

The Knight of the Burning Pestle by Francis Beaumont  
M/M QS, BS, S&S

III THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE

WIFE.

O George, the giant, the giant! —Now, Rafe, for thy life.

BARBER.

What fond unknowing wight is this, that dares  
So rudely knock at Barbaroso's cell,  
Where no man comes but leaves his fleece behind? 325

RAFE.

I, traitorous caitiff, who am sent by fate  
To punish all the sad enormities  
Thou hast committed against ladies gent  
And errant knights. Traitor to God and men,  
Prepare thyself! This is the dismal hour 330  
Appointed for thee to give strict account  
Of all thy beastly treacherous villainies.

BARBER.

Foolhardy knight, full soon thou shalt aby  
This fond reproach. Thy body will I bang,  
*He takes down his pole.*  
And, lo, upon that string thy teeth shall hang. 335  
Prepare thyself, for dead soon shalt thou be.

RAFE.

Saint George for me! *They fight.*

BARBER.

Gargantua for me!

WIFE.

To him, Rafe; to him. Hold up the giant. Set out thy leg  
before, Rafe. 340

CITIZEN.

Falsify a blow, Rafe; falsify a blow. The giant lies open on  
the left side.

WIFE.

Bear't off; bear't off still. There, boy. —O, Rafe's almost  
down; Rafe's almost down.

324. Barbaroso's] *Colman*; Bar- 328. gent] *Q1*; gentle *Q2-3, F*.  
barossa's *Q1-3, F*.

325. *fleece*] i.e., beard.

333. *aby*] pay the penalty for.

334. *fond*] foolish.

338. *Gargantua*] the giant king in Rabelais' satirical romance, published  
in 1535.

343. *Bear't off*] Resist the blow.

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III

RAFE.

Susan, inspire me. —Now have up again. 345

WIFE.

Up, up, up, up, up! So, Rafe, down with him; down with  
him, Rafe.

CITIZEN.

Fetch him o'er the hip, boy.

WIFE.

There, boy. Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, Rafe.

CITIZEN.

No, Rafe, get all out of him first. 350

RAFE.

Presumptuous man, see to what desperate end  
Thy treachery hath brought thee. The just gods,  
Who never prosper those that do despise them,  
For all the villainies which thou hast done  
To knights and ladies, now have paid thee home 355  
By my stiff arm, a knight adventurous.  
But say, vile wretch, before I send thy soul  
To sad Avernus, whither it must go,  
What captives holdst thou in thy sable cave.

BARBER.

Go in and free them all; thou hast the day. 360

RAFE.

Go, squire and dwarf, search in this dreadful cave  
And free the wretched prisoners from their bonds.  
*Exit Squire [Tim] and Dwarf [George].*

BARBER.

I crave for mercy, as thou art a knight,  
And scorn'st to spill the blood of those that beg.

RAFE.

Thou show'd'st no mercy, nor shalt thou have any. 365  
Prepare thyself, for thou shalt surely die.

*Enter Squire [Tim], leading one winking, with a basin under his chin.*

348. o'er] *Q1-2*; over *Q3, F*.

365. show'd'st] *Q1-2*; shewest *Q3, F*.

358. *Avernus*] a lake in southern Italy traditionally regarded as an  
entrance to hell.

366.1. *basin*] used to catch the lather and bristles in shaving and the  
blood in bloodletting.