readers and is a Newbery Honor Book. Catherine, a spirited and inquisitive young woman, narrates the story of her fourteenth year—the year 1290..



Discussion Questions:

1. Are there parts of Catherine's medieval world that you find shocking or surprising? Why do you think the author chose to include this information?
2. Does Catherine always tell the truth in her journal? How can you tell?
3. What kinds of assumptions does Catherine make about people, such as her suitors, her family, and the Jewish people? What about Perkin, Aelis and George? Does she ever discover that her early assumptions about people were wrong?
4. How does Catherine feel about her father? Why? In what ways is she similar to him?
5. Why does Catherine finally decide that it is useless to run away? Whose advice helps her to realize this?
6. Why, at the end of the story, is Catherine satisfied with her arranged marriage? Is this a realistic conclusion for a story about a young woman of the Middle Ages?
7. Compare Catherine's early diary entries with her later ones. How does she change?
8. In what ways might adult readers and young readers react differently to the characters and themes in the book? What are the reasons for this?
9. Do you think the author always agrees with her characters' opinions and actions? How do you know?
10. How does the author's inclusion of journals and letters in her book help you to understand Catherine?



About the author: Karen Cushman's acclaimed historical novels include *Catherine, Called Birdy*, a Newbery Honor winner, and *The Midwife's Apprentice*, which received the Newbery Medal. She lives on Vashon Island in Washington State.

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