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

In Four Volumes

**Fielding, Henry**

**London, 1750**

Chap. IX. The Escape of Sophia.

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‘ doth he ruin by his Fondness, but his own  
‘ Child?’ To which *Blifil* immediately agreed.

Mrs. *Western* then began to express great Confusion on the Account of Mr. *Blifil*, and of the Usage which he had received from a Family to which he intended so much Honour. On this Subject she treated the Folly of her Neice with great Severity; but concluded with throwing the whole on her Brother, who, she said, was inexcusable to have proceeded so far without better Assurances of his Daughter’s Consent: ‘ But he  
‘ was (says she) always of a violent, headstrong  
‘ Temper; and I can scarce forgive myself for  
‘ all the Advice I have thrown away upon him.’

After much of this Kind of Conversation, which, perhaps, would not greatly entertain the Reader, was it here particularly related, Mr. *Blifil* took his Leave, and returned home, not highly pleased with his Disappointment; which, however, the Philosophy which he had acquired from *Square*, and the Religion infused into him by *Thwackum*, together with somewhat else, taught him to bear rather better than more passionate Lovers bear these Kinds of Evils.

## C H A P. IX.

### *The Escape of Sophia.*

**I**T is now Time to look after *Sophia*; whom the Reader, if he loves her half so well as I do, will rejoice to find escaped from the Clutches of her passionate Father, and from those of her dispassionate Lover.

Twelve Times did the iron Register of Time beat on the sonorous Bell-metal, summoning the  
Ghosts

Ghosts to rise, and walk their nightly Round.— In plainer Language, it was Twelve o'Clock, and all the Family, as we have said, lay buried in Drink and Sleep, except only Mrs. *Western*, who was deeply engaged in reading a political Pamphlet, and except our Heroine, who now softly stole down Stairs, and having unbarred and unlocked one of the House Doors, sallied forth, and hastened to the Place of Appointment.

Notwithstanding the many pretty Arts, which Ladies sometimes practise, to display their Fears on every little Occasion, (almost as many as the other Sex uses to conceal theirs) certainly there is a Degree of Courage, which not only becomes a Woman, but is often necessary to enable her to discharge her Duty. It is indeed, the Idea of Fierceness, and not of Bravery, which destroys the Female Character: For who can read the Story of the justly celebrated *Arria*, without conceiving as high an Opinion of her Gentleness and Tenderness, as of her Fortitude? At the same Time, perhaps, many a Woman who shrieks at a Mouse, or a Rat, may be capable of poisoning a Husband; or, what is worse, of driving him to poison himself.

*Sophia*, with all the Gentleness which a Woman can have, had all the Spirit which she ought to have. When, therefore, she came to the Place of Appointment, and, instead of meeting her Maid, as was agreed, saw a Man ride directly up to her, she neither screamed out, nor fainted away: Not that her Pulse then beat with its usual Regularity; for she was, at first, under some Surprize and Apprehension: But these were relieved almost as soon as raised, when the Man, pulling off his Hat, asked her, in a very submissive



missive Manner, 'If her Ladyship did not expect to meet another Lady?' And then proceeded to inform her, 'that he was sent to conduct her to that Lady.'

*Sophia* could have no possible Suspicion of any Falshood in this Account: She therefore mounted resolutely behind the Fellow, who conveyed her safe to a Town about Five Miles distant, where she had the Satisfaction of finding the good Mrs. *Honour*: For as the Soul of the Waiting-woman was wrapt up in those very Habiliments which used to enwrap her Body, she could by no means bring herself to trust them out of her Sight. Upon these, therefore, she kept Guard in Person, while she detached the aforesaid Fellow after her Mistress, having given him all proper Instructions.

They now debated what Course to take, in order to avoid the Pursuit of Mr. *Western*, who, they knew, would send after them in a few Hours. The *London* Road had such Charms for *Honour*, that she was desirous of going on directly; alleging, that as *Sophia* could not be missed till Eight or Nine the next Morning, her Pursuers would not be able to overtake her, even though they knew which Way she had gone. But *Sophia* had too much at Stake to venture any Thing to Chance; nor did she dare trust too much to her tender Limbs, in a Contest which was to be decided only by Swiftness. She resolved, therefore, to travel across the Country, for at least twenty or thirty Miles, and then to take the direct Road to *London*. So, having hired Horses to go twenty Miles one Way, when she intended to go twenty Miles the other, she set forward with the same Guide, behind whom she had ridden from her

her Father's House; the Guide having now taken up behind him, in the Room of *Sophia*, a much heavier, as well as much less lovely Burthen; being, indeed, a huge Portmanteau, well stuffed with those outside Ornaments, by means of which the fair *Honour* hoped to gain many Conquests, and, finally, to make her Fortune in *London* City.

When they had gone about Two hundred Paces from the Inn, on the *London* Road, *Sophia* rode up to the Guide, and, with a Voice much fuller of Honey than was ever that of *Plato*, though his Mouth is supposed to have been a Bee-hive, begged him to take the first Turning which led towards *Bristol*.

Reader, I am not superstitious, nor any great Believer of modern Miracles. I do not, therefore, deliver the following as a certain Truth; for, indeed, I can scarce credit it myself: But the Fidelity of an Historian obliges me to relate what hath been confidently asserted. The Horse, then, on which the Guide rode, is reported to have been so charmed by *Sophia's* Voice, that he made a full Stop, and express'd an Unwillingness to proceed any farther.

Perhaps, however, the Fact may be true, and less miraculous than it hath been represented; since the natural Cause seems adequate to the Effect: For as the Guide at that Moment desisted from a constant Application of his armed Right Heel, (for, like *Hudibras*, he wore but one Spur) it is more than possible, that this Omission alone might occasion the Beast to stop, especially as this was very frequent with him at other Times.

But if the Voice of *Sophia* had really an Effect on the Horse, it had very little on the Rider.

He answered somewhat furlily, ' That Measter  
' had ordered him to go a different Way, and  
' that he should lose his Place, if he went any  
' other than that he was ordered.'

*Sophia* finding all her Persuasions had no Effect,  
began now to add irresistable Charms to her  
Voice; Charms, which, according to the Pro-  
verb, makes the old Mare trot, instead of stand-  
ing still; Charms! to which modern Ages have  
attributed all that irresistable Force, which the  
Antients imputed to perfect Oratory. In a Word,  
she promised she would reward him to his utmost  
Expectation.

The Lad was not totally deaf to these Pro-  
mises; but he disliked their being indefinite:  
For tho' perhaps he had never heard that Word;  
yet that in Fact was his Objection. He said,  
' Gentlevolks did not consider the Case of poor  
' Volks; that he had like to have been turned  
' away the other Day, for riding about the  
' Country with a Gentleman from Squire *All-*  
' *worthy's*, who did not reward him as he should  
' have done.'

' With whom?' says *Sophia* eagerly—' With  
' a Gentleman from Squire *Allworthy's*,' repeated  
the Lad; ' the Squire's Son, I think, they call  
' 'un.'—' Whither? which Way did he go?'  
says *Sophia*. ' Why a little o' one Side o' *Bristol*,  
' about twenty Miles off,' answered the Lad.—  
' Guide me,' says *Sophia*, ' to the same Place,  
' and I'll give thee a Guinea, or two, if one is  
' not sufficient.' ' To be certain,' said the Boy,  
' it is honestly worth two, when your Ladyship  
' considers what a Risk I run; but, however, if  
' your Ladyship will promise me the two Guineas,  
' I'll e'en venture: To be certain it is a sinful  
' Thing

‘ Thing to ride about my Master’s Horses ; but  
 ‘ one Comfort is, I can only be turned away, and  
 ‘ two Guineas will partly make me Amends.’

The Bargain being thus struck, the Lad turned aside into the *Bristol* Road, and *Sophia* set forward in Pursuit of *Jones*, highly contrary to the Remonstrances of *Mrs. Honour*, who had much more Desire to see *London*, than to see *Mr. Jones* : For indeed she was not his Friend with her Mistress, as he had been guilty of some Neglect in certain pecuniary Civilities, which are by Custom due to the Waiting-gentlewoman in all Love Affairs, and more especially in those of a clandestine Kind. This we impute rather to the Carelessness of his Temper, than to any Want of Generosity ; but perhaps she derived it from the latter Motive. Certain it is that she hated him very bitterly on that Account, and resolved to take every Opportunity of injuring him with her Mistress. It was therefore highly unlucky for her, that she had gone to the very same Town and Inn whence *Jones* had started, and still more unlucky was she, in having stumbled on the same Guide, and on this accidental Discovery which *Sophia* had made.

Our Travellers arrived at *Hambrook* \* at the Break of Day, where *Honour* was against her Will charged to enquire the Rout which *Mr. Jones* had taken. Of this, indeed, the Guide himself could have informed them ; but *Sophia*, I know not for what Reason, never asked him the Question.

When *Mrs. Honour* had made her Report from the Landlord, *Sophia*, with much Difficulty, pro-

\* This was the Village where *Jones* met the Quaker.



cured some indifferent Horfes, which brought her to the Inn, where *Jones* had been confined rather by the Misfortune of meeting with a Surgeon, than by having met with a broken Head.

Here *Honour* being again charged with a Commission of Enquiry, had no sooner applied herself to the Landlady, and had described the Person of *Mr. Jones*, than that sagacious Woman began, in the vulgar Phrase, to smell a Rat. When *Sophia* therefore entered the Room, instead of answering the Maid, the Landlady addressing herself to the Mistress began the following Speech. ‘ Good-lack-a-day! why there now, who would have thought it! I protest the loveliest Couple that ever Eye beheld. I-fackins, Madam, it is no Wonder the Squire run on so about your Ladyship. He told me indeed you was the finest Lady in the World, and to be sure so you be. Mercy on him, poor Heart, I bepited him, so I did, when he used to hug his Pillow, and call it his dear Madam *Sophia*.—I did all I could to dissuade him from going to the Wars: I told him there were Men enow that were good for nothing else but to be killed, that had not the Love of such fine Ladies.’ ‘ Sure,’ says *Sophia*, ‘ the good Woman is distracted.’ ‘ No, no,’ cries the Landlady, ‘ I am not distracted. What, doth your Ladyship think I don’t know then? I assure you he told me all.’ ‘ What saucy Fellow,’ cries *Honour*, ‘ told you any thing of my Lady?’ ‘ No saucy Fellow,’ answered the Landlady, ‘ but the young Gentleman you enquired after, and a very pretty young Gentleman he is, and he loves Madam *Sophia* Western to the Bottom of his Soul.’ ‘ He love my Lady! I’d have you to know, Woman, she



‘ she is Meat for his Master.’—‘ Nay, *Honour*,’ said *Sophia*, interrupting her, ‘ don’t be angry with the good Woman; she intends no Harm.’ ‘ No, marry don’t I,’ answered the Landlady, emboldened by the soft Accents of *Sophia*; and then launched into a long Narrative too tedious to be here set down, in which some Passages dropt, that gave a little Offence to *Sophia*, and much more to her Waiting-woman, who hence took Occasion to abuse poor *Jones* to her Mistress the Moment they were alone together, saying, ‘ that he must be a very pitiful Fellow, and could have no Love for a Lady, whose Name he would thus prostitute in an Ale-house.’

*Sophia* did not see his Behaviour in so very disadvantageous a Light, and was perhaps more pleased with the violent Raptures of his Love (which the Landlady exaggerated as much as she had done every other Circumstance) than she was offended with the rest; and indeed she imputed the whole to the Extravagance, or rather Ebullience of his Passion, and to the Openness of his Heart.

This Incident, however, being afterwards revived in her Mind, and placed in the most odious Colours by *Honour*, served to heighten and give Credit to those unlucky Occurrences at *Upton*, and assisted the Waiting-woman in her Endeavours to make her Mistress depart from that Inn without seeing *Jones*.

The Landlady finding *Sophia* intended to stay no longer than till her Horses were ready, and that without either eating or drinking, soon withdrew; when *Honour* began to take her Mistress to Task, (for indeed she used great Freedom) and



after a long Harangue, in which she reminded her of her Intention to go to *London*, and gave frequent Hints of the Impropriety of pursuing a young Fellow, she at last concluded with this serious Exhortation: 'For Heaven's Sake, Madam, consider what you are about, and whither you are going.'

This Advice to a Lady who had already rode near forty Miles, and in no very agreeable Season, may seem foolish enough. It may be supposed she had well considered and resolved this already; nay, Mrs. *Honour*, by the Hints she threw out, seemed to think so; and this I doubt not is the Opinion of many Readers, who have, I make no Doubt, been long since well convinced of the Purpose of our Heroine, and have heartily condemned her for it as a wanton Baggage.

But in Reality this was not the Case. *Sophia* had been lately so distracted between Hope and Fear, her Duty and Love to her Father, her Hatred to *Bliffl*, her Compassion, and (why should we not confess the Truth?) her Love for *Jones*; which last the Behaviour of her Father, of her Aunt, of every one else, and more particularly of *Jones* himself, had blown into a Flame, that her Mind was in that confused State, which may be truly said to make us ignorant of what we do, or whither we go, or rather indeed indifferent as to the Consequence of either.

The prudent and sage Advice of her Maid, produced, however, some cool Reflection; and she at length determined to go to *Gloucester*, and thence to proceed directly to *London*.

But unluckily a few Miles before she entered that Town, she met the Hack-Attorney, who, as is before mentioned, had dined there with Mr.

*Jones*.

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*Jones*. This Fellow being well known to *Mrs. Honour*, stopt and spoke to her; of which *Sophia* at that Time took little Notice, more than to enquire who he was.

But having had a more particular Account from *Honour* of this Man afterwards at *Gloucester*, and hearing of the great Expedition he usually made in travelling, for which (as hath been before observed) he was particularly famous; recollecting likewise, that she had overheard *Mrs. Honour* inform him, that they were going to *Gloucester*, she began to fear lest her Father might, by this Fellow's Means, be able to trace her to that City; wherefore if she should there strike into the *London Road*, she apprehended he would certainly be able to overtake her. She therefore altered her Resolution; and having hired Horses to go a Week's Journey, a Way which she did not intend to travel, she again set forward after a light Refreshment, contrary to the Desire and earnest Entreaties of her Maid, and to the no less vehement Remonstrances of *Mrs. Whitefield*, who from good Breeding, or perhaps from good Nature (for the poor young Lady appeared much fatigued) press'd her very heartily to stay that Evening at *Gloucester*.

Having refresh'd herself only with some Tea, and with lying about two Hours on the Bed, while her Horses were getting ready, she resolutely left *Mrs. Whitefield's* about Eleven at Night, and striking directly into the *Worcester Road*, within less than four Hours arriv'd at that very Inn where we last saw her.

Having thus traced our Heroine very particularly back from her Departure, till her Arrival

at *Upton*, we shall in a very few Words bring her Father to the same Place; who having received the first Scent from the Post-boy, who conducted his Daughter to *Hambrook*, very easily traced her afterwards to *Gloucester*; whence he pursued her to *Upton*, as he had learned Mr. *Jones* had taken that Rout, (for *Partridge*, to use the Squire's Expression, left every where a strong Scent behind him) and he doubted not in the least but *Sophia* travelled, or, as he phrased it, ran the same Way. He used indeed a very coarse Expression, which need not be here inserted; as Fox-hunters, who alone would understand it, will easily suggest it to themselves.

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