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**The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling**

In Four Volumes

**Fielding, Henry**

**London, 1750**

Chap. VIII. What passed between Jones and old Mr. Nightingale, with the  
Arrival of of a Person not yet mentioned in this History.

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‘ it might be easier to reconcile him to the Fact  
 ‘ after it was done; and, upon my Honour, I  
 ‘ am so affected with what you have said, and I  
 ‘ love my *Nancy* so passionately, I almost wish  
 ‘ it was done, whatever might be the Confe-  
 ‘ quence.’

*Jones* greatly approved the Hint, and promised to pursue it. They then separated, *Nightingale* to visit his *Nancy*, and *Jones* in quest of the old Gentleman.

## C H A P. VIII.

*What passed between Jones and old Mr. Nightingale; with the Arrival of a Person not yet mentioned in this History.*

**N**Otwithstanding the Sentiment of the Roman Satirist, which denies the Divinity of *Fortune*, and the Opinion of *Seneca*, to the same Purpose; *Cicero*, who was, I believe, a wiser Man than either of them, expressly holds the contrary; and certain it is, there are some Incidents in Life so very strange and unaccountable, that it seems to require more than human Skill and Foresight in producing them.

Of this Kind was what now happened to *Jones*, who found Mr. *Nightingale* the elder in so critical a Minute, that *Fortune*, if she was really worthy all the Worship she received at *Rome*, could not have contrived such another. In short, the old Gentleman and the Father of the young Lady whom he intended for his Son, had been hard at it for many Hours; and the latter was just now gone, and had left the former delighted with the Thoughts that he had succeeded in a long Con-  
 tion,

attention, which had been between the two Fathers of the future Bride and Bridegroom; in which both endeavoured to over-reach the other, and, as it not rarely happens in such Cases, both had retreated fully satisfied of having obtained the Victory.

This Gentleman whom Mr. *Jones* now visited, was what they call a Man of the World; that is to say, a Man who directs his Conduct in this World, as one who being fully persuaded there is no other, is resolved to make the most of this. In his early Years he had been bred to Trade; but having acquired a very good Fortune, he had lately declined his Business; or, to speak more properly, had changed it from dealing in Goods, to dealing only in Money, of which he had always a plentiful Fund at Command, and of which he knew very well how to make a very plentiful Advantage, sometimes of the Necessities of private Men, and sometimes of those of the Public. He had indeed conversed so entirely with Money, that it may be almost doubted, whether he imagined there was any other Thing really existing in the World: This at least may be certainly averred, that he firmly believed nothing else to have any real Value.

The Reader will, I fancy, allow, that Fortune could not have culled out a more improper Person for Mr. *Jones* to attack with any Probability of Success; nor could the whimsical Lady have directed this Attack at a more unseasonable Time.

As Money then was always uppermost in this Gentleman's Thoughts; so the Moment he saw a Stranger within his Doors, it immediately occurred to his Imagination, that such Stranger was either come to bring him Money, or to fetch it from



from him. And according as one or other of these Thoughts prevailed, he conceived a favourable or unfavourable Idea of the Person who approached him.

Unluckily for *Jones*, the latter of these was the Ascendant at present; for as a young Gentleman had visited him the Day before, with a Bill from his Son for a Play Debt, he apprehended, at the first Sight of *Jones*, that he was come on such another Errand. *Jones* therefore had no sooner told him, that he was come on his Son's Account, than the old Gentleman, being confirmed in his Suspicion, burst forth into an Exclamation, 'That he would lose his Labour.' 'Is it then possible, Sir, answered *Jones*, that you can guess my Business?' 'If I do guess it,' replied the other, 'I repeat again to you, you will lose your Labour. What, I suppose you are one of those Sparks who lead my Son into all those Scenes of Riot and Debauchery, which will be his Destruction; but I shall pay no more of his Bills I promise you. I expect he will quit all such Company for the future. If I had imagined otherwise, I should not have provided a Wife for him; for I would be instrumental in the Ruin of no Body.' 'How, Sir,' said *Jones*, 'and was this Lady of your providing?' 'Pray, Sir,' answered the old Gentleman, 'how comes it to be any Concern of yours?'—'Nay, dear Sir,' replied *Jones*, 'be not offended that I interest myself in what regards your Son's Happiness, for whom I have so great an Honour and Value. It was upon that very Account I came to wait upon you. I can't express the Satisfaction you have given me by what you say; for I do assure you your Son is  
' a Person

a Person for whom I have the highest Honour.  
 —Nay, Sir, it is not easy to express the Esteem  
 I have for you, who could be so generous, so  
 good, so kind, so indulgent to provide such a  
 Match for your Son; a Woman who, I dare  
 swear, will make him one of the happiest Men  
 upon Earth.

There is scarce any thing which so happily in-  
 troduces Men to our good Liking, as having  
 conceived some Alarm at their first Appearance;  
 when once those Apprehensions begin to vanish,  
 we soon forget the Fears which they occasioned,  
 and look on ourselves as indebted for our present  
 Ease, to those very Persons who at first rais'd our  
 Fears.

Thus it happened to *Nightingale*, who no  
 sooner found that *Jones* had no Demand on him,  
 as he suspected, than he began to be pleas'd with  
 his Presence. Pray, good Sir, said he, be  
 pleas'd to sit down. I do not remember to  
 have ever had the Pleasure of seeing you be-  
 fore; but if you are a Friend of my Son, and  
 have any thing to say concerning this young  
 Lady, I shall be glad to hear you. As to her  
 making him happy, it will be his own Fault if  
 she doth not. I have discharged my Duty, in  
 taking Care of the main Article. She will  
 bring him a Fortune capable of making any  
 reasonable, prudent, sober Man happy. Un-  
 doubtedly, cries *Jones*, for she is in herself a  
 Fortune; so beautiful, so genteel, so sweet-  
 tempered, and so well educated; she is indeed  
 a most accomplished young Lady; sings ad-  
 mirably well, and hath a most delicate Hand  
 at the Harpsichord. I did not know any of  
 these Matters, answered the old Gentleman,  
 for



for I never saw the Lady; but I do not like her  
 the worse for what you tell me; and I am the  
 better pleas'd with her Father for not laying  
 any Strefs on these Qualifications in our Bar-  
 gain. I shall always think it a Proof of his  
 Understanding. A silly Fellow would have  
 brought in these Articles as an Addition to her  
 Fortune; but to give him his due, he never  
 mentioned any such Matter; though to be sure  
 they are no Disparagements to a Woman. I  
 do assure you, Sir, cries *Jones*, she hath them  
 all in the most eminent Degree: For my Part I  
 own I was afraid you might have been a little  
 backward, a little less inclined to the Match:  
 For your Son told me you had never seen the  
 Lady; therefore I came, Sir, in that Case, to  
 entreat you, to conjure you, as you value the  
 Happiness of your Son, not to be averse to his  
 Match with a Woman who hath not only all  
 the good Qualities I have mentioned, but many  
 more.---- If that was your Business, Sir,  
 said the old Gentleman, we are both obliged  
 to you; and you may be perfectly easy; for I  
 give you my Word I was very well satisfied  
 with her Fortune. Sir, answered *Jones*, I  
 honour you every Moment more and more.  
 To be so easily satisfied, so very moderate on  
 that Account, is a Proof of the Soundness of  
 your Understanding, as well as the Nobleness  
 of your Mind.---- Not so very moderate,  
 young Gentleman, not so very moderate, an-  
 swered the Father.--- Still more and more  
 noble, replied *Jones*, and give me Leave to  
 add, sensible: For sure it is little less than Mad-  
 ness to consider Money as the sole Foundation  
 of Happiness. Such a Woman as this with  
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her little, her nothing of a Fortune.—‘ I find,  
 cries the old Gentleman, you have a pretty just  
 Opinion of Money, my Friend, or else you  
 are better acquainted with the Person of the  
 Lady than with her Circumstances. Why pray,  
 what Fortune do you imagine this Lady to  
 have?—‘ What Fortune? cries *Jones*, why  
 too contemptible a one to be named for your  
 Son. Well, well, well, said the other, per-  
 haps he might have done better.—‘ That I  
 deny, said *Jones*, for she is one of the best of  
 Women.’ ‘ Ay, ay, but in Point of For-  
 tune I mean—answered the other.—And  
 yet as to that now, how much do you imagine  
 your Friend is to have?—‘ How much, cries  
*Jones*, how much!—Why at the utmost, per-  
 haps, 200 l.’ ‘ Do you mean to banter me,  
 young Gentleman? said the Father a little  
 angry.—‘ No, upon my Soul, answered *Jones*,  
 I am in Earnest; nay I believe I have gone to  
 the utmost Farthing. If I do the Lady an In-  
 jury, I ask her Pardon.’ ‘ Indeed you do,  
 cries the Father. I am certain she hath fifty  
 Times that Sum, and she shall produce fifty  
 to that, before I consent that she shall marry my  
 Son.’ ‘ Nay, said *Jones*, it is too late to  
 talk of Consent now—If she had not fifty  
 Farthings your Son is married.—‘ My Son  
 married! answered the old Gentleman with  
 Surprise.’ ‘ Nay, said *Jones*, I thought you  
 was unacquainted with it.—‘ My Son married  
 to Miss *Harris*! answered he again’—‘ To  
 Miss *Harris*! said *Jones*; no, Sir, to Miss *Nancy*  
*Miller*, the Daughter of Mrs. *Miller*, at whose  
 House he lodged; a young Lady, who, though  
 her Mother is reduced to let Lodgings’—‘ Are  
 you



‘ you bantering, or are you in Earnest?’ cries the Father with a most solemn Voice. ‘ Indeed, Sir, answered *Jones*, I scorn the Character of a Banterer. I came to you in most serious Earnest, imagining, as I find true, that your Son had never dared acquaint you with a Match so much inferior to him in Point of Fortune, tho’ the Reputation of the Lady will suffer it no longer to remain a Secret.’

While the Father stood like one struck suddenly dumb at this News, a Gentleman came into the Room, and saluted him by the Name of Brother.

But though these two were in Consanguinity so nearly related, they were in their Dispositions almost the Opposites to each other. The Brother who now arrived had likewise been bred to Trade, in which he no sooner saw himself worth 6000 *l.* than he purchased a small Estate with the greatest Part of it, and retired into the Country; where he married the Daughter of an unbeneficed Clergyman; a young Lady who, though she had neither Beauty nor Fortune, had recommended herself to his Choice, entirely by her good Humour, of which she possessed a very large Share.

With this Woman he had, during twenty-five Years, lived a Life more resembling the Model which certain Poets ascribe to the Golden Age, than any of those Patterns which are furnished by the present Times. By her he had four Children, but none of them arrived at Maturity except only one Daughter, whom in vulgar Language he and his Wife had spoiled; that is, had educated with the utmost Tenderness and Fondness; which she returned to such a Degree, that she had actually refused a very extraordinary Match with



a Gentleman a little turned of forty, because she could not bring herself to part with her Parents.

The young Lady whom Mr. *Nightingale* had intended for his Son was a near Neighbour of his Brother, and an Acquaintance of his Niece; and in reality it was upon the Account of his projected Match, that he was now come to Town; not indeed to forward, but to dissuade his Brother from a Purpose which he conceived would inevitably ruin his Nephew; for he foresaw no other Event from a Union with Miss *Harris*, notwithstanding the Largeness of her Fortune, as neither her Person nor Mind seemed to him to promise any Kind of matrimonial Felicity; for she was very tall, very thin, very ugly, very affected, very silly, and very ill-natured.

His Brother therefore no sooner mentioned the Marriage of his Nephew with Miss *Miller*, than he express the utmost Satisfaction; and when the Father had very bitterly reviled his Son, and pronounced Sentence of Beggary upon him, the Uncle began in the following Manner.

‘ If you was a little cooler, Brother, I would  
 ‘ ask you whether you love your Son for his  
 ‘ Sake, or for your own. You would answer,  
 ‘ I suppose, and so I suppose you think, for his  
 ‘ Sake; and doubtless it is his Happiness which  
 ‘ you intended in the Marriage you proposed for  
 ‘ him.

‘ Now, Brother, to prescribe Rules of Happiness  
 ‘ to others, hath always appeared to me  
 ‘ very absurd, and to insist on doing this very  
 ‘ tyrannical. It is a vulgar Error I know; but  
 ‘ it is nevertheless an Error. And if this be absurd  
 ‘ in other Things, it is mostly so in the Affair  
 ‘ of Marriage, the Happiness of which depends

pende entirely on the Affection which subsists between the Parties.

I have therefore always thought it unreasonable in Parents to desire to chuse for their Children on this Occasion; since to force Affection is an impossible Attempt; nay, so much doth Love abhor Force, that I know not whether through an unfortunate but incurable Perverseness in our Natures, it may not be even impatient of Persuasion.

It is, however, true, that though a Parent will not, I think, wisely prescribe, he ought to be consulted on this Occasion; and in Strictness perhaps should at least have a negative Voice. My Nephew therefore, I own, in marrying without asking your Advice, hath been guilty of a Fault. But honestly speaking, Brother, have you not a little promoted this Fault? Have not your frequent Declarations on this Subject, given him a moral Certainty of your Refusal, where there was any Deficiency in Point of Fortune? nay, doth not your present Anger arise solely from that Deficiency? And if he hath failed in his Duty here; did you not as much exceed that Authority, when you absolutely bargained with him for a Woman without his Knowledge, whom you yourself never saw, and whom if you had seen and known as well as I, it must have been Madness in you, to have ever thought of bringing her into your Family.

Still I own my Nephew in a Fault; but surely it is not an unpardonable Fault. He hath acted indeed without your Consent, in a Matter in which he ought to have asked it; but it is in a Matter in which his Interest is





principally concerned; you yourself must and  
 will acknowledge, that you consulted his Inter-  
 est only, and if he unfortunately differed  
 from you, and hath been mistaken in his No-  
 tion of Happiness, will you, Brother, if you  
 love your Son, carry him still wider from the  
 Point? Will you increase the ill Consequences  
 of his simple Choice? Will you endeavour to  
 make an Event certain Misery to him, which  
 may accidentally prove so? In a Word, Bro-  
 ther, because he hath put it out of your Power  
 to make his Circumstances as affluent as you  
 would, will you distress them as much as you  
 can?

By the Force of the true Catholick Faith, St.  
*Antony* won upon the Fishes. *Orpheus* and *Am-  
 phion* went a little farther, and by the Charms of  
 Music enchanted Things merely inanimate. Won-  
 derful both! But neither History nor Fable have  
 ever yet ventured to record an Instance of any  
 one, who by Force of Argument and Reason  
 hath triumphed over habitual Avarice.

Mr. *Nightingale*, the Father, instead of at-  
 tempting to answer his Brother, contented him-  
 self with only observing, that they had always  
 differed in their Sentiments concerning the Edu-  
 cation of their Children. "I wish, said he, Bro-  
 ther, you would have confined your Care to  
 your own Daughter, and never have troubled  
 yourself with my Son, who hath, I believe, as  
 little profited by your Precepts, as by your  
 Example." For young *Nightingale* was his  
 Uncle's Godson, and had lived more with him  
 than with his Father. So that the Uncle had  
 often declared, he loved his Nephew almost  
 equally with his own Child.

Jones