

# Hum sammary 2



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Summary: Prologue to The Wife of Bath's Tale The Prologue to The Wife of Bath's Tale begins by the speaker claiming that she is an authority on marriage because of her extensive personal experience. To illustrate, she had her first marriage when she was only twelve years old and she has had five husbands to date. She mentions that many people have criticized her for her many marriages, with critiques claiming that it is not proper since Christ himself went only once to a wedding which is at Cana in Galilee. However, the Wife of Bath has her own views regarding the Scripture and God's plan, claiming that men can do nothing more than guess and interpret what Jesus meant when he told a Samaritan woman that her fifth husband was not her husband. Furthermore, she reasons out that the Scriptures talk about God's command to "go forth and multiply" and that even great Old Testament figures, like Abraham, Jacob, and Solomon, enjoyed multiple wives at once. The Wife of Bath admits that many great Fathers of the Church have proclaimed the importance of virginity, such as the Apostle Paul. However, she argues that even if virginity is important, there must be existing people who are procreating so that virgins can be created. Thus, she says that virginity should be left to the perfect so that the rest could use their gifts in the best way they could. Undoubtedly, her gift is her sexual power and she uses this power as an "instrument" to control her husbands.

It is at this point, the Pardoner interrupts. The Pardoner is planning to marry soon and he is worried that his wife will control his body, in the same way that the Wife of Bath describes. The Wife of Bath tells him to be patient and to listen to the whole story to see if it reveals the truth about marriage. Of her five husbands, three have been "good" and two have been "bad." She further admits that the first three of her husbands were good because they

were rich, old, and submissive.

She then laughs as she remembers the torments that she put her husbands through and she even recounts a typical conversation that she had with her older husbands. She then accused her husband of having an affair, and launched into a litany in which she would charge him with a bewildering array of accusations. If one of her husbands got drunk, she would claim he said that every wife is out to destroy her husband. He would then feel guilty and give her what she wanted. In the end, the Wife of Bath says that these were all lies and that her husbands never held these opinions, but she made these claims to give them grief. What's worse is that she would tease her husbands in bed, refusing to give them full satisfaction until they promised her money. She even admits proudly to using her verbal and sexual power to bring her husbands to total submission.