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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. The last. In which the History is concluded.

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C H A P. *The last.**In which the History is concluded.*

YOUNG *Nightingale* had been that Afternoon, by Appointment, to wait on his Father, who received him much more kindly than he expected. There likewise he met his Uncle, who was returned to Town in Quest of his new-married Daughter.

This Marriage was the luckiest Incident which could have happened to the young Gentleman; for these Brothers lived in a constant State of Contention about the Government of their Children, both heartily despising the Method which each other took. Each of them therefore now endeavoured as much as he could to palliate the Offence which his own Child had committed, and to aggravate the Match of the other. This Desire of triumphing over his Brother, added to the many Arguments which *Allworthy* had used, so strongly operated on the old Gentleman, that he met his Son with a smiling Countenance, and actually agreed to sup with him that Evening at Mrs. *Miller's*.

As for the other, who really loved his Daughter with the most immoderate Affection, there was little Difficulty in inclining him to a Reconciliation. He was no sooner informed by his Nephew, where his Daughter and her Husband were, than he declared he would instantly go to her. And when he arrived there, he scarce suffered her to fall upon her Knees, before he took

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her up, and embraced her with a Tenderness which affected all who saw him ; and in less than a Quarter of an Hour was as well reconciled to both her and her Husband, as if he had himself joined their Hands.

In this Situation were Affairs when Mr. *Allworthy* and his Company arrived to complete the Happiness of Mrs. *Miller*, who no sooner saw *Sophia*, than she guessed every Thing that had happened ; and so great was her Friendship to *Jones*, that it added not a few Transports to those she felt on the Happiness of her own Daughter.

There have not, I believe, been many Instances of a Number of People met together, where every one was so perfectly happy, as in this Company. Amongst whom the Father of young *Nightingale* enjoyed the least perfect Content ; for notwithstanding his Affection for his Son ; notwithstanding the Authority and the Arguments of *Allworthy*, together with the other Motive mentioned before, he could not so entirely be satisfied with his Son's Choice ; and perhaps the Presence of *Sophia* herself tended a little to aggravate and heighten his Concern, as a Thought now and then suggested itself, that his Son might have had that Lady, or some such other. Not that any of the Charms which adorned either the Person or Mind of *Sophia*, created the Uneasiness : It was the Contents of her Father's Coffers which set his Heart a longing. These were the Charms which he could not bear to think his Son had sacrificed to the Daughter of Mrs. *Miller*.

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The Brides were both very pretty Women; but so totally were they eclipsed by the Beauty of *Sophia*, that had they not been two of the best-tempered Girls in the World, it would have raised some Envy in their Breasts; for neither of their Husbands could long keep his Eyes from *Sophia*, who sat at the Table like a Queen receiving Homage, or rather like a superiour Being receiving Adoration from all around her. But it was an Adoration which they gave, not which she exacted: For she was as much distinguished by her Modesty and Affability, as by all her other Perfections.

The Evening was spent in much true Mirth. All were happy, but those the most, who had been most unhappy before. Their former Sufferings and Fears gave such a Relish to their Felicity, as even Love and Fortune in their fullest Flow could not have given without the Advantage of such a Comparison. Yet as great Joy, especially after a sudden Change and Revolution of Circumstances, is apt to be silent, and dwells rather in the Heart than on the Tongue, *Jones* and *Sophia* appeared the least merry of the whole Company. Which *Western* observed with great Impatience, often crying out to them, 'Why do'st not talk, Boy! Why do'st look so grave! Hast lost thy Tongue, Girl! Drink another Glass of Wine, tha't drink another Glass.' And the more to enliven her, he would sometimes sing a merry Song, which bore some Relation to Matrimony, and the Loss of a Maidenhead. Nay, he would have proceeded so far on that Topic, as to have driven her out of the Room, if Mr. *Allworthy* had not checkt him

sometimes by Looks, and once or twice by a *Fie!* Mr. *Western*. He began indeed once to debate the Matter, and assert his Right to talk to his own Daughter as he thought fit; but as no Body seconded him, he was soon reduced to Order.

Notwithstanding this little Restraint, he was so pleased with the Chearfulness and Good-Humour of the Company, that he insisted on their meeting the next Day at his Lodgings. They all did so; and the lovely *Sophia*, who was now in private become a Bride too, officiated as the Mistress of the Ceremonies, or, in the polite Phrase, did the Honours of the Table. She had that Morning given her Hand to *Jones*, in the Chapel at *Doctors Commons*, where Mr. *Allworthy*, Mr. *Western*, and Mrs. *Miller* were the only Persons present.

Sophia had earnestly desired her Father, that no others of the Company, who were that Day to dine with him, should be acquainted with her Marriage. The same Secrecy was enjoined to Mrs. *Miller*, and *Jones* undertook for *Allworthy*. This somewhat reconciled the Delicacy of *Sophia* to the publick Entertainment, which, in Compliance with her Father's Will, she was obliged to go to, greatly against her own Inclinations. In Confidence of this Secrecy, she went through the Day pretty well, till the Squire, who was now advanced into the second Bottle, could contain his Joy no longer, but, filling out a Bumper, drank a Health to the Bride. The Health was immediately pledged by all present, to the great Confusion of our poor blushing *Sophia*, and the great Concern of *Jones* upon her Account.

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To say Truth, there was not a Person present made wiser by this Discovery; for Mrs. *Miller* had whisper'd it to her Daughter, her Daughter to her Husband, her Husband to his Sister, and she to all the rest.

Sophia now took the first Opportunity of withdrawing with the Ladies, and the Squire sat in to his Cups, in which he was, by Degrees, deserted by all the Company, except the Uncle of young *Nightingale*, who loved his Bottle as well as *Western* himself. These two therefore sat stoutly to it, during the whole Evening, and long after that happy Hour which had surrendered the charming *Sophia* to the eager Arms of her enraptured *Jones*.

Thus, Reader, we have at length brought our History to a Conclusion, in which, to our great Pleasure, tho' contrary perhaps to thy Expectation, Mr. *Jones* appears to be the happiest of all human Kind: For what Happiness this World affords equal to the Possession of such a Woman as *Sophia*, I sincerely own I have never yet discovered.

As to the other Persons who have made any considerable Figure in this History, as some may desire to know a little more concerning them, we will proceed in as few Words as possible, to satisfy their Curiosity.

Allworthy hath never yet been prevailed upon to see *Bliss*, but he hath yielded to the Impor-tunity of *Jones*, backed by *Sophia*, to settle 200 *l.* a Year upon him; to which *Jones* hath privately added a third. Upon this Income he lives in one of the northern Counties, about 200 Miles distant from *London*, and lays up 200 *l.* a Year

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out of it, in order to purchase a Seat in the next Parliament from a neighbouring Borough, which he has bargained for with an Attorney there. He is also lately turned Methodist, in hopes of marrying a very rich Widow of that Sect, whose Estate lies in that Part of the Kingdom.

Square died soon after he writ the before-mentioned Letter; and as to *Thwackum*, he continues at his Vicarage. He hath made many fruitless Attempts to regain the Confidence of *Allworthy*, or to ingratiate himself with *Jones*, both of whom he flatters to their Faces, and abuses behind their Backs. But in his stead, Mr. *Allworthy* hath lately taken Mr. *Abraham Adams* into his House, of whom *Sophia* is grown immoderately fond, and declares he shall have the Tuition of her Children.

Mrs. *Fitzpatrick* is separated from her Husband, and retains the little Remains of her Fortune. She lives in Reputation at the polite End of the Town, and is so good an Economist, that she spends three Times the Income of her Fortune, without running in Debt. She maintains a perfect Intimacy with the Lady of the *Irish* Peer; and in Acts of Friendship to her repays all the Obligations she owes to her Husband.

Mrs. *Western* was soon reconciled to her Niece *Sophia*, and hath spent two Months together with her in the Country. Lady *Bellafton* made the latter a formal Visit at her Return to Town, where she behaved to *Jones*, as to a perfect Stranger, and with great Civility, wished him Joy on his Marriage.

Mr. *Nightingale* hath purchased an Estate for his Son in the Neighbourhood of *Jones*, where

the young Gentleman, his Lady, Mrs. *Miller*, and her little Daughter reside, and the most agreeable Intercourse subsists between the two Families.

As to those of lower Account, Mrs. *Waters* returned into the Country, had a Pension of 60 *l.* a Year settled upon her by Mr. *Allworthy*, and is married to Parson *Supple*, on whom, at the Instance of *Sophia*, *Western* hath bestowed a considerable Living.

Black George hearing the Discovery that had been made, run away, and was never since heard of; and *Jones* bestowed the Money on his Family, but not in equal Proportions, for *Molly* had much the greatest Share.

As for *Partridge*, *Jones* hath settled 50 *l.* a Year on him; and he hath again set up a School, in which he meets with much better Encouragement than formerly; and there is now a Treaty of Marriage on Foot, between him and Miss *Molly Seagrim*, which, through the Mediation of *Sophia*, is likely to take Effect.

We now return to take Leave of Mr. *Jones* and *Sophia*, who, within two Days after their Marriage, attended Mr. *Western* and Mr. *Allworthy* into the Country. *Western* hath resigned his Family Seat, and the greater Part of his Estate to his Son-in-law, and hath retired to a lesser House of his, in another Part of the Country, which is better for Hunting. Indeed he is often as a Visitant with Mr. *Jones*, who as well as his Daughter, hath an infinite Delight in doing every Thing in their Power to please him. And this Desire of theirs is attended with such Success, that the old Gentleman declares he was never

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very happy in his Life till now. He hath here a Parlour and Anti-chamber to himself, where he gets drunk with whom he pleases; and his Daughter is still as ready as formerly to play to him whenever he desires it; for *Jones* hath assured her, that as next to pleasing her, one of his highest Satisfactions is to contribute to the Happiness of the old Man; so the great Duty which she expresses and performs to her Father renders her almost equally dear to him, with the Love which she bestows on himself.

Sophia hath already produced him two fine Children, a Boy and a Girl, of whom the old Gentleman is so fond, that he spends much of his Time in the Nursery, where he declares the tattling of his little Grand-Daughter, who is above a Year and half old, is sweeter Music than the finest Cry of Dogs in *England*.

Allworthy was likewise greatly liberal to *Jones* on the Marriage, and hath omitted no Instance of shewing his Affection to him and his Lady, who love him as a Father. Whatever in the Nature of *Jones* had a Tendency to Vice, has been corrected by continual Conversation with this good Man, and by his Union with the lovely and virtuous *Sophia*. He hath also, by Reflexion on his past Follies, acquired a Discretion and Prudence very uncommon in one of his lively Parts.

To conclude, as there are not to be found a worthier Man and Woman, than this fond Couple, so neither can any be imagined more happy. They preserve the purest and tenderest Affection for each other, an Affection daily increased and confirmed by mutual Endearments, and mutual Esteem.

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Esteem. Nor is their Conduct towards their Relations and Friends less amiable, than towards one another. And such is their Condescension, their Indulgence, and their Beneficence to those below them, that there is not a Neighbour, a Tenant or a Servant who doth not most gratefully bless the Day when Mr. *Jones* was married to his *Sophia*.

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