

- That is assailed upon ech a side."
 "Thou seyst some folk desiren us for richesse,
 Somme for oure shap, and somme for oure fairnesse,
 And some for she kan either singe or daunce,
 260 And some for gentiltesse and daliaunce,
 Some for her handes and her armes smale.
 Thus goth all to the devel, by thy tale.
 "Thou seyst men may not kepe a castel wall
 It may so longe assailed been over all.
 265 And if that she be foul, thou seist that she
 Coveiteth every man that she may see,
 For as a spaynel she wol on him lepe
 Til that she finde some man her to chepe.
 Ne noon so grey goos gooth there in the lake
 270 As, seistow, wol been withoute make.
 "And seyst it is an hard thing for to wolde
 A thing that no man wole, his thankes, holde.
 Thus seistow, lorel, whan thow goost to bedde,
 And that no wis man nedeth for to wedde,
 275 Ne no man that entendeth unto hevене.
 With wilde thonder-dint and firy levene
 Moote thy welked nekke be tobroke!
 "Thou seyst that dropping houses and eek smoke
 And chiding wives maken men to flee°
 280 Out of hir owene hous — a, benedicitee!
 What eyleth swich an old man for to chide?
 "Thou seyst we wives wol oure vices hide
 Til we be fast, and thanne we wol hem shewe.
 Well may that be a proverbe of a shrewe!
 285 "Thou seist that oxen, asses, hors, and houndes,
 They been assayed at diverse stoundes.
 Bacins, lavours, er that men hem bye,
 Spoones and stooles, and all swich housbondrye,
 And so been pottes, clothes, and array.
 290 But folk of wives maken noon assay
 Til they be wedded, olde dotard shrewe!
 And thanne, seistow, we wol oure vices shewe.
 "Thou seist also that it displeseth me
 But if that thou wolt preise my beautee,

*every side**figure / beauty**gentility and flirtatiousness**according to you
defend a castle wall**Lusts after (covets)
spaniel
who will take her**mate, lover**control
wishes to keep
rogue**intends to get into
thunder and lightning**withered neck**leaking**noisy**ah, good Lord!**ails**secure**tested / various times**basins, washbowls**household utensils**adornment**assessment**foolish**Unless*

278–79. **dropping houses . . . flee:** Chaucer probably took this antifeminist proverb, as he did so much in the Wife of Bath's Prologue, from Jerome. See section 28.

- 295 And but thou poure alwey upon my face
 And clepe me "faire dame" in every place
 And but thou make a feeste on thilke day
 That I was born, and make me fressh and gay,
 And but thou do to my norice honour,
 300 And to my chamberere withinne my bour,
 And to my fadres folk and his allies.
 "Thus seistow, olde bareful of lies!
 And yet of oure apprentice Janekyn,
 For his crisp heer, shinging as gold so fin,
 305 And for he squiereth me bothe up and down,
 Yet hastow caught a fals suspeciou.
 I wol him noght, thogh thou were deed tomorwe.°
 "But tel me, why hidestow, with sorwe,
 The keyes of thy cheste away fro me?
 310 It is my good as well as thine, pardee.
 What wenestow make an idiot of oure dame?°
 Now by that lord that called is Seint Jame,
 Thou shalt noght bothe,° thogh that thou were wood,
 Be maister of my body and of my good.
 315 That oon thou shalt forgo, maugree thine eyen.
 What helpeth it of me enquere and spyen?°
 I trowe thou woldest loke me in thy chiste.
 "Thou sholdest seye, "Wif, go where thee liste.
 Taak your disport, I wol not leve no talis.°
 320 I knowe you for a trewe wif, dame Alys."°
 We love no man that taketh kepe or charge
 Wher that we goon. We wol ben at oure large.
 Of alle men yblessed moot he be,
 The wise astrologien, daun Protholome,

*unless you gaze always**dress me fresh and new
nurse**chambermaid / bedroom
family and relatives**And again**lustrous**escorts**have you**I would not have him**keys of your coffer**property / by heaven**mad**goods**despite your watching**would lock me**wish**charge of**at large, free**astrologer / Ptolomy*

307. **I wol . . . tomorwe:** I would not have him if you died tomorrow. Compare lines 593–99.

311. **What wenestow . . . dame:** Why would you make a fool of the lady of the house?

313. **bothe:** Refers to the next line: You shall not be master of both my body and my goods.

316. **What helpeth . . . spyen:** What good does it do you to inquire about and spy on me?

319. **Taak your . . . talis:** Have your fun, and I will not believe any stories I hear about you.

320. **dame Alys:** This is the first reference to the Wife of Bath's name, later used by her husband in the form "Alisoun" (line 804) — the form used by most scholars in referring to the Wife of Bath. The Hengwrt manuscript here has the spelling "Alis," but I have adopted, for consistency, the form given in line 548.