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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

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Chap. IV. An extraordinary Scene between Sophia and her Aunt.

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' man, without any Regard to her Sentiments
 ' towards us, is, I am afraid, too natural : But
 ' Love, I believe, is the Child of Love only ; at
 ' least, I am pretty confident, that to love the
 ' Creature who we are assured hates us, is not in
 ' human Nature. Examine your Heart, there-
 ' fore, thoroughly, my good Boy, and if, upon
 ' Examination, you have but the least Suspicion
 ' of this Kind, I am sure your own Virtue and
 ' Religion will impel you to drive so vicious a
 ' Passion from your Heart, and your good Sense
 ' will soon enable you to do it without Pain.'

The Reader may pretty well guess *Bliss's* An-
 swer ; but if he should be at a Loss, we are
 not, at present, at Leisure to satisfy him, as our
 History now hastens on to Matters of higher Im-
 portance, and we can no longer bear to be absent
 from *Sophia*.

CHAP. IV.

*An extraordinary Scene between Sophia and her
 Aunt.*

THE lowing Heifer, and the bleating Ewe in
 Herds and Flocks, may ramble safe and
 unregarded through the Pastures. These are, in-
 deed, hereafter doomed to be the Prey of Man ;
 yet many Years are they suffered to enjoy their
 Liberty undisturbed. But if a plump Doe be dis-
 covered to have escaped from the Forest, and to
 repose herself in some Field or Grove, the whole
 Parish is presently alarmed, every Man is ready
 to set his Dogs after her ; and if she is preserved
 from the rest by the good Squire, it is only that
 he may secure her for his own eating.

I have

I have often considered a very fine young Woman of Fortune and Fashion, when first found strayed from the Pale of her Nursery, to be in pretty much the same Situation with this Doe. The Town is immediately in an Uproar, she is hunted from Park to Play, from Court to Assembly, from Assembly to her own Chamber, and rarely escapes a single Season from the Jaws of some Devourer or other: For if her Friends protect her from some, it is only to deliver her over to one of their own chusing, often more disagreeable to her than any of the rest: While whole Herds or Flocks of other Women securely, and scarce regarded, traverse the Park, the Play, the Opera, and the Assembly; and though, for the most Part at least, they are at last devoured, yet for a long Time do they wanton in Liberty, without Disturbance or Controul.

Of all these Paragons, none ever tasted more of this Persecution than poor *Sophia*. Her ill Stars were not contented with all that she had suffered on Account of *Blifil*, they now raised her another Pursuer, who seemed likely to torment her no less than the other had done. For though her Aunt was less violent, she was no less assiduous in teasing her, than her Father had been before.

The Servants were no sooner departed after Dinner, than Mrs. *Western*, who had opened the Matter to *Sophia*, informed her, 'That she expected his Lordship that very Afternoon, and intended to take the first Opportunity of leaving her alone with him.' 'If you do, Madam,' answered *Sophia*, with some Spirit, 'I shall take the first Opportunity of leaving him by himself.' 'How! Madam!' cries the
Aunt;

Aunt ; ‘ is this the Return you make me for my
 ‘ Kindness, in relieving you from your Confinement
 ‘ at your Father’s ?’ ‘ You know, Madam,’ said *Sophia*, ‘ the Cause of that Confinement
 ‘ was a Refusal to comply with my Father,
 ‘ in accepting a Man I detested ; and will my
 ‘ dear Aunt, who hath relieved me from that
 ‘ Distress, involve me in another equally bad ?’
 ‘ And do you think then, Madam,’ answered
 Mrs. *Western*, ‘ that there is no Difference between
 ‘ my Lord *Fellamar* and Mr. *Bliss* ?’
 ‘ Very little, in my Opinion,’ cries *Sophia* ;
 ‘ and if I must be condemned to one, I would
 ‘ certainly have the Merit of sacrificing myself to
 ‘ my Father’s Pleasure.’ ‘ Then my Pleasure, I
 ‘ find,’ said the Aunt, ‘ hath very little Weight
 ‘ with you ; but that Consideration shall not
 ‘ move me. I act from nobler Motives. The
 ‘ View of aggrandizing my Family, of ennobling
 ‘ yourself, is what I proceed upon. Have you no
 ‘ Sense of Ambition ? Are there no Charms in
 ‘ the Thoughts of having a Coronet on your
 ‘ Coach ?’ ‘ None, upon my Honour,’ said *Sophia*.
 ‘ A Pincushion upon my Coach would
 ‘ please me just as well.’ ‘ Never mention Honour,’
 ‘ cries the Aunt. ‘ It becomes not the
 ‘ Mouth of such a Wretch. I am sorry, Niece,
 ‘ you force me to use these Words ; but I cannot
 ‘ bear your groveling Temper ; you have
 ‘ none of the Blood of the *Westerns* in you. But
 ‘ however mean and base your own Ideas are,
 ‘ you shall bring no Imputation on mine. I will
 ‘ never suffer the World to say of me, that I
 ‘ encouraged you in refusing one of the best
 ‘ Matches in *England* ; a Match which, besides
 ‘ its Advantage in Fortune, would do Honour



' to almost any Family, and hath indeed, in
 ' Title, the Advantage of ours.' ' Surely,' says
Sophia, ' I am born deficient, and have not the
 ' Senses with which other People are blessed:
 ' There must be certainly some Sense which can
 ' relish the Delights of Sound and Show, which
 ' I have not: For surely Mankind would not
 ' labour so much, nor sacrifice so much for the
 ' obtaining, nor would they be so elate and
 ' proud with possessing, what appeared to them,
 ' as it doth to me, the most insignificant of all
 ' Trifles.'

' No, no, Mifs;' cries the Aunt; ' you are
 ' born with as many Senses as other People; but I
 ' assure you, you are not born with a sufficient
 ' Understanding to make a Fool of me, or to
 ' expose my Conduct to the World. So I de-
 ' clare this to you upon my Word, and you
 ' know, I believe, how fixed my Resolutions
 ' are, unless you agree to see his Lordship this
 ' Afternoon, I will, with my own Hands, de-
 ' liver you To-morrow Morning to my Brother,
 ' and will never henceforth interfere with you
 ' nor see your Face again.' *Sophia* stood a few
 Moments silent after this Speech, which was ut-
 tered in a most angry and peremptory Tone;
 and then bursting into Tears, she cry'd, ' Do
 ' with me, Madam, whatever you please; I am
 ' the most miserable, undone Wretch upon
 ' Earth; if my dear Aunt forsakes me, where
 ' shall I look for a Protector?'—My dear Niece,'
 cries she, ' you will have a very good Protector
 ' in his Lordship; a Protector, whom nothing
 ' but a Hankering after that vile Fellow *Jones*
 ' can make you decline.' ' Indeed, Madam,'
 said *Sophia*, ' you wrong me. How can you
 ' imagine,

' imagine, after what you have shewn me, if I
 ' had ever any such Thoughts, that I should not
 ' banish them for ever. If it will satisfy you, I
 ' will receive the Sacrament upon it, never to
 ' see his Face again.'—But Child, dear Child,
 said the Aunt, ' be reasonable: Can you invent
 ' a single Objection?'—' I have already, I
 ' think, told you a sufficient Objection,' an-
 swered *Sophia*.—' What,' cries the Aunt;
 ' I remember none,' ' Sure, Madam,' said *So-*
sophia, ' I told you he had used me in the rudest and
 ' vilest Manner.' ' Indeed, Child,' answered
 she, ' I never heard you, or did not understand
 ' you:—But what do you mean by this rude vile
 ' Manner?' ' Indeed, Madam,' said *Sophia*,
 ' I am almost ashamed to tell you. He caught
 ' me in his Arms, pulled me down upon the
 ' Settee, and thrust his Hand into my Bosom,
 ' and kissed it with such Violence, that I have
 ' the Mark upon my left Breast at this Moment.'
 —' Indeed!' said Mrs. *Western*. ' Yes in-
 ' deed, Madam,' answered *Sophia*; ' my Fa-
 ' ther luckily came in at that Instant, or Heaven
 ' knows what Rudeness he intended to have pro-
 ' ceeded to.' ' I am astonished and confound-
 ' ed,' cries the Aunt. ' No Woman of the
 ' Name of *Western* hath been ever treated so,
 ' since we were a Family. I would have torn
 ' the Eyes of a Prince out, if he had attempted
 ' such Freedoms with me. It is impossible:
 ' Sure, *Sophia*, you must invent this to raise my
 ' Indignation against him.' ' I hope, Madam,'
 said *Sophia*, ' you have too good an Opinion of
 ' me, to imagine me capable of telling an Un-
 ' truth. Upon my Soul it is true.' I should
 ' have stabbed him to the Heart had I been pre-
 sent,

' sent,' returned the Aunt. ' Yet surely he
 ' could have no dishonourable Design: It is im-
 ' possible; he durst not: Besides, his Proposals
 ' shew he had not; for they are not only ho-
 ' nourable but generous. I don't know; the
 ' Age allows too great Freedoms. A distant
 ' Salute is all I would have allowed before the
 ' Ceremony. I have had Lovers formerly, not
 ' so long ago neither; several Lovers, tho' I
 ' never would consent to Marriage, and I never
 ' encouraged the least Freedom. It is a foolish
 ' Custom, and what I never would agree to.
 ' No Man kissed more of me than my Cheek.
 ' It is as much as one can bring oneself to give
 ' Lips up to a Husband; and, indeed, could I
 ' ever have been persuaded to marry, I believe I
 ' should not have soon been brought to endure
 ' so much.' ' You will pardon me, dear Ma-
 ' dam,' said *Sophia*, ' if I make one Observa-
 ' tion: You own you have had many Lovers,
 ' and the World knows it, even if you should
 ' deny it. You refused them all, and I am con-
 ' vinced one Coronet at least among them.'
 ' You say true, dear *Sophy*,' answered she; ' I
 ' had once the Offer of a Title.' ' Why then,'
 said *Sophia*, ' will you not suffer me to refuse
 ' this once?' ' It is true, Child,' said she, ' I
 ' have refused the Offer of a Title; but it was
 ' not so good an Offer; that is, not so very,
 ' very good an Offer.'—' Yes, Madam,' said
Sophia; ' but you have had very great Proposals
 ' from Men of vast Fortunes. It was not the
 ' first, nor the second, nor the third advantage-
 ' ous Match that offered itself.' ' I own it was
 ' not,' said she. ' Well, Madam,' continued
Sophia, ' and why may not I expect to have a
 ' second

' second perhaps better than this? You are now
 ' but a young Woman, and I am convinced
 ' would not promise to yield to the first Lover
 ' of Fortune, nay, or of Title too. I am a ve-
 ' ry young Woman, and sure I need not de-
 ' spair.' ' Well, my dear, dear *Sophy*,' cries the
 Aunt, ' what would you have me say?' ' Why
 ' I only beg that I may not be left alone, at least
 ' this Evening: Grant me that, and I will sub-
 ' mit, if you think, after what is past, I ought
 ' to see him in your Company.' ' Well, I will
 ' grant it,' cries the Aunt. ' *Sophy*, you know
 ' I love you, and can deny you nothing. You
 ' know the Easiness of my Nature; I have not
 ' always been so easy. I have been formerly
 ' thought cruel; by the Men I mean. I was
 ' called the cruel *Parthenissa*. I have broke
 ' many a Window that has had Verses to the
 ' cruel *Parthenissa* in it. *Sophy*, I was never so
 ' handsome as you, and yet I had something of
 ' you formerly. I am a little altered. King-
 ' doms and States, as *Tully Cicero* says in his
 ' Epistles, undergo Alterations, and so must the
 ' human Form.' Thus run she on for near half
 an Hour upon herself, and her Conquests and her
 Cruelty, 'till the Arrival of my Lord, who, af-
 ter a most tedious Visit, during which Mrs. *Wes-*
tern never once offered to leave the Room, re-
 tired, not much more satisfied with the Aunt
 than with the Niece. For *Sophia* had brought
 her Aunt into so excellent a Temper, that she
 consented to almost every Thing her Niece said;
 and agreed, that a little distant Behaviour might
 not be improper to so forward a Lover.

Thus *Sophia* by a little well directed Flattery,
 for which surely none will blame her, obtained a

