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**Clarissa Harlowe, or the history of
a young lady –Volume 3**

Samuel Richardson

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LETTER L. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—Observations on Lovelace's meanness, pride, and revenge. Politeness not to be expected from him. She raves at him for the artful manner in which he urges Clarissa to marry him. Advises her how to act in her present situation.

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LETTER LII. Mrs. Hervey to Clarissa.—A severe and cruel letter in answer to her's, Letter XLIX. It was not designed, she says, absolutely to force her to marry to her dislike.

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THE HISTORY OF CLARISSA HARLOWE

LETTER I

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TUESDAY, NINE O'CLOCK.

I write, because you enjoin me to do so. Love you still!—How can I help it, if I would? You may believe how I stand aghast, your letter communicating the first news—Good God of Heaven and Earth!—But what shall I say?—I am all impatient for particulars.

Lord have mercy upon me!—But can it be?

My mother will indeed be astonished!—How can I tell it her!—It was but last night (upon some jealousies put into her head by your foolish uncle) that I assured her, and this upon the strength of your own assurances, that neither man nor devil would be able to induce you to take a step that was in the least derogatory to the most punctilious honour.

But, once more, can it be? What woman at this rate!—But, God preserve you!

Let nothing escape you in your letters. Direct them for me, however, to Mrs. Knolly's, till further notice.

Observe, my dear, that I don't blame you by all this—Your relations only are in fault!—Yet how you came to change your mind is the surprising thing.

How to break it to my mother, I know not. Yet if she hear it first from any other, and find I knew it before, she will believe it to be my connivance!—Yet, as I hope to live, I know not how to break it to her.

But this is teasing you.—I am sure, without intention.

Let me now repeat my former advice—If you are not married by this time, be sure delay not the ceremony. Since things are as they are, I wish it were thought that you were privately married before

you went away. If these men plead AUTHORITY to our pain, when we are theirs—Why should we not, in such a case as this, make some good out of the hated word, for our reputation, when we are induced to violate a more natural one?

Your brother and sister [that vexes me almost as much as any thing!] have now their ends. Now, I suppose, will go forward alterations of wills, and such-like spiteful doings.

Miss Lloyd and Miss Biddulph this moment send up their names. They are out of breath, Kitty says, to speak to me—easy to guess their errand;—I must see my mother, before I see them. I have no way but to shew her your letter to clear myself. I shall not be able to say a word, till she has run herself out of her first breath.—Forgive me, my dear—surprise makes me write thus. If your messenger did not wait, and were not those young ladies below, I could write it over again, for fear of afflicting you.

I send what you write for. If there be any thing else you want that is in my power, command without reserve

Your ever affectionate ANNA HOWE.

LETTER II.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE. TUESDAY NIGHT.

I think myself obliged to thank you, my dear Miss Howe, for your condescension, in taking notice of a creature who has occasioned you so much scandal.

I am grieved on this account, as much, I verily think, as for the evil itself.

Tell me—but yet I am afraid to know—what your mother said.

I long, and yet I dread, to be told, what the young ladies my companions, now never more perhaps to be so, say of me.

They cannot, however, say worse of me than I will of myself. Self accusation shall flow in every line of my narrative where I think I am justly censurable. If any thing can arise from the account I am going to give you, for extenuation of my fault (for that is all a person can hope for, who cannot excuse herself) I know I may expect it from your friendship, though not from the charity of any other: since by this time I doubt not every mouth is opened against me; and all that know Clarissa Harlowe condemn the fugitive daughter.

After I had deposited my letter to you, written down to the last hour, as I may say, I returned to the ivy summer-house; first taking back my letter from the loose bricks: and there I endeavoured, as coolly as my situation would permit, to recollect and lay together several incidents that had passed between my aunt and me; and, comparing them with some of the contents of my cousin Dolly's letter, I began to hope, that I needed not to be so very apprehensive as I have been next Wednesday. And thus I argued with myself.

'Wednesday cannot possibly be the day they intend, although to intimidate me they may wish me to think it is: for the settlements are unsigned: nor have they been offered me to sign. I can choose whether I will or will not put my hand to them; hard as it will be to refuse if my father and mother propose, if I made compulsion necessary, to go to my uncle's themselves in order to be out of the way of my appeals? Whereas they intend to be present on Wednesday. And, however affecting to me the thought of meeting them and all my friends in full assembly is, perhaps it is the very thing I ought to wish for: since my brother and sister had such an opinion of my interest in them, that they got me excluded from their presence, as a measure which they thought previously necessary to carry on their designs.

'Nor have I reason to doubt, but that (as I had before argued with myself) I shall be able to bring over some of my relations to my party; and, being brought face to face with my brother, that I shall expose his malevolence, and of consequence weaken his power.

'Then supposing the very worst, challenging the minister as I shall challenge him, he will not presume to proceed: nor surely will Mr. Solmes dare to accept my refusing and struggling hand. And finally, if nothing else will do, nor procure me delay, I can plead

scruples of conscience, and even pretend prior obligation; for, my dear, I have give Mr. Lovelace room to hope (as you will see in one of my letters in your hands) that I will be no other man's while he is single, and gives me not wilful and premeditated cause of offence against him; and this in order to rein-in his resentment on the declared animosity of my brother and uncles to him. And as I shall appeal, or refer my scruples on this head, to the good Dr. Lewen, it is impossible but that my mother and aunt (if nobody else) must be affected with this plea.'

Revolving cursorily these things, I congratulated myself, that I had resolved against going away with Mr. Lovelace.

I told you, my dear, that I would not spare myself: and I enumerate these particulars as so many arguments to condemn the actions I have been so unhappily betrayed into. An argument that concludes against me with the greater force, as I must acknowledge, that I was apprehensive, that what my cousin Dolly mentions as from Betty, and from my sister who told her, that she should tell me, in order to make me desperate, and perhaps to push me upon some such step as I have been driven to take, as the most effectual means to ruin me with my father and uncles.

God forgive me, if I judge too harshly of their views!—But if I do not, it follows, that they laid a wicked snare for me; and that I have been caught in it.—And now they triumph, if they can triumph, in the ruin of a sister, who never wished or intended to hurt them!

As the above kind of reasoning had lessened my apprehensions as to the Wednesday, it added to those I had of meeting Mr. Lovelace—now, as it seemed, not only the nearest, but the heaviest evil; principally indeed because nearest; for little did I dream (foolish creature that I was, and every way beset!) of the event proving what it has proved. I expected a contention with him, 'tis true, as he had not my letter: but I thought it would be very strange, as I mentioned in one of my former,* if I, who had so steadily held out against characters so venerable, against authorities so sacred, as I may say, when I thought them unreasonably exerted, should not find myself more equal to such a trial as this; especially as I had so much reason to be displeased with him for not having taken away my letter.

On what a point of time may one's worldly happiness depend! Had I but two hours more to consider of the matter, and to attend to and improve upon these new lights, as I may call them—but even then, perhaps, I might have given him a meeting.—Fool that I was! what had I to do to give him hope that I would personally acquaint him with the reason for my change of mind, if I did change it?

O my dear! an obliging temper is a very dangerous temper!—By endeavouring to gratify others, it is evermore disobliging itself!

When the bell rang to call the servants to dinner, Betty came to me and asked, if I had any commands before she went to hers; repeating her hint, that she should be employed; adding, that she believed it was expected that I should not come up till she came down, or till I saw my aunt or Miss Hervey.

I asked her some questions about the cascade, which had been out of order, and lately mended; and expressed a curiosity to see how it played, in order to induce her [how cunning to cheat myself, as it proved!] to go thither, if she found me not where she left me; it being a part of the garden most distant from the ivy summer-house.

She could hardly have got into the house when I heard the first signal—O how my heart fluttered!—but no time was to be lost. I stept to the garden-door; and seeing a clear coast, unbolted the already-unlocked door—and there was he, all impatience, waiting for me.

A panic next to fainting seized me when I saw him. My heart seemed convulsed; and I trembled so, that I should hardly have kept my feet, had he not supported me.

Fear nothing, dearest creature, said he—let us hasten away—the chariot is at hand—and, by this sweet condescension, you have obliged me beyond expression or return.

Recovering my spirits a little, as he kept drawing me after him, O Mr. Lovelace, said I, I cannot go with you—indeed I cannot—I wrote you word so—let go my hand, and you shall see my letter. It is lain there from yesterday morning, till within this half-hour. I bid you watch to the last for a letter from me, lest I should be obliged to revoke the appointment; and, had you followed the direction, you would have found it.