
For My Lady's Heart by Laura Kinsale

GLOSSARY

I've provided this glossary for the audiobook edition of *For My Lady's Heart* as a small glimpse into the fascinating history of our language. Some of the words listed have other definitions, but here they are limited to the meanings I used in this book. I've given alternate spellings, for those who wish to investigate further in dictionaries, and a couple of grammar hints for those of you who like to go around talking to your friends like this. You know who you are!

Abbreviations: ME (Middle English); OE (Old English); OF (Old French); L (Latin)

aghlich (also *awly*; OE, ME)—Terrifying, dreadful

alaunt (OF)—A wolf-hound

ambs-ace (L, OF "both aces, double ace," the lowest possible throw at dice)—Worthlessness, nought, next to nothing.

a'plight (OE, "pledge")—In faith, truly, certainly, surely, in truth

austringer (OF)—A keeper of goshawks

aventail (OF, "air-hole")—The movable mouthpiece of a helmet

avoi (also *avoy*; OF, unknown origin)—General exclamation of surprise or fear

besant (also *bezant*; OF "Byzantium," where it was first minted)—A type of gold or silver coin; a gold button

caitiff (also *caytif*; OF)—A base, mean, despicable wretch

camelot (also *camlot*, *cameline*; OF)—A light, plush fabric supposedly made from camel's hair; a garment made of this fabric

cheap (OE)—A purchase, a bargain

ciclatoun (OF, possibly from Arabic)—A precious material; cloth of gold or other rich material

comelych (ME)—Comely, lovely

comlokkest (ME)—Comeliest, most handsome

coquin (also *cokin*; OF)—Rogue, rascal

cote-hardie (also *cotehardi*, OF)—A close-fitting outer garment with sleeves, worn by both sexes

cuirass (OF)—Breast-plate and back-plate armor

cuir bouilli (OF, literally "boiled leather")—Leather armor

cuisse (OF, "thigh")—Armor pieces for the upper leg

depardeu (also *depardieu*; OF)—In God's name; by God

descry/describe (OF)—To discover; to describe or reveal

destrier (L *dextra* "right hand" because the horse was led by the squire with his right hand)—A warhorse or charger

disturn (OF)—Turn away

drury (OF)—A love-token, a keepsake

enow (ME)—Enough

escheat (OF)—To confiscate from; or more specifically the reversion of a fief to the lord, commonly when the tenant died without leaving a successor

fermysoun (also *fermisoun*; OF)—The close season, when it was illegal or uncustomary to hunt the hart (a male red deer)

fette (OE, "fetch")—Lay hold of

forn (ME)—In front, forward of

foryield (OE)—Reward, repay

fouchée (OF)—A skewer for the special tidbits reserved for the lord from "unmaking" or butchering of the hart at the end of a hunt

frith (OE)—wooded or waste land, underbrush

frumenty (ME)—A dish made of hulled wheat boiled in milk, with spices and sweeteners added

fustian (OF, possibly from *Fostat*, a cloth-making section of Cairo)—Coarse cloth made of cotton and flax

gambeson (OF)—undecorated body garment of quilted material or leather, worn under armor to prevent chafing

greaves (OF, "shin")—Armor for the leg below the knee

haf/hatz (OE, ME)—have

harlot (OF)—A rogue, rascal, villain, low fellow, knave; also applied to the pointed boots worn in the fourteenth century

hastilude (L "spear-play")—A tilt or tournament

havercake (ME northern dialect)—Oatcake

houppelande (also *houpland*; OF, unknown origin)—A tunic with a long skirt, sometimes with train attached, worn by both sexes

iwysse (OE, *gewis* "certain")—Certainly, assuredly, indeed

lay (OF)—A short lyric or narrative poem

leman (also *lemman*, *lemmon*; ME)—A lover or mistress

lickerous (OF)—Delicious; lustful, wanton

liripipe (L)—A long tippet hanging from the peak of a hood or from the elbows

lovelokkest (OE, ME)—Loveliest

luflych (OE, ME)—Lovely; gracious; a fervent expression of admiring or delighted feeling

lymer (OF, "leash")—A leash-hound; a dog bred for tracking the quarry by scent without disturbing it, similar to a modern bloodhound

menskeful (ME, *memke* "courtesy, honors")—Elegant, ornamented

misericorde (OF, "compassion, pity, mercy")—A dagger

mote (OF)—A note-call on a hunting horn

mote/moten/moste (OE)—Expressing permission, possibility, or obligation; might, may, or must

ne (OE, ME)—A simple negative; no, not. Sometimes formed in contraction with a verb, as in "n'ill I" for "ne will I" (I will not). Our modern term "willy-nilly" comes from "Will ye or nill ye!"

passager (OF)—A wild falcon trapped during migration and trained; sometimes used only for a season and then released

pillion (from Celtic *pill* "cushion")—A kind of saddle, esp. a woman's light saddle. Also, a pad or cushion attached to the back of an ordinary saddle, on which a second person (usually a woman) may ride

plessis (OF)—Felled trees, young trees, brambles, and thorn bushes woven and grown together as an impenetrable barrier and defense; plessis were common all over Europe in the Middle Ages, some so ancient they dated back at least to the Germanic tribes of Roman times.

poleyn (OF)—Plate armor for the knee

poulaine (OF, "souliers a la Poulaine," shoes in Polish fashion)—The long pointed toe of a shoe, as worn in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries

rache (OE)—A hunting dog that pursues the quarry in a pack by scent, like modern foxhounds

ramp (OF)—A bold, vulgar, ill-behaved woman or girl

rechase (OF)—The horn call to denote the hounds are running, or to release them to run

rouncy (OF)—A riding horse

runisch (also *runish*, *renish*; ME, unknown origin)—Fierce, violent, rough

sabaton (from L "shoe")—Armor for the foot

shend (OE)—Overcome with fatigue; bewildered, stupefied

sparviter (OF)—A keeper of sparrowhawks

Tam Lin—A traditional name for the King of the Fairies

throw (OE)—Trust

unhende (also *unhend*; OE)—Ungentle, rude, rough

varvel (OF, "bolt, hinge")—A falconry term for the metal ring attached to a bird's jess, on which the leash is tied; usually engraved with the owner's name

vauntguard (also *avantguard*; OF)—the foremost part of a troop or army, the vanguard

vetterer (also *fewterer*; OF from the Gaulish word "run")—A keeper of greyhounds

voire (OF)—In truth, indeed

waster bread (also *wastel*; OF "cake")—Bread made of the finest flour; a cake or loaf of this bread

wit/wis/wist/wen/wot (OE, ME)—Know, understand

witterly (OE, ME)—Clearly, plainly, evidently; for certain; without doubt

woodwose (OE)—a wild man of the woods

wrathe/wrothe (also *wrath*; ME)—annoy, vex, anger

Notes on Middle English Grammar

Negatives—The modern idea that multiple negatives in a sentence are bad grammar and that "two negatives equal a positive," has no historical basis. In Middle English, the more you wanted to negate something, the more negatives you stuffed into the sentence. "No I ain't done nothing," would be perfectly proper Middle English.

Word order—Negative statements, commands, and questions often invert the typical subject-verb-object word order. "Ne care I nought," for "I don't care." "Swear thee now." "Why sayest thou so?"

Conjugation of verbs—As a very general rule, the first and third person singular are similar to our modern forms. *I hear. He hears.* Middle English differentiated between "thou" and "you," for the second person pronoun. Between equals, or to inferiors, "thou" was used. This informal second person singular adds an *-est* ending for many verbs. *Thou hearest.* When addressing a superior, "ye" or its plural "you" was used. This polite address, plus the infinitive and all other plurals typically use a *-en* ending: *You hearen. To hearen. They hearen.*

There are only two tenses, past and present. The past tense follows the same general rules: *I heard. Thou heardest. He heard. They hearden.*

There are of course many irregularities and complications, and grammar was never my strong point, so I'll recommend *A Book of Middle English* by J. A. Burrow and Thorlac Turville-Petre for those who'd like to take a further peek into the grammatical rules and a more extensive dictionary of Middle English.

When the characters in *For My Lady's Heart* are not speaking Middle English, I used simpler conventions. When they are speaking French, the universal court language of the time, I generally used the informal and polite forms of address, *thou* and *ye*. When the characters are speaking Italian between themselves, I used modern grammar.