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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. VI. Containing a Dialogue between Sophia and Mrs. Honour, which may a little relieve those tender Affections which the foregoing Scene may have raised in the Mind of a good-natured Reader.

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-884

The Aunt answered, 'She knew too much of the World to be so deceived; that as she was sensible another Man had her Affections, she should persuade Mr. *Western* to hasten the Match as much as possible. It would be bad Politics indeed,' added she, 'to protract a Siege when the Enemy's Army is at Hand, and in Danger of relieving it. No, no, *Sophy*,' said she, 'as I am convinced you have a violent Passion, which you can never satisfy with Honour, I will do all I can to put your Honour out of the Care of your Family: For when you are married, those Matters will belong only to the Consideration of your Husband. I hope, Child, you will always have Prudence enough to act as becomes you; but if you should not, Marriage hath saved many a Woman from Ruin.'

Sophia well understood what her Aunt meant; but did not think proper to make her an Answer. However, she took a Resolution to see Mr. *Bless*, and to behave to him as civilly as she could: For on that Condition only she obtained a Promise from her Aunt to keep secret the Liking which her ill Fortune, rather than any Scheme of Mrs. *Western*, had unhappily drawn from her.

C H A P. VI.

Containing a Dialogue between Sophia and Mrs. Honour, which may a little relieve those tender Affections which the foregoing Scene may have raised in the Mind of a good-natured Reader.

MRS. *Western* having obtained that Promise from her Niece which we have seen in the last Chapter, withdrew; and presently after

arrived Mrs. Honour. She was at Work in a neighbouring Apartment, and had been summoned to the Key-hole by some Vociferation in the preceding Dialogue, where she had continued during the remaining Part of it. At her Entry into the Room, she found *Sophia* standing motionless, with the Tears trickling from her Eyes. Upon which she immediately ordered a proper Quantity of Tears into her own Eyes, and then began, 'O Gemini, my dear Lady, what is the Matter?' 'Nothing,' cries *Sophia*. 'Nothing! O dear Madam,' answers Mrs. Honour, 'you must not tell me that, when your Ladyship is in this Taking, and when there hath been such a Preamble between your Ladyship and Madam Western.' 'Don't tease me,' cries *Sophia*, 'I tell you nothing is the Matter.----' 'Good Heavens! Why was I born!----' 'Nay, Madam,' says Mrs. Honour, 'you shall never persuade me, that your La'ship can lament yourself so for nothing. To be sure, I am but a Servant; but to be sure I have been always faithful to your Ladyship, and to be sure I would serve your La'ship with my Life.' 'My dear Honour,' says *Sophia*, 'tis not in thy Power to be of any Service to me. I am irretrievably undone.' 'Heaven forbid,' answered the Waiting-woman; 'but if I can't be of any service to you, pray tell me, Madam, it will be some Comfort to me to know: Pray dear Ma'am, tell me what's the Matter.' 'My Father,' cries *Sophia*, 'is going to marry me to a Man I both despise and hate.' 'O, dear Ma'am,' answered the other, 'who is this wicked Man? For to be sure he is very bad, or your La'ship would not despise him.' 'His Name

' Name is Poison to my Tongue,' replied *Sophia*,
 ' thou wilt know it too soon.' Indeed, to confess
 the Truth, she knew it already, and therefore
 was not very inquisitive as to that Point.
 She then proceeded thus: ' I don't pretend to
 ' give your La'ship Advice, *whereof* your La'ship
 ' knows much better than I can pretend to, being
 ' but a Servant; but, i-fackins! no Father in
 ' *England* should marry me against my Consent.
 ' And to be sure, the Squire is so good, that if he
 ' did but know your La'ship despises and hates
 ' the young Man, to be sure he would not desire
 ' you to marry him. And if your La'ship would
 ' but give me Leave to tell my Master so--To be
 ' sure, it would be more proper to come from
 ' your own Mouth; but as your La'ship doth
 ' not care to foul your Tongue with his nasty
 ' Name.' ' You are mistaken, *Honour*,' says
Sophia, ' my Father was determined before he
 ' ever thought fit to mention it to me.' ' More
 ' Shame for him,' cries *Honour*, ' you are to go
 ' to Bed to him, and not Master. And tho' a
 ' Man may be a very proper Man, yet every
 ' Woman mayn't think him handsome alike. I
 ' am sure my Master would never act in this
 ' Manner of his own Head. I wish some Peo-
 ' ple would trouble themselves only with what
 ' belongs to them; they would not, I believe,
 ' like to be served so, if it was their own Case:
 ' For tho' I am a Maid, I can easily believe as
 ' how all Men are not equally agreeable. And
 ' what signifies your La'ship having so great a
 ' Fortune, if you can't please yourself with the
 ' Man you think most handsome? Well, I say
 ' nothing, but to be sure it is Pity some Folks
 ' had not been better born; nay, as for that
 C 4 ' Matter,

‘ Matter, I should not mind it myself: But then
 ‘ there is not so much Money, and what of that?
 ‘ your La’ship hath Money enough for both;
 ‘ and where can your La’ship bestow your For-
 ‘ tune better? For to be sure every one must
 ‘ allow, that he is the most handsome, charm-
 ‘ ingest, finest, tallest, properest Man in the
 ‘ World.’ ‘ What do you mean by running on
 ‘ in this Manner to me?’ cries *Sophia*, with a
 very grave Countenance. ‘ Have I ever given
 ‘ any Encouragement for these Liberties?’ ‘ Nay
 ‘ Ma’am, I ask Pardon; I meant no Harm,’ an-
 swered she; ‘ but to be sure the poor Gentleman
 ‘ hath run in my Head ever since I saw him this
 ‘ Morning.---To be sure, if your Ladyship had
 ‘ but seen him just now, you must have pitied
 ‘ him. Poor Gentleman! I wishes some Mis-
 ‘ fortune hath not happened to him: For he hath
 ‘ been walking about with his Arms a-crofs, and
 ‘ looking so melancholy all this Morning; I vow
 ‘ and protest it made me almost cry to see him.’
 ‘ To see whom?’ says *Sophia*. ‘ Poor Mr.
 ‘ *Jones*,’ answered *Honour*. ‘ See him! Why,
 ‘ where did you see him?’ cries *Sophia*. ‘ By
 ‘ the Canal, Ma’am,’ says *Honour*. ‘ There he
 ‘ hath been walking all this Morning, and at
 ‘ last there he laid himself down; I believe he
 ‘ lies there still. To be sure, if it hath not been
 ‘ for my Modesty, being a Maid as I am, I should
 ‘ have gone and spoke to him. Do, Ma’am, let
 ‘ me go and see, only for a Fancy, whether he
 ‘ is there still.’ ‘ Pugh!’ says *Sophia*, ‘ There!
 ‘ no, no, what should he do there? He is gone
 ‘ before this Time to be sure. Besides, why---
 ‘ what--why should you go to see?---Besides, I
 ‘ want you for something else. Go, fetch me
 ‘ my

‘ my Hat and Gloves. I shall walk with my Aunt in the Grove before Dinner.’ *Honour* did immediately as she was bid, and *Sophia* put her Hat on; when looking in the Glass, she fancied the Ribbon with which her Hat was tied, did not become her, and so sent her Maid back again for a Ribbon of a different Colour; and then giving Mrs. *Honour* repeated Charges not to leave her Work on any Account, as she said it was in violent Haste, and must be finished that very Day; she muttered something more about going to the Grove, and then sallied out the contrary Way, and walked as fast as her tender trembling Limbs could carry her, directly towards the Canal.

Jones had been there, as Mrs. *Honour* had told her: He had indeed spent two Hours there that Morning in melancholy Contemplation on his *Sophia*, and had gone out from the Garden at one Door, the Moment she entered it at another. So that those unlucky Minutes which had been spent in changing the Ribbons, had prevented the Lovers from meeting at this Time. A most unfortunate Accident, from which my fair Readers will not fail to draw a very wholesom Lesson. And here I strictly forbid all Male Critics to intermeddle with a Circumstance, which I have recounted only for the sake of the Ladies, and upon which they only are at Liberty to comment.

