

the world of the Medieval
N I G H T

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U N T I N G

Hunting provided meat for the dinner table, and was also a favorite sport. It gave the knights an opportunity to exercise their horses and to practice their riding skills. Most knights kept special horses for hunting, and for some the hunt was almost an obsession. For many knights, it was the only time they used a bow. Specially trained hunting dogs were sent out early in the morning to sniff out and track down prey. The knights chased game animals on horseback, or lay in wait with their bows while men beat the bushes and made noises to drive the animals towards them. William the Conqueror set aside vast areas of forest for his own private use. Foresters tended the woods and protected the animals chosen for hunting. Peasants who were caught poaching royal animals were severely punished. They might lose a hand, or even be executed. Dogs owned by the villagers who lived in these areas had their front claws cut off to stop them chasing game. Even nobles had to seek permission to hunt if the king's hunting ground included part of their own land.

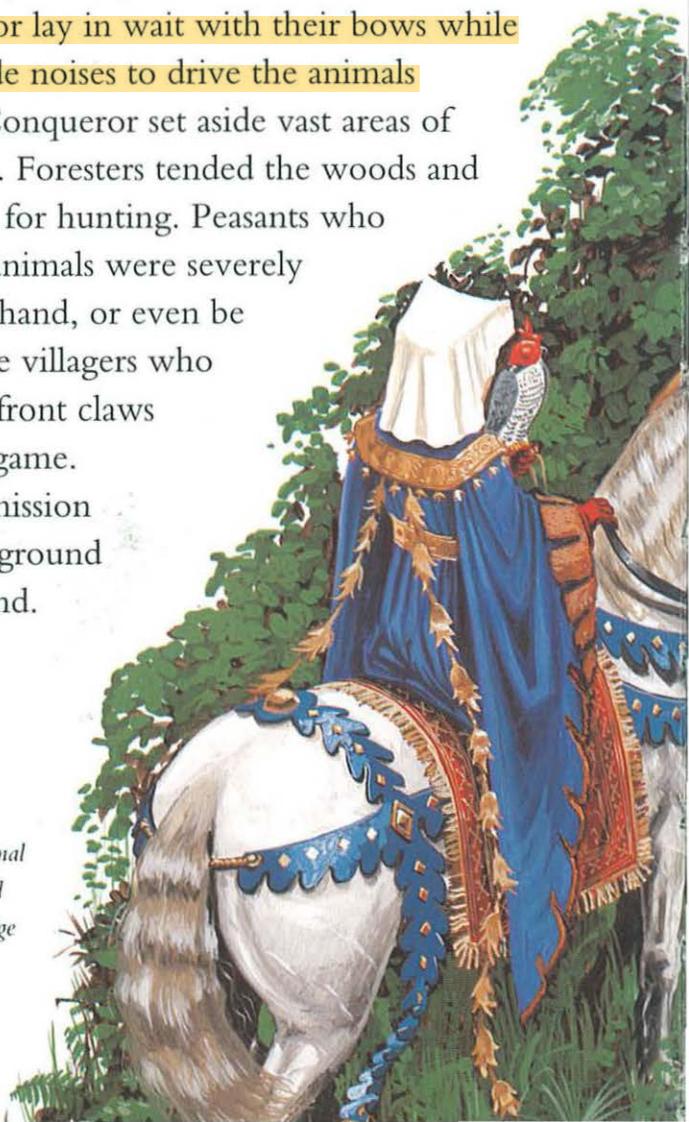
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The boar spear had lugs to stop the animal sliding up the spear. The broadhead had long barbs, which gave a long cutting edge and stopped the broadhead falling out.



The blunt was used to stun birds.





Here a hunter is hiding behind a stalking-horse, a framework covered in dyed cloth. This could be used for stalking prey when there was no other cover.

A Hunting Party

In the picture below, noble lords and ladies of the early fifteenth-century ride out to fly their falcons. Falconry was a more gracious form of

hunting than the chase on horseback. Some people kept their favorite bird in their chamber, but most birds of prey were kept in a long wooden shed called a mews.

