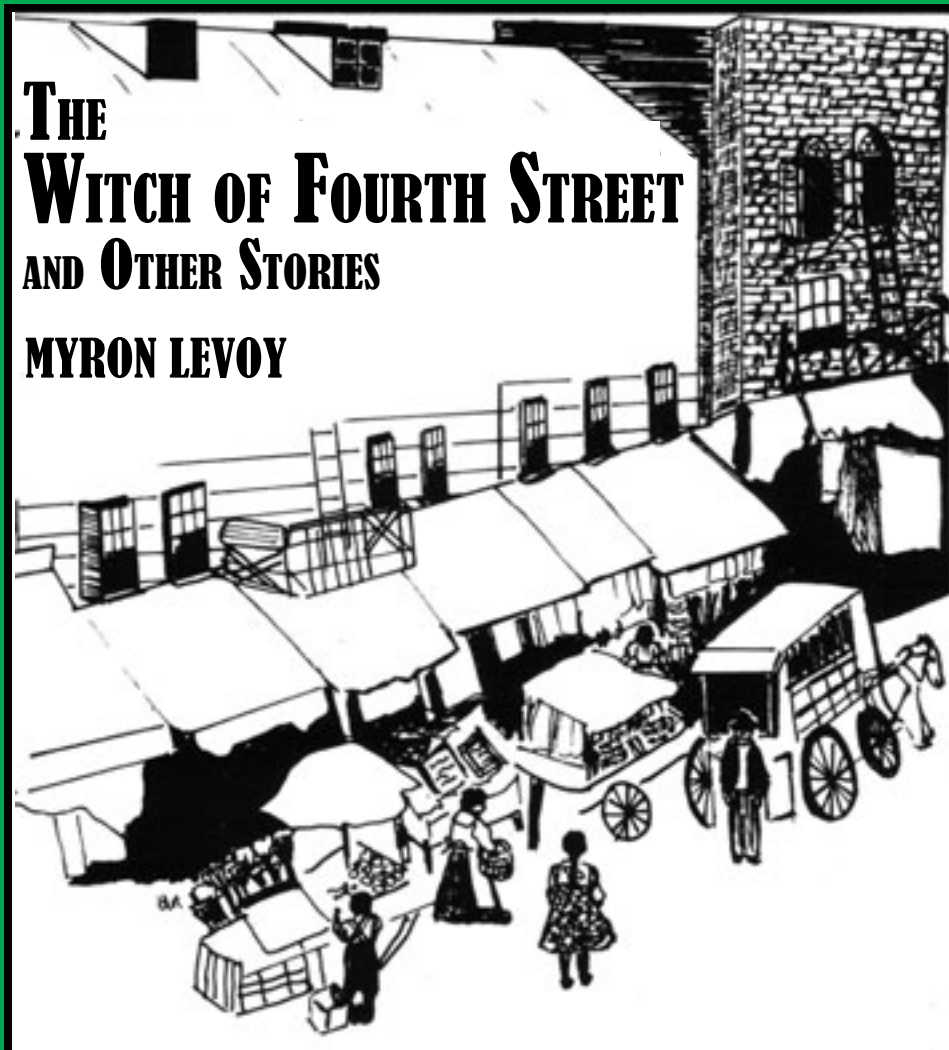


Novel•Ties



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the book *The Witch of Fourth Street* consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

One day as Aaron Kandel, the main character in *Aaron's Gift*, is roller skating in Tompkins Square Park he finds a wounded pigeon which he takes home to nurse back to health. He trains "Pidge" to carry messages and proudly tells everyone, including a gang of older boys, about his new pet. Aaron desperately wants to belong to the boy's club; they say he can become a member if Pidge becomes their club mascot. Aaron's mother doesn't want him to associate with the gang, and, to distract him, suggests that Aaron make a present for his grandmother's sixtieth birthday. Aaron decides that he will give her his beloved Pidge—to make up for the destruction of her pet goat in a pogrom when she was a child in Ukraine. A few days later, Carl, the leader of the gang, tells Aaron to bring Pidge to a club meeting. Aaron slips out of the house with Pidge, and meets the boys in an empty lot where a fire has been prepared. When the fire is hot, Carl plans to throw Pidge into it. Aaron grabs Pidge and runs. Pidge escapes but the boys catch Aaron and beat him up. Aaron returns home and tells his family what has happened. Grandmother is happy that Aaron has defended his pet against the "Cossacks" and that the pigeon is now free.

Since Samuel Moscovitz, in *The Chanukah Santa Claus*, never had any toys as a child in Moscow, he decides to sell toys from his pushcart in America. Keeping his home a secret from the children, they think he is Santa Claus whose home is at the North Pole. On the first night of Hanukkah, Samuel dreams that he is back in Moscow and someone has just given him money for toys. His dream gives him an idea: to dress up as Santa Claus and give away toys. He goes to Elias, the curtain and tablecloth vendor, and gets curtains which he uses as wrapping for the toys. With all of his wrapped toys in a bundle, he goes to the roof of a tenement. When he steps onto the fire escape, preparing to leave toys in the apartments on the way down, his foot slips, causing Samuel to have a fatal fall. In his imagination, however, Samuel thinks he is floating down peacefully giving toys away to children. Finally, he thinks he has returned to his childhood home in Moscow as he dies peacefully.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title, the author's name, and the Table of Contents, and by looking at the illustration on the cover. How do you think this book is organized? Where and when do you think it takes place? Have you read anything else by the same author?
2. Read the Background Information on the Lower East Side on page four of this study guide and then do some additional research to learn more about this part of New York City at the turn of the twentieth century.
3. Talk to family members and relatives to learn about your family history and use this information to fill out the family history chart on page six of this study guide. Be sure to learn which of your relatives were immigrants and when they came to America.
4. One of the most famous entry points for immigrants to the United States during the early 1900s was Ellis Island. Do some research to find out all you can about Ellis Island. How many immigrants passed through Ellis Island? How did immigrants get there? What happened when they arrived? What might have been their next stops?
5. Brainstorm with your classmates on the subject of superstition. What is superstition? Do you believe in any superstitions? Could someone convince you that the superstitions are real? Make a list of superstitions of which you and your classmates are aware.
6. Do some research to find out about the traditions surrounding Christmas, Kwanzaa, and Hanukkah. You may ask relatives and friends to tell about the ways they celebrate these holidays.
7. What kinds of pets have you owned? How have you cared for them? What feelings have you had toward your pets? How does it feel when you lose a pet?
8. Why do you think some people have hobbies? What kinds of hobbies do you or your friends have? Do a class survey to find out the most popular hobbies. Make a chart or graph to show your results.
9. Mr. Keplik, the main character in one of the stories you will read, enjoys making models. Have you ever made a model of a large object? What skills are required for model making? What materials can be used?
10. You will encounter many characters as you read the stories in this book: some characters appear in more than one story. Use the Character Chart on page seven of this study guide to keep track of the characters as they appear in the stories. List the characters on the chart as you meet them and look on a map or in an atlas to find their native countries.