

Margery Kempe Encyclopedia Article

Margery Kempe

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Margery Kempe Encyclopedia Article.....	1
Contents.....	2
Margery Kempe.....	3

Margery Kempe

1373?-1438?

English mystic and autobiographer whose dictated life story, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, is considered the first autobiography in English. A well-to-do matron who bore 14 children, Kempe started having visions and received the "gift of tears" shortly after her first pregnancy and began a series of pilgrimages that took her across Europe and throughout the Holy Land. Illiterate but opinionated, Kempe did not shy from theological argument and challenged clergy and commoner alike; but she also sought guidance, especially from the anchoress Julian of Norwich. Her disruptive behaviors and defiance of authority resulted in a trial for heresy, but she was found innocent. Following divine inspiration, Kempe dictated her *Book* as a record of her spiritual life. Idiosyncratic to a fault, the *Book* is a picaresque travelogue as well as a testament of faith.