

“The Wife of Bath’s Tale”  
pp. 138-147

1. Why is this pilgrim called the Wife of Bath?
2. How many times has the Wife of Bath been married?
3. When is the Wife of Bath’s tale set?
4. Why does the Wife of Bath say there are no more fairies?
5. What irony is there in the Wife of Bath’s comments about friars in lines 52-56?
6. What does the knight do to the maiden?
7. What is the king’s punishment for the knight’s crime?
8. Who intercedes for the knight?
9. On what conditions does the queen say the knight can save his life?
10. What are at least 7 things people say women want?
11. What criticism of women does the Wife of Bath make?
12. What secret does Midas have?
13. What is the purpose of the Wife of Bath including the story of Midas in her tale?
14. On his return to the queen after his time has expired, what does the knight see?
15. As he approaches how does the scene change?
16. What does the hag require in return for solving the riddle?
17. What is the answer to the riddle?
18. How is the answer ironic?
19. What must the knight do to fulfill his promise to the hag?
20. What is his reaction to this requirement?
21. How do you feel about his reaction? Sympathy? Justice?
22. How does the knight behave on his wedding night?
23. What does the knight’s behavior reveal about his character?
24. In the Middle Ages the concept of “gentleness” was related to the Old French word for “of noble birth” (gentility). So, a gentleman was considered one of noble birth. What does the hag say true gentleness is?
25. How might temporal things (line 308) hurt and maim?
26. What does the hag say about poverty?
27. According to the hag, what advantage is there to having an old and ugly wife?
28. When given the choice to have her old and ugly or young and beautiful, how does the knight reply?
29. What does his reply show about his character?
30. What is the final outcome of the story?