



Will, the Villain



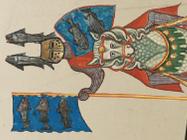
Will is a villain on Lord Robert's manor. Being a villain means that he is not a free peasant. He can be bought and sold, and he must give some of his labour for free on his lord's land. Will rents less than a hide of land from Lord Robert. A hide of land was an area of land considered large enough to produce food for a family. As you can imagine, if Will is farming less than a hide of land, his family are often left hungry. He dreams of gaining more land and becoming a free peasant.



Bess, Lord of the Manor's Daughter



Bess is a feisty, intelligent young lady. Although she grew up in far more grand surroundings than Will or Tom, she is not a stranger to hardship. Her mother and then, later, her stepmother died in childbirth. Her father, Lord Robert, has just died leaving her an orphan with a half-brother. As a minor (child) and a female, she has few rights and is much controlled by certain adults; especially, Earl Simon of the neighbouring estate. Does Earl Simon care more about her or her wealth?



Hugo, the Knight



Hugo's father is Earl Simon, a brave soldier who is often fighting for the king. Hugo dreams of being a knight too although it has become more costly; weapons, armour and good horses are not cheap. He thinks that he will accompany his father on a campaign to Wales but then he hears of a call from the Pope to go to Jerusalem in the Holy Land. To his ears this sounds far more romantic and heroic. He is keen to go. Skirmishes in Wales and his father's plans for his marriage can wait.



Tom, the Dyer of Cloth



Tom is the son of Will. As the son of a villain it would be very unusual for him to gain an apprenticeship as a dyer. Apprenticeships were expensive. However, Master Woad, a dyer in the nearby town, is a friend of Lord Robert's and Tom had been noticed by Lord Robert for his quick mind. When Master Woad's previous apprentice ran away, Tom was suggested as a possible replacement. This was a great opportunity for Tom.



Agnes, the Nun



Agnes is a devout young woman. She has heard stories about St Thomas a Becket, martyred by Henry II's knights, and about the magnificent cathedral at Canterbury recently built to glorify God. Apparently, healing miracles have occurred at the shrine of St Thomas too. She longs to go on a pilgrimage to Canterbury, to see new sights and to show her devotion to God.



Gilbert, the Lazy Priest



Gilbert does not take his religion nearly as seriously as Agnes. Gilbert desires to do the least possible in life and live as comfortably as he can. He really is not a great shepherd of his flock in the parish which encompasses Lord Robert's manor. Gilbert does seem to have a knack of always landing on his feet, though.



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Character

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