

“Nun’s Priest’s Tale” Reading Guide

The Nun’s Priest’s prologue is not included in this translation, but it is summarized. All of the pilgrims were tired of hearing the Monk tell tragedies, so the host asked the Nun’s Priest to “tell of something to gladden our hearts.” Keep this goal in mind as you read.

This tale is a **fable**, a story in which animals can talk and a moral or lesson is shared.

The Nun’s Priest’s Tale is also considered **mock heroic** because it uses the language of heroes to describe ordinary characters. The conflicts are described as epic battles when they’re really common occurrences between barnyard animals.

As you read, you will notice that Chanticleer often cites **authorities**, or famous people and stories, to support his reasoning. Don’t worry if you don’t recognize these references. We will discuss them in class.

Reading Questions:

- Who tells his/her story before the Nun’s Priest? Why does the Nun’s Priest go next?
- How is the widow characterized? What details does the Nun’s Priest share?
- What is her rooster’s name? How is he described?
- Who is Chanticleer’s favorite hen?
- What scares Chanticleer? How does Pertelote react to his fear?
- Does Chanticleer listen to Pertelote’s advice regarding his dream?
- What convinces Chanticleer to ignore his dream?
- How does the fox trick Chanticleer? How does this relate to our debate?
- How do the animals react when Chanticleer is taken?
- How does Chanticleer trick the fox?
- What is the moral of the “Nun’s Priest’s Tale”?