

Dear Abigail,

Hope all is well with you and your family. As you know I have started labor at the Jay Manor. I must say it is going to be a very difficult time here. The schedule of a serf is very tiring and troublesome. Especially nowadays where we have to harvest our own food, and plant several items in the orchard, and much much more. Every day gets more and more exhausting. I can't wait until the planting season is over. I bet it's gonna be a lot less tiring. Can you believe that we have to do manual labor to pay for our place at the manor?

We actually just finished our last meal for the day which was pottage. We eat that quite a lot. Most of the food we eat are the food we grow for ourselves. Sometimes we'll have beans and cabbage, or meat and cheese for special occasions. I'm not sure what the special occasions are, but I'll find out soon enough. For clothes we only get wool while the wealthy get silk.

Us serfs also have restrictions as to where we go, and what we're allowed to do. We have approval to go to the forest, or orchard, but we don't have permission to leave the manor. Our houses are also a bit unbearable. We have to sleep with all of the animals from the pasture or else they may be stolen. It is very hot right now which makes the houses even hotter. As much as I would love to keep writing to you I must head to sleep for a long day's work tomorrow. Talk to you soon.

Miss you dearly,

Geronimo S

Dear Marigold,

Life in the fields is harder than ever. My brothers are old enough now to work in the fields, but they are always so busy I never see them. Mother made me in charge of picking up stones in the fields and chasing birds away from our crops while she cleans our house and takes care of the animals. Oh Marigold, you have it easy. You get to work in the castle with your mother and you get to eat big meals for dinner. Our lunch and dinners usually consist of soup made with onions, turnips, and cabbage that I pick from the garden. On special occasions, we get to eat meat with eggs and cheese. We also eat a small slice of bread with each meal. You are lucky you do not have to live in the cruck houses. The wood on ours is slowly rotting and every spring we re-plaster the outside with mud, straw, and manure. Yesterday, my father had to fix a small leak in our thatched roof. We have two small beds and a straw bed, each with thin lining on them. We have a small table in our kitchen area but when we bring in our chickens and other animals for the night, we have to push the table aside. We also have three stools near the table. I also get to stitch a curtain to cover the doorway. Father also works in the fields with my two brothers but father also has to take care of our Lord's animals and land. Sometimes he works day and night just to get

everything done. Our Lord also charges a high rent but my family swore an oath to him so we have to obey his rules. We also cannot leave the manor unless we ask the Lord for permission, but he usually says no. Taxes to the Church are getting higher, so now we make less money from the crops. In a few days Father and my brothers will take turns harvesting the serfs fields and our own fields with the help of other adult male serfs. But life isn't all bad. When we get a break from working, we have small get togethers with our neighbors that involves dancing, laughing, and music. Well, it's time to get back to work. For some odd reason my brother is sick and he has these big black blisters on him. Oh well, enjoy your time at the other manor, goodbye 'til next time!!

Your friend,
Elizabeth