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

In Four Volumes

**Fielding, Henry**

**London, 1750**

Chap. VI. In which Mrs. Miller pays a Visit to Sophia.

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## C H A P. VI.

*In which Mrs. Miller pays a Visit to Sophia.*

ACCESS to the young Lady was by no Means difficult; for as she lived now on a perfect friendly Footing with her Aunt, she was at full Liberty to receive what Visitants she pleased.

*Sophia* was dressing, when she was acquainted that there was a Gentlewoman below to wait on her: As she was neither afraid, nor ashamed, to see any of her own Sex, *Mrs. Miller* was immediately admitted.

Curt'sies, and the usual Ceremonials between Women who are Strangers to each other, being past, *Sophia* said, 'I have not the Pleasure to know you, Madam.' 'No, Madam,' answered *Mrs. Miller*, 'and I must beg Pardon for intruding upon you. But when you know what has induced me to give you this Trouble, I hope'—'Pray, what is your Business, Madam?' said *Sophia*, with a little Emotion. 'Madam, we are not alone,' replied *Mrs. Miller*, in a low Voice. 'Go out, *Betty*,' said *Sophia*.

When *Betty* was departed, *Mrs. Miller* said, 'I was desired, Madam, by a very unhappy young Gentleman, to deliver you this Letter.' *Sophia* changed Colour when she saw the Direction, well knowing the Hand, and after some Hesitation, said,—'I could not conceive, Madam, from your Appearance, that your Business had been of such a Nature.—Whomever you brought this Letter from I shall not open it. I should be sorry to entertain an unjust



‘Suspicion of any one; but you are an utter  
‘Stranger to me.’

‘If you will have Patience, Madam,’ answered  
Mrs. *Miller*, ‘I will acquaint you who I am,  
‘and how I came by that Letter.’ ‘I have  
‘no Curiosity, Madam, to know any Thing,’  
cries *Sophia*, ‘but I must insist on your delivering  
‘that Letter back to the Person who gave it  
‘you.’

Mrs. *Miller* then fell upon her Knees, and in  
the most passionate Terms, implored her Com-  
passion; to which *Sophia* answered: ‘Sure, Ma-  
‘dam, it is surprizing you should be so very  
‘strongly interested in the Behalf of this Person.  
‘I would not think, Madam,’—‘No, Madam,’  
says Mrs. *Miller*, ‘you shall not thi k any thing  
‘but the Truth. I will tell you all, and you  
‘will not wonder that I am interested. He is  
‘the best natured Creature that ever was born.’  
—She then began and related the Story of Mr.  
*Henderson*—After this she cried, ‘This, Ma-  
‘dam, this is his Goodness; but I have much  
‘more tender Obligations to him. He hath pre-  
‘served my Child.’—Here, after shedding some  
Tears, she related every Thing concerning that  
Fact, suppressing only those Circumstances which  
would have most reflected on her Daughter, and  
concluded with saying, ‘Now, Madam, you  
‘shall judge whether I can ever do enough for so  
‘kind, so good, so generous a young Man; and  
‘sure he is the best and worthiest of all human  
‘Beings.’

The Alterations in the Countenance of *Sophia*,  
had hitherto been chiefly to her Disadvantage, and  
had inclined her Complexion to too great Pale-  
ness; but she now waxed redder, if possible, than  
Vermi-



Vermilion, and cried, ' I know not what to say ; certainly what arises from Gratitude cannot be blamed.—But what Service can my reading this Letter do your Friend, since I am resolved never'---Mrs. *Miller* fell again to her Entreaties, and begged to be forgiven, but she could not, she said, carry it back. ' Well, Madam,' says *Sophia*, ' I cannot help it, if you will force it upon me.---Certainly you may leave it whether I will or no.' What *Sophia* meant, or whether she meant any Thing, I will not presume to determine ; but Mrs. *Miller* actually understood this as a Hint, and presently laying the Letter down on the Table, took her Leave, having first begged Permission to wait again on *Sophia* ; which Request had neither Assent nor Denial.

The Letter lay upon the Table no longer than till Mrs. *Miller* was out of Sight ; for then *Sophia* opened and read it.

This Letter did very little Service to his Cause ; for it consisted of little more than Confessions of his own Unworthiness, and bitter Lamentations of Despair, together with the most solemn Protestations of his unalterable Fidelity to *Sophia*, of which, he said, he hoped to convince her, if he had ever more the Honour of being admitted to her Presence ; and that he could account for the Letter to Lady *Bellafton*, in such a Manner, that though it would not entitle him to her Forgiveness he hoped at least to obtain it from her Mercy. And concluded with vowing, that nothing was ever less in his Thoughts than to marry Lady *Bellafton*.

Though *Sophia* read the Letter twice over with great Attention, his Meaning still remained

a Riddle to her; nor could her Invention suggest to her any Means to excuse *Jones*. She certainly remained very angry with him, though indeed *Lady Bellaston* took up so much of her Repentment, that her gentle Mind had but little left to bestow on any other Person.

That *Lady* was most unluckily to dine this very Day with her Aunt *Western*, and in the Afternoon, they were all three by Appointment, to go together to the Opera, and thence to *Lady Thomas Hatched's* Drum. *Sophia* would have gladly been excused from all, but she would not disoblige her Aunt; and as to the Arts of counterfeiting Illness, she was so entirely a Stranger to them, that it never once entered into her Head. When she was dress'd, therefore, down she went, resolv'd to encounter all the Horrors of the Day, and a most disagreeable one it prov'd; for *Lady Bellaston* took every Opportunity very civilly and slyly to insult her; to all which her Dejection of Spirits disabled her from making any Return; and indeed, to confess the Truth, she was at the very best but an indifferent Mistress of Repartee.

Another Misfortune which besel poor *Sophia*, was the Company of Lord *Fellamar*, whom she met at the Opera, and who attended her to the Drum. And though both Places were too publick to admit of any Particularities, and she was farther relieved by the Musick at the one Place, and by the Cards at the other, she could not however enjoy herself in his Company: For there is something of Delicacy in Women, which will not suffer them to be even easy in the Presence of a Man whom they know to have Pretensions



tensions to them, which they are disinclined to favour.

Having in this Chapter twice mentioned a Drum, a Word which our Posterity, it is hoped, will not understand in the Sense it is here applied, we shall, notwithstanding our present Haste, stop a Moment to describe the Entertainment here meant, and the rather as we can in a Moment describe it.

A Drum then, is an Assembly of well dressed Persons of both Sexes, most of whom play at Cards, and the rest do nothing at all; while the Mistress of the House performs the Part of the Landlady at an Inn, and like the Landlady of an Inn prides herself in the Number of her Guests, though she doth not always, like her, get any Thing by it.

No wonder then as so much Spirits must be required to support any Vivacity in these Scenes of Dulness, that we hear Persons of Fashion eternally complaining of the Want of them; a Complaint confined entirely to upper Life. How insupportable must we imagine this Round of Impertinence to have been to *Sophia*, at this Time; how difficult must she have found it to force the Appearance of Gaiety into her Looks, when her Mind dictated nothing but the tenderest Sorrow, and when every Thought was charged with tormenting Ideas.

Night however, at last, restored her to her Pillow, where we will leave her to soothe her Melancholy at least, though incapable we fear of Rest, and shall pursue our History, which something whispers us, is now arrived at the Eve of some great Event.