

# Yar Re: medieval english was knight ranks and titles

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2005-10/msg00614.html>

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- *From:* "Peter T. Daniels" <[grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Sat, 15 Oct 2005 02:23:30 GMT
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James Dolan wrote:

>  
> in article <434FE401.2BD3@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>,  
> peter t. daniels <[grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote:  
>  
> |James Dolan wrote:  
> |>  
> |> in article <434F2E2F.3063@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>,  
> |> peter t. daniels <[grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote:  
> |>  
> |> |> > It's used in the film in a sense of 'super-shipshape'.  
> |> |>  
> |> |> Are you sure? According to my SOD, it means "responsive to the  
> |> |> helm" in old nautical usage.  
> |> |>  
> |> |> Actually she has quite a speech rhapsodizing over the model of it,  
> |> |> which for the landlubber boils down to "shipshape."  
> |> |>  
> |> |> from <<http://www.fakeradio.net/scripts/casap.htm>>:  
> |> |>  
> |> |> TRACY: Oh, a wedding present. From Dext. A picture of the True  
> |> |> Love. We sailed her up the coast of Maine and back the summer we  
> |> |> were married. My, she was yawl.  
> |> |>  
> |> |> GEORGE: Yawl? What's that?  
> |> |>  
> |> |> TRACY: It means, oh, easy to handle, quick to the helm. Fast,  
> |> |> bright. Everything a boat should be. Until it develops dry  
> |> |> rot. (starts to cry) Oh, George--  
> |> |>  
> |> |> |In the movie she doesn't say "yawl." Is this maybe from a Lux Radio  
> |> |> |Theatre (hosted by Cecil B. DeMille) script?  
> |> |>  
> |> |> no, but same general principle; the screen guild players sponsored by  
> |> |> lady esther face powder and hosted by truman bradley, or something  
> |> |> like that. it should be possible to track down the details via that  
> |> |> website or via google or whatever.  
> |> |>  
> |> |>

## Yar Re: medieval english was knight ranks and titles

- > it seems to think that it's a "script", but that "yawl" seems
- > obviously ridiculous, so maybe it's really a transcription and "yawl"
- > is a transcription error, or something?

Maybe it's a folk etymology. Some script adapter, unsurprisingly, didn't know the word "yar" (it rhymes with "jar," not with "bare," so I'll spell it as I've always imagined it), and used the boat-related word "yawl."

- > anyway it's clear that it's pretty exactly the meaning that John
- > Atkinson mentioned, and that merely "shipshape" loses too many nuances
- > even for a landlubber.

That's the only context I've ever encountered it in. I had, for many years, no reason to suppose it wasn't a totally made-up word.

- > |How many of the original cast participated in the broadcast?
- >
- > the big three, at least. by the way is Jimmy Stewart's character
- > really a country bumpkin, as opposed to a city bumpkin? he does say
- > that his father taught high school in South Bend, but he's a New
- > York-based reporter for scandal sheet "spy magazine". are you saying
- > that if Jimmy Stewart is in a movie with Cary Grant then Jimmy
- > Stewart's character is necessarily a country bumpkin, even if also a
- > New Yorker?

Pretty much so, no? How often did they appear together? How believable is he in other sorts of roles, as in, say, *Rear Window* or *Rope*? (I forget who Hitch originally wanted for that part, but it was someone totally different.)

- > |Or is it from the play rather than the movie?
- >
- > I didn't find the play or the movie script on the web; only this radio
- > script.

This seems as good as any a place to complain about Hollywood writers who put the most inappropriate situations into TV scripts set in places other than Hollywood — for instance this week's *Still Standing* was set in "traffic school" in Chicago (no such thing), and any number of episodes of *New York* and *Chicago* series have had references to parking in "red zones" (no such thing). Last week's *Law and Order* even had Det. Fontana revisit a case he'd worked ten years earlier — but he was introduced last year as having just moved to NY from Chicago (for unexplained reasons), and they've previously used his Chicago connections for solving at least one crime. (True, that's a continuity thing rather than an inappropriateness thing.)

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- **Follow-Ups:**
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- **References:**
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