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My Medieval Project

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The Stages of Knighthood

At an early age of about seven years old, a young boy would start his journey and the teachings on becoming a knight. At this stage in his life he would be titled as a Page and live in the household of a lord. These lords, who were also known as knights, would watch over him and teach him the skills and life lessons of knighthood. Specifically, the Page would be taught skills such as the art of hunting, how to ride a horse, dancing, and if possible even the rare skill of reading and writing. Besides the skills, the Page would be taught how to act in the eyes of nobility, he would be taught manners, would receive religious training, and be taught the code of chivalry. The knights must uphold the code of chivalry meaning that they must uphold Christianity, defend the women, and to protect the poor and the weak.

Now, as the Page progresses through the beginning of his training, he is in his teens from the age of about twelve to thirteen and is now addressed as a Squire. The Squire is now basically the knight’s assistant. The Squire would take care of the knight’s armor and weapons and he would be the only one allowed to do so. He would serve the knight his meals and would have to follow the knight into battle, however in tournaments the Squire could only assist the knight by helping him, meaning that he would have to dress the knight, place his armor on him, give him his lance or sword, and wait for his return from the tournament. However, when the Squire would grow and become of age he too would follow the knight and engage in the tournaments.

Now, twenty-four to forty-eight hours before the Squire becomes a knight, he confesses his sins to a priest, he is bathed, and he fasts. Throughout the next day, the Squire is dressed in all white and is blessed by the priest. The priest also asks the Squire his reasons on why he chose to become a knight. Now after this holy cleansing, the knight-to-be is given a new set of armor, and in this upcoming ceremony called an Accolade, either the knight that trained him or a priest dubs the Squire on both shoulders with his sword three times to remind the Knight-to-be of the vows that he promises to keep and of the code of chivalry. Now finally, the training that the young Page had undergone was now finished and the adolescent Squire is now a grown Knight.

Now, though this man is now a knight, does not mean that it is a permanent title. His title as a knight can be easily stripped away from him if he ever breaks his vows or if he is dishonored. In this ceremony, it is a Knight’s way of showing his death “A Knight without honor is no longer to live.”