



[Home](#) > The Lady and the Squire

The Lady and the Squire

Books Reviewed:

[The Lady and the Squire](#) [1]

Issue:

[126](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Herein Tom and Ann from *The Knight and the Squire* continue their hectic career in France in the wake of Edward III's invasion. Off they go again in a whirlwind of capture, escape, pursuit and flight; in and out of dungeons and bedchambers; diving off castle walls, falling down wells; now in disguise, now out of it; and in imminent danger of a variety of cruel deaths at every turn. Jones and Foreman preside over the mayhem with wry smiles. Jones wears his historical knowledge lightly. For instance, had you considered how much easier it might be to escape from castles if medieval architects had thought of inventing the corridor? Or perhaps you wondered how the wealthy could show off their status in a time when they couldn't drive around in a Lamborghini. Well, between one sword thrust and the next, Jones will explain, with the help of modern comparisons. The conventions of the picaresque novel, the costume romance and the Saturday matinee swashbuckler are all sent up. Who is the mysterious Man in Black who dogs their footsteps? Who is destined to be Tom's true love, the haughty and beautiful Lady Emily, whom we meet for the first time, or the redoubtable Ann, who is rarely out of men's clothing? The finale, when the Pope's banquet is reduced to chaos, is wonderful. In time-honoured fashion, Tom humbles the great and wealthy with the absurd and hilarious consequences of their own avarice and insecurity. Much of the comedy in the story comes from the ways that we make an adventure of the past, but Jones and Foreman cleverly insinuate the idea that there is a real medieval realm, brutal and fascinating, to be discovered beyond the novel's pages. And there is more to come.

Running Order:

18

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Links:

[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/the-lady-and-the-squire-0>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/126>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/clive-barnes>