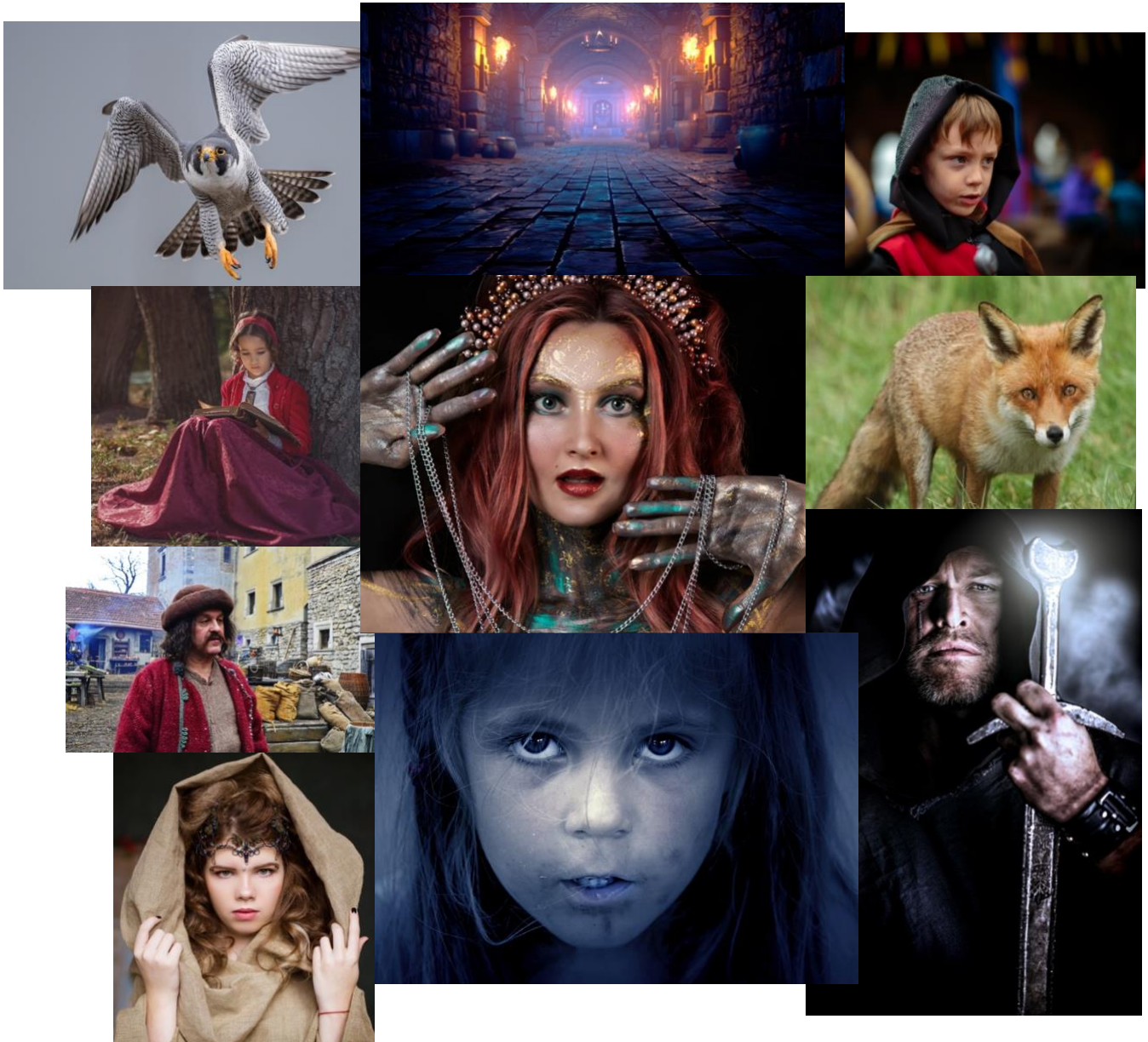


The Insider's Guide to *Lia* & *Lusk* Lingo



101 Terms, Phrases, Names and Concepts Important in Medieval England Life

A

Anelace/Anlace / A Medieval dagger or long knife. Kind of a “mini sword.” Most people carried a knife of some kind, even children. Handy for many daily tasks, such as cutting food.

Astrology / As with “prophecy” and “sorcery” (see below), the thing to remember about astrology is that people are absolutely certain it works. Decisions both major and minor are made on the basis of astrological predictions.

B



Battle of Numbers / tbd

Black Plague / The Great Plague, or Black Death (so-named because limbs turned black from gangrene) of 1348-50, killed nearly half the population. By 1400, thousands of villages were deserted. England's population shrunk from 5 million in 1300, to 2.5 million in 1400...a huge blow that profoundly changes the way of life.

Boethius / TBD

Book of Hours / TBD

Breeches / Generally speaking, men's trousers. (Kindly don't call them “pants.” Your British friends will laugh, since pants to them are ladies underwear.)

C

"The reality of life in Medieval England was even more colorful, magical, mysterious, funny and frightening than the fiction we've all read or seen in movies and on television!" - D.K.S.

Chamber Pot / Definitely not for plants! This is your highly convenient, in-room (for Nobility at least) toilet. Check behind the screen.

Civic pride / You're right. Not a medieval term. But the *concept* of civic pride is exceedingly important to the people who lived in the cities, towns and villages of Medieval England...

Climate Change / Surprise! Medieval England experienced its own version of global warming....except in reverse. Instead of warming, there was pronounced cooling. A *cooling climate* is blamed for massive flooding and crop failures that lead to the Great Famine of 1315-17. It also killed England's wine-making industry that had flourished for centuries.

D

Damask / An intricately patterned fabric, sometimes used in more expensive Medieval clothing.

E

Etiquette / Violence, disease, dirt, death and inequality aside, Medieval England was also a decidedly formal place with high standards of etiquette. A few tips: Hand over your weapons on

entering a host's house. Never enter a Manor's hall (main room) without permission. Never turn your back on a social superior. Oh, and don't talk with your mouth full (sound familiar?) or interrupt someone who's drinking. (Also see "Politeness")

Exchequer / To keep it simple, let's just say, the treasury.

F

Fashionistas of the 14th Century / Fashion sense exploded in 14th Century England. [P. 102, 105, 108-9](#)

Flint & Tinder / No matches or lighters in Medieval England! The goal was to not let your cooking and heating fires completely burn out. Try to keep a few coals alive, to re-ignite the next fire. If you fail, go borrow a few hot coals from your neighbor. It will be easier than using a flint and tinder to try and light a new one!

40,000 / The estimated total population of London in 1377 (according to a census conducted around that time). Today? Somewhere around 10 million for the metro London area. Kinda different, don't you think?

40% / After the Black Plague (see above) decimated the population (particularly adults), and because life expectancy in Medieval England was much shorter than day, an estimated half of the entire population were in their teens or younger!

French / Why is this here? Easy. French was widely predominantly spoken in Medieval England. English only became the "official" language in the second part of the 14th Century. It was considered essential for a Knight in 13th Century England to know French (Anglo-French, was a dialect used during some periods.)

G



Gallows / Yah, sure, you already know what gallows are. But what you probably don't know is that larger Medieval towns ... [p. 8](#)

Godsforks / Eating utensils were not necessarily available at meals in Medieval England. Instead, people used *Godsforks*. You might know them better as fingers!

Gongfermor / Not the most enticing job of the age, although extremely vital. The gongfermor is the person who has the unenviable task of emptying the latrine or "catch barrel" each day.

H

Heraldic Family / Boiled down version: A family with its own unique Coat of Arms. Using a Coat of Arms to define a family's identity or lineage is called "heraldry."

Hocking / A curious "game" popular in Medieval England, usually played only at certain times of the year, during feast days or other celebrations and observances.

Hospital / Nope! Not what you're thinking...or even close. In Medieval England, "hospitals" were places that offered lodging, or "*hospitality*" – which is where we get the word hospital from.

Hundred / A standard administrative area encompassing several Manors and related Manorial lands...also a Judicial District...believed to be the amount of land needed to sustain 100 households, defended by a 100-man force.

K



Kettle Hat / Early Medieval term for a Knight's helmet. In French (much spoken at the time in England) it was a *chapel-de-fer* which literally means "hat of iron." Armor was expensive, highly-prized and passed down generation to generation.

L

Loyalty / Honor, respect and loyalty are highly treasured and fiercely guarded.

M

Mazer / A drinking made from hardwood. The wealthy might have mazers with gilt-silver ornamentation.

Medieval / The Medieval period in Europe (also called the Middle Ages or Dark Ages) spans roughly 1,000 years. It begins in the 6th Century (500s) when the Roman's leave, and ...

Misericorde / Also called a "'mercy-giver." A long, thin knife used to deliver the death blow, or "mercy blow" (the name is derived from the Latin word *misericordia* meaning "mercy") to a seriously wounded knight.

O

Ossuary / A bone crypt – a place to store the bones of people long dead when the crypt space was needed for "new arrivals." Such places could end up containing huge stacks of human bones.

P

Palfrey / This was a type of riding horse that was highly prized in Medieval England because it was lighter, had a smoother gait, and could travel long distances. They were particularly preferred by women...including Lady Isabella, who had several.

Panoply / A full suit of Knight's armor. But much more than just protection. Armor design – and designs ON the armor – were intricate art forms...a means of individual expression and identity. Consider it "the body art" for Medieval knights. Different types of armor served distinctly purposes, for combat, competition and ceremony.

Piepowder Court / A special roving court that will help resolve your dispute with a merchant on market days or at fairs – often dispensing justice on the spot.

Pirates / Notorious pirates, outlaws and criminal gangs. Medieval England had them all, including, most notably, Eustace the Monk-turned-Pirate, x, y and z.

Pissing Alley / Residents of Medieval England were prone to "telling it like it is." This alley was exactly as you'd expect.

Plague Pits / A grim reminder of how devastating the Black Plague was. Plague pits were mass burial sites, up to 30-feet deep.

Plowland / Modern units of measure did not exist in Medieval England. Instead of, say, acres or hectares, a plowland was the amount of land a team of oxen could plow in a year. Depending on the terrain, of course, this could vary wildly from area to area. But no matter.

Politeness / Sure, Medieval England was brutal, crude and dirty in many ways. But *manners mattered!* The list of "do's and don'ts" is long and detailed. Don't pick your nose (need we mention this one?), spit (indoors, at least), and cut your bread, don't rip it apart!



Prime / There were no clocks, so people relied on the town bells to signal certain “prime” times. When the bells rang, for example, the shops could open.

Privy / Medieval towns and cities often provided public toilets, or privies, with the preferred location being on the city bridge. One guess where the “deposits” drop!

Q

Quoits / A popular Medieval ring-toss game.

R

Rebec / A small, bowed Medieval musical instrument; kind of like a pint-sized violin.

Red squirrels / There were no gray squirrels in Medieval England. They were red! All of them.

Reynard/Renard / Feckless fox, and French *word* for fox. But it wasn’t always. Before tales of Reynard’s exploits became wildly popular in the Middle Ages, the French word for fox was “*goupil*.” But Reynard was so famous that the French word changed to “*Renard*.”

Rithmomachy / A popular, math-based Medieval board game that uses pieces in the shape of circles, squares, triangles and pyramids, each inscribed with a different number. Also called “The Battle of Numbers” and “The Philosopher’s Game.” More details: Liz & Lusk website, [here](#).

S

Sark Island / Island in the English Channel just off the coast of France that was the base of operations for the pirate Eustace the Monk and his brothers.

Shitbrook/Shytebrook / They definitely called it as they saw it in Medieval England. Nearly every town or city had at least one equivalent – the local stream or river that served as the dumping place for the town's' sewage. In some cities, it was, *literally*, called *Shitbrook*! Stay clear if you value your senses.

Stirrups / Simple enough. But in 11th Century England, stirrups were a new invention that revolutionized warfare. Knights in armor on horses

with stirrups – which allowed them far greater control – dominated...like Medieval army tanks.

Swords / [p. 120-21](#) here

T

Three Estates (The) / [p. 39](#) They are: Those Who Fight, Those Who Pray, and Those Who Work.

Toll Roads & Bridges / [p. 129-130](#) pay up

Town Crier / No x y or z. How in the world do people get the latest news or gossip? ... (TBD)

U

Underwear / You know it, you love it. Maybe. Not so much in Medieval England. Men typically wore braies made of linen and tied or belted at the waist. Women, uhmmm, well, they generally didn’t wear any. It was simply considered too inconvenient.

Town Crier / No x y or z. How in the world do people get the latest news? ... (TBD)

V

Vellum / A durable, expensive and rather rare type of “paper” made from animal skins. Most Medieval manuscripts were written on vellum.

Vixen / Reynard’s wife, and the English term for a female fox.

W

Wax Tablet / Paper, as we know it, did not exist in Medieval England. The paper that did exist, was either made from linen or animal skins. Either way, it was super scarce and expensive. Those who had some used every square millimeter. Most casual writing was done on *wax tablets* that could easily be erased and re-used.

Weald / Woodland, or woods. It might interest you that, in some ways at least, Medieval England residents were responsible stewards of the land...early environmentalists. Medieval woodlands, or wealds, were carefully managed and prized.

Wheel of Fortune (Boethius Wheel) / [p. 118](#)

