

# Heilewif's Tale

## Teacher's Guide

Anthony Tiatorio

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# Heilewif's Tale

## Teacher's Guide: Introduction

Heilewif's tale is a mystery that takes place in the Rhineland during the high Middle Ages. It was written to support a typical secondary school study of medieval history and to clarify for students the social and political nature of feudal European civilization. The events occur in the late 14<sup>th</sup> Century when considerable political and religious turmoil threatened the stability of the Holy Roman Empire, and while the characters are purely fictional they parallel real historical events very closely and in ways that were socio-culturally true to the times. The relationships between lord and vassal, church and state, commoner and noble, as well as the rise of a merchant middle class, are cleverly woven into a story of conspiracy and betrayal effecting ordinary lives and everyday struggles.

The impact of fear and superstition on the medieval mind sets the mood of an age in which a ubiquitous religious authority permeated every decision. As the intrigue unfolds the students gradually discover more and more about the nature of life in the Middle Ages and its relevance for ethical issues still with us today. Fundamental questions about freedom and equality are explored in several social contexts as the characters cope with their own very real human conflicts and crises. In this way the novel becomes a catalyst for further study and the basis for Socratic seminar discussions. It encourages students to think deeply about themselves and their beliefs by examining universal ethical dilemmas through the perspective of an extremely communal society and helps them to formulate astute questions to ask about conflicts and turning points in their own lives.

Among the main characters are three women who are of particular importance in rendering a balanced study of the Middle Ages. A major objective of the book involves illuminating the roots of discrimination against women and it is an important and accurate airing of this often-avoided reality. *Heilewif's Tale* is particularly valuable in this respect and represents a needed balancing, mature gender sensitive, input for students, missing from typical textbook accounts.

## Teacher's Guide

The teacher's guide is structured into a twenty-four day time frame, sequenced to follow a reading of the novel at a rate of one chapter per day. *Heilewif's Tale* should be integrated with the routine textbook supported study of the middle ages. It will provide enrichment strategies to integrate values issues and questions seamlessly into the more comprehensive historical treatment. In this strategy, students will be responsible for researching and presenting much of the factual historical information about the Middle Ages that underpins the novel. They will be divided into a number of cooperative groups for this purpose and will share what they learn.

### Thinking Skill Strategy: Socratic Seminar Discussion Method

The Socratic seminar is a time-honored strategy for the encouragement of active student participation; it forces students to think at higher cognitive levels; and it fosters an environment where the student is constantly the focus of attention. The Socratic method has come to mean a process of creating and discussing questions, which are open ended and inquisitive rather than conclusive. The primary components of the Socratic method are systematic questioning and inductive reasoning. In the Socratic seminar students, prompted by the teacher's provocative questions or statements, engage one another in thoughtful dialog. The role of the teacher during the discussion is secondary and supportive. It is the students who have the primary responsibility of analyzing the assigned work. With this strategy, the teacher becomes the facilitator whose job is to maintain an environment that fosters participation. Students are encouraged to consider different and often conflicting ideas. Individually, and as a group, they are driven to think carefully and critically about issues.

In the Socratic seminar, the teacher asks a general "opening" question, addressing the central concept. As students respond to this question they look to each other for analysis and evaluation of the statements being made. As the students explore the material, responses become longer and more complex. Students begin to challenge their peers. Ideally the teacher leaves the stage, commenting only when it is necessary to provide direction or focus. At the end of the discussion, the teacher asks prepared closings questions that encourage the students to synthesize the various points of the discussion and form a conclusion. Follow up writing samples or reaction papers enhance the process. The Socratic seminar is an open forum, which fosters both active student involvement and student engagement in higher-level thinking. By manipulating the material in a number of thought provoking ways, such as researching, generalizing about concepts, applying them to new situations, analyzing their component parts, synthesizing and then evaluating a thesis, the students are actively engaged in all of the levels of thinking according to Bloom's taxonomy.

The value of active learning cannot be overstated. In addition to keeping the students motivated, active learning strategies produce a number of other positive outcomes. The research consistently links strategies where students are actively involved with higher degrees of learning and the higher the level of thought process, the more successfully the student internalizes the ideas. Active participation also gives students ownership of the learning process. In the seminar, the teacher is less of an authority and

more of a colleague. The ability to construct meaning one's self from a discussion and to generate thoughtful conclusions independent of an external authority provides a sense of empowerment for the students, a feeling that they have control over their own learning. In addition, active participation in discussion assists in the development of social skills. While students are given the opportunity to articulate their own thoughts and feelings, they are also required to be respectful of the thoughts and feelings of their classmates.

### Thinking Skill Objectives

1. (Knowledge) The student will recall significant facts about aspects of the history of the Middle Ages.
2. (Comprehension) The student will comprehend the concepts of internal and external ethical authority and understand the nature and importance of individual ethical responsibility.
3. (Application) The student will apply the concepts of internal and external ethical authority to a new and not previously studied problem.
4. (Analysis) The student will analyze the factors that undermined individual ethical responsibility during the Middle Ages.
5. (Synthesis/Evaluation) The student will write an essay in which he or she assesses ethical responsibility for medieval witch hunts.
6. (Synthesis/Evaluation) The student will reflect on his or her own innate ethical sense and comment thoughtfully on how it can best be guided.

### Knowledge Strategy: Report Topics

Much of the historical information that the class learns about the Middle Ages will result from student research and reporting. Students should be divided into six cooperative groups and each assigned one of the topics listed below. Student reports should be strengthened by supporting teacher presentations if possible. These assignments should be made several days before the planned reading of *Heilewif's Tale*.

1. **Scholasticism and the First Universities.** Due day 3. *Discussion of the influence of the philosophy of Scholasticism is important to have a clear understanding of the novel. Scholasticism is essentially the marriage of reason and faith and was the method used in the first European universities, which were created by the Church and run by theologians. It was an effort by Churchmen to make reason and science compatible with scripture. The inherent weakness of scholasticism results from its unquestioned acceptance of authoritative texts, such as the writings of Aristotle and the Bible, and merely tries, through logic and linguistics, to reconcile them. It makes no effort to evaluate the texts themselves. In the areas of theology, philosophy and law, Scholasticism produced a unified system, which went unchallenged. But in the area of natural science it resisted actual experimentation leading to a problem, since increasingly what was measurably true scientifically was denied by the "authoritative" texts on which Scholasticism rested. This*

caused it to fall rapidly out of favor by the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Scholasticism was, however, the way of life at the time Heilewif's Tale is set.

2. **John Wyclif and Jan Hus.** Due Day 5. *John Wyclif and his disciple Jan Hus are precursors of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation. Their essential call was for individual interpretation of scripture and they represent a challenge to unquestioned authority. The religious turmoil discussed in the novel was caused by the spread of Wyclif's ideas into Bohemia. Reports should carry events to the execution of Jan Hus. Although it took place two decades after the novel ends, examining it strengthens the student's understanding of the power of religious authority during this historic period and heightens the impact of the novel.*
3. **Medieval Christian anti-Semitism** Due Day 6. *The presence of a virulent anti-Semitism in Christian Europe requires comprehensive consideration. The history and causes of anti-Semitism is easily researched on the Internet.*
4. **Manorialism.** Due Day 7. *The economic nature of medieval subsistence manorial agriculture and the relationship between the lord and serf should be detailed.*
5. **Chivalry and Courtly Love** Due Day 8. *Honor was the backbone of the feudal system, which relied on personal bonds and loyalties bolstered by often elaborate ceremony and protocol. Remember, there were no real public authorities. The law was determined by private contracts and was fluid and largely unreliable. In this world being true to your word, having friends and standing by them, was critical. Students should try to explain how the concept of courtly love was consistent with this fundamental ethical aspect of feudalism.*
6. **The Hanseatic League** Due Day 9. *The Hanseatic League was an alliance of free towns designed to control trade, but it also represented a power-base from which to defend the independence of these towns against any encroachment by the feudal nobility. The essentially limited local nature of feudal power centers, as well as the increasing importance of commerce, forced the feudal lords to cooperate with the Hansa. The rise of big nation-states later wrested control of trade from the league.*
7. **The Black Plague** Due Day 10. *Students should be instructed to focus on the social, psychological and economic impact of the plague on medieval civilization rather than on the disease itself.*
8. **Christian Marriage in the Middle Ages** Due Day 13. *Students should be encouraged to go beyond superficial ceremonial descriptions and analyze the importance of marriage in perpetuating the static class structure of the feudal period. Marriage was the mechanism by which wealth was transferred and passed on. Compare marriage with legal concubinage, which was also common in the middle ages.*

- 9. The Lord and Vassal Relationship** Due Day 14. *Students should describe the commendation ceremony as well as the oaths of homage and fealty. The true nature of the feudal relationship as one of personal loyalties should be clear.*
- 10. Law in the Middle Ages** Due Day 19. *Types of trials and punishments as well as the nature of overlapping ecclesiastical and secular authorities and jurisdictions should be covered. The method of the Inquisition is delineated in detail in the novel and need not be included.*

### Daily Schedule

The following schedule should be fitted into the teacher's planning calendar. The guide assumes a traditional school schedule of 50-minute classes. Schools with block or other alternative schedules need to adapt it accordingly. It is not necessary for the days to be contiguous. This strategy is equally effective when spread over a longer study of the history of this period.

Allow ample time for cooperative groups to prepare reports and assign dates on which reports are due. *Be sure students understand the importance of their contribution and the need for it to be delivered on schedule.* Reports may extend beyond one day; there is sufficient flexibility in the calendar to accommodate this but the teacher should be attentive to timing-out the unit as a whole.

- Day 1** Assign: *Heilewif's Tale*, Chapter 1.
- Day 2** Discuss Chapter 1. Assign: Chapter 2.
- Day 3** Discuss Chapter 2. Assign: Chapter 3. Hear report: Scholasticism.
- Day 4** Discuss Chapter 3. Assign: Chapter 4.
- Day 5** Discuss Chapter 4. Assign: Chapter 5. Hear report: Wyclif and Hus.
- Day 6** Discuss Chapter 5. Assign: Chapter 6. Hear report: anti-Semitism.
- Day 7** Discuss Chapter 6. Assign: Chapter 7. Hear report: Manorialism.
- Day 8** Discuss Chapter 7. Assign: Chapter 8. Hear report: Chivalry.
- Day 9** Discuss Chapter 8. Assign: Chapter 9. Hear report: Hanseatic League.
- Day 10** Discuss Chapter 9. Assign: Chapter 10. Hear report: Black Plague.
- Day 12** Discuss Chapter 10. Assign: Chapter 11.

- Day 13** Discuss Chapter 11. Assign: Chapter 12.
- Day 14** Discuss Chapter 12. Assign: Chapter 13. Hear report: Christian Marriage.
- Day 15** Discuss Chapter 13. Assign: Chapter 14. Hear report: Lord and Vassal.
- Day 16** Discuss Chapter 14. Assign: Chapter 15.
- Day 17** Discuss Chapter 15. Assign: Chapter 16.
- Day 18** Discuss Chapter 16. Assign: Chapter 17.
- Day 19** Discuss Chapter 17. Assign: Chapter 18.
- Day 20** Discuss Chapter 18. Assign: Chapter 19. Hear report: Medieval Law.
- Day 21** Discuss Chapter 19. Assign: Chapter 20.
- Day 22** Discuss Chapter 20. Assign: Chapter 21 through 23 and the Epilog.
- Day 23** Discuss the conclusion of the novel.
- Day 24** Final Assessment.

### **Prolog: Summary**

The Prolog is very important to read carefully and discuss with the class. It presents an understandable picture of feudalism and in particular of the often-misunderstood political nature of the Holy Roman Empire. The story takes place in the late 14<sup>th</sup> Century and it is important to keep in mind that although the characters and specific descriptions of events in the story are purely fictional, they very closely parallel real people in the real historical past.

All of the events around which *Heilewif's Tale* is built are true in their general outline. For example, the deposition of the Holy Roman Emperor, an occurrence central to the plot, did happen very much in the way it is described in the novel. All of the political events in the story occurred within the late 14<sup>th</sup> Century time frame. The socio-cultural aspects however are a composite of conditions typical of the Middle Ages generally. For example, the witch hunts in the Rhineland, which play a prominent part in the story, did not actually begin in earnest until nearly a century later.



### **Prolog: Seminar Discussion Question**

It states in the Prolog that: "The world was too dangerous to be left long without the protection of an Emperor." Why did people believe this? *This is useful to discuss since students will assume that the Emperor's protection was needed against human invasions. But the deeper fear was of an invasion by the Devil, or the anti-Christ, who was expected to overwhelm the world and bring about the apocalypse. Scripture told how the anti-Christ would conquer the world and his would become the seventh kingdom. Five kingdoms had already come and gone and the world was at that time in the sixth, which was the Kingdom of Rome. As long as Rome remained in existence, the coming of the anti-Christ was thwarted. It is important for students to come to grips with the hold of unquestioned religious authority on the medieval mind and discussing this is a good way to start. There are many Internet sources useful to research the anti-Christ in Christian scripture.*

### **Chapter One: Summary**

The story begins with Sir Shilgen Sturmere and his squire, Ludwig von Wittelsbach, riding south into the Black Forest in search of the wise woman, Heilewif. *The chapter is important to establish the superstitious nature of the age and the importance of religion in everyday decision-making. There is considerable discussion of ghosts, werewolves and witches. There is obvious reliance on scripture and religious authority opening opportunities to discuss the pivotal place of the Church in medieval civilization. They meet a leper. A discussion of leprosy is useful as it is still rampant in places today and its psychological impact is similar to that of AIDS and other dreaded diseases.*

### **Socratic Seminar Questions**

When is it acceptable to discriminate against a person who is handicapped or diseased? *Students should reflect on why lepers were feared, shunned and banished from society. The disease was incurable and thought to be very contagious but it also caused disfiguring deformities making it more frightening. Students should reflect on the ethical impact of being different, and how difference and strangeness affect a person's ethical standing in the minds of most people.*

### **Chapter One Reports Due: Scholasticism**

*The thinking skill strategy used in this study is dependent upon understanding the difference between internal and external ethical authority. Scholasticism was a bulwark for external ethical authority, which bolstered the power of the Church in the determination of right and wrong. The pervasive nature of religious aggressive moralism during the middle ages made it almost impossible for an individual to develop confidence in his or her own sense of internal ethical authority. In the novel, Heilewif comes closest to doing this and nearly pays for it with her life. Students should be encouraged to identify all the sources of external ethical authority in their*

*lives and begin to reflect on why a separation of church and state is considered to be so important to most Americans.*

### **Chapter Two: Summary**

Sir Shilgen and Ludwig ride on into the Black Forest and attempt to locate a woodcutting party working in the area. Ludwig dreams he sees a ghost and his talk with Shilgen continues to emphasize the importance of religion in everyday lives. They meet some peasants driving oxen and in conversation Ludwig tells a lie. Later Shilgen instructs him in the importance of being truthful. They find the woodcutters and learn more about Heilewif.

### **Socratic Seminar Question**

*Is it always wrong to lie? Expand on the discussion between Ludwig and Shilgen about lying. Encourage students to present examples from their own lives. At the very end of the chapter Shilgen lies to Zumwald about allowing Heilewif to freely decide if she wanted to return to Heidelberg. Ask students if this lie was justified. Students will see this as a necessary ploy in a conflict between different ethical cooperative groups and not as lying per se. It is very important for students to come to grips with the fact that right and wrong are judged within contexts and that those outside of the group sometimes don't count. Pursue this with the class and encourage examples from real experience.*

### **Chapter Three: Summary**

Count Robert and his wife Ava discuss the spell which has recently befallen their daughter Aurianna. They pray to Saint Benedict. Robert then meets with his steward to discuss business matters involving Robert's feudal estates and his Rhine trade. *This chapter offers a good opportunity to discuss the manorial economic system. The Hanseatic League is mentioned but the teacher should delay discussion of the rise of trade.* Robert meets with his chancellor to discuss the spell and the chancellor recommends an exorcism. Robert's troublesome vassal Bodenolph von Vulpes visits and the men discuss high court politics. *The deposition of the Holy Roman Emperor did take place and for reasons consistent with those discussed in the novel.*

### **Socratic Seminar Questions**

Robert and Ava's marriage *like all dynastic marriages for the ruling class, had been carefully arranged to create and to strengthen family and clan alliances.* Why was loyalty so important during the Middle Ages? What is loyalty and to whom are you expected to be loyal? *Loyalty is an extremely powerful innate human ethical drive. A sense of obligation to support other members of one's recognized ethical cooperative group results from the understanding that*

*the strength of the group protects the interests of its members. The opposite of loyalty is betrayal and it is judged to be one of the most reprehensible ethical acts by the innate human ethical sense. Students should also discuss betrayal.*

### **Chapter Three Reports Due: Wycliffe and Hus**

*The teacher should continue to discuss the difference between internal and external authority while setting a framework for the later study of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation.*

### **Chapter Four: Summary**

Sir Shilgen and Ludwig are guided by Zumwald into the forest. They discuss the nature of the forest economy and how the rise of the river trade was eroding the feudal system. They talk about the plague and Zumwald blames the scourge on the Jews. The roots of Christian anti-Semitism are touched upon. *Ludwig thinks about the ambivalent place of Jews in Christian Europe and reveals the power of cultural conditioning on his opinion of Jews.* They arrive at the peasant's cottage and see something of peasant life.

### **Socratic Seminar Questions**

Ludwig says that: *he would kill a Jew if he could.* Why Does Ludwig fear and hate Jews? Was this belief the result of internal or external ethical authority? What is the role of external ethical authority in perpetuating racial, religious and ethnic prejudice? *Students should be encouraged to reflect on the power of cultural conditioning on their own beliefs.*

### **Chapter Four Reports Due: Medieval Christian anti-Semitism**

*It is important for students to examine the impact of entrenched external ethical authority in a broad spectrum of areas.*

### **Chapter Five: Summary**

There is some discussion of medieval farming practices and a glimpse of daily life routines. Zumwald leads the knight and his squire to Heilewif's cottage where they meet the old woman. She agrees to return to Heidelberg with them. We get a sense of the medieval mix of science and superstition. *It is important to keep in mind that Heilewif is a child of her age, as are the other characters, and while she seems in some ways more modern and scientific, she is not free of superstitious beliefs, and struggles herself to make sense of the world.*

### **Socratic Seminar Questions**

Why does Zumwald believe that Heilewif was obligated to help Count Robert? *Zumwald implies that when he says, "It was Robert's father remember that saved her then and his son needs her now; that seemed hard to deny." The norm of reciprocity is an integral part of the innate human ethical sense. Students should explore this urge to pay back good for good and bad for bad as it impacts their own lives and decisions. Why doesn't Maria trust the knight? Maria distrusts strangers. She warns her husband, "He is not from here; you can't trust him." The fear of outsiders is a natural human ethical urge associated with support for the recognized ethical cooperative group.*

### **Chapter Five Report Due: Manorialism**

#### **Chapter Six: Summary**

Aurianna and her mother discuss the role of women. *Much of this exchange is based on The Book of the City of Ladies by Christine Pizan. Written in 1405 it is perhaps the first "feminist" expression in western literature. Discussion of the roots of discrimination against women should be a recurring theme in this study.* The physicians from the university arrive and examine Aurianna in a way that presents a picture of medieval medicine.

#### **Socratic Seminar Question**

What differences can you see between the method used by the physicians to cure the curse with that recommended by the priest? *While the doctors are wrong about how the body works, they are fundamentally scientific in their approach, which contrasts with the priest's recommendation that only an exorcism can cure the curse. It is useful to discuss this distinction with students.*

#### **Chapter Seven: Summary**

Sir Shilgen and Ludwig begin the journey back, with the old woman riding in a sledge. Shilgen thinks about his love for the Lady Aurianna and then he and Ludwig discuss the duties of knighthood. They make camp and we learn more about Heilewif. Heilewif tells a symbolic story.

### **Socratic Seminar Question**

How are Sir Shilgen's obligations to his Lord Robert similar to the obligations he feels for Aurianna? In this world of honor and duty, the knight was bound similarly to both his lord and his lady. This dilemma presents a classic type of ethical conflict in which one course of action conflicts ethically with another. Challenge students to find analogous examples in their own lives.

### **Chapter Seven Report Due: Chivalry and Courtly Love**

### **Chapter Eight: Summary**

They reach the river and observe the building and loading of a great timber raft. We get a clear picture of the rising river trade that was beginning to undermine the local subsistence manorial economies.

### **Socratic Seminar Questions**

What are the shackles that Heilewif tells Ludwig are preventing him from knowing what to do. The medieval ethic was based on unquestioned external authority. Ludwig is heavily conditioned to carry out his given responsibility, and to not question it. Heilewif is telling him to think for himself and trust his own judgment. Interpret the proverb Heilewif uses when she says: while a group cannot talk at the same time, it can sing. This expresses the essential conflict between individualism and group responsibility. How was this problem solved by the feudal system? Individualism was subordinated to the good of the group. Was this a good solution?

### **Chapter Eight Report Due: The Hanseatic League.**

### **Chapter Nine: Summary**

The raft makes progress down the Rhine and stops at Speyer where fear of the plague causes it to be quarantined. We learn about the Inquisition from conversations between Heilewif and the knight. *The teacher should briefly describe the Inquisition.* The Inquisitor arrives and the Papal Bull establishing his authority is read. *We know from his dress that he, and his assistants, are Dominican Monks. The descriptions of the inquisition in Heilewif's Tale are based on the Malleus Malificarum, which was the handbook of the inquisitors, Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, who conducted the great Rhineland witch hunt of the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Although the Malleus Malificarum post-dates our story by nearly a century, it is consistent with earlier inquisitorial practices and is the definitive historical source for this aspect of the Inquisition.*

### **Socratic Seminar Question**

Think about the encounter between Heilewif and the inquisitor and tell why reason and logic are useless in combating external ethical authority? The authority flows logically from accepted premises and it is forbidden to question the premises themselves. It is a closed system from which there is no escape. This theme will be explored in much more detail later.

### **Chapter Nine Report Due: The Black Plague**

### **Chapter Ten: Summary**

Heilewif is awake before dawn and her meditation is interrupted by the knight who confesses to certain human weaknesses. They discuss the static social structure that prevents the knight from reaching his dreams. *The knight's innate urge for freedom and equality conflicts with the aggressive moralism of a society in which neither is possible, and which he is culturally conditioned to accept. Aggressive moralism is the ethical voice of society's hierarchy imposed on all of its members in the guise of moral imperatives. Aggressive moralism is an external authority which seeks to replace individual internal authority as the guide for behavior because it promotes stability for the status quo, which is often inherently in opposition to the innate human need for freedom and equality.* They discuss the story of the woodcutter's son and Sir Shilgen is forced to face the socio-political realities of his society. They discuss the spell afflicting Aurianna.

### **Socratic Seminar Question**

What seems to have been the greatest threat to the feudal system? Individual freedom.

### **Chapter Eleven: Summary**

Robert and Ava discuss the problems they are facing and we learn more details relevant to the political problems within the Holy Roman Empire at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. An exorcism is performed on Aurianna, but it fails to stop the curse.

### **Socratic Seminar Question**

Robert tells his wife that: "equality is only for equals as Aristotle has taught us." What do you think he means by this? Encapsulation is a term used to describe the tendency of human beings to identify themselves ethically with particular groups and to limit their innate

*ethical expectations for equality to relationships within those groups. Encapsulation limits the scope of the arena within which human beings expect equality. Encapsulation combines with aggressive moralism to provide the major support structure to stabilize inequality in steeply hierarchical class societies. E.g. serfs should only expect equality with other serfs.*

### **Chapter Twelve: Summary**

Ava tells her daughter about plans to arrange her marriage to the heir of an important family. Aurianna is not pleased. She expresses an urge to be free and not be forced to marry someone not of her choosing. She discusses this with the priest and then with her father, who tells her she owes loyalty to her family. *The inequality of women in medieval society is very clear. The appeal to family loyalty is very effective since the family is the strongest natural ethical cooperative group and uncritical support for it is an innate human ethical urge.*

### **Socratic Seminar Questions**

How much loyalty does one owe to his or her family? Is Aurianna being treated justly? What do you see as the balance between individual freedom and group responsibility in this case? *An ethical cooperative group is a naturally collaborative association in which individuals are innately urged to behave in ways that are consistent with both the individual and the group good. Close familial and friendship groups are the strongest ethical cooperative groups and usually function ethically without coercion. This is an ethical dilemma for Aurianna because she is at once driven in opposite directions by her self-regarding urges and by her other-regarding urges. Students should reflect on their own personal experiences with this seminal ethical dilemma.*

### **Chapter Twelve Report Due: Marriage in the Middle Ages**

### **Chapter Thirteen: Summary**

The raft arrives at Mannheim and they are met by Vulpes' chancellor who tells them that Count Robert has been summoned to Prague by the emperor. They accompany the chancellor to Vulpes' manor. Shilgen's loyalty to Robert is challenged by thoughts of his narrower self-interest.

### **Socratic Seminar Questions**

At the end of the chapter the narrator comments: *How easy it was to find logical justifications for what were emotionally driven desires and to allow reason to enter the equation as the eager servant of selfishness.* Do you think people are moved to act mostly by reasons or are the reasons people give really only after the fact rationales for emotionally driven

decisions? *Until one understands his or her innate ethical drives, reason is very likely to be only rationale to support predetermined conclusions.*

### **Chapter Thirteen Report Due:** The Lord and Vassal Relationship

#### **Chapter Fourteen: Summary**

They reach Heidelberg and Heilewif begins her investigation. She examines the Lady Aurianna who is under the spell. She interviews the chambermaid and other members of the household staff. Heilewif and Ava discuss a plan to solve the mystery.

#### **Socratic Seminar Question**

What is the essential difference between the method Heilewif proposes and that which the Heidelberg University physicians pursued? *Heilewif pursues a scientific method of establishing a hypothesis without preconception and then objectively gathering evidence by observation to test it. The physicians made scientific observations, but were circumscribed by the scholastic medical authorities, who established the bogus notion that illness was caused by the balance of four bodily fluids.*

#### **Chapter Fifteen: Summary**

Heilewif tours the manor and grounds at Heidelberg and interviews several of the household staff as she begins her investigation. She meets Aurianna and with the Countess discusses a plan to solve the mystery. Later they conduct another experiment on Sir Shilgen.

#### **Socratic Seminar Question**

Does Sir Shilgen's free consent make it ethical to conduct the medical experiments on him? *Students should also weigh the circumstances surrounding the decision and the responsibility of the experimenter to be sure the decision is truly free and fully informed. Students should be challenged with circumstances such as poverty that drive living people to sell their organs.*

#### **Chapter Sixteen: Summary**

Heilewif goes back to the kitchen to speak again to the cook. We see the elaborate food preparation operations of the manor and Heilewif adds to her knowledge of the problem and broadens her suspicions. She then interviews the priest and chancellor, Adelbrech



Crapho, who believes she is a witch and is hostile toward her. She learns more and narrows her suspects.

### **Socratic Seminar Question**

*Heilewif operates within a very small circle of trust. Who do you trust and why do you trust them? People naturally limit their ethical responsibilities to other members of their recognized ethical cooperative groups. They expect to give and receive trust and loyalty within those groups but do not expect the same standards from outsiders. Students should consider this natural limitation on human ethical decision-making in their own lives.*

### **Chapter Seventeen: Summary**

Aurianna refuses to be confined any longer and, against her mother's wishes, goes horseback riding alone. Ava sends Sir Shilgen after her. Ava meets with Heilewif and the two discuss the old woman's theory. Shilgen rides after Aurianna. The steward speaks with Ava about events in Prague and delivers a letter from Robert. The knight overtakes Aurianna and the two ride together through the forest. They discuss their hopes and dreams.

### **Socratic Seminar Question**

*Aurianna says that despite all of her wealth and privilege she cannot be happy because she is not free. Do you agree that true happiness is based on freedom? Encourage students to explore their own idea of happiness and compare it with that of both Aurianna and Shilgen, both of whom see happiness as disconnected from material life.*

### **Chapter Eighteen: Summary**

It is very late at night and Heilewif finds the door to the mezzanine open. She sees figures on the altar below and one comes up the balcony stairs into the private chambers but, in the darkness, she cannot see who it is. Later Ludwig has a nightmare and Heilewif goes to him. He describes a ghost that came to him in his dream. Later Ava tells Heilewif about a note she has received asking the old woman to go to the village church at dawn to learn the truth.

### **Socratic Seminar Question**

*The Middle Ages are sometimes called the dark ages and darkness is used symbolically throughout the novel. What do you think this means?*

### **Chapter Nineteen: Summary**

Heilewif goes to the village church as instructed and is taken into custody. She is accused of witchcraft and brought to Mainz for trial. The Countess sends Sir Shilgen to Mainz to represent Heilewif before the Inquisition. Once again the spell afflicts Aurianna, but she recovers. Shilgen returns from Mainz and meets with Ava and lawyers from the University of Heidelberg. They form a strategy.

### **Socratic Seminar Question**

In your opinion is the procedure used by the inquisitor fair and just? Justice is based on equality and the inquisition is rooted in hierarchical inequality rendering real justice impossible. The accused is at the mercy of the authority and only protected by the duty of the inquisitor to be careful not to punish an innocent person.

### **Chapter Nineteen: Report Due: Law in the Middle Ages**

### **Chapter Twenty: Summary**

Ludwig begins to unravel the mystery. In Mainz, Heilewif is questioned by the inquisitor and is threatened with torture. She attempts to refute the evidence against her but is frustrated by the protocol. Shilgen arrives and the law professor explains the proceeding which seems hopeless. *Language is a two-edged sword in the search for ethical answers, often doing more to advance a cause than to find the truth. The inquisitor represents an immutable authority whose basic premises are beyond question. If Heilewif is not the witch, then someone else must be.*

### **Socratic Seminar Question**

Why is logical argument unable to reach a settlement in Heilewif's encounter with the inquisitor? Heilewif and the inquisitor have different understandings of the basic facts concerning her behavior. She views her actions as science; he sees them as witchcraft. This is an important lesson in ethics education since most ethical dispute is of this type.

### **Chapters Twenty-One – Twenty Three and Epilog: Summary**

*The mystery is resolved in the final three chapters which, with the epilog, should be combined for the final assignment.*

### **Socratic Seminar Question**

*The final Socratic seminar should be used for free discussion of the novel and its relationship to the middle ages. It is important for students to review the concepts of internal and external authority and how they apply to their own lives. Medieval European civilization was dominated by strong communal values which students should be asked to think about and to evaluate. Ethics is about finding a balance between individual freedom and group responsibility. Human beings innately understand the need for both sides of this equation and are naturally urged to seek both. Extremes at either end usually result in unethical outcomes. The feudal system was skewed heavily toward group responsibility to the point of smothering individual freedom. Students will readily see this and be critical of it since their own values tend to over-emphasize freedom. To balance this, students should be challenged to find all that was good about the medieval way of life. An evaluative essay is recommended.*

