

The Pardoner's Tale

Three Men Look for Death

The pardoner told his story next. But first, he told the other pilgrims about his job.

'I speak to people in churches,' he said. 'I always talk about the same thing. I tell people: "Love of money is a real problem. You do bad things, and bad things happen to you, because of it." And I sell pardons. I've got a lot of things that belonged to saints – bits of cloth and other old things. Well, they didn't really belong to saints, but people don't know that! If people buy these things, God will forgive them. And I make a lot of money. I don't like being poor. Oh no! I must have fine clothes and good food! The poor give me money and I have a good life. I sell them pardons and they're happy.'

The pardoner was a very bad man but his story was very good. The pilgrims were surprised that a bad man could tell a good tale.

This is the story.



There were three young men who did many bad and stupid things. They drank too much and they did no work.

One morning, they were drinking when they heard a noise outside. People were carrying the body of a dead man.

They asked the boy who brought them more drink, 'Whose body is that, boy?'

'He was your friend,' answered the boy. 'He was killed last night while he was drinking here. He was killed by that quiet thief, Death. Death kills all the people in this country. He killed

your friend and then went away. He's killed thousands and thousands of people. You should get ready to meet Death.'

'I'm not afraid to meet him!' cried one young man, and he quickly jumped up. 'I'm going to find him! I'll look for him in every field and wood and town. Listen! Let's hold up our hands and promise to be brothers. Let's find Death and kill him!'

'I'll come with you,' said the second man.

'And me,' said the third. 'We'll kill this dangerous man, Death, before night comes.'

So the three men went to find Death. They walked a little way and saw an old man with a long white beard. He was wearing a lot of old clothes and carrying a stick. When he saw the three men, he spoke to them kindly.

'God be with you, my young friends.'

But the men shouted at him, 'You stupid old man! Why are you wearing all those clothes?'

'Because I'm very old,' answered the man. 'I feel the cold and I can never get warm.'

'Well, why have you lived for so long then, you ugly old man? You should die more quickly!' they shouted.

The old man looked at them angrily. 'I live like this because Death hasn't taken me. I travel up and down the country, looking for Death. I say to the ground under my feet: "Dear Mother Earth, let me in! Oh, Mother Earth, I want to lie down in you and sleep for ever!" But she isn't kind to me. That's why I'm old, young men.'

One of the men laughed loudly. The old man turned to him and said quietly, 'You've spoken very unkindly to me and now you're laughing at me. But I've done nothing to hurt you. You should speak more kindly to an old man. Now, I've got nothing more to say to you. I'm going to continue on my journey to meet Death.'

'No, you can't do that!' they shouted. 'He's killed all our



They walked a little way and saw an old man with a long white beard.

friends in this country. We're going to find him and kill him. Quickly; tell us where he is.'

'If you really want to find Death, I'll tell you,' answered the old man. 'Can you see that little road? Go up there. Not long ago I saw him near a great tree in the wood. But you can't save men from Death. He won't be afraid of you. Go now. I hope God will help you to become better men.'



The three young men went up the road and ran towards the great tree, but there was nobody there. They sat down and looked around them. Then suddenly, on the ground, they saw a lot of money. They all got very excited and forgot about Death. But Death was very near and he was thinking about them.

Nobody said anything as they started to count the money. At last one of them spoke.

'Listen to me,' he said. 'This money will bring us happiness for the rest of our lives but we must hide it. One of us must go back to the town for food and drink. The other two can hide in the wood. They must guard the money until night comes.'

This plan sounded sensible. So the youngest man went into town and his two friends waited in the wood with the money.

'I've got an idea,' said one of the men. 'We're like three brothers, but one of us has gone now. If you take half the money, I'll take the other half. Then we'll be really rich!'

'But how can we do that?' asked the other man. 'Our young brother knows about the money.'

'I'll tell you how we can do it. There are two of us. Two men are stronger than one. When he comes back, we'll play a game with him. You can start a friendly fight with him. I'll wait and then kill him with my knife. After that, my dear brother, we can take all the money. Half for you and half for me!'

And so they planned their young friend's death.

But the young friend was bad too. As he walked to the town, his mind was full of the beautiful money. He said to himself, 'How can I get all that money? If I think of a good plan, I'll be the happiest, richest man in the world!'

At last he had an idea.

'I know what I'll do. I'll go to a shop and buy some poison. Then I'll kill the other two and take all the money.'

So he went to a shop in the town and said to the shopkeeper, 'The cats on my farm are eating all my plants. Can you give me something to kill them?'

The shopkeeper showed him a small bottle of poison.

'This will kill your cats,' he said. 'Put it in their food or drinking water. It's very strong. It will kill a horse!'

Then the young man went to the next street and bought three bottles of wine. He put the poison into two of the bottles and he kept the third bottle.

'I'll need a drink after I've killed my two friends. I'll hide their bodies first and then hide the money. I'll need a good bottle of wine after all that!'

Then he bought some food and walked back to the wood. When the other two men saw him, they said, 'Ha! Here he comes! He's bringing us our supper but *he'll* never have another meal again!'

They were hungry and they ate the food immediately. Then the two men asked their young friend to play the fighting game. Their plan went well and they soon killed him.

'Let's eat again and drink some of this wine. Then we'll put his body in the ground,' they said.

One man got a bottle of wine and drank a lot of it. Then he gave the bottle to the other man.

Both men died slowly in a lot of pain.

They wanted to find Death and kill him. But when Death found them, they were all dead!

And Death laughed loudly for a long time!

'Well, that's the end of my story,' said the pardoner. 'Now, I've got some things here in my bag. They'll bring you forgiveness and save you all. Only a penny! Hurry! Hurry! Come and buy!'

The Franklin's Tale

Three Promises

The franklin was a rich farmer. He had a big house and a lot of land, and he liked good food and wine. His guests always had excellent things to eat and drink when they came to visit him.

The franklin told the pilgrims a story about three promises.



Long ago, in France, there lived a knight called Arveragus. He was in love with a beautiful lady called Dorigen. She wanted to be sure that he was brave and good. So she asked him to do a lot of difficult things.

'Do these things for me. Then I'll know that you love me,' she said to him.

Arveragus went away and had many adventures. He did all the things that Dorigen asked him to do. Then he came back to his love, Dorigen.

'Now I know that you aren't afraid of anything,' Dorigen said to him. 'I love you as much as you love me. I want to marry you.' The knight loved his lady very much. 'I want to marry you, too,' he said. 'I'll never ask you to do anything that you don't want to do,' he told her.

'And when we're married,' she said, 'I'll be your loving wife. I'll never do anything that will make you unhappy.'



Arveragus and Dorigen got married and went to live in Arveragus's home in Brittany. They lived together happily for more than a year. But the knight was a man of war and he

wanted to fight in England. Even his love for his wife couldn't stop him.

So he sailed away for two years.



Poor Dorigen was left at home. She felt very sad without her husband, because she loved him very much. She couldn't sleep or eat when he was away.

Her friends tried hard to help her.

'You'll die if you don't sleep and eat more,' they said to her.

She listened to her friends and slowly got better. She was young and full of hope.

'My husband's going to come home soon,' she thought.

Arveragus sent her long, loving letters. 'All is well,' he wrote. 'I'll be home again very soon, my love.'

Her friends said to her, 'Now you're feeling better, so come outside with us. Don't sit alone in your house. Come and have fun.' So she began to go out with them. One day, as she was walking with her friends, Dorigen saw great black rocks in the sea. She felt very frightened when she saw them. Sometimes, when she was far away from the sea, she thought about those terrible rocks.

'I don't like those rocks. If a ship hits them, the men on the ship will die. Will my dear Arveragus be safe? Oh, why did God make something which can kill men? He loves everyone!'

Her friends saw that she was becoming ill again. They were worried. They were kind people and they wanted to help her. So they kept her away from the black rocks, and they took her out with them to other places. They danced and played games together.



One day in spring, they went to a beautiful garden. They sat down on the grass and sang and danced. Only Dorigen was

unhappy. All the men were dancing happily, but her dear husband, Arveragus, was not there.

One of the dancers in the garden was a man called Aurelius. He was a handsome young man and he loved Dorigen with all his heart. But he never spoke to her about his feelings. Some of his friends knew that he was in love. But they didn't know who the lady was.

When Aurelius saw Dorigen in the garden on that spring day, he couldn't hide his love.

'I know that your heart lies over the sea with Arveragus,' he said to her. 'You're his wife. I know that you can't love me. But I love you very much.'

'You must never speak to me like that again, Aurelius,' Dorigen answered. 'Arveragus is my husband and I love him with all my heart. I'll never leave him.'

Then she laughed and said, 'Aurelius, I *will* love you if you take away all the rocks from the sea. Then Arveragus can come home safely in his ship.'

'Is there no other way?' he asked.

'No, there's no other way,' said Dorigen.



Aurelius went away sadly. First he spoke to the Sun God.

'Oh, Lord of the Sun, speak to your sister. Ask her to cover the rocks with the sea. Then my lady will love me. She won't break her promise, I'm sure.'

But nothing happened. The sea stayed the same and Aurelius could still see the black rocks. He got very ill and his brother looked after him. Aurelius told his brother everything.

'I must take those rocks away,' he said. 'If I can do that, then Dorigen will love me. I'll be a happy man.'

Aurelius's brother loved him and wanted to help him. He started to read books. He had to find a way to move the rocks.



When Aurelius saw Dorigen in the garden on that spring day, he couldn't hide his love.

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After two years, Arveragus came home from the war. Dorigen and all their friends were very happy. But Aurelius didn't know that he was back. He lay at home in bed, very ill. His brother stayed close to him. He read his books and thought about the rocks all the time.

'How can I help my dear brother?' he asked himself every day. At last he remembered something. He sat down near Aurelius's bed and spoke to him quietly.

'One day in Orleans, I saw a book in a friend's house. It was a book about magic. Perhaps that book will help us with the rocks. If we can hide the rocks for a short time, Dorigen will love you.'

Aurelius listened to his brother and felt much better. He jumped out of his bed and in a day or two they went to Orleans together.

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As they came near Orleans, they met a young man. He was a magician.

He said to them, 'I know why you've come here: And to their great surprise he told them everything about Dorigen and the rocks.'

That night, they went with the young man to his house. Before they ate, he showed them many strange things. They were all done by magic. Forests came in front of their eyes, full of animals. Next they saw a river in the room. Then they saw many knights, and they even saw Aurelius with his love, Dorigen. Aurelius was dancing with her.

Before they went to bed, Aurelius decided. He said to the young man, 'If you hide those rocks, I'll pay you a thousand pounds.' The young man agreed, and the next morning they all rode to

Brittany. It was December and the weather was very cold. When they arrived, the young man started his magic immediately. The sea began to cover the rocks. At the end of the day, Aurelius and his brother couldn't see one single rock!

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Aurelius was very excited. He found Dorigen and said to her, 'I still love you very much, dear lady. I know that you're married to Arveragus. But remember the promise that you made in the garden on that spring day. I've done what you told me to do. All the black rocks have disappeared!'

Then he went away and left her. Dorigen ran down to the sea and looked for the rocks.

'It's true!' she cried. 'All the rocks have gone — or the sea has hidden them. Aurelius has done what I asked. But what shall I do now?'

Arveragus was away from home for a few days, so she couldn't tell him about her problem. She lay on her bed and cried.

'What can I do? Shall I kill myself? Some women kill themselves because their husbands don't love them. But Arveragus loves me. Other women kill themselves because they love another man. I don't love Aurelius but I've made a promise. I must keep my promise. But I can't! Oh, what shall I do?'

She lay on her bed all day and night, and cried and cried.

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After two days, Arveragus came home. He saw that his wife was unhappy. He asked her, 'My love, why are you crying? What's the matter?'

Dorigen told him the story.

'Is that all?' he said, and looked at her lovingly. 'Is there nothing more?'

'That's enough!' she cried. 'Oh, Arveragus, what shall I do?'

'A promise is a promise, my dear. You must keep your promise – that's very important. I won't love you if you break your promise.'

'Then I must go to the garden where Aurelius told me about his love. I must wait for him there,' answered Dorigen sadly.

She kissed her husband goodbye and walked slowly towards the garden.



Aurelius met Dorigen in the street. He looked very happy but Dorigen's eyes were red with tears.

'Where are you going?' he asked her.

'I've spoken to my husband. He told me to keep my promise to you. So I'm going to the garden where I first met you,' she replied unhappily.

Aurelius looked at Dorigen. He saw her sad face and felt sorry for her.

'I'm doing a very bad thing,' he thought. 'She loves her husband, Arveragus, very much.'

'Tell your husband that he's a good man,' he said to Dorigen. 'I don't want to come between a man and his wife. You're the most loving wife I've ever met.'

When she heard these kind words, Dorigen fell on her knees. She thanked him. Then, with a heart full of happiness, she ran home to her husband.

For the rest of their long life together, Arveragus looked after her like a queen and she was always his true and loving wife.



But poor Aurelius didn't feel very happy. He was a worried man.

'How can I ever pay the magician all that money?' he thought. 'I'll have to sell everything that I own. And, even then, I won't have enough. Perhaps I can pay him a little every year.'

He had five hundred pounds, and he went to see the magician with this money.

'Here's all my money,' he said. 'I'll pay you the rest but, please, give me two or three years.'

'But I did what I promised to do. And *you* promised to pay me a thousand pounds,' shouted the magician angrily.

'Yes, I know. You kept your promise but I can't pay you,' Aurelius answered unhappily.

'Well, have you seen your lady? Does she love you now?' asked the magician when he saw Aurelius's sad face.

'No, she doesn't,' said Aurelius. 'Her husband loves her very much but he told her to keep her promise. He sent her to me but I sent her back to him. She loves her husband and she looked so unhappy. I didn't want to hurt her.'

The magician was pleased to hear this. He said, 'My dear brother, you've done the right thing. And now I'll do the right thing too. I won't take your money.'

And he said goodbye, got on his horse, and rode away.



The franklin finished his story and then asked the pilgrims a question.

'My friends, now you must tell me something. Which of those three men seemed the best to you? Aurelius? Arveragus? Or the magician?'

The Friar's Tale

The Summoner and the Devil

There was a summoner and a friar on the pilgrimage to Canterbury:

Summoners found people who did bad things. They took them to an important person in the church. People often paid summoners a lot of money to forget those bad things. A friar's job was different. He asked people for money for the church.

The summoner and friar on the pilgrimage were not friends.

The friar said to the pilgrims, 'I'm going to tell you a story about summoners.'

Then the summoner said, 'And I'm going to tell you a story about friars.'

'Well, I'm going to tell my story first,' said the friar.

So the friar began.

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There was an important man in the church who was very bad. He only wanted people's money. A summoner worked for this man. He watched people quietly. Then he caught them when they did bad things. 'You must leave the church,' he told them. 'But if you give me a lot of money, you can come into the church again.'

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One day, the summoner was on his way to see an old woman. He thought that she was a bad woman. He wanted her to give him money.

On the way he met a man. The man was wearing bright red clothes and riding a brown horse.



The man was wearing bright red clothes and riding a brown horse.

'Where are you riding to?' asked the man.
Nobody liked the summoner, so he lied.

'I'm just going to get some money from an old woman. She has to pay the money to my lord.'

'Oh, so you're a bailiff,' said the man.

A bailiff is a man who looks after land for rich lords. He takes money from the farmers who use the land.

'Yes, that's right,' answered the summoner. 'I'm a bailiff.'

'I've got a farm which I look after for a lord,' said the man.

'Oh, that's interesting,' said the summoner. 'Tell me, how do you get your money from people?'

'I get it in many different ways,' said the man. 'I like having a lot of money, but my lord doesn't pay me much.'

'I've got my ways too,' said the summoner. 'I don't mind if people are frightened of me or unhappy. I think we're the same, you and I. What's your name?'

The man's answer gave the summoner a surprise.

'I'll tell you who I am. I'm a devil, and I live in hell!' he said.

'Oh, I thought you were an ordinary man like me,' said the summoner. 'You look like a man.'

'Devils can look like anything they want to,' laughed the devil.

'There are good reasons for this. Now, let's continue our journey.'



So the man and the devil rode along the road. After a short time, they saw a man with some horses. He was hitting the horses and shouting at them.

'The devil can take you, you lazy animals!' he cried.

'Did you hear that?' the summoner asked the devil. 'Go and take his horses. He says that the devil can take them!'

'You can't believe everything you hear,' answered the devil.

'Wait. Let's see what happens.'

After a few minutes the tired horses started to walk a little

faster. 'Good horses!' shouted their owner. 'Good Brock! Good old Scottie! God will save you all!'

'What did I tell you?' said the devil. 'He said one thing but he meant another thing. There's nothing for me here. Let's continue.'



When the town was far behind them, the summoner said to the devil, 'You didn't do very well with the man and his horses, did you? Now I'm going to get some money from this poor old woman. Watch carefully! You can see how I do it.'

He went to the old woman's door. 'Come out!' he shouted. 'I'm sure you're doing something bad in there!'

'Who's that?' cried the old woman, coming quickly out of her house.

When she saw the summoner, she looked very frightened. 'Oh, it's you, sir,' she said.

'People are saying some very bad things about you,' said the summoner in a serious voice. 'If they're true, you'll have to go to the church. You'll have to pay them a lot of money.'

When she heard this, the old woman began to cry.

'Oh, sir, please be kind to me,' she said. 'I'm ill and I can't get to church. Can I pay you the money?'

'Yes, but you must pay me now,' answered the summoner. 'It will cost you twelve pennies. Quickly!'

'Twelve pennies!' cried the old woman. 'Oh, God help me! I haven't got twelve pennies! What can I do?'

'Give me your money!' shouted the summoner angrily.

'But I haven't done anything bad,' said the poor woman.

'Give me your money or I'll take your cooking pot. You were with a man who isn't your husband. You know you were!'

'No, I always loved my husband,' cried the old woman. 'I hope the blackest devil in hell carries you away! And the cooking pot too!'

Then the devil spoke to the old woman. 'Do you really mean what you're saying, madam?'

'Yes I do!' she answered. 'The devil can carry him away – clothes, cooking pot, everything.'

The summoner was still shouting at her. He was very angry.

'What? Will I get no money from this stupid old woman?'

'Why are you so angry?' asked the devil. 'You and the cooking pot are mine now. She gave you to me. Tonight you'll be in hell with me. You can learn about devils there and about how we do our work!'

Suddenly the devil jumped on the summoner and caught him.

Then he carried him down to hell. There's a place for summoners in hell, and it's always very full!



The friar finished his story and looked at all the pilgrims.

'Think hard about my story,' he said. 'We must hope that God will keep us from the devil!'

Then the summoner told his story about the friar. But it wasn't a very interesting story so I haven't put it in this book.

The Nun's Priest's Tale

Chaunticleer and the Fox

There was a nun on the pilgrimage called Madam Eglantine. A priest was travelling with her to help her on the journey. His name was John.

The knight said, 'We've had enough sad stories. Let's have a happy story now! You, priest – can you tell us a happy story?'

The nun's priest, John, thought for a minute and then answered, 'I'll try!'

So he told the story of Chaunticleer and Pertelote. Chaunticleer was a cock, and Pertelote was a hen.

This is the story.



A long time ago, there was a poor old woman who lived in a small house in the country. Near her house was a wood.

The old woman was very poor, so she couldn't buy any food. She only ate the things that she grew in her garden, and the eggs from her hens.

The hens lived in the garden during the day. Chaunticleer, the cock, was the lord of the hens. The name Chaunticleer means 'sing beautifully' and he had a wonderful voice. Every morning he sang when the sun came up. During the day he sang every hour. So the old woman didn't need a clock – she could always tell the time by the cock.

Chaunticleer was the lord of seven hens. His wife was called Pertelote. She was very wise and she knew her husband very well. He told her everything and they often sang love songs together.



Chaunticleer, the cock, was the lord of the hens.

At night, Chaunticleer and the hens slept on the roof of the old woman's house.

One morning, just before the sun came up, Chaunticleer was sitting on the roof with Pertelote and the other hens. He was making a terrible noise, like someone who is very frightened. When Pertelote heard him, she felt frightened too.

'Oh, dear heart! she cried. 'What's the matter? Did you sleep badly?'

'Don't be angry with me, my love,' answered her husband. 'I've had a very bad dream and I still feel frightened. I thought I was in great danger. Please God, bring me something good and not danger.'

'What was your dream about, dearest?' asked Pertelote in a worried voice. 'Tell me about it.'

'I dreamed that I was walking in our garden. Suddenly I saw an animal that looked like a dog. It wanted to kill me! It looked terrible – it was yellow and red with black ears. And it had two burning eyes that were looking straight at me! I've never felt so afraid in all my life. That's why I was crying out in my sleep.'

'Oh, I thought I had a brave husband!' cried Pertelote. 'But you're not the kind of husband that a woman wants. How can a brave man be afraid of dreams? You're having bad dreams because you eat too much!'

Pertelote knew a lot about health. She was as good as a doctor.

'You're ill, you know. That's why you dreamed about danger. When we fly down to the ground this morning, I'll show you some plants. You must eat them to get better.'

Chaunticleer was angry with his wife.

'She can't tell me what to do!' he thought. 'I haven't eaten too much. And I'm not ill. Dreams mean something.'

He said to his wife, 'Thank you for your lesson, but there are many wise books about dreams. These books say that all dreams mean something. And I know many true stories about dreams.'

Chauntecleer was a great talker and he read a lot of books. He started to tell his wife about three dreams which came true.

This is the first dream.



One day, two pilgrims came to a town where there were a lot of people. It was very crowded, so there weren't many places to stay. In the end they had to sleep in different places. One man slept in a comfortable house, and the other man slept in a farmhouse.

In the night, the man in the comfortable house dreamed that his friend was calling him. His friend was crying, 'Help! Help! There are dangerous animals in my room! They're going to kill me! Come quickly!'

The friend had the same dream three times.

The third time, the man in the farmhouse cried, 'It's too late! I'm already dead! They've killed me and hidden my body. Go to the west gate of the town. You'll find my body there.'

So the friend went to the west gate, and there he found the body.



Chauntecleer said, 'You see, dreams have meanings. Now, I'll tell you another story.'

This was his second story.



Two men wanted to sail across the sea, but they had to wait for the right wind.

They went to stay in a city near the sea, and decided to sail early the next day. They went to bed in the same room. They were happy that they could start their journey soon.

But in the night one of the men dreamed that he saw a man in their room. This man said to him, 'If you sail tomorrow, you'll die. Stay here, in the city, for one more day. Then you'll be safe.'

The man woke up and told his friend the story, but his friend laughed at him. He didn't believe that the dream was true.

'The wind's right today,' he said. 'You stay here if you want to wait. I'm leaving. Dreams mean nothing! Goodbye!'

He walked away and the man never saw his friend again. The ship sailed onto some rocks, and all the men in it were killed.



Then Chauntecleer told Pertelote his third story. It was about the King of Mercia's son.

This little boy was only seven years old. He dreamed that he was in great danger. He told a kind woman about his dream but she didn't believe him. Nobody believed his dream.

A few days later, the king's sister killed the little boy.



Chauntecleer finished his stories and said, 'My dear Pertelote, I feel better now. I'm not frightened. Let's fly down to the garden.'

The cock and his wife both flew down from the roof and Chauntecleer called all his hens to him. He felt like a king and he wasn't afraid.

It was a beautiful morning. When Chauntecleer sang, his voice sounded happy and strong. He happily told the world what time it was.

'Madam Pertelote,' he said, 'listen to the birds. They sound wonderful! And look at the flowers. They look lovely after their long winter's sleep. My love, my heart is full of happiness.'

But then a terrible thing happened.

A fox lived in the little wood near the old woman's house. He came into the garden during the night and hid quietly behind the trees until it was midday. 'That's the best time to catch poor Chauntecleer,' he thought to himself.



'Oh, Chaunticleer,' the nun's priest said, 'it was a bad day for you! You came down from your safe roof into the dangerous garden! You tried to forget your dream — but it was true!'

'It was a mistake for Chaunticleer to listen to his wife. Women are often wrong. But I'm a nun's priest, so I mustn't say too much against women!'



Pertelote was sitting happily in the sun with all her sisters round her. Chaunticleer stood near them, singing loudly.

Then the cock heard a noise and turned quickly. There was the fox! He stopped singing immediately. He felt very, very frightened.

'Dear sir,' said the fox, 'why have you stopped singing? I'm your friend. I don't want to hurt you. You sing beautifully, like your mother and father. They've both been to my house. They were very kind to come. I was very happy to have them there.'

'I've never heard anyone sing like your father on that morning. He shut his eyes and stood up tall. Now, please sir, can you sing for me like your father?'

Chaunticleer was very pleased to hear these words. He didn't understand the fox's true meaning. So he stood up tall, shut his eyes, and began to sing.

The fox suddenly caught Chaunticleer and threw him on his back. Then he ran with him towards the wood.

The hens saw the fox and made a terrible noise. Pertelote made the loudest noise. The old woman and her two daughters ran out of their house when they heard her.

'Fox! Fox!' they cried out, and ran into the wood. The seven hens followed them, then the old woman's three dogs, and the other farm animals. People ran out of their houses and threw things at the fox.

The women shouted, 'Fox! Fox!' The hens ran — 'Cluck!

Cluck!' The dogs ran — 'Woof! Woof!' Everyone followed the fox and poor Chaunticleer.



'Now, good people,' said the nun's priest, 'you must listen to the end of my story. Then you'll learn something.'



The fox ran deeper and deeper into the wood with Chaunticleer in his mouth. When he stopped for a rest, the cock spoke to him.

'Sir Fox, you must turn round and speak to those stupid people. Say to them, "Go back home! I've reached the wood now and I'm going to eat this cock. You can't do anything about it, so stop making that noise. Go home!"'

'That's a good idea,' answered the fox.

Of course, when the fox opened his mouth to speak, he dropped Chaunticleer. The cock quickly flew up into a high tree.

'Oh, dear Sir Chaunticleer,' said the fox, as he looked up, 'I didn't want to frighten you. I didn't really want to eat you. Come down, and talk to me.'

'No,' shouted Chaunticleer, 'I'm not coming down. I've been very stupid but now I understand you!'

'Ah!' replied the fox. 'I was the stupid one. I spoke when you were in my mouth. I must learn to keep my mouth shut.'



'So,' said the nun's priest, 'don't believe everything that people say to you in this world. My story isn't just a simple one about a fox, a cock and seven hens. It can teach you important things. You can learn from it.'

'Thank you,' said the pilgrims. 'Thank you, Sir Priest, for a very good story.'