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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. XII. In which the Thirteenth Book is concluded.

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cated to her the House where he lodged, with which *Sophia* was acquainted.

C H A P. XII.

In which the Thirteenth Book is concluded.

THE elegant Lord *Shaftsbury* somewhere objects to telling too much Truth: By which it may be fairly inferred, that, in some Cases, to lie, is not only excusable but commendable.

And surely there are no Persons who may so properly challenge a Right to this commendable Deviation from Truth, as young Women in the Affair of Love; for which they may plead Precept, Education, and above all, the Sanction, nay, I may say, the Necessity of Custom, by which they are restrained, not from submitting to the honest Impulses of Nature (for that would be a foolish Prohibition) but from owning them.

We are not, therefore, ashamed to say, that our Heroine now pursued the Dictates of the abovementioned Right Honourable Philosopher. As she was perfectly satisfied then, that Lady *Bellafton* was ignorant of the Person of *Jones*, so she determined to keep her in that Ignorance, though at the Expence of a little Fibbing.

Jones had not been long gone, before Lady *Bellafton* cry'd, 'Upon my Word, a good pretty young Fellow; I wonder who he is: For I don't remember ever to have seen his Face before.'

'Nor I neither, Madam, cries *Sophia*, I must say he behaved very handsomely in relation to my Note.'

‘ Yes ; and he is a very handsome Fellow,’
 said the Lady ; ‘ don’t you think so ?’

‘ I did not take much Notice of him,’ answered
Sophia ; ‘ but I thought he seem’d rather aukward
 ‘ and ungenteel than otherwise.’

‘ You are extremely right,’ cries Lady *Bella-*
ston : ‘ You may see, by his Manner, that he hath
 ‘ not kept good Company. Nay, notwithstand-
 ‘ ing his returning your Note, and refusing the
 ‘ Reward, I almost question whether he is a Gen-
 ‘ tleman.—I have always observed there is a
 ‘ Something in Persons well-born, which others
 ‘ can never acquire.—I think I will give Or-
 ‘ ders not to be at Home to him.’

‘ Nay sure, Madam,’ answered *Sophia*, ‘ one
 ‘ can’t suspect after what he hath done :—Be-
 ‘ sides, if your Ladyship observed him, there was
 ‘ an Elegance in his Discourse, a Delicacy, a
 ‘ Prettiness of Expression that, that—

‘ I confess,’ said Lady *Bella-*
ston, ‘ the Fellow
 ‘ hath Words—And indeed, *Sophia*, you must
 ‘ forgive me, indeed you must.’

‘ I forgive your Ladyship!’ said *Sophia*.

‘ Yes indeed you must,’ answered she laughing ;
 ‘ for I had a horrible Suspicion when I first came
 ‘ into the Room— I vow you must forgive it ;
 ‘ but I suspected it was Mr. *Jones* himself.’

‘ Did your Ladyship indeed?’ cries *Sophia*,
 blushing, and affecting a Laugh.

‘ Yes, I vow I did,’ answered she, ‘ I can’t
 ‘ imagine what put it into my Head : For, give
 ‘ the Fellow his due, he was genteelly dress’d ;
 ‘ which, I think, dear *Sophy*, is not commonly
 ‘ the Case with your Friend.’

‘ This

‘ This Raillery,’ cries *Sophia*, ‘ is a little cruel. *Lady Bellaston*, ‘ after my Promise to your Ladyship.’

‘ Not at all, Child,’ said the Lady !--‘ It would have been cruel before ; but after you have promised me never to marry without your Father’s Consent, in which you know is implied your giving up *Jones*, sure you can bear a little Raillery on a Passion which was pardonable enough in a young Girl in the Country, and of which you tell me you have so entirely got the better. What must I think, my dear *Sophy*, if you cannot bear a little Ridicule even on his Drefs ? I shall begin to fear you are very far gone indeed ; and almost question whether you have dealt ingenuously with me.’

‘ Indeed, Madam,’ cries *Sophia*, ‘ your Ladyship mistakes me, if you imagine I had any Concern on his Account.’

‘ On his Account ?’ answered the Lady : ‘ You must have mistaken me ; I went no farther than his Drefs ;-----for I would not injure your Taste by any other Comparison----I don’t imagine, my dear *Sophy*. if your *Mr. Jones* had been such a Fellow as this-----

‘ I thought,’ says *Sophia*, ‘ your Ladyship had allowed him to be handsome.’-----

‘ Whom, pray ?’ cried the Lady, hastily.’

‘ *Mr. Jones*,’ answered *Sophia* ;----and immediately recollecting herself, ‘ *Mr. Jones* !-----no, no ; I ask your Pardon ;---I mean the Gentleman who was just now here.’

‘ O *Sophy* ! *Sophy* !’ cries the Lady ; ‘ this *Mr. Jones*, I am afraid, still runs in your Head.’

‘ Then

‘ Then upon my Honour, Madam,’ said *Sophia*, Mr. *Jones* is as entirely indifferent to me, as the Gentleman who just now left us.’

‘ Upon my Honour,’ said Lady *Bellafton*, ‘ I believe it. Forgive me, therefore, a little innocent Raillery; but I promise you I will never mention his Name any more.’

And now the two Ladies separated, infinitely more to the Delight of *Sophia* than of Lady *Bellafton*, who would willingly have tormented her Rival a little longer, had not Business of more Importance called her away. As for *Sophia*, her Mind was not perfectly easy under this first Practice of Deceit: upon which, when she retired to her Chamber, she reflected with the highest Uneasiness and conscious Shame. Nor could the peculiar Hardship of her Situation, and the Necessity of the Case, at all reconcile her Mind to her Conduct; for the Frame of her Mind was too delicate to bear the Thought of having been guilty of a Falshood, however qualified by Circumstances. Nor did this Thought once suffer her to close her Eyes during the whole succeeding Night.

The End of the Third Volume.