



2007

Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village

Kate Reynolds

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Reynolds, Kate (2007) "Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 28 : Iss. 1, Article 9.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol28/iss1/9>

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Schlitz, Laura Amy. *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village*. Illustrated by Robert Byrd. Candlewick Press, 2007. ISBN 9780763615789. \$19.99. 85 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Historical plays; Informational books;

Subject: Monologues--Juvenile literature; Middle Ages--Juvenile drama; Books—Reviews;

As stated in the forward Schlitz wrote this book to give the students at her school something to perform based on their studies of the Middle Ages. However, rather than write one long play she wrote monologues and dialogues so that each student would have an equal part--leaving no one feeling slighted. *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!* contains 19 monologues and two dialogues, allowing for a total of up to 23 students to participate.

The skits themselves introduce characters, male and female from the ages of about 10 to 15, who live in a fictitious medieval village. They introduce jobs, customs, and concepts prevalent in the Middle Ages but that may be somewhat obscure for modern children. Specific terms or references that may not be understood are explained in side notes. Following certain skits are longer explanations: after the plowboy's monologue there is a page about the three-field system, and after an exchange between the moneylender's son and the merchant's daughter there is a discussion about Jews in the Middle Ages.

Byrd's illustrations are not in the style of the time period but are very accessible to the audience who will be using the book. Likewise, Schlitz uses modern diction and spelling rather than the language of the time period. The skits are fun but informative at the same time. Highly recommended for extending a Middle Ages library collection or for use in cross-curricular activities.