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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. XI. In which the Reader will be surprized.

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omit any Circumstances which might do the fullest Honour to his Benefactor.

C H A P. XI.

In which the Reader will be surprized.

MR. Jones was rather earlier than the Time appointed, and earlier than the Lady, whose Arrival was hindered not only by the Distance of the Place where she dined, but by some other cross Accidents, very vexatious to one in her Situation of Mind. He was accordingly shewn into the Drawing-Room, where he had not been many Minutes before the Door opened, and in came——no other than *Sophia* herself, who had left the Play before the End of the first Act; for this, as we have already said, being a new Play, at which two large Parties met, the one to damn, and the other to applaud, a violent Uproar, and an Engagement between the two Parties had so terrified our Heroine, that she was glad to put herself under the Protection of a young Gentleman, who safely conveyed her to her Chair.

As Lady *Belleston* had acquainted her that she should not be at Home till late, *Sophia* expecting to find no one in the Room, came hastily in, and went directly to a Glass which almost fronted her, without once looking towards the upper End of the Room, where the Statue of *Jones* now stood motionless.——In this Glass it was, after contemplating her own lovely Face, that she first discovered the said Statue; when instantly turning about, she perceived the Reality of the Vision: Upon which she gave a violent Scream, and scarce preserved herself from fainting, till

Jones

Jones was able to move to her and support her in his Arms.

To paint the Looks or Thoughts of either of these Lovers is beyond my Power. As their Sensations, from their mutual Silence, may be judged to have been too big for their own Utterance, it cannot be supposed, that I should be able to express them: And the Misfortune is, that few of my Readers have been enough in Love, to feel by their own Hearts what pass at this Time in theirs.

After a Short Pause, *Jones*, with faltering Accents, said,——‘ I see, Madam you are surprized.’——‘ Surprize!’ answered she; ‘ Oh Heavens! Indeed, I am surprized. I almost doubt whether you are the Person you seem.’ ‘ Indeed,’ cries he, ‘ my *Sophia*, pardon me, Madam, for this once calling you so, I am that very wretched *Jones*, whom Fortune after so many Disappointments, hath, at last, kindly conducted to you. Oh! my *Sophia*, did you know the Thousand Torments I have suffered in this long, fruitless Pursuit’—‘ Pursuit of whom?’ said *Sophia*, a little recollecting herself, and assuming a reserved Air.——‘ Can you be so cruel to ask that Question?’ cries *Jones*. ‘ Need I say of you?’ ‘ Of me?’ answered *Sophia*: ‘ Hath Mr. *Jones* then any such important Business with me?’ ‘ To some, Madam,’ cries *Jones*, ‘ this might seem an important Business,’ (giving her the Pocket-Book). ‘ I hope, Madam, you will find it of the same Value, as when it was lost.’ *Sophia* took the Pocket-Book, and was going to speak, when he interrupted her, thus;-----‘ Let us not, I beseech you, lose one of these precious Moments which Fortune hath so kindly sent us.—’

‘ O

' O my *Sophia*, I have Business of a much superior Kind.—Thus, on my Knees, let me ask your Pardon.'—' My Pardon?' cries she;—' Sure, Sir, after what is past, you cannot expect, after what I have heard—' I scarce know what I say,' answered *Jones*. By Heavens! I scarce wish you should pardon me. O my *Sophia*, henceforth never cast away a Thought on such a Wretch as I am. If any Remembrance of me should ever intrude to give a Moment's Uneasiness to that tender Bosom, think of my Unworthiness; and let the Remembrance of what past at *Upton* blot me forever from your Mind'—

Sophia stood trembling all this while. Her Face was whiter than Snow, and her Heart was throbbing through her Stays. But at the mention of *Upton*, a Blush arose in her Cheeks, and her Eyes, which before she had scarce lifted up were turned upon *Jones* with a Glance of Disdain. He understood this silent Reproach, and replied to it thus: ' O my *Sepbia*, my only Love, you cannot hate or despise me more for what happened there, than I do myself: But yet do me the Justice to think, that my *Heart* was never unfaithful to you. *That* had no Share in the Folly I was guilty of; it was even then unalterably yours. Though I despaired of possessing you, nay, almost of ever seeing you more, I doated still on your charming Idea, and could *seriously* love no other Woman. But if my Heart had not been engaged, she, into whose Company I accidentally fell at that cursed Place, was not an Object of serious Love. Believe me, my Angel, I never have seen her from that Day to this; and never intend, or desire, to see her again.' *Sophia*, in her Heart, was very glad
to

to hear this; but forcing into her Face an Air of more Coldness than she had yet assumed; 'Why,' said she, 'Mr. Jones, do you take the Trouble to make a Defence, where you are not accused? If I thought it worth while to accuse you, I have a Charge of unpardonable Nature in deed.' 'What is it, for Heaven's Sake?' answered Jones, trembling and pale, expecting to hear of his Amour with Lady *Bellafton*. 'Oh,' said she, 'How is it possible! Can every Thing noble, and every Thing base, be lodged together in the same Bosom?' Lady *Bellafton*, and the ignominious Circumstance of having been kept, rose again in his Mind, and stopt his Mouth from any Reply. 'Could I have expected,' proceeded *Sophia*, 'such Treatment from you? Nay from any Gentleman, from any Man of Honour? To have my Name traduced in Public; in Inns, among the meanest Vulgar! To have any little Favours that my unguarded Heart may have too lightly betrayed me to grant, boasted of there! Nay, even to hear that you had been forced to fly from my Love!

Nothing could equal Jones's Surprize at these Words of *Sophia*; but yet, not being guilty, he was much less embarrassed how to defend himself, than if she had touched that tender String, at which his Conscience had been alarmed. By some Examination he presently found, that her supposing him guilty of so shocking an Outrage against his Love, and her Reputation, was entirely owing to *Partridge's* Talk at the Inns, before Landlords and Servants; for *Sophia* confessed to him, it was from them that she received her Intelligence. He had no very great Difficulty to make her believe that he was entirely innocent

of

of an Offence so foreign to his Character; but she had a great deal to hinder him from going instantly home, and putting *Partridge* to Death, which he more than once swore he would do. This Point being cleared up, they soon found themselves so well pleased with each other, that *Jones* quite forgot he had begun the Conversation with conjuring her to give up all Thoughts of him; and she was in a Temper to have given Ear to a Petition of a very different Nature: For before they were aware, they had both gone so far, that he let fall some Words that sounded like a Proposal of Marriage. To which she replied, 'That, did not her Duty to her Father forbid her to follow her own Inclinations, Ruin with him would be more welcome to her, than the most affluent Fortune with another Man.' At the mention of the Word Ruin he started, let dropher Hand, which he had held for some Time, and striking his Breast with his own, cried out, 'Oh, *Sophia*, can I then ruin thee? No; by Heavens, no! I never will act so base a Part. Dearest *Sophia*, whatever it costs me, I will renounce you; I will give you up: I will tear all such Hopes from my Heart, as are inconsistent with your real Good. My Love I will ever retain, but it shall be in Silence; it shall be at a Distance from you; it shall be in some foreign Land; from whence no Voice, no Sigh of my Despair, shall ever reach and disturb your Ears. And when I am dead'—He would have gone on, but was stopt by a Flood of Tears which *Sophia* let fall in his Bosom, upon which she leaned, without being able to speak one Word. He kissed them off, which, for some Moments, she allowed him to do without any Resistance; but

but then recollecting herself, gently withdrew out of his Arms; and, to turn the Discourse from a Subject too tender, and which she found she could not support, bethought herself to ask him a Question she never had Time to put to him before, ‘How he came into that Room?’ He begun to stammer, and would, in all Probability, have raised her Suspicions by the Answer he was going to give, when, at once, the Door opened, and in came Lady *Bellaſton*.

Having advanced a few Steps, and seeing *Jones* and *Sophia* together, she suddenly stopt; when after a Pause of a few Moments, recollecting herself with admirable Presence of Mind, she said, — tho’ with sufficient Indications of Surprize both in Voice and Countenance—‘I thought, Miss *Western*, you had been at the Play?’

Though *Sophia* had no Opportunity of learning of *Jones* by what Means he had discovered her, yet as she had not the least Suspicion of the real Truth, or that *Jones* and Lady *Bellaſton* were acquainted, so she was very little confounded: And the less, as the Lady had, in all their Conversations on the Subject, entirely taken her Side against her Father. With very little Hesitation, therefore, she went through the whole Story of what had happened at the Playhouse, and the Cause of her hasty Return.

The length of this Narrative gave Lady *Bellaſton* an Opportunity of rallying her Spirits, and of considering in what manner to act. And as the Behaviour of *Sophia* gave her Hopes that *Jones* had not betrayed her, she put on an Air of Good-Humour, and said, ‘I should not have broke in so abruptly upon you, Miss *Western*, if I had known you had Company.

Lady

Lady *Bellaſton* fixed her Eyes on *Sophia* whilſt ſhe ſpoke theſe Words. To which that poor young Lady, having her Face overſpread with Bluſhes and Confuſion, answered, in a ſtammering Voice, ‘I am ſure, Madam, I ſhall always think the Honour of your Ladyſhip’s Company——’ ‘I hope, at leaſt,’ cries Lady *Bellaſton*, ‘I interrupt no Buſineſs.’—‘No, Madam,’ answered *Sophia*, ‘our Buſineſs was at an End. Your Ladyſhip may be pleaſed to remember, I have often mentioned the Loſs of my Pocket-book, which this Gentleman having very luckily found, was ſo kind to return it to me with the Bill in it.’

Jones, ever ſince the Arrival of Lady *Bellaſton*, had been ready to ſink with Fear. He ſat kicking his Heels, playing with his Fingers, and looking more like a Fool, if it be poſſible, than a young booby Squire, when he is firſt introduced into a polite Aſſembly. He began, however, now to recover himſelf; and taking a Hint from the Behaviour of Lady *Bellaſton*, who, he ſaw, did not intend to claim any Acquaintance with him, he reſolved as entirely to affect the Stranger on his Part. He ſaid, ‘Ever ſince he had the Pocket-Book in his Poſſeſſion, he had uſed great Diligence in enquiring out the Lady whoſe Name was writ in it; but never till that Day could be ſo fortunate to diſcover her.’

Sophia had, indeed, mentioned the Loſs of her Pocket-Book to Lady *Bellaſton*; but as *Jones*, for ſome Reaſon or other, had never once hinted to her that it was in his Poſſeſſion, ſhe believed not one Syllable of what *Sophia* now ſaid, and wonderfully admired the extreme Quickneſs of the young

young Lady, in inventing such an Excuse. The Reason of *Sophia's* leaving the Playhouse met with no better Credit; and though she could not account for the Meeting between these two Lovers, she was firmly persuaded it was not accidental.

With an affected Smile, therefore, she said—
 ‘ Indeed, Miss *Western*, you have had very good
 ‘ Luck in recovering your Money. Not only
 ‘ as it fell into the Hands of a Gentleman of
 ‘ Honour, but as he happened to discover to
 ‘ whom it belonged. I think you would not
 ‘ consent to have it advertised.—It was great good
 ‘ Fortune, Sir, that you found out to whom the
 ‘ Note belonged.’

‘ O Madam,’ cries *Jones*, ‘ it was inclosed in
 ‘ a Pocket-Book, in which the young Lady’s
 ‘ Name was written.’

‘ That was very fortunate indeed,’ cries the
 Lady;—‘ And it was no less so, that you heard
 ‘ Miss *Western* was at my House; for she is very
 ‘ little known.’

Jones had at length perfectly recovered his
 Spirits; and as he conceived he had now an Op-
 portunity of satisfying *Sophia*, as to the Question
 she had asked him just before Lady *Bellaston* came
 in, he proceeded thus: ‘ Why, Madam,’ an-
 swered he, ‘ it was by the luckiest Chance ima-
 ‘ ginable I made this Discovery. I was mention-
 ‘ ing what I had found, and the Name of the
 ‘ Owner, the other Night, to a Lady at the
 ‘ Masquerade, who told me, she believed she
 ‘ knew where I might see Miss *Western*; and if
 ‘ I would come to her House the next Morning,
 ‘ she would inform me. I went according to
 ‘ her Appointment, but she was not at home;
 ‘ nor

‘nor could I ever meet with her till this Morning, when she directed me to your Ladyship’s House. I came accordingly, and did myself the Honour to ask for your Ladyship; and upon my saying that I had very particular Business, a Servant shewed me into this Room; where I had not been long before the young Lady returned from the Play.’

Upon his mentioning the Masquerade, he look’d very slyly at Lady *Bellafton*, without any Fear of being remarked by *Sophia*; for she was visibly too much confounded to make any Observations. This Hint a little alarmed the Lady, and she was silent; when *Jones*, who saw the Agitations of *Sophia*’s Mind, resolv’d to take the only Method of relieving her, which was by retiring: But before he did this, he said, ‘I believe, Madam, it is customary to give some Reward on these Occasions;—I must insist on a very high one for my Honesty;—It is, Madam, no less than the Honour of being permitted to pay another Visit here.’

‘Sir,’ replied the Lady, ‘I make no Doubt that you are a Gentleman, and my Doors are never shut to People of Fashion.’

Jones then, after proper Ceremonials, departed, highly to his own Satisfaction, and no less to that of *Sophia*; who was terribly alarmed lest Lady *Bellafton* should discover what she knew already but too well.

Upon the Stairs *Jones* met his old Acquaintance Mrs. *Honour*, who, notwithstanding all she had said against him, was now so well-bred to behave with great Civility. This Meeting proved indeed a lucky Circumstance, as he communi-

cated