



Catherine, Called Birdy

By Karen Cushman

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Catherine, a spirited and inquisitive young woman of good family, narrates in diary form the story of her fourteenth year—the year 1290. A Newbery Honor Book.

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Catherine, Called Birdy By Karen Cushman Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"You can run, but you can't hide" is the rather belated conclusion reached by Catherine, called "Birdy" for her caged pets, in this fictive diary of a medieval young woman's coming-of-age and struggle for self-determination. Escaping regularly into a fantasy life of daring escapades and righteous battles, Birdy manages to postpone the inevitable sale of herself as a wife to a very unwelcome suitor. Just as she resigns herself to her fate with the comforting knowledge that "I am who I am wherever I am," word comes that she will not have to marry the oaf after all. Birdy's journal, begun as an assignment, first wells up in the reluctant and aggressive prose of hated homework, and then eases into the lighthearted flow of descriptive adventures and true confessions; the narrative device reveals Birdy's passage from rebellious child to responsible adult. Despite the too-convenient ending, this first novel introduces an admirable heroine and pungently evokes a largely unfamiliar setting. Ages 12-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 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.
Bruce Anne Shook, Mendenhall Middle School, Greensboro, NC

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From [Booklist](#)

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. *Ilene Cooper*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alexander Snider:

Throughout other case, little men and women like to read book Catherine, Called Birdy. You can choose the best book if you'd prefer reading a book. Providing we know about how is important a new book Catherine, Called Birdy. You can add information and of course you can around the world by a book. Absolutely right, simply because from book you can understand everything! From your country until eventually foreign or abroad you may be known. About simple point until wonderful thing you are able to know that. In this era, you can open a book or searching by internet gadget. It is called e-book. You should use it when you feel bored to go to the library. Let's study.

Todd McCrea:

Hey guys, do you desires to finds a new book to read? May be the book with the headline Catherine, Called Birdy suitable to you? The actual book was written by famous writer in this era. The actual book untitled Catherine, Called Birdy is the main of several books in which everyone read now. That book was inspired a number of people in the world. When you read this guide you will enter the new dimensions that you ever know previous to. The author explained their strategy in the simple way, thus all of people can easily to comprehend the core of this e-book. This book will give you a wide range of information about this world now. To help you see the represented of the world on this book.

Erin Kizer:

Is it anyone who having spare time and then spend it whole day through watching television programs or just lying on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This Catherine, Called Birdy can be the solution, oh how comes? It's a book you know. You are thus out of date, spending your spare time by reading in this new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these books have than the others?

Denise Rutledge:

E-book is one of source of understanding. We can add our understanding from it. Not only for students but in addition native or citizen will need book to know the update information of year for you to year. As we know those publications have many advantages. Beside many of us add our knowledge, may also bring us to around the world. From the book Catherine, Called Birdy we can take more advantage. Don't you to definitely be creative people? To be creative person must like to read a book. Only choose the best book that suitable with your aim. Don't always be doubt to change your life at this book Catherine, Called Birdy. You can more desirable than now.

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