Introduction

By the middle of the thirteenth century in France, the common word for fox, *goupil,* had been replaced by the name of the fox whose adventures are related here. Nothing could better demonstrate the popular appeal of the *Roman de Renart* and its anti-establishment attitudes. The authors were anything but pedantic; nor were they out to write the simple tales for children extracted from their work by later bowdlerizers. They attacked, with gusto and a subterranean idealism, the government of their country, its legal system, its Church, the formalities of feudalism, the hollow protection offered the underprivileged, and the unredeemed brutality of peasants. They put us on the side of a revolutionary individual who is, however, no social reformer but a murderer and a thief. These writers have their own *renardie,* craftiness and guile, and take full advantage of the fact that at a masquerade, if the rhymes are good enough, almost anything can be said.

Unlike the fables from which the animal characters partly derive, the *Roman de Renart* has no overt moral purpose. No doubt it is intended to be instructive, but the more it exposes the complex weaknesses that constitute the very fabric of the society it depicts, the more it makes them an occasion for enjoyment. When the characters are clothed in real fur and real feathers, not only is their experience of life, insofar as it resembles our own, an entertainment, but there is further charm in those moments when we are reminded, by a gesture of wing or tail, that they *are* animals. The same literary mechanism, however, holds

bleak implications. Laws, even those of a king, cannot really protect the vulnerable creatures in the *Roman*, because predation is an irreproachable norm of animal existence. To think of Renard as a fox makes rich comedy of his trial and condemnation for murdering a chicken. However, since Renard is one of King Noble's most important vassals, the reader might infer that the predations of a *seigneur* would similarly be part of the very nature of the beast.

The title *Roman de Renart* was applied in the late twelfth century to a loosely organized collection of tales in the vernacular whose principal characters were a fox and a wolf. These verse narratives were written independently of each other and are referred to as *branches* by some of the authors. Approximately fifteen tales were written between 1174 and 1205, and production of related stories, lacking in quality if not in enthusiasm, continued until the middle of the thirteenth century. All the branches are derived, directly or indirectly, from the work of Pierre de Saint-Cloud, who was the first to write in French of the famous triangle consisting of Renard the fox, Ysengrin the wolf, and Hersent his wife, which forms the nucleus of the major adventures. Pierre did not invent the hostility of fox and wolf, but he did give the wolf a less than virtuous wife, a fact that complicates matters when Renard is eventually brought to trial, accused by Hersent and Ysengrin of rape. That episode is narrated in detail by the most brilliant of the Renard authors in "The Trial of Renard." These oldest sections of the *Roman* are completed, in the present translation, by "Renard's Pilgrimage," written between 1180 and 1200, which describes Renard in his not very mellow old age.

References to the *Roman de Renart* in the twelfth century and throughout the thirteenth century—in epic poems, romances, chronicles, sermons, and countless edifying and unedifying stories—more than justify Lucien Foulet's statement that few if any works of the period

were so widely read.[1] For literary monuments of similar significance one would have to refer to *Tristan et Iseut* and *Le Roman de la Rose*, certainly superior to *Le Roman de Renart* in dignity but appealing to a much more restricted public. For generations of readers, including Chaucer, the French authors established the archetype of the rogue fox, but the very popularity of the source was responsible for its virtual disappearance. The best and oldest branches were buried in the avalanche of derivative works—some 25,000 lines copied and recopied in conflicting, contradictory manuscripts in which the outlines of the individual tales were obscured and sometimes vanished entirely. The Renard stories survived through foreign adaptations, particularly the late twelfth century German *Reinhart Fuchs*, by Henri Glichezâre; a fourteenth century Flemish version is the source of what medieval material remains in Goethe's *Reineke Fuchs*.

The earliest extant French manuscripts are thirteenth century copies. The first modern edition was made by D. M. Méon in 1826. Ernest Martin's more rigorously edited text first appeared in 1882. The present translation is based on this text as reprinted and emended in 1970. The text of another manuscript was published, beginning in 1948, by Mario Roques. Known as the Cangé manuscript, it contains some interesting variations of the texts used here, as indicated in the notes.

A number of theories have developed about the sources of the *Roman*, many of them inspired by the work of the nineteenth-century philologist Jakob Grimm (author of *Grimm's Fairy Tales*). Grimm's studies placed the origins of the *Roman* in the depths of German forests where observations of animal life would have given rise to a folklore transformed, many centuries later, into the medieval poems. The considerable body of opinion, pro and con, evoked by Grimm had subsided with no victory on either side when, in 1892, Leopold Sudre dissected the *Roman* into its thematic elements—the bear's weakness

for honey, the vanity of the cock, and so on—and demonstrated that comparable episodes can be found from Sanskrit to Swedish.

Subsequent criticism, most notably that of Lucien Foulet, has convincingly established that there is no need to go so far, at least to identify the sources of the French text. The decades immediately preceding the first appearance of the *Roman* (in about 1170–1175, according to Foulet's chronology) offered a considerable number of possible literary antecedents, notably Marie de France's translations of Aesop's fables and Nivard's Latin poem *Ysengrimus* (c. 1150). Foulet believes that Pierre de Saint-Cloud probably knew them both (p. 151). Pierre's reading of *Ysengrimus* is virtually certain and would have been far more significant. The Latin poem seems to have supplied the idea of an animal epic organized around the conflict of fox and wolf.

Ysengrimus, however, is a complex and very erudite clerical work, exceedingly long-winded. Resemblances between it and the *Roman de Renart* involve the plot alone. Foulet (p. 150) points out that the curious family relationships between the animals of Branch II are already established in *Ysengrimus*, in which Reinardus is not only the cock's *compère (compater)* but also his cousin and the nephew of Ysengrimus. Reinardus and Renard meet their intended victims in the same order. In *Ysengrimus*, the mistreatment of the wolf cubs occurs at the beginning of the fox's visit to their home, and nothing about it is contradicted by either Renard's character or the plot. In the *Roman* the motive is quite obscure, and one would be inclined to agree with Foulet (p. 136) that it shows the author somewhat ill at ease with his predecessor's version of the episode.

Pierre de Saint-Cloud's account of this adventure differs from that of Nivard on a point of such capital importance that it influences the entire story; in the Old French version the wolf's wife more or less initiates the adultery and

certainly welcomes it. This suggests a possible explanation for the author's having retained Renard's mistreatment of Hersent's cubs. The plot must somehow proceed to rape, a difficult problem if Hersent was so readily seduced. The rage of the cubs makes them refuse to keep Hersent's secret from her husband, and she can defend herself only by pretending to be furious with Renard. She actually seems to become so, perhaps simply under the influence of adrenaline; she outdistances Ysengrin in pursuing the fox and so plunges headlong into the excessively narrow entrance to his lair. After that, her desire for vengeance is quite natural, and the occasion offers a particularly good example of Renard's gratuitous wickedness.

Pierre's narrative continues in the branch called Va,[2] but another author completed Pierre's work five years later by bringing Renard to trial. Renard is condemned to go on a pilgrimage, at his own insincere suggestion, but he actually starts out only in Branch VIII. These branches (II, Va, I, and VIII) are translated in this book, presented in the coherent order. Branch I clearly refers to its predecessor, giving us Pierre's name.[3] These are the oldest and best poems in the collection, and they fully justify Bossuat's statement that the *Roman de Renart* provides us with the most faithful image we have of feudal society at its zenith.[4]

Based on these early texts of the *Roman* alone, an evaluation of the French monarchy in the late twelfth century would be quite accurate. The supremacy of the king is recognized by all. He even has the power to declare a universal truce (as Louis VII had actually done in 1155).[5] The greater and lesser vassals attend his court, where a respectful decorum is maintained. Although none of the vassals has the strength of King Noble the lion, there are some, like the wolf, who have a great position at court and who are always threatening to flout the law if it cannot be adjusted to suit them. There is constant danger of

alliances that might be able to influence or attack the king. On the other hand, as even Renard's behavior occasionally shows, King Noble has a genuine prestige; the respect he inspires goes to a certain extent beyond his ability to command it.

The project of a universal peace both in the *Roman* and in actuality is more than ambitious. Private wars were prohibited by *L'Enquête de Caen* in 1091, and they had to be prohibited again early in the thirteenth century in the *Très Ancienne Coutume de Normandie*.[6] King Louis's general truce was in force for ten years, but in practice his experience may have resembled that of King Noble, who discovers that the strong continue to devour the weak when hunger and opportunity coincide. For the most part, references to the truce in the *Roman de Renart* are either hypocritical or jocular. The ultimate answer to disobedience is, of course, war. The great lord, so threatened, retires to his fortress, as Renard does to Maupertuis, lays in supplies, and has a good chance of wearing out and even harassing the opposition. Branch Ia relates exactly this situation, but unfortunately in a style without much literary quality.

The king's court as seen in the *Roman* is primarily judicial. Hersent and Ysengrin are as sure as is Pinte the hen that the king will give them a fair judgment and a legal way to avenge their wrongs. King Noble, exactly in the manner of Charlemagne in *La Chanson de Roland*, appoints a council to meet and decide on an appropriate verdict—great lords were normally judged by their peers. Regardless of whether the council's decision would necessarily be binding on the king, he does ask for advice, turning to the learned jurist from Lombardy as well, and for the most part follows it.

The council's deliberations stand as proof that the authors of the *Roman* were not invariably pessimistic about human nature. Bricemer the stag and Baucent the boar are both absolutely on Ysengrin's side, but that does not

prevent them from judging Hersent's testimony inadmissible since, as Bricemer says, she is inclined to do whatever her husband asks and is, besides, a very convincing liar. Baucent agrees that testimony from interested parties is not to be relied on and that the case cannot be decided until Renard himself appears before the court. Their friend Bruin's account of how Renard betrayed him does not change their opinion. Graven (p. 121) is surely correct in stating that although the guilty party escapes punishment in the *Roman*, justice at Noble's court is an ideal sincerely pursued. Nevertheless, the king reacts with an exclamation of pleasure when the council relieves him of further participation in Renard's trial. A noble's claim to innocence is to be proved by an oath taken in the presence of an esteemed watchdog (not an impartial observer, one would think, for a fox), and the king is very responsive to the suggestion that he himself will be unable to attend.[7]

Once a formal accusation has been made, the accused must be brought within reach of jurisdiction. The self-confident Renard does not bother attending the court at first, although it is a plenary session and no one else is absent. Nevertheless, in both Branch Va and Branch I, he obeys the king without coercion.

Legal custom as set down in the early-thirteenth-century *La Très Ancienne Coutume de Bretagne* considered failure to appear when summoned an admission of guilt.[8] Renard's attitude also contains, of course, an element of bravado. He is a distinguished vassal of the king, but his enemies at court are far more numerous than his friends. None would know better than he how thin the veneer of universal peace and deference to the law would become once he was really dependent on the truce and the law for protection. Against this reality stands the statement of the Lombard camel, clear despite his multilingual jargon: the primary duty of the king is to make sure that no one is condemned without trial or, when proved guilty, escapes

without punishment. If he cannot maintain justice in his lands, ruling his vassals honorably and with affection, he might as well become a monk!

Very little is treated as sacred in the *Roman*, certainly not the clerical orders. Respect is paid to them, however, through their contribution to the plot. Renard more than once lures Ysengrin to disaster by promising him a share in the monks' rich stores of food. Apart from farmers and peasants, few of whom have significant speaking roles, the human characters in the *Roman* are monks and hermits. These may be credulous enough to be helpful, like the friar Renard meets in Branch II who is persuaded that Renard is merely having a friendly race with the dogs, or dangerous, like the parish priest of Branch I, father of Martin de la Tour, who stuck a manure fork into Bruin's side (although the priest appears much less effective later when he leaps half-naked out of his unsanctified bed to attack Tibert and lose the battle).

The hermit who listens to Renard's confession in Branch VIII is more convincing in his spiritual role, but the case, he says, is beyond his powers. The exercise of priestly functions is not limited to the ordained. Bruin puts on a stole and presides at Mme. Copee's funeral. Grinbert the badger not only listens to Renard's confession but gives him absolution in both French and Latin. Renard, in any case, loves to confess: it provides an opportunity for dwelling on moments of past triumph.

In the absence of conclusive evidence, or in deference to a vassal powerful enough to prefer God's judgment to man's, combat or trial by ordeal was a familiar procedure. It had, of course, its problems. Hersent suggests the most extreme demonstrations of her innocence, offering, for instance, to carry a red-hot iron. Noble is all in favor, but Ysengrin realizes that not only his wife's hands but his pride would be at risk. The council's decision in Renard's case is that he should simply swear to his innocence in the presence of his accuser and a reliable judge. The insistence on there being a holy relic to swear on seems to

come only from Ysengrin; certainly Bricemer thinks that Renard's word alone would be sufficient. Neither he nor anyone else, however, questions the elevation of Roenel to sainthood simply by reason of his supposed death, nor do they admit to any difference between an ordeal that involves physical danger and one that, at least in principle, does not.

Not only instant sainthood but miracle working and instant martyrdom occur in the *Roman*, both in fact engineered by Ysengrin and his ally the dog. Ysengrin is cured of earache by putting his head on the grave of Renard's victim Mme. Copee, with Roenel as witness to reinforce the faith one should have in holy miracles. Although it is usual to say that Ysengrin is stupid—certainly he is no match for Renard in unscrupulous cleverness—this ploy cannot be faulted as a means of intensifying public outcry against the killer (Branch I, lines 459–469).

When Renard succeeds in having his sentence of death commuted to a lifelong pilgrimage, the lion asks the fox to forgive them all, and Queen Fiere says, "We'll pray for you, / And remember us in your prayers too" (Branch I, lines 1441–1442). Expressions of Christian charity and piety are rare enough in the poems to deserve mention, but these are, of course, quickly followed by a response not at all in kind. The authors of "The Trial of Renard" and "Renard's Pilgrimage" express the opinion that those who undertake journeys to the Holy Land are likely to return worse than when they started out. This is why King Noble does not want Renard ever to return, even presumably edified by his visits to holy shrines. Renard, with the same excuse, decides later in life that plans for reform are best carried out at home.

Although direct comments from the author are rare in the *Roman*, there is at least one evocation of court life from a strictly human point of view. The speech is given to Renard but has little relevance except as a personal complaint from the poet. In "The Trial of Renard," Renard explains that he wanted to enjoy a good dinner before

going to court, for fear that he would be treated as a poor man once he got there (lines 505–530). There is a wonderfully vivid description of the unfortunate guest fighting off the housedogs who crowd around him since he has no place at the table and making his one drink and single serving last as long as possible. Renard himself, who could claim to be Noble's most distinguished vassal, would certainly have been better treated. The author seems not to be imagining special circumstances owing to Renard's fall from grace, but rather expressing grievances of his own. The most acerbic comments are directed at thieving seneschals and cooks, the implication being that the lords of castles would be more generous were they not deprived of the means.

The other authors of the early branches remain more detached, their interventions tending to be briefer and more conventional, but they, like the author of Branch I, express themselves indirectly through literary allusions—references to books, stylistic echoes, or resemblances between the animal characters and the humans of other fiction. This, of course, adds both depth and humor to the characterization. Renard may be either Roland or the traitor Ganelon, depending on whether we are admiring his courage or deploring his motives. King Noble sometimes recalls Charlemagne, sitting on his throne surrounded by respectful warriors, and sometimes the less heroic figure of King Arthur as he appears in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes.

There are echoes of Guinevere in Queen Fiere's gracious attitude toward Renard, and this conjures up Lancelot as an image of all that Renard is not. Hersent parodies Iseut, especially when she clamors for trial by ordeal and contrives statements of the truth that will communicate, under oath, an opposite meaning (Branch I, lines 147–150). Ysengrin, like King Mark, vacillates between crude ferocity and a readiness to believe what he wants to no matter how flimsy the evidence. The evocation of literary gran-

deur is a comment on the unredeemed adulteries of actual life as the *Roman* presents it.

Hersent may have eloquence and infidelity in common with Iseut, but her lover is scarcely Tristan. Encounters with other creatures are, for Renard, so many opportunities to prove himself their superior. His mistreatment of titmouse, cat, and crow persuade us that Hersent's embracing Renard on one occasion would not prevent her being raped by him when she was vulnerable to attack. Neither scruples nor self-interest restrain him; he sees no advantage in making alliances with beings inferior to him in either wit or physical power. Consequently, once outside the shelter of Maupertuis, he is in enemy territory, and the larger the number joined against him in their righteous indignation, the more both his contempt and his courage increase. In his total alienation from society, and in his awareness of it, he becomes at certain moments the first of the Romantic heroes. To Tibert, summoning him to face the court's sure condemnation, Renard replies (Branch I, lines 793–795):

> How I deal with threats you shall see,
> And those who'd sharpen their teeth on me.
> While I can I will live my life!

When Renard stands before King Noble at last, his first concern is not to conciliate but to remind the king of his services (unlike Roland he does not enumerate them). If Bruin and Tibert came to harm, it was owing to their own weaknesses. "Who ate the honey, if not the bear?" How could Renard possibly have caused injury to such an enormous fellow? Unfortunately, King Noble, seeing Renard primarily as the murderer of Mme. Copee, is not in a mood for making nice distinctions, and Renard soon finds himself about to be hanged. Even in despair he fights on, appealing to the king's religious scruples, until he is saved. As a penitent he puts just enough distance between himself and the court so that, standing on a hilltop above them,

he can use his pilgrim's flag to express his absolute disdain for those he has gulled, risking his life for the gesture once again.

Renard's defense—that Tibert and Bruin were trapped by their own greed—is perfectly true as far as it goes. Beyond it, however, is Renard's unabashed enjoyment of their suffering. Thus Grinbert reproaches Renard when he brings him the king's letter (Branch I, lines 982–984):

> What did you want of Ysengrin?
> Why harm Tibert? Why hurt Bruin?
> You have betrayed them to your ruin.

Renard does not answer these questions directly, but he clearly does not regard them as irrelevant. This same devilish trait is established in Branch II by Renard's unprovoked attack on Hersent's cubs and then on their mother. In earlier scenes, the titmouse was supposed to be both relative and friend. In Tiecelin's case Renard could have contented himself with the cheese alone. He had absolutely nothing to gain from attempting to trap Tibert, a good fighter who had, just a moment before, signed on as the fox's ally.

But we delight in all these adventures, just as we enjoy the incongruous eloquence of the hens even as we sympathize with their bereavement, and so participate in a characteristically ambivalent medieval approach to reality (thanks to which God, at least in romances, protects illicit lovers). Renard reformed would not be Renard. When we encounter him, older and grayer, in Branch VIII, it seems at first that he is genuinely unhappy about the hatred he inspires. When they realize that he really is lamenting his inability to perform reprehensible deeds, most readers will be inclined to feel more sympathy than regret. The pilgrimage makes it clear that Renard can still lead the unsuspecting into peril, again with the excuse, if one be needed, that their own weakness led them to it. The sheep and the donkey insist on having a roof over their heads,

and Renard doesn't feel obliged to say that the lodging he proposes belongs to the wolf.

Renard at home is someone else again. At Maupertuis, wonderfully poised between baronial castle and fox's lair, Renard lives a domestic life of considerable charm. He has a devoted wife, always ready to bind up his wounds, prepare his bath, and soothe him with an invalid's meal. We see her, accompanied by their three sons, hurrying to embrace Renard when he escapes the pursuing horde at the end of Branch I. Hermeline, unlike the wolf's wife, is completely faithful to her spouse as long as she thinks he is alive. (Branch Ib, which relates her erroneous widowhood and attempt at remarriage, concludes with a quick return to domestic harmony.) About to leave for his trial, Renard embraces his wife and children and explains to his sons how they can be safe in their castle, at least for quite a while. He commends them to God and then speaks a prayer for himself which is a striking example of his unflinching insight (Branch I, lines 1129–1133):

> God, King, in your omnipotence,
> Let my craft and my common sense
> Not be lost to me out of fear
> When before the king I must appear
> To answer Ysengrin in court.

No one in the *Roman* is wholly admirable. Every character will use his powers unjustly—even the weakest, like Coward the hare—when he gets a chance. Bricemer the stag, an animal of particular fair-mindedness, is constantly making important errors in judgment which the others, respecting his opinion, do not perceive. (One is reminded here of Charlemagne's most respected source of counsel, Duke Naimon, whose wisdom always provided poor advice.) The vanity of totally innocent creatures like Chanteclere increases their vulnerability, and Dame Pinte's prudence becomes a source of ostentatious self-esteem. Renard's independence thus comes to seem a proof of

superior values, while the ineffectual brutes and weak-minded victims around him make us cherish the spirited sinner who takes them for his prey.

Pierre de Saint-Cloud, however, chose to give Renard an opponent superior to the wolf in *Ysengrimus*. Renard and Ysengrin are both described in the beginning of the poem as "mighty lords" and essentially equals. In Branch Va it is mentioned, quite arbitrarily, that Ysengrin speaks "several languages." We hear him, of course, only in French, and if his eloquence is not a match for Renard's, he is an effective speaker, not without finesse. He begins when addressing the court, for example, by emphasizing that Renard has not simply insulted Ysengrin but has broken the law. This is even more disrespectful to the king than to the husband and wife. Except for losing his way so that Hersent arrives at Maupertuis before him, Ysengrin does not show stupidity as much as he finds himself in a ridiculous position. He cannot accuse Renard without admitting that he witnessed the rape of his own wife and could do nothing about it. On the other hand, his attempts at guile do not go beyond seeking out the proposed judge Roenel, and it is the dog who contrives the crude plan of turning the oath taking into a murder. (One wonders how the other animals were supposed to have reacted to that event. Possibly it was hoped they would consider that a miracle had been accomplished by the dead "saint"!)

There are references, particularly in Branch I, to various occasions on which Renard made a fool of Ysengrin—getting him trapped in a pit, in a rich man's larder, in a frozen pond, in a monastery—but the cause of the war between them was more Renard's malice than Ysengrin's dull wits, and the fox escapes the wolf's immediate vengeance by speed rather than by cleverness.

Although Ysengrin is endlessly the victim of Renard, he never manages to inspire our sympathy. The fact that Hersent welcomes Renard in the first place does not increase our esteem for her husband, and his violence makes her seem, if not justified, at least courageous. He is gullible

not, like King Mark, because he loves his wife, but entirely because of pride. Only the blind rage that overcomes him at the thought of a cuckold's horns makes it possible for him to appear in court at all, and this, too, makes him seem less than pitiable.

After Ysengrin, it is Bruin the bear who hates Renard the most, and his reasons are at least as good. He is neither cowardly nor excessively virtuous, but he does not seek personal vengeance, possibly because he lacks imagination. He will fight very effectively when forced to it but is otherwise not aggressive. It is he who protests when Noble wants to dismiss Ysengrin's case as unworthy of notice, but he seeks a legal rather than a martial solution. Nor does he make a formal complaint on his own behalf, but he does give, without embarrassment, a lengthy account of Renard's misdeeds to demonstrate the need for the court's intervention. On the other hand, when the council meets in Branch Va, the stag and the boar are far more scrupulous than Bruin is about the niceties of evidence.

Unlike the smaller and more intelligent Tibert the cat, Bruin does not hesitate to visit Maupertuis on the king's errand; in fact, he volunteers. Perhaps the false confidence given him by his size makes him unable to learn from experience. The love of honey that caused the extreme physical suffering he describes to the council has even more painful results in Branch I; the king, when Bruin falls fainting at his feet, thinks the bear is dead. When Renard makes his subsequent confession to Grinbert, however, he does not think the episode worthy of mention.

The name given to the king of all these beasts is not meant to be taken ironically. Noble may have his limitations, but he is not wholly unworthy as a monarch. He enjoys the respect of his subjects, including Renard who, after the trial, takes leave of Noble and the queen with a formality he shows no other members of the court. The ability to bring the accused and powerful baron to trial depends to some extent on the mystique of kingship. Grin-

bert will have no influence over Renard, safe in Maupertuis, unless he carries a letter sealed by the king.

Bruin, a blunt speaker, articulates the relation between the universal truce and the processes of law: if the king will not bring Renard to trial, Ysengrin cannot be expected to continue restraining himself. The king, however, would prefer another solution. He, like the rest of us, has a weakness for Renard, whose intelligence, he thinks, might well make an end of the wolf; and while Ysengrin's complaint is obviously justified, Noble is not inclined to regard it as a very serious matter. He offers Ysengrin fraternal consolation (Branch I, lines 49–50):

> And nowadays one sees all sorts
> Of cuckolds, even ruling courts!

He appeals to Ysengrin's sense of personal dignity and finally insists that Hersent be allowed her trial by ordeal, knowing that for Ysengrin the point is not Hersent's innocence—unlikely to be proved even if she carries a red-hot iron—but Renard's guilt. The king would prefer to avoid a direct confrontation that would mean either punishing a favorite or insulting a powerful vassal.

While King Noble's council has been much concerned with distinguishing admissible from inadmissible evidence, their master, finally enraged when he is shown the body of the murdered hen, requires nothing more to pronounce a verdict of guilty. Strictly speaking, Noble's first reaction is to have Renard summoned to court, but when Renard mistreats Bruin, the second summons is also a condemnation: Renard will be hanged. The lion will listen to nothing from the defense, and although he still goes through the form of asking his vassals for their advice, any who might have been inclined to debate the verdict are certainly much too terrified to speak. The lion rules because he is the strongest. Ultimately his whim is the only law.

Female characters in the *Roman* function as they probably did in the lives of most feudal lords: the women