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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. III. The Arrival of Mr. Jones, with his Lady, at the Inn, with a very full Description of the Battle of Upton.

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‘ done no more than my Duty in protecting you ;
 ‘ and as for the latter, I will entirely remove it,
 ‘ by walking before you all the Way ; for I
 ‘ would not have my Eyes offend you, and I
 ‘ could not answer for my Power of resisting the
 ‘ attractive Charms of so much Beauty.’

Thus our Heroe and the redeemed Lady walked in the same Manner as *Orpheus* and *Eurydice* marched heretofore : But tho’ I cannot believe that *Jones* was designedly tempted by his Fair One to look behind him, yet as she frequently wanted his Assistance to help her over Stiles, and had besides many Trips and other Accidents, he was often obliged to turn about. However, he had better Fortune than what attended poor *Orpheus* ; for his brought his Companion, or rather Follower, safe into the famous Town of *Upton*.

C H A P. III.

The Arrival of Mr. Jones, with his Lady, at the Inn ; with a very full Description of the Battle of Upton.

TH^O’ the Reader, we doubt not, is very eager to know who this Lady was, and how she fell into the Hands of Mr. *Northerton* ; we must beg him to suspend his Curiosity for a short Time, as we are obliged, for some very good Reasons, which hereafter perhaps he may guess, to delay his Satisfaction a little longer.

Mr. *Jones* and his fair Companion no sooner entered the Town, than they went directly to that Inn which, in their Eyes, presented the fairest Appearance to the Street. Here *Jones*, having ordered a Servant to shew a Room above Stairs, was ascending, when the dishevelled Fair hastily follow-

following, was laid hold on by the Master of the House, who cried, 'Hey day, where is that Beggar Wench going? Stay below Stairs, I defire you;' but *Jones* at that Instant thundered from above, 'Let the Lady come up,' in so authoritative a Voice, that the good Man instantly withdrew his Hands, and the Lady made the best of her Way to the Chamber.

Here *Jones* wished her Joy of her safe Arrival, and then departed, in order, as he promised, to send the Landlady up with some Cloaths. The poor Woman thanked him heartily for all his Kindness, and said, she hoped she should see him again soon, to thank him a thousand Times more. During this short Conversation, she covered her white Bosom as well as she could possibly with her Arms: For *Jones* could not avoid stealing a fly Peep or two, tho' he took all imaginable Care to avoid giving any Offence.

Our Travellers had happened to take up their Residence at a House of exceeding good Repute, whither *Irish* Ladies of strict Virtue, and many Northern Lassies of the same Predicament, were accustomed to resort in their Way to *Bath*. The Landlady therefore would by no Means have admitted any Conversation of a disreputable Kind to pass under her Roof. Indeed so foul and contagious are all such Proceedings, that they contaminate the very innocent Scenes where they are committed, and give the Name of a bad House, or of a House of ill Repute, to all those where they are suffered to be carried on.

Not that I would intimate, that such strict Chastity as was preserved in the Temple of *Vesta* can possibly be maintained at a public Inn. My good Landlady did not hope for such a Blessing, nor would any of the Ladies I have spoken of, or

indeed any others of the most rigid Note, have expected or insisted on any such Thing. But to exclude all vulgar Concubinage, and to drive all Whores in Rags from within the Walls, is within the Power of every one. This my Landlady very strictly adhered to; and this her virtuous Guests, who did not travel in Rags, would very reasonably have expected of her.

Now it required no very blameable Degree of Suspicion, to imagine that Mr. *Jones* and his ragged Companion had certain Purposes in their Intention, which, tho' tolerated in some Christian Countries, connived at in others, and practised in all, are however as expressly forbidden as Murder, or any other horrid Vice, by that Religion which is universally believed in those Countries. The Landlady therefore had no sooner received an Intimation of the Entrance of the above said Persons, than she began to meditate the most expeditious Means for their Expulsion. In order to this, she had provided herself with a long and deadly Instrument, with which, in Times of Peace, the Chambermaid was wont to demolish the Labours of the industrious Spider. In vulgar Phrase, she had taken up the Broomstick, and was just about to sally from the Kitchen, when *Jones* accosted her with a Demand of a Gown, and other Vestments, to cover the half-naked Woman above Stairs.

Nothing can be more provoking to the human Temper, nor more dangerous to that Cardinal Virtue, Patience, than Solicitations of extraordinary Offices of Kindness, on Behalf of those very Persons with whom we are highly incensed. For this Reason *Shakespear* hath artfully introduced his *Desdemonia* soliciting Favours for *Cassio* of her Husband, as the Means of enslaving not
only

only his Jealousy, but his Rage, to the highest Pitch of Madnes; and we find the unfortunate Moor less able to command his Passion on this Occasion, than even when he beheld his valued Present to his Wife in the Hands of his supposed Rival. In fact, we regard these Efforts as Insults on our Understanding; and to such the Pride of Man is very difficultly brought to submit.

My Landlady, though a very good tempered Woman, had, I suppose, some of this Pride in her Composition; for *Jones* had scarce ended his Request, when she fell upon him with a certain Weapon, which, tho' it be neither long, nor sharp, nor hard, nor indeed threatens from its Appearance with either Death or Wound, hath been however held in great Dread and Abhorrence by many wise Men; nay, by many brave ones; insomuch that some who have dared to look into the Mouth of a loaded Cannon, have not dared to look into a Mouth where this Weapon was brandished; and rather than run the Hazard of its Execution, have contented themselves with making a most pitiful and sneaking Figure in the Eyes of all their Acquaintance.

To confess the Truth, I am afraid Mr. *Jones* was one of these; for tho' he was attacked and violently belaboured with the aforesaid Weapon, he could not be provoked to make any Resistance; but in a most cowardly Manner applied, with many Entreaties, to his Antagonist to desist from pursuing her Blows: In plain *English*, he only begged her with the utmost Earnestness to hear him; but before he could obtain his Request, my Landlord himself entered into the Fray, and embraced that Side of the Cause which seemed to stand very little in need of Assistance.

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There are a Sort of Heroes who are supposed to be determined in their chusing or avoiding a Conflict, by the Character and Behaviour of the Person whom they are to engage. These are said to know their Men, and *Jones*, I believe, knew his Woman; for tho' he had been so submissive to her, he was no sooner attacked by her Husband, than he demonstrated an immediate Spirit of Resentment, and enjoined him Silence under a very severe Penalty; no less than that, I think, of being converted into Fuel for his own Fire.

The Husband, with great Indignation, but with a Mixture of Pity, answered, 'You must pray first to be made able; I believe I am a better Man than yourself; ay, every Way, that I am;' and presently proceeded to discharge half a dozen Whores at the Lady above Stairs, the last which had scarce issued from his Lips, when a swinging Blow from the Cudgel that *Jones* carried in his Hand, assaulted him over the Shoulders.

It is a Question whether the Landlord or the Landlady was the most expeditious in returning this Blow. My Landlord, whose Hands were empty, fell to with his Fist, and the good Wife, uplifting her Broom, and aiming at the Head of *Jones*, had probably put an immediate End to the Fray, and to *Jones* likewise, had not the Descent of this Broom been prevented,---not by the miraculous Intervention of any Heathen Deity, but by a very natural, tho' fortunate Accident; viz. by the Arrival of *Partridge*; who entered the House at that Instant (for Fear had caused him to run every Step from the Hill) and who, seeing the Danger which threatned his Master, or Companion, (which you chuse to call him) prevented so sad a Catastrophe, by catching hold of the Land-

Landlady's Arm, as it was brandished aloft in the Air.

The Landlady soon perceived the Impediment which prevented her Blow; and being unable to rescue her Arm from the Hands of *Partridge*, she let fall the Broom; and then leaving *Jones* to the Discipline of her Husband, she fell with the utmost Fury on that poor Fellow, who had already given some Intimation of himself, by crying, 'Zounds! do you intend to kill my Friend?'

Partridge, though not much addicted to Battle, would not however stand still when his Friend was attacked; nor was he much displeas'd with that Part of the Combat which fell to his Share: He therefore returned my Landlady's Blows as soon as he received them; and now the Fight was obstinately maintained on all Parts, and it seem'd doubtful to which Side Fortune would incline, when the naked Lady, who had list'n'd at the Top of the Stairs to the Dialogue which preceded the Engagement, descend'd suddenly from above, and without weighing the un-fair Inequality of two to one, fell upon the poor Woman who was boxing with *Partridge*; nor did that great Champion desist, but rather redoubled his Fury, when he found fresh Succours were arriv'd to his Assistance.

Victory must now have fallen to the Side of the Travellers (for the bravest Troops must yield to Numbers) had not *Susan* the Chambermaid come luckily to support her Mistress. This *Susan* was as two-handed a Wench (according to the Phrase) as any in the Country, and would, I believe, have beat the famed *Thalestris* herself, or any of her subject *Amazons*; for her Form was robust and manlike, and every way made for such Encounters. As her Hands and Arms were formed

to

to give Blows with great Mischief to an Enemy, so was her Face as well contrived to receive Blows without any great Injury to herself: Her Nose being already flat to her Face; her Lips were so large, that no Swelling could be perceived in them, and moreover they were so hard that a Fist could hardly make any Impression on them. Lastly, her Cheek-Bones stood out, as if Nature had intended them for two Bastions to defend her Eyes in those Encounters for which she seemed so well calculated, and to which she was most wonderfully well inclined.

This fair Creature entering the Field of Battle, immediately filed to that Wing where her Mistress maintained so unequal a Fight with one of either Sex. Here she presently challenged *Partridge* to single Combat. He accepted the Challenge, and a most desperate Fight began between them.

Now the Dogs of War being let loose, began to lick their bloody Lips; now Victory with Golden Wings hung hovering in the Air. Now Fortune taking her Scates from her Shelf, began to weigh the Fates of *Tom Jones*, his Female Companion, and *Partridge*, against the Landlord, his Wife, and Maid; all which hung in exact Ballance before her; when a good-natured Accident put suddenly an End to the bloody Fray, with which half of the Combatants had already sufficiently feasted. This Accident was the Arrival of a Coach and four; upon which my Landlord and Landlady immediately desisted from fighting, and at their Entreaty obtained the same Favour of their Antagonists; but *Susan* was not so kind to *Partridge*; for that *Amazonian* Fair having overthrown and besfrid her Enemy, was now cuffing him lustily with both her Hands, with-

without any Regard to his Request of a Cessation of Arms, or to those loud Exclamations of Murder which he roared forth.

No sooner, however, had *Jones* quitted the Landlord, than he flew to the Rescue of his defeated Companion, from whom he with much Difficulty drew off the enraged Chambermaid; but *Partridge* was not immediately sensible of his Deliverance; for he still lay flat on the Floor, guarding his Face with his Hands, nor did he cease roaring till *Jones* had forced him to look up, and to perceive that the Battle was at an End.

The Landlord who had no visible Hurt, and the Landlady hiding her well scratched Face with her Handkerchief, ran both hastily to the Door to attend the Coach, from which a young Lady and her Maid now alighted. These the Landlady presently ushered into that Room where Mr. *Jones* had at first deposited his fair Prize, as it was the best Apartment in the House. Hither they were obliged to pass through the Field of Battle, which they did with the utmost Haste, covering their Faces with their Handkerchiefs, as desirous to avoid the Notice of any one. Indeed their Caution was quite unnecessary: For the poor unfortunate *Helen*, the fatal Cause of all the Bloodshed, was entirely taken up in endeavouring to conceal her own Face, and *Jones* was no less occupied in rescuing *Partridge* from the Fury of *Susan*; which being happily effected, the poor Fellow immediately departed to the Pump to wash his Face, and to stop that bloody Torrent which *Susan* had plentifully set a flowing from his Nostrils.