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# The Witch of Blackbird Pond

John D. Newman

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York, Y., adapted from the novel by Elizabeth George Speare. *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*. 1996. 85 pp.  
**A 7-12**

Kit is a well-educated, intelligent, and free-spirited seventeen-year-old who ends up living in a Puritan village in Connecticut. She unwittingly brings the ire and the suspicion of the village upon her as she parades about in fine dresses, reads her secular books, swims in the water, and befriends a banished healer woman who is believed to be a witch.

Kit is one of the most realistic adolescent characters ever created for the stage. Her caprices and charisma will endear her to modern teenagers. Kit's naiveté and spontaneity unwittingly brings about accusations of witchcraft. Kit is not cruel but she is careless and even childish at times. However, her actions plunge her headlong into adult consequences.

Kit embodies the adolescent virtue of being able to look beyond things that the adult society has come to accept. Against the dire warnings of the villagers, Kit meets and befriends Hannah Tupper, the alleged "witch" who lives at Blackbird Pond. Kit's lack of foresight in using her knowledge of herbal medicine to alleviate a plague of scarlet fever provides redemption for the superstitious villagers but peril for Kit and for Hannah who taught her the cures.

In the past action of the play, Kit made one very selfish mistake: she sold her bondswoman in Barbados in order to pay her passage to Connecticut. Kit redeems herself at the end of the play, deciding to fill her bondswoman's term herself. Forces intervene which release her from that necessity, but it is important to note that Kit has grown from expedient egoism to ethical empathy and that she is committed to taking actions which benefit not only her but others around her.

While Kit is able to escape from death, the dangers she faces and the risks she takes are very real. Despite the intense pressure to conform, Kit remains true to her crystallizing personality while learning to comprehend, if not accept, a world view that runs contrary to her own. Kit could well become a model for the next generation of adolescent protagonists.

**This play is found in:**

Jennings, Coleman A. *Eight Plays for Children: The New Generation Play Project*. University of Texas Press, 1999. ISBN 0-292-74056-5 cloth, 0-292-74057-3 paperback. \$44.95 cloth, \$19.95 paperback. 479 pp.

A Reviewed by John D. Newman