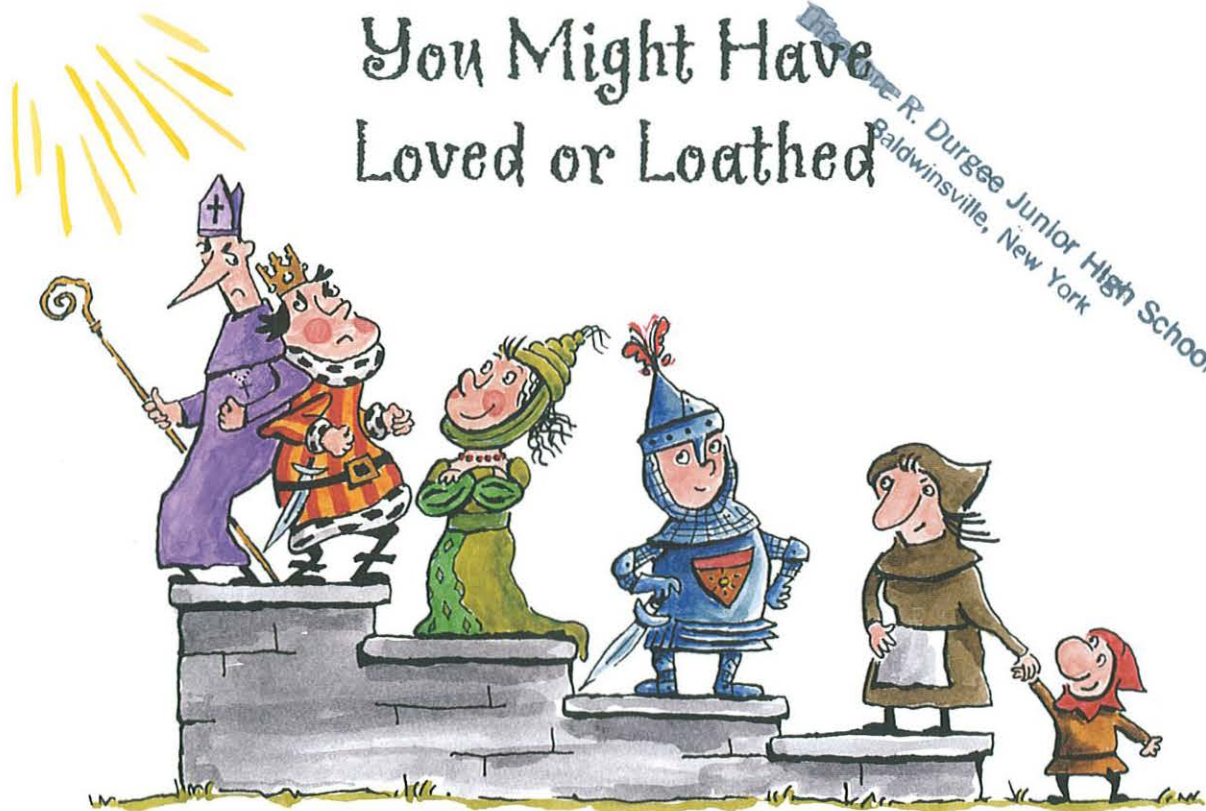


Archers, Alchemists, and 98 Other Medieval Jobs You Might Have Loved or Loathed

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The woman warrior

Joan of Arc was not the only great fighting woman of the Middle Ages. In the 1100s, Queen Matilda led an invasion and defeated King Stephen of England. The French Countess of Montfort took command in 1341 when her husband was captured. Under siege, she led the defense in full armor astride a warhorse. She ordered the townswomen to cut their long skirts and carry stones and pots of boiling pitch to throw down on the enemy. After her husband died, she went on fighting, although the English finally captured and imprisoned her. Other women of the time also fought, defended castles, and negotiated peace.



NOBLEWOMAN

As wife and mother, you have charge of the household, sometimes several hundred people. When your husband is at war, you are his deputy. You control his men and property, negotiating marriages, punishing wrongdoers, and acting in every way on his behalf. The bailiff reports to you.

You read and write both Latin and French, and have studied astronomy, household management, and elements of medicine and first aid. You are proud of your embroidery and tapestries, and you teach these skills to your daughters and your ladies. Your arrow sometimes hits the mark, but you'd rather hawk than hunt. You can defend the castle in a siege or protect your family's interests under the law. You read every day from your Book of Hours, a special prayer book; and often from books of etiquette, home remedies, and law.

