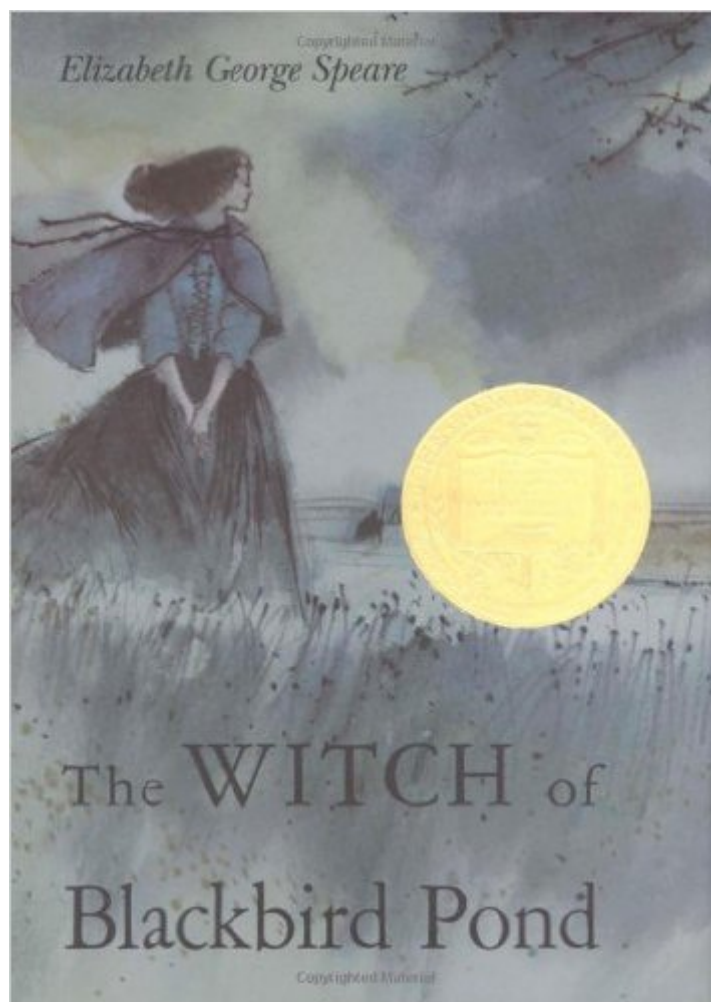


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The Witch Of Blackbird Pond



Synopsis

Sixteen-year-old Kit Tyler is marked by suspicion and disapproval from the moment she arrives on the unfamiliar shores of colonial Connecticut in 1687. Alone and desperate, she has been forced to leave her beloved home on the island of Barbados and join a family she has never met. Torn between her quest for belonging and her desire to be true to herself, Kit struggles to survive in a hostile place. Just when it seems she must give up, she finds a kindred spirit. But Kit's friendship with Hannah Tupper, believed by the colonists to be a witch, proves more taboo than she could have imagined and ultimately forces Kit to choose between her heart and her duty. Elizabeth George Speare won the 1959 Newbery Medal for this portrayal of a heroine whom readers will admire for her unwavering sense of truth as well as her infinite capacity to love.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars See all reviews (966 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

It's April of 1687 when Kit Tyler steps on shore in Connecticut. Having recently lost her grandfather, she's come to the colonies to live with her uncle and aunt. But her new town is completely different from her old life in Barbados. Not only does she have to do the chores she used to have servants do, but her Puritan relatives are much stricter than her previous upbringing has taught her to be. But her life isn't all bad. There is the interesting William, the most eligible bachelor in town, who has shown interest in her. And there's the refuge she's managed to find in Hannah, the town outcast suspected of being a witch. But will she ever truly adjust to her new life? I found this book in Jr. High, and have read it four or five times since then. I recently reread it again, and was completely drawn into the story. I

couldn't put it down, and I already knew how it ended. The characters are sympathetic and interesting, especially Kit. You can help but root for her to find some happiness in her new life. The plot is engrossing, with several sub-plots expertly woven through the book. And the time and place of the setting is brought to life in such an amazing way it feels like you are actually in the town of Wethersfield. This book is so engrossing that anyone will love it. And the theme about judging others will stick with you long after you've read the last page. I can not recommend this book highly enough. Ms. Speare is an excellent author.

The Witch of Blackbird Pond is set in Connecticut in the late 1600s. It tells the story of Kit Tyler, a 16-year-old girl who sails from Barbados to Connecticut after her grandfather passes away. Kit travels to Connecticut to live with her aunt and her aunt's family, none of who have met her and who do not know that she is coming. Connecticut was a Puritan community struggling for independence from England at this time and the culture shock is difficult for Kit, who grew up affluent and independent. The townspeople are not very welcoming to her and some believe to fear that she is a witch because she is different from them. Kit's troubles get worse when she becomes friends with an old Quaker woman people called the Witch of Blackbird Pond. I would recommend this book for ages 10 and up. Most children have felt like they didn't fit in at some point and will be able to relate to Kit. This book teaches children about tolerance, acceptance, and not being judgmental. I would use this book in a school setting as part of a social studies curriculum. It is appropriate for discussions about witch trials, Puritan history, and Connecticut history. I would also recommend this book for pleasure reading.

Although I am well past the age this book is intended for, I must say this is one of the finest pieces of historical fiction I have ever read. One of the favorite books of my youth was "Calico Captive" which was also written by Elizabeth George Speare. Recently, in a fit of nostalgia, I purchased "Calico Captive" and, on a whim, I also grabbed "The Witch of Blackbird Pond" simply because it was by the same author and also set in colonial times. I felt I could use some light, escapist reading material in order to take a break from my usual heavy fare of military history books. Anyway I started to read "The Witch of Blackbird Pond" at around 9:30 in the evening. At 2AM, I finished it. I couldn't put it down! After the first few chapters the book becomes a real page turner. I had to find out what would happen next. Would Kit ever adapt to the austere life of the Puritans? How would the situation with Prudence Cruff pan out? Would Kit marry William? Would John marry the girl he truly loved? Would Uncle Matthew ever soften? And, of course, what would happen if the Puritans found out

about Kit's friendship with a suspected witch? I was just blown away by this book- one of the enjoyable reading experiences I have had in a long time.

The Witch of Blackbird Pond may be a work of fiction, but there are many parables with modern life. It's about a white girl, from the sunny West Indies, who moves to the cold, unwelcoming colonies in New England. Her uncle, a Puritan, reluctantly takes her in. Though they treat her as good as as their own children, they're clearly not happy to have her. For starters, the Puritans are serious people, and she's used to play and leisure. The Puritans are austere and Spartan, while she's used to flamboyant luxury. The family's life is preoccupied with hunting, farming, cooking, and cleaning; the kind of stuff one has to do in order to eat. She, however, comes from a wealthy family and has never even cooked for herself. But she learns. The family are Puritans after all, and it's their duty to teach her self-sufficiency. Soon she settles into the routine, cooking meals, cleaning, and teaching young children to read. But Puritan life comes with a problem. The people believe in the existence of witches, and anybody who appears unusual is a suspect. Hannah, a kindly old woman who lives alone, was once a suspected witch. She has a scar on her face as a reminder of how she suffered under the Puritans' paranoia. Worse, she's a Quaker, and the Quakers are despised by the Puritans. Faced with an inquisition-like investigation, she faces the harshness of the Colonial laws of the time. Judge's decisions are not based on codified laws, but on the religious and social mores and norms. Every single good thing she's done since arriving is suspected as an act of witchcraft and subversion. But there is hope. As with today's legal system, success depends on getting the right advocate! Will the townspeople stand up for her and denounce the witch hunts, or will she be tortured by religious hysteria?

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