

The KNIGHT of the BURNING PESTLE

written by

Francis
Beaumont
& John
Fletcher



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The Knight of the Burning Pestle Beaumont & Fletcher

The Knight of the Burning Pestle is a play in five acts, first performed in 1607. It is the first whole parody (or pastiche) play in English. The play is a satire on chivalric romances in general, similar to Don Quixote. It breaks the fourth wall from its outset. As a play called "The London Merchant" is about to be performed, a Citizen and his Wife "in the audience" interrupt and demand that the players put on a play of their own choosing and suggest that their apprentice, Rafe, should have a part in the play as a knight errant. He refers to himself as the "Grocer Errant" and has a burning pestle on his shield as a heraldic device. This meta-fictional plot is intercut with the main plot of the interrupted play, where Jasper Merrythought, the merchant's apprentice, is in love with his master's daughter, Luce, and must elope with her to save her from the arranged marriage with Humphrey, a "swell" or City man of fashion. Meanwhile Jasper's mother has decided to leave her husband Old Merrythought, who, in an apparent mid-life crisis, has spent all his savings in drinking and partying. Summary by Wikipedia and Rob Board

Read by Librivox volunteers. Total running time: 2:39:04

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