

The Carnival at Bray by Jessie Ann Foley

Judging a Book by Its Cover

Before you begin reading, examine the cover of *The Carnival at Bray*. Keep in mind cover decisions are deliberate, and a collaboration between a designer, publisher, and author. From viewing the front cover, what do you assume the tone of the book will be? Where do you think the story takes place? Can you assume anything else about the book from the cover? Read the description on the back of the book. What are you curious to read more about? What conflicts do you think the book will address? Jot your thoughts down in a journal so you can revisit them when you finish reading *The Carnival at Bray*.

Characters

After reading the first chapter of the novel, create a character web for Maggie. Fill in the bubbles with as much detail as possible about her life, her motivations, her likes and dislikes, her relationships with other characters, etc. Cite page numbers and specific passages to support your conclusions. Add to this web as you continue to read the novel. Continue to make webs for other characters as they are introduced.

Research

Find one outside resource on Irish culture (language, food, music, etc.) and one resource on Irish American culture to bring to class. Have each student present these resources, and then discuss Maggie's cultural identity as a group.

Writing Prompt

Kevin's letter to Maggie, and Maggie's letter to Eoin are pivotal moments in the novel. Choose two other characters, and write a letter from one to the other on the page below. What would Aíne write to Paddy? Or Ronnie to Maggie? Choose the characters that most appealed to you, and be creative to capture the character's voice.