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Study Guide/Questions for “A Knight’s Tale”

*Connecting the film to Historical Context of the Middle Ages*

1. How does William become a “knight?”

2. According to the rules of feudalism, why would William *never* be allowed to be a knight?

3. What does William mean when he says “A man can change his stars” after his first joust posing as Sir Ector?

4. As William is convincing Wat and Roland to go along with his scheme, he mentions the unfairness of the system that only allows nobility to be knights. What is his argument?

5. Other than the fact that he is naked, what is a clear difference between Geoffrey Chaucer and William, Wat, and Roland?

6. Why is it not surprising that the three had not heard of Chaucer or his book “The Book of the Duchess?”

7. When Chaucer says “Oh well, it was allegorical” and Wat replies, “Well, we won’t hold that against you. That’s for each man to decide for himself!” what is the basis of the misunderstanding?

8. When William asks her to speak, Jocelyn replies “But sir, my sex are marred by their silence” when William asks her to speak. Also, when Kate is asking about Williams’ armor, she says “Do they say I can’t do it because I’m a woman?” What does this show you about the role of women in the Middle Ages?

9. When William is knocked unconscious briefly, his mind returns to his childhood and a conversation with his father. What do you learn about him?

10. In his third joust, William defeats his opponent after he is told “His people starve while he sits at banquet.” Why does this inspire William to fight harder?

1. William jousts Sir Thomas Colville in Rouen, but instead of defeating him after Colville is injured, William honors his request to keep his honor in tact. A. What does this show about William?

b. How does this pay off for William later in the story when the true identity of Colville is revealed?

12. Who did Sir Thomas Colville turn out to be? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Why did he disguise himself?

13. In what country do the jousting tournaments take place? What nationality are William and his knights?

14. Why doesn’t William write his own letter to Jocelyn? Explain your answer.

1. William has a flashback on the barge traveling back to England of when he was first placed in service to Sir Ector. For how long was his commitment and why would his father send him away?
2. .After William is found out to be a phony, Jocelyn says she is willing to run away with him, even if it means living in a hovel with pigs because the poor can marry for love. Why is this a true statement of life in the Middle Ages?
3. Prince Edward knights William after William has been in the stockade. Why does he do this and does it fit with what you know about the rules of chivalry and knighthood?
4. William continues to fight in the final joust even after his is seriously injured. Why does he do this?