

# Women's position in society in the wife of bath



The Wife of Bath's tale provides insight into how women were treated and what their positions were in society during the Medieval Era. In this era women were seen as objects, under men. Women had small titles while men took on larger roles in society and dominated women.

The tale takes place in the days of King Arthur. The wife of bath herself, is a seamstress by occupation, married 5 times and had many other affairs in her youth, making her experienced in love. She has her own views of scripture and God's plan. The wife of Bath is one of the Canterbury Tales, and was written by Geoffrey Chaucer.

In the tale, the knight was asked to figure out what it was that women most desired. He searched and searched but couldn't figure it out. Some people said women wanted wealth and treasure, honor, jollity and pleasure, some wanted gorgeous clothes and others fun in bed, while others wanted to be oft widowed and remarried. Women in this era were made to seem like all they wanted were material things, they were made to seem like they needed men to do things for them just so they can be happy, and that women seek nothing but jewelry and clothes. This stereotype of women still goes on in our time, men think that all women want is to be flattered with words and that we can't do anything without them. As the knight went on searching, some said they desired freedom to do exactly as they please, with no one to reprove their faults and lies, rather to have one call them good and wise. Others said they find it sweet when they are controlled. People assumed that women in this era needed affirmation, they needed to be told they were doing the right thing to feel good about themselves and that they liked being controlled by men. These women were taught that it was okay for them to be

treated this way, that the man should always be in control, which made men think that they can do whatever they want with women, since they like to be controlled. In this day and age it is still like that, men are still controlling and some women still accept it, but it is better than it was in the Middle Ages.

Now women are standing up to men and letting them know that they are not going to let themselves be controlled by them, and that men and women are equal.

The knight couldn't find an answer that was certain so he went to an old lady, made a promise with her and she let him know exactly what it was women in this era actually wanted. The book said, women in this time want the self-same sovereignty over her husband, as over her lover, and master him; he must not be above her. Women in this time are similar in this way of thinking as women right now. Women in the Middle Ages just wanted to be above men, but they never had the chance to. Women in this day and age are now feminists, they believe that men and women are equal and that a man can't control them for whatever reason. Women have spent centuries being under men, but now things are different. Although women right now still experience sexism, they have more freedom to be above men than women in the medieval era did.

Women in the medieval era were made to believe the older they were, the less attractive they would be and that men would no longer love them.

Beauty standards in the medieval era were higher than they are right now.

Even though beauty standards in this day and age, aren't as high as they used to be, they are still causing problems for women. Some women believe if they are not young, they are not attractive because all the women on

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magazines and social media who are seen as beautiful are all young. The tale says most men would rather have a young and pretty wife than a loyal, true and humble wife, this might have been true in the Middle Ages as women were still seen as objects, but things aren't the same now. Some men nowadays might prefer to have a trophy wife, but now women are more respected and are acknowledged for who they are and not how they look.

At the end of the tale it says may Christ Jesus send us husbands meek and young and fresh in bed. From this statement it is simple to say that all women in the Middle Ages wanted to get married, they wanted to feel special and thought only a man could make them feel that way. In our era, women are taught to aspire to marriage but men aren't, which goes back to my point of men thinking women need them to survive. Most women want to get married, society makes us think all women should get married and that it is strange for a woman of a certain age not to be married.