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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. VIII. Containing Scenes of Altercation, of no very uncommon Kind.

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Purpose, when she found her positively determined, at last started the following Expedient to remove her Clothes, viz. to get herself turned out of Doors that very Evening. *Sophia* highly approved this Method, but doubted how it might be brought about. 'Oh! Ma'am,' cries *Honour*, 'your La'ship may trust that to me; we Servants very well know how to obtain this Favour of our Masters and Mistresses; tho' some times indeed, where they owe us more Wages than they can readily pay, they will put up with all our Affronts, and will hardly take any Warning we can give them; but the Squire is none of those; and since your La'ship is resolved upon setting out To-night, I warrant I get discharged this Afternoon.' It was then resolved that she should pack up some Linen, and a Night-gown for *Sophia*, with her own Things; and as for all her other Clothes, the young Lady abandoned them with no more Remorse than the Sailor feels when he throws over the Goods of others, in order to save his own Life.

C H A P. VIII.

Containing Scenes of Altercation, of no very uncommon Kind.

MR. *Honour* had scarce sooner parted from her young Lady, than something (for I would not, like the old Woman in *Quivedo*, injure the Devil by any false Accusation, and possibly he might have no Hand in it) but something, I say, suggested itself to her, that by sacrificing *Sophia* and all her Secrets to Mr. *Western*, she might

might probably make her Fortune. Many Considerations urged this Discovery. The fair Prospect of a handsome Reward for so great and acceptable a Service to the Squire, tempted her Avarice; and again, the Danger of the Enterprize she had undertaken; the Uncertainty of its Success; Night, Cold, Robbers, Ravishers, all alarmed her Fears. So forcibly did all these operate upon her, that she was almost determined to go directly to the Squire, and to lay open the whole Affair. She was, however, too upright a Judge to decree on one Side, before she had heard the other. And here, first, a Journey to *London* appeared very strongly in Support of *Sophia*. She eagerly longed to see a Place in which she fancied Charms shone only of those which a raptured Saint imagines in Heaven: In the next Place, as she knew *Sophia* to have much more Generosity than her Master; so her Fidelity promised her a greater Reward than she could gain by Treachery. She then cross-examined all the Articles which had raised her Fears on the other Side, and found, on fairly sifting the Matter, that there was very little in them. And now both Scales being reduced to a pretty even Balance, her Love to her Mistress being thrown into the Scale of her Integrity, made that rather preponderate, when a Circumstance struck upon her Imagination, which might have had a dangerous Effect, had its whole Weight been fairly put into the other Scale. This was the Length of Time which must intervene, before *Sophia* would be able to fulfil her Promises; for tho' she was intitled to her Mother's Fortune, at the Death of her Father, and to the Sum of 3000 *l.* left her by an Uncle when she came of Age; yet these were distant Days,

and

and many Accidents might prevent the intended Generosity of the young Lady; whereas the Rewards she might expect from Mr. *Western*, were immediate. But while she was pursuing this Thought, the good Genius of *Sophia*, or that which presided over the Integrity of Mrs. *Honour*, or perhaps mere Chance, sent an Accident in her Way, which at once preserved her Fidelity, and even facilitated the intended Business.

Mrs. *Western's* Maid claimed great Superiority over Mrs. *Honour*, on several Accounts. First, her Birth was higher: For her great Grandmother by the Mother's Side was a Cousin, not far removed, to an *Irish* Peer. Secondly, her Wages were greater. And lastly, she had been at *London*, and had of Consequence seen more of the World. She had always behaved, therefore, to Mrs. *Honour* with that Reserve, and had always exacted of her those Marks of Distinction, which every Order of Females preserves and requires in Conversation with those of an inferior Order. Now as *Honour* did not at all Times agree with this Doctrine, but would frequently break in upon the Respect which the other demanded, Mrs. *Western's* Maid was not at all pleased with her Company: Indeed, she earnestly longed to return home to the House of her Mistress, where she domineered at Will over all the other Servants. She had been greatly, therefore, disappointed in the Morning when Mrs. *Western* had changed her Mind on the very Point of Departure, and had been in what is vulgarly called, a glouting Humour ever since.

In this Humour, which was none of the sweetest, she came into the Room where *Honour* was debating with herself, in the Manner we have

have above related. *Honour* no sooner saw her, than she addressed her in the following obliging Phrase. ‘Soh! Madam, I find we are to have the Pleasure of your Company longer, which I was afraid the Quarrel between my Master and your Lady would have robbed us of.’ I don’t know, Madam,’ answered the other, who you mean by We and Us. I assure you I do not look on any of the Servants in this House to be proper Company for me. I am Company, I hope, for their Betters every Day in the Week. I do not speak on your Account Mrs. *Honour*; for you are a civilized young Woman; and when you have seen a little more of the World, I should not be ashamed to walk with you in *St. James’s Park*. ‘Hoity! toity!’ cries *Honour*, ‘Madam is in her Airs, I protest. Mrs. *Honour*, forsooth! sure, Madam, you might call me by my Sir-name; for tho’ my Lady calls me *Honour*, I have a Sir-name as well as other Folks. Ashamed to walk with me, quotha! Marry, as good as yourself, I hope.’ ‘Since you make such a Return to my Civility,’ said the other, ‘I must acquaint you, Mrs. *Honour*, that you are not so good as me. In the Country indeed one is obliged to take up with all kind of Trumpery; but in Town I visit none but the Women of Women of Quality. Indeed, Mrs. *Honour*, there is some Difference, I hope, between you and me.’ I hope so too,’ answered *Honour*, ‘there is some Difference in our Ages, and—I think in our Persons.’ Upon speaking which last Words, she strutted by Mrs. *Western’s* Maid with the most provoking Air of Contempt; turning up her Nose, tossing her Head, and violently brushing
the

the Hoop of her Competitor with her own. The other Lady put on one of her most malicious Sneers, and said, ' Creature! you are below my Anger; and it is beneath me to give ill Words to such an audacious saucy Trollop; but, Huffy, I must tell you, your Breeding shews the Mean-ness of your Birth as well as of your Education; and both very properly qualify you to be the mean serving Woman of a Country Girl.' ' Don't abuse my Lady,' cries *Honour*, ' I won't take that of you; she's as much better than yours as she is younger, and ten thousand Times more handsomer.'

Here ill Luck, or rather good Luck, sent Mrs. *Western* to see her Maid in Tears, which began to flow plentifully at her Approach; and of which being asked the Reason by her Mistress, she presently acquainted her, that her Tears were occasioned by the rude Treatment of that Creature there, meaning *Honour*. ' And, Madam,' continued she, ' I could have despised all she said to me; but she hath had the Audacity to affront your Ladyship, and to call you ugly——Yes, Madam, she called you ugly old Cat, to my Face. I could not bear to hear your Ladyship called ugly.'—' Why do you repeat her Impudence so often?' said Mrs. *Western*. And then turning to Mrs. *Honour*, she asked her, ' how she had the Assurance to mention her Name with Disrespect?' ' Disrespect, Madam!' answered *Honour*, ' I never mentioned your Name at all; I said somebody was not as handsome as my Mistress, and to be sure you know that as well as I.' ' Huffy,' replied the Lady, ' I will make such a saucy Trollop as yourself, know that

‘ that I am not a proper Subject of your Dis-
 ‘ course. And if my Brother doth not discharge
 ‘ you this Moment, I will never sleep in his
 ‘ House again. I will find him out and have
 ‘ you discharged this Moment.’ ‘ Discharged!’
 cries *Honour*, ‘ and suppose I am; there are
 ‘ more Places in the World than one. Thank
 ‘ Heaven, good Servants need not want Places;
 ‘ and if you turn away all who do not think you
 ‘ handsome, you will want Servants very soon;
 ‘ let me tell you that.’

Mrs. *Western* spoke, or rather thundered, in Answer; but as she was hardly articulate, we cannot be very certain of the identical Words: We shall, therefore, omit inserting a Speech, which, at best, would not greatly redound to her Honour. She then departed in Search of her Brother, with a Countenance so full of Rage, that she resembled one of the Furies rather than a human Creature.

The two Chambermaids being again left alone, began a second Bout at Altercation, which soon produced a Combat of a more active Kind. In this the Victory belonged to the Lady of inferior Rank, but not without some Loss of Blood, of Hair, and of Lawn and Muslin.