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

In Four Volumes

**Fielding, Henry**

**London, 1750**

Chap. XI. The Disasters which befel Jones on his Departure for Coventry;  
with the sage Remarks of Partridge.

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if we should happen to meet Mr. *Dowling* any more in the Course of our History. At present we are obliged to take our Leave of that Gentleman a little abruptly, in Imitation of Mr. *Jones*; who was no sooner informed, by *Partridge*, that his Horses were ready, than he deposited his Reckoning, wished his Companion a good Night, mounted, and set forward towards *Coventry*, tho' the Night was dark, and it just then began to rain very hard.

C H A P. XI.

*The Disasters which beset Jones on his Departure for Coventry; with the sage Remarks of Partridge.*

**N**O Road can be plainer than that from the Place where they now were to *Coventry*; and though neither *Jones* nor *Partridge*, nor the Guide had ever travelled it before, it would have been almost impossible to have missed their Way, had it not been for the two Reasons mentioned in the Conclusion of the last Chapter.

These two Circumstances, however, happening both unfortunately to intervene, our Travellers deviated into a much less frequented Track; and after riding full Six Miles, instead of arriving at the stately Spires of *Coventry*, they found themselves still in a very dirty Lane, where they saw no Symptoms of approaching the Suburbs of a large City.

*Jones* now declared that they must certainly have lost their Way; but this the Guide insisted upon was impossible; a Word which, in common Conversation, is often used to signify not only

only improbable, but often what is really very likely, and, sometimes, what hath certainly happened: An hyperbolical Violence like that which is so frequently offered to the Words Infinite and Eternal; by the former of which it is usual to express a Distance of half a Yard, and by the latter, a Duration of five Minutes. And thus it is as usual to assert the Impossibility of losing what is already actually lost. This was, in fact, the Case at present: For notwithstanding all the confident Assertions of the Lad to the contrary, it is certain they were no more in the right Road to *Coventry*, than the fraudulent, griping, cruel, canting Miser is in the right Road to Heaven.

It is not, perhaps, easy for a Reader who hath never been in those Circumstances, to imagine the Horror with which Darkness, Rain, and Wind fill Persons who have lost their Way in the Night; and who, consequently, have not the pleasant Prospect of warm Fires, dry Cloaths, and other Refreshments, to support their Minds in struggling with the Inclemencies of the Weather. A very imperfect Idea of this Horror will, however, serve sufficiently to account for the Conceits which now filled the Head of *Partridge*, and which we shall presently be obliged to open.

*Jones* grew more and more positive that they were out of their Road; and the Boy himself, at last, acknowledged he believed they were not in the right Road to *Coventry*; tho' he affirmed, at the same Time, it was impossible they should have mist the Way. But *Partridge* was of a different Opinion. He said, 'When they first set out he  
' imagined some Mischief or other would happen.  
' —Did not you observe, Sir,' said he to *Jones*,  
' that old Woman who stood at the Door just as  
' you

‘ you was taking Horse? I wish you had given  
 ‘ her a small Matter, with all my Heart; for she  
 ‘ said then you might repent it; and at that very  
 ‘ Instant it began to rain, and the Wind hath con-  
 ‘ tinued rising ever since. Whatever some People  
 ‘ may think, I am very certain it is in the Power  
 ‘ of Witches to raise the Wind whenever they  
 ‘ please. I have seen it happen very often in  
 ‘ my Time: And if ever I saw a Witch in all my  
 ‘ Life, that old Woman was certainly one. I  
 ‘ thought so to myself at that very Time; and if  
 ‘ I had any Halfpence in my Pocket, I would  
 ‘ have given her some: For to be sure it is al-  
 ‘ ways good to be charitable to those Sort of  
 ‘ People, for Fear what may happen; and ma-  
 ‘ ny a Person hath lost his Cattle by saving a  
 ‘ Halfpenny.

*Jones*, tho’ he was horridly vexed at the Delay  
 which this Mistake was likely to occasion in his  
 Journey, could not help smiling at the Superstition  
 of his Friend, whom an Accident now greatly con-  
 firmed in his Opinion. This was a Tumble from  
 his Horse; by which, however, he received no  
 other Injury than what the Dirt conferred on his  
 Cloaths.

*Partridge* had no sooner recovered his Legs,  
 than he appealed to his Fall, as conclusive Evi-  
 dence of all he had asserted; but *Jones*, finding  
 he was unhurt, answered with a Smile: ‘ This  
 ‘ Witch of yours, *Partridge*, is a most ungrate-  
 ‘ ful Jade, and doth not, I find, distinguish her  
 ‘ Friends from others in her Resentment. If the  
 ‘ old Lady had been angry with me for neglecting  
 ‘ her, I don’t see why she should tumble you from  
 ‘ your Horse, after all the Respect you have ex-  
 ‘ pressed for her.’

‘ It

‘It is ill jesting,’ cries *Partridge*, ‘with People who have Power to do these Things; for they are often very malicious. I remember a Farrier, who provoked one of them, by asking her when the Time she had bargained with the Devil for, would be out; and within three Months from that very Day one of his best Cows was drowned. Nor was she satisfied with that; for a little Time afterwards he lost a Barrel of Best-Drink: For the old Witch pulled out the Spigot, and let it run all over the Cellar, the very first Evening he had tapped it, to make merry with some of his Neighbours. In short, nothing ever thrived with him afterwards; for she worried the poor Man so, that he took to Drinking; and in a Year or two his Stock was seized, and he and his Family are now come to the Parish.’

The Guide, and perhaps his Horse too, were both so attentive to this Discourse, that, either thro’ Want of Care, or by the Malice of the Witch, they were now both sprawling in the Dirt.

*Partridge* entirely imputed this Fall, as he had done his own, to the same Cause. He told Mr. *Jones*, ‘it would certainly be his Turn next;’ and earnestly intreated him ‘to return back, and find out the old Woman, and pacify her. We shall very soon,’ added he, ‘reach the Inn; For tho’ we have seemed to go forward, I am very certain we are in the identical Place in which we were an Hour ago; and I dare swear if it was Day-light, we might now see the Inn we set out from.’

Instead of returning any Answer to this sage Advice, *Jones* was entirely attentive to what had happened to the Boy, who received no other

Hurt