

Joseph Andrews=

Henry Fielding=

Plot=

Preface=

The author explains that he is presenting his audience with a new genre, an epic poem in prose, or what could also be called a comic romance. He will use elements of burlesque but will take his characters from nature, in the way that a romance might do. His purpose, however, is to bring out the ridiculous rather than the sublime using affectation, which is based on either vanity or hypocrisy, of which the latter is the worse.

Book 1=

Before beginning his story, the narrator says he wishes to provide his audience with a study of an exemplary life, in the vein of the biographies of Mr. Colley Cibber and Mrs. Pamela Andrews. The subject of his study is Joseph Andrews, the brother of the famous Pamela, who was able to preserve her purity despite being subject to great temptations.

Joseph is the son of humble people, and he is put out as an apprentice at age 10 to Sir Thomas Booby, the local squire. He is given various jobs until, at 17, he has grown into an exceptionally handsome young man, and Lady Booby makes him her footman. The local parson, Abraham Adams, also notices Joseph and is impressed by the little learning he has accumulated as well as by his piety. He would like to teach him Latin, but Joseph is whisked off to London by Lady Booby.

When Joseph is about 21, Sir Thomas dies, and the widow, who has fallen in love with Joseph, tries to seduce him. When Joseph rebuffs her, she gets angry and dismisses him. Adding to her fury are false rumors planted by Mrs. Slipslop, her gentlewoman-in-waiting, that Joseph has been philandering with the female servants. Mrs. Slipslop also has a crush on Joseph and wishes to sleep with him. In the end Joseph is cast out of the house. He has not seen his fiancée, Fanny Goodwill, in many months, so he immediately sets off from London, headed toward his old parish, since Fanny works on a farm not far from the Booby estate.

Before he can get very far, he is attacked by robbers, who take everything, including his clothes. They beat him and leave him for dead in a ditch. A stagecoach stops and reluctantly picks him up and drops him at the next inn. Coincidentally, Parson Adams has been traveling toward London in the hope of selling his volumes of sermons, and he stops at the same inn. He and Joseph reunite.

Book 2=

Once Joseph is well enough, the two set off, planning to go in opposite directions. But the parson realizes he doesn't have his sermons in his saddlebags and decides to return home with Joseph. Since they have only one horse between them (the parson's), one man walks

and one rides. When the rider catches up to the walker, they switch places. Parson Adams sets off first, but he forgets to pay the board for his horse, so the innkeeper will not let Joseph go. When Joseph is delayed in arriving, the parson steps into an alehouse, where he is caught up on Joseph's situation. Joseph in the meantime has been "rescued" by Mrs. Slipslop and rides up alongside her on Adams's horse. Slipslop invites him to give the horse to the parson and ride in her coach, but he defers to the parson, who becomes a passenger in the coach.

After some time, the coach stops at another inn so people can eat, and they learn that Joseph has arrived there first. The landlady is nursing a wound on his leg. He has fallen under the parson's recalcitrant (difficult to manage) horse, who has a nasty habit of kneeling down unexpectedly. When the woman's husband comes in, he becomes furious to see his wife tending to the handsome stranger. A general fight soon ensues when Parson Adams defends Joseph. Slipslop and the innkeeper's wife also take part in this fisticuffs. When the brawl ends, Joseph replaces Adams in the coach. Later he sees his mentor walking on foot, apparently having forgotten that he has a horse, which he left at the inn.

Adams gets too far ahead of the coach and meets a hunter, who complains about the lack of patriotism and valor among his countrymen until both men hear a woman screaming, clearly in distress. The hunter becomes frightened and runs away, and Adams rushes toward the sounds of distress. He finds a woman fighting off a would-be rapist, and he knocks this man out. Since night has fallen, the parson calls for help when he sees some young men trying to catch birds, and he calls them over. Adams tells what happened, but the villain, who is only pretending to be unconscious, jumps up and accuses Adams and Fanny of trying to rob him. The youths believe the ruffian, and they take Fanny and Adams into custody and bring them before the magistrate.

Because Fanny and Adams look disheveled, the judge doesn't believe their story and is ready to put them in jail and hold them over for trial. Luckily, a squire in the crowd recognizes Fanny and the parson, and they are let go. After they leave, they stop at an inn because it begins to rain, and they find Joseph there, also waiting out the rain with Slipslop's party. The lovers have a tender reunion, and now Joseph will not get back into the stagecoach because he wants to stay with Fanny. Slipslop leaves in a fury, and the trio now spend the night at the inn, where they wake to discover they cannot pay. Adams visits the farm of a local clergyman to ask for the 14 shillings and finds him to be rich and prosperous, but the man is scandalized when Adams asks for a loan and throws him out after Adams accuses him of not being a Christian.

When Adams gets back to the inn, a poor peddler loans the parson the money and promises to go through his parish at a later date and collect what is owed. At the next alehouse, Adams runs into a trickster, who promises to pay his bill but then disappears. In the morning, the innkeeper provides him with a true history of this liar, who has ruined many people with his false promises. The innkeeper sympathizes with Adams, since he himself was tricked by this man, and he lets Adams's party go.

Book 3=

On the road again at night, the trio are given hospitality on Mr. Wilson's farm with his family. Wilson tells Adams the story of his life after the others are asleep. The farmer was born a gentleman, but he ran through his inheritance by leading a dissolute life. He ends up in jail because he owes his tailor money. Before he went to jail, he had bought a lottery ticket, and he gives this ticket to a distant relation in exchange for food. Around the same time, the ticket wins 3,000 pounds, and the relation dies. The ticket is now passed on to the man's daughter, a woman Wilson has admired from afar. After she sends him 200 pounds, he is able to get out of jail. When he visits her, she offers to loan him money if he wants to start a business. He confesses his feelings for her, and he learns she feels the same way. The two get married and move to the farm in the country. Wilson is very happy now as a semirecluse, and his only sorrow is that his baby son was kidnapped by gypsies many years ago.

After the trio take leave of this exemplary family, the parson and Joseph have a minor disagreement about whether the man was ruined by public school (private school for rich boys of the upper classes). When they stop to rest and the parson falls asleep, Joseph gives a discourse to Fanny on charity. Then the trio find themselves in the middle of a hunt. The dogs attack a hare in the middle of their camp, mistaking Adams for part of their quarry and tearing at his clothes. Adams wakes up and knocks the dogs off, but when the hunting master arrives, he thinks it will be amusing to set the dogs on the parson. Joseph and Adams now fight the dogs together and kill two of them. When the squire arrives and sees Fanny, he immediately puts on a good face and invites them to his house for dinner.

At the house, Fanny and Joseph eat in the kitchen. Meanwhile, the squire and his vicious toadies play several nasty practical jokes on Adams until he finally realizes what is going on and storms out of the house with Fanny and Joseph. The squire is now enraged because he had planned to get Adams and Joseph drunk so that he could rape Fanny. He sends his toadies after the trio the next day, and they beat and tie up Joseph and Adams and kidnap Fanny. One of them, the captain, brings Fanny back to the squire, but Fanny's loud calls lead to her rescue by Peter Pounce, Lady Booby's steward. Pounce returns to the inn, and Joseph and Adams are freed. Joseph beats the captain, and the servants later let him go. Pounce is traveling with an entourage, so they put Joseph and Fanny on a horse. The parson rides with Pounce until the two of them get into an argument about the meaning of charity, and Adams jumps out of his chariot.

Book 4=

The entourage arrives at the parish at the same time as Lady Booby, who is in a coach. When Lady Booby sees Joseph, she summons Slipslop to fill her in on what has happened. When she discovers that Joseph is engaged to be married, she is furious. She summons Adams and attempts to persuade him to stop the marriage, but he refuses to fall in with her plans. She next calls on an unscrupulous lawyer, who promises to use an equally unscrupulous judge to drive the couple out of town and prevent them from marrying. Around this time, Lady Booby's nephew, Squire Booby, has come to the parish to visit his aunt with his new wife, Pamela. Pamela is anxious to see her brother Joseph. Squire Booby finds out from the servants that Joseph and Fanny have been sentenced to a month of incarceration in a workhouse, all for stealing a twig from the lawyer's property. Squire Booby convinces the judge to release the couple into his custody.

Pamela and Joseph have a joyful reunion, and he is pressured to stay at the Booby estate, so Fanny goes off with the parson to stay at his house. While Fanny is walking in the woods, two men try to rape her. She fights off the first one, Beau Didapper, a dandy from London who is visiting the Boobys, but is less successful with his servant, who is much stronger. Joseph arrives in time to save Fanny and beats the man.

The peddler from the inn arrives at Mr. Adams's house, and Joseph invites everyone out for dinner. Afterward, the peddler tells Fanny the true story of her origins. Up until now she thought she was an orphan who had been brought up in the Booby household (as a servant). But the peddler had been in a common-law marriage with a woman who confessed on her deathbed that she had stolen a child. That child was Fanny, taken from the Andrews family. It now appears that Fanny and Joseph are siblings.

When Pamela hears about this development, she is skeptical, so her husband suggests that everyone come to his aunt's house to sort out the mystery. Pamela's family will arrive the next day, so they can ask her parents about it. Because of bad weather, everyone stays over at the Boobys. Didapper attempts to sneak into Fanny's room in the middle of the night, but he goes into Slipslop's room instead. When she screams, the parson bursts in, but he mistakes Didapper for the lady and lets him go. When he realizes he is in Slipslop's room, he bumbles out, this time accidentally going into Fanny's room instead of his own. She is fast asleep, so she doesn't even notice he is there. In the morning, Joseph knocks on her door and finds Adams, but everyone realizes there has been another mix-up, and Adams returns sheepishly to his own room. Joseph and Fanny talk about their new status as brother and sister and decide to live together as platonic friends.

When the Andrews parents arrive, Mrs. Andrews tells how the gypsies stole her girl baby (Fanny) and replaced her with a boy baby (Joseph), who was sickly. Fanny was eventually sold by the gypsies at age four to the Boobys. The peddler has additional information about Joseph, and he says he thinks he knows to whom he belongs, again based on information he got from his dying common-law wife. Mrs. Andrews has mentioned Joseph's strawberry birthmark, and the parson remembers that Wilson also mentioned such a birthmark. Mr. Wilson happens to be passing by, and when he hears this story, he realizes that Joseph is his long-lost son. Fanny and Joseph can now marry. The happy couple go off to live in Mr. Wilson's part of the world. Squire Booby provides money for Fanny, so she and Joseph are able to buy some land near Mr. Wilson. The couple continue happily and are expecting their first child. A disappointed Lady Booby returns to London and takes up with a young captain of the dragoons.