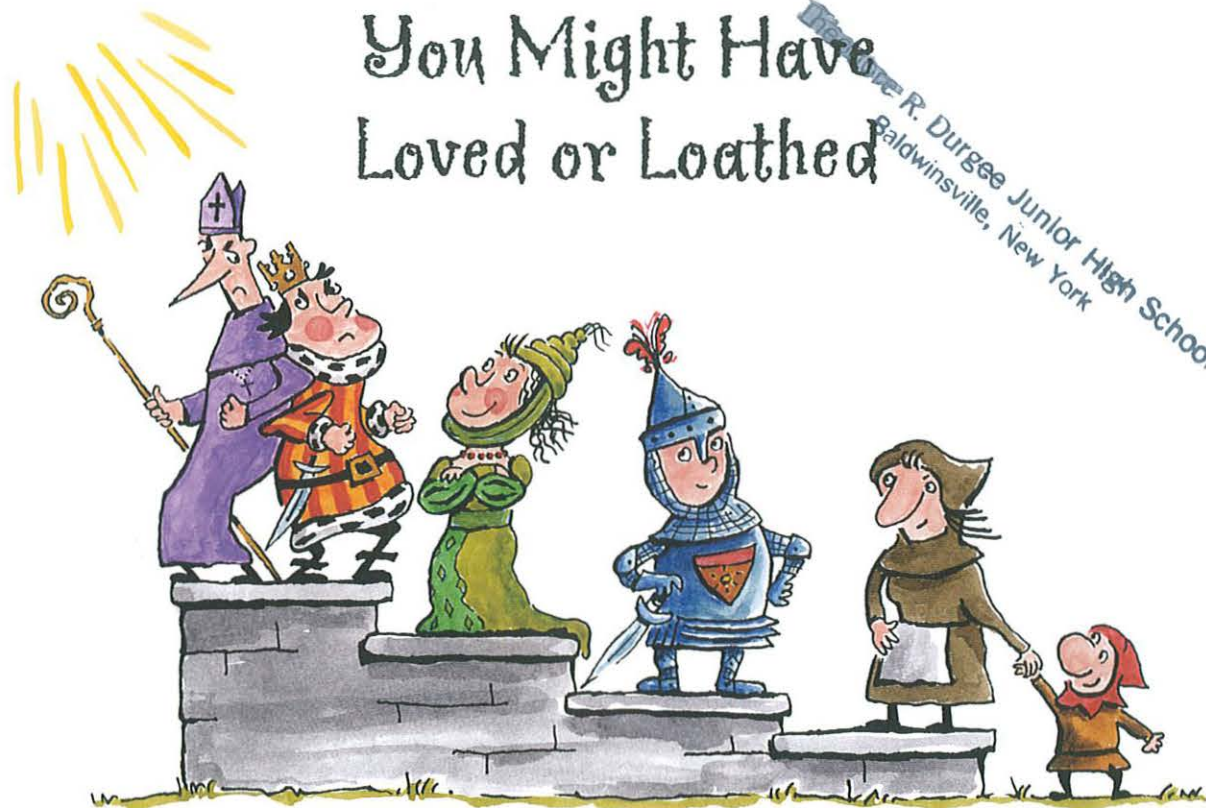


Archers, Alchemists, and 98 Other Medieval Jobs You Might Have Loved or Loathed

Matthew R. Durgee Junior High School
Galdwinville, New York



by Priscilla Galloway
art by Martha Newbigging

2003

Annick Press Ltd.
Toronto • New York • Vancouver

Women in the Middle Ages

The Middle Ages was a good period for women in Europe, though not nearly as good as today. However, medieval women could run a business, rule an abbey, defend a castle, teach at a university, practise medicine, learn a skilled trade, earn a living by writing, and own land and houses with the power to buy and sell.

This is not to say that women everywhere in Europe did all these things, or that women in general had the same rights and powers as men. They didn't. Women, like men, were part of the structured society, with everybody in his or her place, and a wife's place was subordinate to her husband. In England, a husband had the legal right to beat his wife with a rod, as long as the rod was no thicker than his thumb.

However, in the centuries after the Middle Ages, things got better for men and worse for women. Until very recent times, men continued to gain rights and powers, while women lost them. Less than 100 years ago, men could vote, but women could not; women could not attend university along with men. History books ignored women. But now we recognize everyone's importance in history. Both women and men among your ancestors helped to give you the opportunities you have today.

