

AP English Notes
6 October 2004

The Prioress:

Her name is Madame Eglantine, translated as “Sweet Briar,” and she is the most delicate and supposedly sensitive creature. She speaks in a French, which is an English learning of the language; however, she is attempting to look very courtly with her knowledge of the French as the language of kings. The Prioress cries if she sees a mouse in a trap and feeds her lap dogs “fine white bread,” while children starve.

She makes every effort to appear refined and elegant; she “counterfeits a courtly grace” while she should reflect the calm serene of a world that is dedicated to Christ. She has forgotten her vows to the church which made her a “bride of Christ.” She owns jewelry, lap dogs, and loves to travel outside her convent. The Prioress’ lips are red as if she uses cosmetics or bites her laps to appear “pretty” to others. She exposes her forehead which is suppose to be covered. She also wears jewelry: beads with a charm that contains a Latin phrase meaning “love conquerors all.” If this love is “agape” that is one thing; however, we are not sure whether it is “eros, phili, or agape.”

Notes on the Prioress

Prioress was the superior in a convent

Bound to all the restrictions of a nun

Expected to live a cloistered life

Maintain reverent solitude

Must practice humility and compassion

Not allowed pets

A nun (Prioress) took the vows of

– Poverty

– Chastity

– Obedience

Prioress outward appearance shows the reader her inner qualities

– Counterfeits courtly grace

– Exposes forehead

– Owns jewelry

Three Priests and another nun:

They are all companions to the Prioress.