For shrewednesse him thoughte the tale swete.
Fy! Spek namoore — it is a grisly thing —
Of her horrible lust and her liking. *horrid*
"Of Clitermistra,° for her lecherye, *preference (for a bull)*
That falsly made her housbonde for to dye,
He redde it with ful good devocioun.
"He tolde me eek for what occasioun *enthusiasm*
Amphiorax° at Thebes loste his lif.
Mine housbonde hadde a legende of his wif,
Eriphilem, that for an ouch of gold
Hath prively unto the Grekes told *piece of gold jewelry*
Wher that her housbonde hidde him in a place *secretly*
For which he hadde at Thebes sory grace.
"Of Lyvia tolde he me, and of Lucie.
They bothe made hir housbondes for to die,
That oon for love, that oother was for hate.
Lyvia° her housbonde, upon an even late,
Empoisoned hath for that she was his fo. *evening*
Lucia,° likerous, loved her housbonde so
That for he sholde alwey upon her thinke *sexually charged*
She yaf him swich a manere love-drinke
That he was deed er it were by the morwe:
'And thus algates housbondes han sorwe.'
"Thanne tolde he me how oon Latumius°
Compleyned unto his felawe Arrius
That in his gardyn growed swich a tree *friend*
On which he seyde how that his wives three
Hanged hemself for herte despitus.
'O leeve brother,' quod this Arrius, *out of a spiteful heart*
'Yif me a plante of thilke blissed tree,
And in my gardyn planted it shall be.' *Give me a clipping*
"Of latter date, of wives hath he red
That somme han slayn hir housbondes in hir bed
And lete her lecchour dighte her all the night, *make love to her*

737. Clitermistra: Clytemnestra, wife of Agamemnon, commits adultery and eventually murders her husband in his bath.

741. Amphiorax: Eriphile betrays her husband Amphiorax's hiding place in exchange for a gold necklace. Because of that betrayal Amphiorax goes to war and dies at Thebes.

750. Lyvia: At the suggestion of her lover, Lyvia poisons her husband, Drusus.

752. Lucia: Lucilla poisons her husband Lucretius by giving him what she thinks is a love potion.

757. Latumius: The story of the precious tree that wives hang themselves from is told in a number of places, including the *Gesta Romanorum* (thirty-third story), but Chaucer is likely to have taken it from Walter Map.

Whan that the corps lay in the floor upright.° *corpse (of her husband)*
And somme han driven nailes in hir brain *into their (husbands') brains*
Whil that they slepte,° and thus they han hem slain.
Somme han hem yeve poisoun in hir drinke.
"He spak moore harm than herte may bithinke,
And therwithal he knew of mo proverbes
Than in this world there growen gras or herbes.
'Bet is,' quod he, 'thine habitacioun
Be with a leoun or a foul dragoun
Than with a womman using for to chide.'° *whose habit is to chide*
'Bet is,' quod he, 'hye in the roof abide *high in the attic*
Than with an angry wif doun in the hous.
They been so wikked and contrarious, *contentious*
They haten that hir housbondes loveth ay.'° *whatever their husbands like*
He seyde, 'A womman cast her shame away
Whan she cast of her smok.'° And forthermo, *petticoat*
'A fair womman, but she be chaast also,
Is like a gold ring in a sowes nose.'°
"Who wolde wene or who wolde suppose *believe*
The wo that in mine herte was, and pyne? *pain*
And whan I saugh he wolde nevere fyne *finish*
To reden on this cursed book all night,
All sodeynly three leves have I plyght *plucked*
Out of his book right as he radde, and eke *read*
I with my fest so took him on the cheke *struck him on the cheek*
That in oure fire he fil bakward adoun. *into*
"And he up stirte as dooth a wood leoun, *jumped like a mad lion*
And with his fest he smoot me on the heed *fist he punched*
That in the floor I lay as I were deed. *So that*
And whan he saugh how stille that I lay
He was agast and wolde have fled his way *away*
Til atte laste out of my swowgh I breyde. *swoon I awoke*
"'O, hastow slain me, false theef?' I seyde, *false villain*
'And for my land thus hastow mordred me? *have you murdered*
Er I be deed yet wol I kisse thee.' *would like to*
"And neer he cam and kneled faire adoun, *kneeled gallantly*

766–68. That somme . . . upright: Chaucer probably took this from the story of the widow of Ephesus in John of Salisbury's *Polycraticus* 7:11.

769–70. And somme . . . slepte: Probably a reference to Jael's murder of Sisera in Judges 14:21, also mentioned in the *Polycraticus* 7:11.

775–77. Bet is . . . chide: From Ecclesiasticus 25:23, but see also Proverbs 21:19.

778–81. Bet is . . . ay: See Proverbs 21:9–10.

782–83. A womman . . . smok: See Jerome 48.

784–85. A fair . . . nose: See Proverbs 11:22.