“The Wife of Bath’s Tale” by Geoffrey Chaucer

READING QUESTIONS

1. In your opinion, what is the thing that women most desire?

2. As you read, write down details that show the Wife of Bath’s views on these topics:

Women

Marriage

True “Gentility” or Goodness

3. At the beginning of the tale, there is a dialogue between the Pardoner and the Wife of Bath. What do you learn about the Wife of Bath from this conversation?

4. Identify
   a. the knight’s crime
   b. his original punishment
   c. his second punishment

5. What problem does the knight have when he starts asking women what they want?

6. What bargain do the knight and the old woman make?
7. What payment for her help does the old woman demand?

8. What is the knight’s response to this demand?

9. In lines 366-382, the old woman presents an argument in favor of poverty. Summarize this argument:

10. What final choice does the old woman offer the knight at the end of the tale?

11. What is his response to this final choice?

12. At the end of her tale, the Wife of Bath speaks directly to the other pilgrims. What is her final comment on men, women, and marriage?

13. What does the Wife of Bath think that women desire most?

14. Describe the knight. What kind of person is he? How does Chaucer develop his character? (How does Chaucer show us what the knight is like?)

15. Describe the Wife of Bath. What kind of person is she? How does Chaucer develop her character? (How does Chaucer show us what the Wife of Bath is like?)