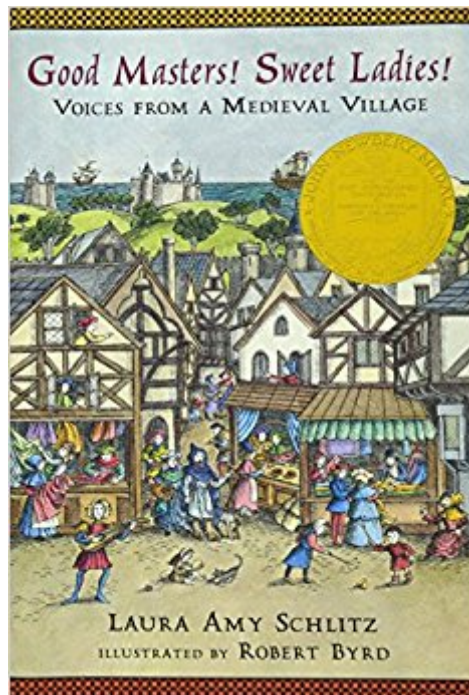


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Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!: Voices From A Medieval Village



Synopsis

Step back to an English village in 1255, where life plays out in dramatic vignettes illuminating twenty-two unforgettable characters. Maidens, monks, and millers—sons—in these pages, readers will meet them all. There's Hugo, the lord's nephew, forced to prove his manhood by hunting a wild boar; sharp-tongued Nelly, who supports her family by selling live eels; and the peasant's daughter, Mogg, who gets a clever lesson in how to save a cow from a greedy landlord. There's also mud-slinging Barbary (and her noble victim); Jack, the compassionate half-wit; Alice, the singing shepherdess; and many more. With a deep appreciation for the period and a grand affection for both characters and audience, Laura Amy Schlitz creates twenty-two riveting portraits and linguistic gems equally suited to silent reading or performance. Illustrated with pen-and-ink drawings by Robert Byrd—inspired by the Munich-Nuremberg manuscript, an illuminated poem from thirteenth-century Germany—this witty, historically accurate, and utterly human collection forms an exquisite bridge to the people and places of medieval England. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: Candlewick; 2 edition (September 13, 2011)

Language: English

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 68 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #35,787 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #5 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Performing Arts > Drama & Theater #21 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Medieval #161 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Stories In Verse

Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Schlitz (The Hero Schliemann) wrote these 22 brief monologues to be performed by students at the school where she is a librarian; here, bolstered by lively asides and unobtrusive

notes, and illuminated by Byrd's (Leonardo, Beautiful Dreamer) stunningly atmospheric watercolors, they bring to life a prototypical English village in 1255. Adopting both prose and verse, the speakers, all young, range from the half-wit to the lord's daughter, who explains her privileged status as the will of God. The doctor's son shows off his skills ("Ordinary sores/ Will heal with comfrey, or the white of an egg,/ An eel skin takes the cramping from a leg"); a runaway villein (whose life belongs to the lord of his manor) hopes for freedom after a year and a day in the village, if only he can calculate the passage of time; an eel-catcher describes her rough infancy: her "starving poor [father] took me up to drown in a bucket of water." (He relents at the sight of her "wee fingers" grasping at the sides of the bucket.) Byrd, basing his work on a 13th-century German manuscript, supplies the first page of each speaker's text with a tone-on-tone patterned border overset with a square miniature. Larger watercolors, some with more intricate borders, accompany explanatory text for added verve. The artist does not channel a medieval style; rather, he mutes his palette and angles some lines to hint at the period, but his use of cross-hatching and his mostly realistic renderings specifically welcome a contemporary readership. Ages 10-up. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Starred Review The author of *A Drowned Maiden's Hair: A Melodrama* (2006), Schlitz turns to a completely different kind of storytelling here. Using a series of interconnected monologues and dialogues featuring young people living in and around an English manor in 1255, she offers first-person character sketches that build upon each other to create a finer understanding of medieval life. The book was inspired by the necessity of creating a play suitable for a classroom where "no one wanted a small part." Each of the 23 characters (between 10 and 15 years old) has a distinct personality and a societal role revealed not by recitation of facts but by revelation of memories, intentions, and attitudes. Sometimes in prose and more often in verse forms, the writing varies nicely from one entry to the next. Historical notes appear in the vertical margins, and some double-page spreads carry short essays on topics related to individual narratives, such as falconry, the Crusades, and Jews in medieval society. Although the characters' specific concerns are very much of their time, their outlooks and emotional states will be familiar to young people today. Reminiscent of medieval art, Byrd's lively ink drawings, tinted with watercolors, are a handsome addition to this well-designed book. This unusually fine collection of related monologues and dialogues promises to be a rewarding choice for performance or for reading aloud in the classroom. Phelan, Carolyn --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

This is an amazing book. I bought for my niece, but read it first. It's really sweet and touching.

Fantastic book that really touches young students

An extraordinary insight into the Middle Ages very accessible and engaging from 4th grade on up.

I love this book almost as much as my kids . . . maybe more! My kids (ages 6 - 9) and I have been reading it together. We are learning so much from the perspectives of children living during the middle ages. We've had to pause periodically to study out some of the traditions, superstitions, and living conditions referenced because they are just too fascinating to overlook.

It's very different, but a good read , very educational, gives you an insight as to what it was like living in those times!

This book is one of the more unique and successful efforts to make history come alive for young readers in short, provocative yet historically accurate bites that are beautifully illustrated. By focusing on one average feudal manor, Schlitz weaves together the very different lives of children to create a whole fabric of understanding to which kids can relate easily. Any young person who wants to gain a quick notion of life in Medieval Europe outside of the Royal Courts and big towns will find this book a treat. I've rarely read anything like it, but perhaps I was already biased by Schlitz's very different but wonderful book, *A Drowned Maiden's Hair*.

The writing is wonderful, the images are powerful. What a creative insight into a long ago time. Highly recommend this book and gave several as Christmas gifts last year!

Great fictional narratives to allow my sixth grade students to understand what life was like for the less noble people of the middle ages.

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