

Life on a Manor Name: _____ Prd: ____ Score: ____ /20

Directions: Highlight the answer in the text on the left before answering the questions on the right.

In Charlemagne's time, a new way of life was taking shape in western Europe. This new way of life was called **feudalism**. It was the **government of the Middle Ages**, & primarily, a way for nobles to obtain military service. Also, it served as a model for the social classes of the time, a **hierarchy** as it were. It was based on possession of the land & the order of importance of those social classes on it. Early medieval Europe lacked any *central* government strong enough to keep order. Therefore, nobles had to rely on their own warriors.

At the top of the feudal system was the **nobility** made up of **kings** & their **lords**. They, then, granted land called a **fief**, to other nobles in return for their loyalty & military service. A noble who received such land was called a **vassal**. The vassal usually paid taxes to his lord & also provided him with a number of **knights** (also called warriors) to help make up an army. In return, he got his land & a *promise of protection*.

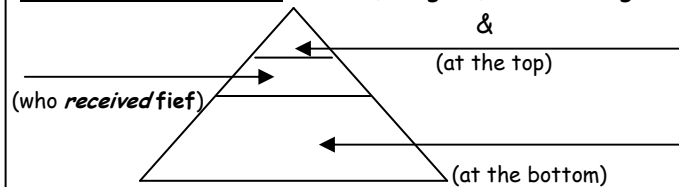
A lord's land was called his **manor**. These manors were considered a "world within a world" because they were **self-sufficient** ~ providing nearly everything necessary to live *within* it. It was usually worked by poor farmers known as **serfs**. Serfs were bound to the land & could not be bought or sold like slaves. They worked the land & provided food for the manor. In return, they were promised protection from invaders by their lord.

Food was a problem for most serfs. Even though they worked *constantly*, their diet was mainly soup, coarse bread, cheese & ale. When they had meat, it was usually only a small bit used to flavor a stew. Lords & ladies, however, had meat frequently. This was partly because *only* the lord was allowed to hunt the game on his land. Nobles also had sugar, spices, & dried fruits to flavor their food. Such seasonings were very expensive because they were imported from Africa & Asia.

I. **Feudalism**

- A. _____ of the **Middle Ages**
 B. way for _____ *to obtain* _____ **service**
 C. **served as a model for social classes** known as a _____ (think pyramid)
 D. **based on** _____ of the _____ & the **order of** _____ of their _____ (2 pts)

Fill-in-the-blank with: vassal, knights, lord or king



hierarchy of social classes

To be **self-sufficient** means: _____

Important sidenote: All of medieval society **relied on PERSONAL, RECIPROCAL** relationships. So, **serfs worked** the _____ & **provided** _____ for the manor *in exchange for* _____ by their lord.

A serf's diet consisted of: 1) _____, 2) _____ 3) _____, & 4) _____

Who was allowed to hunt game on the manor?

- a. all tenants c. lord
 b. serfs d. both lord & serf

Nobles had access to a **diet** of _____, _____, & _____ *as well as meat*.

Most serfs lived in small cottages made of stone or a stick-&-mud mixture called **wattle**. Their roofs were usually covered with straw, & their floors were bare earth. These houses held little besides a crude table, a few stools, & some straw mattresses to sleep on. Serfs were *never* very comfortable by *our* modern standards.

However, lords & ladies were not much better off. They lived in stone castles that were dark, damp, cold & drafty. Although they did not have to farm, they had little **leisure** time. Noble ladies had to supervise servants in the castle, cook & care for children. They endlessly spun & wove wool for winter clothes & linen for summer clothing. Tasks such as washing clothes, making candles & butchering animals were difficult & could take many days.

In addition, women of all classes were often exhausted from having too many children. Because so many children died in infancy, it was important to have as many as possible. It was especially important to have sons to work the land & because daughters usually would *not* inherit their father's property.

Lords did not have so much day-to-day work. They hunted & helped supervise the serfs. They were not home much, though. Most lords spent a good part of their lives in battle for their king & to protect their manor.

The following conversation is imagined. However, it shows how people lived & thought.

The time: c. 850 AD

The place: a farm in northern France

The action: Lord L'Eveque is out riding one afternoon when he comes upon serf Henri.

Lord: Well, Henri, I see you have already finished your spring planting. You are a good fellow, Henri. Work hard & we will all have plenty to eat this year.

Henri: Oh, hard work never bothered me, sir. I start working in the fields at dawn & don't stop until sundown. That's not the problem.



Another word *or* phrase for **leisure** is _____.

Duties of noble ladies included:

- 1) _____ servants
- 2) _____ & _____ for children
- 3) **spin/weave** _____ & _____
- 4) _____ (list 1 more)

Drawing conclusions: **Why** was it important to have **many children** during the Middle Ages? _____

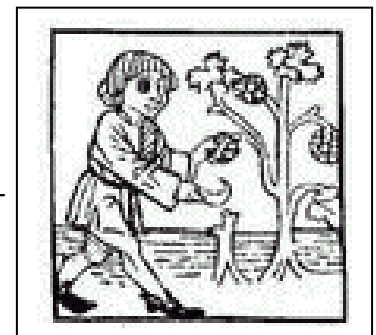
II. work of the lord

- A. *little* _____
- B. _____ & supervised _____
- C. spent **much time** in _____ for their _____ **to protect** the _____

Complete the following:

hard work = _____

Workdays were **from** _____ **to** _____



Lord: Well, what is the problem?

Henri: It's all the fighting that goes on, sir. Take last summer, for example. Count Raymond got mad *at you* because, he said, you were taking fish from his stream. So what did he do? He came over here with several of his knights *to get revenge*. Well, he couldn't attack your castle. It's too strong! So, he *set fire to the fields & burned all our crops!* Then he *killed all the serfs he could find & burned their huts*. Now, sir, I ask you, what's the good of working hard when something like that can happen?

Lord: Yes, you are right about that. It was a great shame. But you *see*, Henri, that stream really belongs to me. It is on my land, & I can prove it. Don't you worry about that. *I will take care of Count Raymond!*

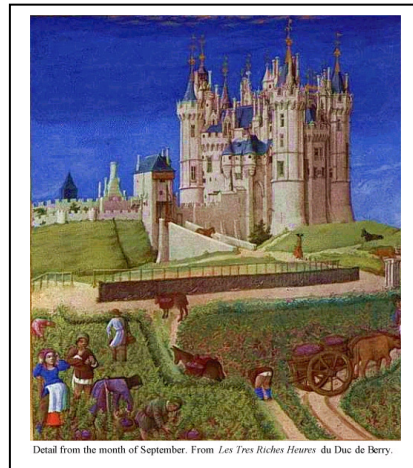
Henri: Well, sir, that's not the only thing that bothers me. It's being *tied to this piece of land all my life!* The law says that I must stay here & work for you 3 days a week. My father did it before me, & his father before him! And what do I get in return? You let me have a small part of your land myself, but I can only work on it when I'm *not* working for you. That gives me just three days. *Heaven forbid*, that I should work on Sunday! I can't let up for a minute, even in bad weather. It's work, work, work, all the time! On top of that, I have to pay you rent for the land I use. Now is that fair?

Lord: Henri, it is a good thing for you that I am a kind man. Other lords would cut your tongue out for talking like that. The trouble with you, Henri, is that *you don't know your place*. It is God's will that noblemen be soldiers & that common people serve us.

Henri: Forgive me, sir, I did not mean to forget my place. It's just that sometimes a man gets very tired...



Applying past knowledge: What does it mean "to get revenge?"

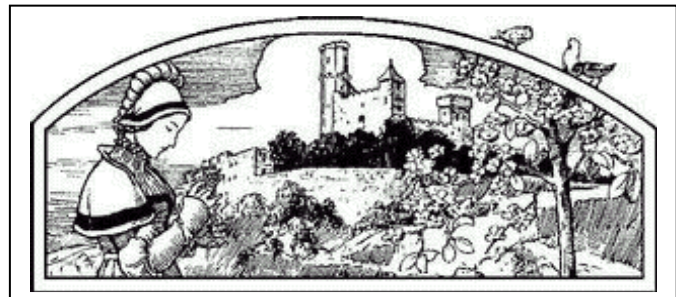


What day was considered "sacred" as a *no-work day*?

- a. Monday
b. Wednesday
c. Saturday
d. Sunday

Match the people with their "station" (position) in life:

- _____ common people
_____ noblemen
- a. serve the nobility
b. serve as soldiers



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Lord: Do you think, Henri, that my life is easy? I am responsible for law & order here. I must protect my serfs against all enemies. And don't you think that I have a lord & master also? This land doesn't really belong to me. It belongs to my lord, the duke. He lets me hold on to it, but in return I must serve him as a soldier. I am sworn to fight for him any time he needs me. But that's not all. I must bring 10 other knights with me. And I have to pay for their horses & armor!! That's why you must work for me & pay me rent besides. But it's really not so bad, Henri. On Sundays & holy days, you have plenty of time to enjoy life!

Henri: Yes, but it's such a short life, sir. Hard work, sickness, & hunger wear a man down. I'll be lucky if I live to be 40!

Lord: What are you complaining about? *How many soldiers live that long!*

III. Lord's duties

- A. **protect** _____
 B. **serve** *his* lord as a _____
 C. **sworn to** _____
 D. **brought** _____ with him
 E. **pay for** _____ & _____

Leisure time included _____
 _____ (what days?)

Fill-in-the-blank:

Hard _____,
 _____ & _____

shortened a person's life expectancy during the Middle Ages.



Diagram of a medieval manor, c. 1200

