

## QUESTIONS ON “THE WIFE OF BATH’S PROLOGUE”

1. When was the first time the Wife of Bath got married?
2. How many husbands has she had?
3. What rationale does she give for always getting remarried when she says that “God bade us all to wax and multiply”?
4. What Biblical example does she give in support of having many spouses?
5. Note: one meaning of continent is having control of your bodily urges. The wife says she’ll “welcome the sixth” because she can’t “keep continent for years and years.”
6. \_\_\_\_\_ said it’s better “to marry than to burn.” \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ both had “several brides.”
7. Note: The Wife of Bath questions the church’s preference for celibacy. She asks where “did He command virginity”? She also says that “advice” is not a “commandment.”
8. What does she mean when she says “Not every dish and vessel’s made of gold, Some are of wood, yet earn their master’s praise”?
9. What comment does she have to make about living a life of perfection?
10. What argument does she make about the existence of “generative organs”?
11. In the section beginning “You wait,” she said, “my story’s not begun,” the wife uses a pattern of diction to expound on her discussion of marriage. Identify the three words that form this pattern. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. The wife has had three \_\_\_\_\_ husbands and \_\_\_\_\_ bad ones.
13. They give her \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, so she doesn’t deny them \_\_\_\_\_.
14. “A knowing wife if she is worth her salt / Can always prove her husband is at fault.” Which other tale espouses this point of view?
15. On page 265, the wife asserts that no matter what the wife is like, men will find \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Protesting over being denied money and being treated with suspicion when they want to go anywhere, the wife asserts that women want \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Note: She argues on p. 267 that 1) men whose wives “do their duty” shouldn’t grudge others the “extra,” and 2) that men are stingy when they start quoting Paul’s warnings against adornments as a threat to chastity.
18. Explain the allusion to Argus and his hundred eyes.
19. What strategy does the wife use to get her way in arguments with her older husbands?
20. The fourth husband kept a \_\_\_\_\_. She laments that she has lost her \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
21. To get revenge for his cheating, she made him think that \_\_\_\_\_.
22. How did husband four die?
23. The fifth husband was her \_\_\_\_\_ because he \_\_\_\_\_ her, but she \_\_\_\_\_ best.
24. What rationale does she give for this?
25. She took this husband for \_\_\_\_\_ and not \_\_\_\_\_.

26. While husband four was away at the Crusades, she walked out with Johnny and suggested that \_\_\_\_\_.
27. She was \_\_\_\_\_ and he \_\_\_\_\_ when they married.
28. What rationale does she give for her lustiness?
29. When they marry, she gives Johnny \_\_\_\_\_.
30. Why is she deaf?
31. What kinds of books does Johnny like to read?
32. The wife accuses the clergy of writing \_\_\_\_\_ about women.
33. Name three horrible wives Johnny reads about:  
\_\_\_\_\_
34. How does she finally get the upper hand in this marriage?

### **QUESTIONS ON THE “THE WIFE OF BATH’S TALE”**

1. How do you know the story happens during the old times when magic existed?
2. Why aren't there spirits and fairies anymore?
3. How does the Wife poke fun at the Friar on the trip?
4. Who is King during the time of this tale?
5. Of what crime is the knight guilty?
6. What is the knight's sentence?
7. How does the queen get power over the knight?
8. What riddle must the knight solve?
9. How long does the knight have to solve it?
10. List seven items that some say women want?
11. Why does the Wife of Bath include the story about King Midas' donkey ears?
12. What is the bargain between the knight and the old woman?
13. What is the answer to the knight's riddle?
14. What demand does the old woman make of the knight?
15. How does the knight treat her rudely and unchivalrously?
16. What lessons does the old woman teach the young knight about
  - A) nobility / gentility
  - B) poverty
  - C) old age
17. What two choices does the old woman give the knight? What is his answer?
18. How does the tale match the Wife of Bath's personality and beliefs about marriage?
19. What main ideas or themes can you get from the tale? Explain them.