

## The Husband of Bath's Tale

Queen Guenevere had a lusty lady in her court, who one day stumbled upon a male virgin. The lusty lady couldn't control her sexual urges upon seeing him, and immediately pounced on the man and raped him. When the court found out, they sentenced the lady to death for taking away the man's honor. However, King Arthur disagreed with his queen's sentence and begged for the lusty lady's life. The Queen allowed him to carry out his own sentence. He told the lusty lady that if she were able to find out what men desire most in the world, she would be able to live. If she did not find the answer to this question within the year, she would be put to death.

The lady looked through all the land to figure out what men want most. Some answers she heard were: money, sex, flattery, remarriage, or the ability to be free and to do as they please. However, no one gave her a clear or consistent answer that King Arthur would appreciate. One day, she saw a group of dancing men and decided to approach them. When she did, however, the dancing men disappeared and there remained only one man. The man was old, wrinkly, and ugly, but the lusty lady decided to ask him anyway. She offered him a reward if he was able to help her, and the man said that he would give her the correct answer if she promised to pledge herself to him. As desperate as she was to find the answer, she agreed.

The lady and the old man went back to the court together so the lady could present her answer. She claimed that what men want most is to be in charge of their wives. The men in the court agreed, and she didn't have to lose her head. The old man spoke up and told the court that he had provided the answer to the lusty lady, and that she had pledged to do what he wanted. Unfortunately for her, what he wanted was to take her as his wife. She objected vehemently, offering him her money instead of her body, but he was not interested in anything else. She was forced to marry him, and remained miserable throughout their wedding and their first night together.

The old man asked her why she was so upset, and she said that she hated the fact that she had to stay married to such an ugly nobody. The old man responded that he would allow her to choose whether she would prefer a handsome but unfaithful husband, or an ugly but loyal one. After some deliberation, the wife responded that he could decide for himself using his own judgment. Since this answer gave the man what he desired most—the ability to govern his own life—he became handsome, young, and loyal. They had a beautiful marriage and lived happily ever after.