“The Wife of Bath’s Tale”

1. What has replaced the fairies? (Read these lines carefully…Don’t “miss it”) What problem does she see in this?
2. What has the Knight done? What is his punishment as decided by the king?
3. What does the Queen decide can spare his life?
4. What difficulty did he encounter while traveling to attempt to find the answer to the riddle?
5. What purpose is served by her inclusion of the tale of Midas? How is it contradicted in Ovid’s version?
6. How is the Chivalric Code of the Knight shown here?
7. Why is it a relevant detail that the twenty-four beautiful maidens mysteriously vanished? What purpose does this serve?
8. Who teaches him the answer to the riddle? What must he agree to in order for her to give him the answer?
9. What is ironic about the Knight’s answer to the Queen’s riddle?
10. Describe the ceremony. What is revealed about the Knight’s character on their wedding night?
11. What point does the crone make concerning noble birth as she “lectures” him on their wedding night? Where does she say gentleness actually comes from? Who is the truly gentle person? What impact should her wise words have on the knight?
12. How would “temporal things” hurt and maim? What fear does she say comes with youth and beauty? What option does she present to him concerning their marriage?
13. What does the response in lines 404-411 reveal about the Knight?
14. What two metaphors are used to describe the night’s reaction to the metamorphosis? Why are they so effective?
15. Evaluate the concluding lines to her tale (postlude). How are they appropriate for this particular pilgrim? (refer to your description of her in the Prologue).