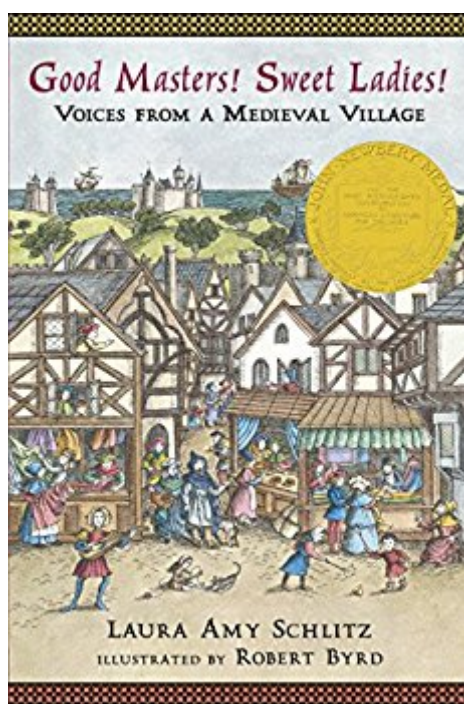


The book was found

Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!



Synopsis

Maidens, monks, and millersâ™ sons â” in these pages, readers will meet them all. Thereâ™s Hugo, the lordâ™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 peasantâ™s daughter, Mogg, who gets a clever lesson in how to save a cow from a greedy landlord. Thereâ™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 â” inspired by the Munich-Nuremberg manuscript, an illuminated poem from thirteenth-century Germany â” this witty, historically accurate, and utterly human collection forms an exquisite bridge to the people and places of medieval England.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Allow me to make something perfectly clear. There are, living amongst you, one or two sad souls for

whom the name "Laura Amy Schlitz" does not mean anything. This is a state of affairs that does none of us any good. You see, Ms. Schlitz is an author whose time has come. In 2006 she managed to simultaneously produce an epic gothic/realistic/historical/faux-ghost story in the tradition of *The Secret Garden* and *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*, while also churning out a truly amusing and interesting bit of non-fiction on the side. You have an assignment. If you have not read *A Drowned Maiden's Hair: A Melodrama* or *The Hero Schliemann: The Dreamer Who Dug For Troy*, do so. You'll be better for it. That done, you may turn your sights onto a book that combines the two things Schlitz does so very well: Research and historical fiction. Maybe once a month a parent will walk up to my reference desk and ask me where they can find a nice selection of plays for children. Usually I'll direct them to *Plays* the periodical or wave them towards the 800s, but by and large there's not a lot of quality drama material for kids out there. Nothing that would give them all some great parts, that is.

From the cover illustration on, the tweens and teens who inhabit this fictional village have taken up residence in my imagination, where they continue to flirt and jostle, scrounge out a living, sin and repent and hunger and triumph. I imagine their beatings, their wasted frames and matted hair and share their hard-scrabble existence through 81 brief pages, with smatterings of discreetly placed background notes. Schlitz wrote this for students at a private school in Baltimore, where she's a librarian and historian. When she offered to write a play that truly depicted life in the Middle Ages, nobody wanted a minor part. She created 21 scenes, all but two of them for a single actor, and most of them in verse. As the characters speak, they offer an unflinching view of their poverty, their superstitions and prejudices and the limited scope of their ambitions. And, like any kids, they're brightly optimistic, cheerful in their adversity, and full of imagination and daring. We meet the Lord of the Manor's nephew, who risks his life in a boar hunt; a glassblower's apprentice determined to get it right; a shepherdess struggling to save her "sister" sheep, and many other charming, disarming and (mostly) guileless kids struggling to figure out their place in the local pecking order and how to bridge those awkward years until adulthood. Even with so many disparate voices, there are no discordant notes. Village life emerges with its rhythms, its simplicity, and narrative threads that weave all the characters into a cohesive whole.

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