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# Heraldry's Heart - The Escutcheon



In medieval times, knights and noble \_\_\_\_\_ displayed unique symbols on their shields. These symbols were part of their \_\_\_\_\_. An important component of heraldry was the \_\_\_\_\_, a shield-shaped surface where symbols and colors were displayed. Each color, known as a \_\_\_\_\_, had its own meaning. For example, blue often represented loyalty and strength. Animals were also common in heraldic designs. A \_\_\_\_\_ might symbolize bravery, while a bear could represent protection. These \_\_\_\_\_ were not chosen at random; they told a story about the family or individual.

The shape of the escutcheon could vary. Some were \_\_\_\_\_ for women, while men typically had a shield shape. The top of the shield, called the \_\_\_\_\_, held great importance, often containing symbols of highest \_\_\_\_\_. Borders and divisions of the escutcheon, known as \_\_\_\_\_, could be straight, wavy, or even jagged, each adding a unique meaning. For example, a wavy line might represent sea or \_\_\_\_\_.

Not just anyone could create a coat of arms. This privilege was overseen by an officer known as the \_\_\_\_\_. He ensured that each design was unique and followed the rules of heraldry. When a \_\_\_\_\_ performed a noble deed, he might be awarded a new symbol for his escutcheon, known as an \_\_\_\_\_.

The escutcheon was more than just decoration; it was a way to identify friends and foes during \_\_\_\_\_. It also represented family lineage and achievements. Over time, these symbols became more elaborate and detailed, evolving into what we recognize today as family \_\_\_\_\_. The art of heraldry, with its intricate rules and symbols, played a key role in medieval society, echoing the values and \_\_\_\_\_ of those who bore them.

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