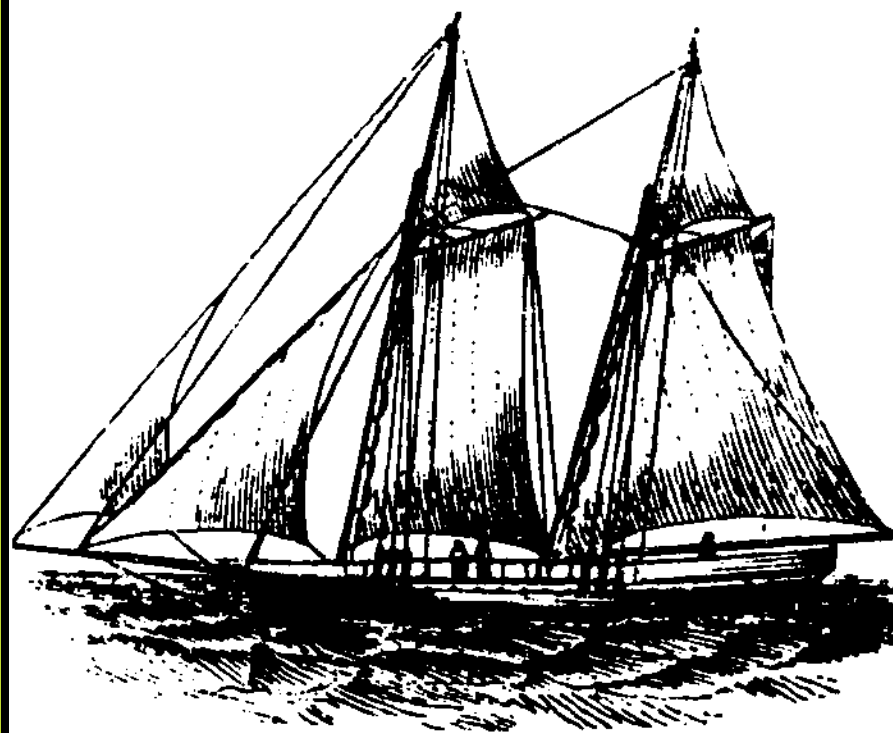


Novel·Ties

THE WITCH OF BLACKBIRD POND

Elizabeth George Speare



A Study Guide

Edited by Joyce Friedland and Rikki Kessler

LEARNING LINKS

P.O. Box 326 • Cranbury • New Jersey 08512

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|---------|
| Synopsis | 1 |
| Background Information | 2 - 3 |
| Glossary | 4 |
| Pre-Reading Activities | 5 |
| Chapters 1, 2 | 6 - 8 |
| Chapters 3, 4 | 9 - 10 |
| Chapters 5 - 7 | 11 - 13 |
| Chapters 8, 9 | 14 - 15 |
| Chapters 10 - 12 | 16 - 17 |
| Chapters 13, 14 | 18 - 19 |
| Chapters 15, 16 | 20 - 21 |
| Chapters 17, 18 | 22 - 24 |
| Chapter 19 | 25 - 26 |
| Chapters 20, 21 | 27 - 28 |
| Cloze Activity | 29 |
| Post-Reading Activities | 30 - 31 |
| Suggestions For Further Reading | 32 |
| Answer Key | 33 - 35 |

Novel-Ties® are printed on recycled paper.

The purchase of this study guide entitles an individual teacher to reproduce pages for use in a classroom. Reproduction for use in an entire school or school system or for commercial use is prohibited. Beyond the classroom use by an individual teacher, reproduction, transmittal or retrieval of this work is prohibited without written permission from the publisher.

For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the book *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* 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.

The Quakers

The Religious Society of Friends is a Protestant denomination dating back to seventeenth-century England. Its members, known as Quakers, believe that God dwells in the heart of every human being and provides direct inspiration for the living of a perfect life. This direct relationship, called the Inner Light, is reflected in a strict mode of living, a stress upon the spiritual responsibility of each individual, and a strong feeling of concern for their fellow human beings.

Whipped, jailed, and even executed in England, the Quakers began emigrating to America in 1656. Strangely enough, the Puritans, who had also left England because of religious oppression, were quick to persecute the Quakers for their beliefs.

Quakers use the word *thee* to stand for *thou*, usually with a verb in the third person singular, as in the following example: *Thee knows my mind.*

Witchcraft

From as early as the fifteenth century, many Europeans believed in witches. When the Puritans left England to come to the New World in the 1600s, they brought their belief in witches with them. Between 1648 and 1662, at least fourteen witches were hanged. Then, for almost twenty-five years, witchcraft in the New World received little attention. By the late 1600s, however, the hunt for witches was back in full force. The most famous witch trials took place in 1692 in Salem Village, Massachusetts. By the time they were over, nineteen people had been hanged, one person had been pressed to death, and two people had died in prison.

The belief in witches waned after the tragedy in Salem, and few still believed in witches by the time of the Revolutionary War. These beliefs, however, did not die easily and there were those who still blamed their misfortunes on an evil presence.

It may be hard to understand how people in colonial times could have believed in witches, but there were good reasons. For one thing, witches were mentioned in the Bible, and many of the early colonists took the Bible literally. For another, religious leaders told the people that witches were doing the Devil's work on earth. Witchcraft was often used to explain frightening natural occurrences, such as illness or drought. Also, there were some people who actually said that they were witches in order to intimidate their neighbors.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think this book will be about? When does it take place? Have you read any other books by the same author?
2. *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* is a historical novel, one in which fictional characters live in a historic period. Characters may be based closely or loosely upon accounts of those who lived then. What do you think are the advantages of writing and reading a historical novel? What are the drawbacks? As you read, notice the historical details embedded within the story and check the information online, in history textbooks, encyclopedias, and biographies. Then determine the historical accuracy of the novel.
3. Read the Background Information on Connecticut Colony on page two of this study guide. You may do some additional research to learn more about the way this colony was governed and the significance of the Charter Oak incident.
4. Read the Background Information on the Puritans, the Quakers, and Witchcraft on pages two and three of this study guide. You may also do additional research to find out whether Connecticut Colony, established by those seeking religious freedom, practiced religious tolerance.
5. Do some research to learn more about everyday life in colonial Connecticut. Find out how each of the following activities was performed:
 - farming
 - making soap and candles
 - preparing food
 - making clothes
 - cleaning the house
 - building a home
6. A young woman in this book, Kit Tyler, sails from Barbados to Connecticut in 1687. Trace her route on a map of the Americas. How long do you think such a voyage would take? What would determine the length of the voyage? How long would such a voyage take today?
7. Find books with pictures of the sailing ships of the seventeenth century. Try to imagine yourself sailing on one of these ships. What do you think you would enjoy most about the voyage? What would you enjoy least?
8. Have you read any other books of fiction set in the United States in the 1600s? If so, when and where were these stories set? What did you learn about life at that time? Would you like to have lived at that time in history? Why or why not?
9. Elizabeth George Speare, the author of *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, once said:

One of the most common questions asked of any writer is 'How do you begin your stories? Do they start with an idea, or an incident, or a character? Looking back, I can answer that for me they begin with people.*

What do you think Speare means when she says her stories begin with people?
10. Become familiar with the words in the Glossary on page four of this study guide. Refer to the Glossary again as you encounter the words in the text.

*From *Something about the Author*, Vol. 62, pp. 166–167. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990.)