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## **Family Plays**

From the novel by Henry Fielding

The  
History  
of  
Tom Jones

Comedy adapted by  
Dennis M. Maganza

# The History of Tom Jones

**Comedy. Adapted by Dennis M. Maganza. Based on the novel Tom Jones by Henry Fielding.** Cast: 8m., 8w., extras. Tom Jones was a foundling ... a loser from birth ... “born to be hung.” Everything he touched turned to lead—or fell on his foot. This smooth-flowing dramatization of the famed 18th-century novel portrays the rowdy, bawdy, racy plot and raucous characters that made Henry Fielding famous and the movie version a box-office champion. Tom, the illegitimate ward of Squire Allworthy, is in love with his beautiful neighbor, Sophia. Although Sophia’s father admires and envies Tom for his reputation as a brawling, womanizing, thieving daredevil, he wouldn’t consider allowing his daughter to marry such a scoundrel. Instead, Sophia is betrothed to Blifil, Allworthy’s sniveling heir. Since Tom is seduced by most of the women and nearly murdered by all of the men, it’s not surprising to find him on the gallows at the end of this fast-paced comedy. *Approximate running time: 2 hours. Code: HE2.*

## Family Plays

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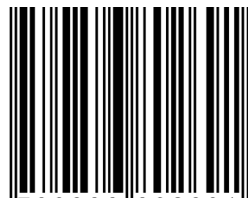
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The History of Tom Jones

The History of  
**TOM JONES**

In 2 Acts

by

**DENNIS M. MAGANZA**

Adapted from the novel by **Henry Fielding**

**Family Plays**

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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DENNIS MAGANZA

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## ABOUT THE PLAY

English-language drama goes back at least to the mid 1500's, with *Ralph Roister Doister*, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, and *Gorboduc* generally acknowledged as the first "real" plays. But the first novels in our language were written 200 years later. Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) is generally considered to be the first novel in English. Henry Fielding (1707-1754) thought *Pamela* dripped with sentimentality and goody-goody romance; so in 1741 he wrote a coarse satire on the story and called it *Shamela*. It wasn't a hit. His next novel, *Joseph Andrews* (1742), was a hit, and when his masterpiece, *Tom Jones*, was published in 1749, Fielding was firmly established as England's first great comic novelist, and the language's first dabbler in realism.

Tom Jones is a realistic "hero." Perhaps the term "fall guy" fits him better. The victim of gossip, jealousy, snobbery, and revenge, Tom is *always* in trouble. Everything he touches turns to lead . . . from the very beginning when his own mother denies him and leaves him as a foundling in the country mansion of Squire Allworthy. But in spite of all his faults, miscues, mishaps, and misfortunes, Tom is a likeable fellow. So likeable, in fact, that most of the women try to seduce him and all the men want to kill him. As Fielding says as he introduces the play, "Tom Jones was born to be hung."

The story of Tom's love for the beautiful Sophia; his everlasting feud with the despicable Allworthy heir, Blifil; the mad race to London, punctuated by the infamous night in the inn; and the ill-fated masquerade ball are skillfully transferred to the stage in this dramatization.

The play, like the novel, employs robust humor to ridicule the hypocrisy and snobbery of bad persons and warn of the dangers inherent in the gullibility of good people. Fielding proclaims: "I have endeavored to laugh man out of his favorite follies and vices."

The play is presented in *commedia*-like fashion, as a troupe of players unload their trunks, dress each other, and introduce their characters in story-theatre style. A unit set composed of platforms of varying heights provides space for all the scenes so that no blackouts, curtains, or other interruptions are necessary during each act.

The large cast may be easily reduced. The original production used an ensemble of 16: 8 males, 8 females. Roles were double and triple cast, with the exception of Tom. Major roles played by the same actor included Fielding/Allworthy, Captain Blifil/Blifil, Wilkens/Innkeeper's

Wife, Thwackum/Fitzpatrick, Bridget/Lady Bellaston, Square/Innkeeper/ Hangman, Judge Dowling/Highwayman, Jenny Jones/Mrs. Waters.

Although the play has strong farcical content, it also has elements of honest drama and romance. Fielding's novel has lived as a classic because of the author's perceptive analysis of human nature, with its inherent hypocrisy, selfishness, boorishness, and indifference toward the welfare of others. These characteristics have been captured in the play; the director and actors are urged to seek them out in the script and point them up in staging the play.



Dennis Maganza is a native of St. Louis, Mo., with theatre degrees from St. Louis University and the University of Minnesota. He is currently an associate professor of theatre arts at Southwest Texas State University, where he has been head of the acting program since 1977. He directed the premiere of *The History of Tom Jones*, with set design by Pat Hambrick and costume design by Gaye Bowen.



# THE HISTORY OF TOM JONES

## *Cast*

(A *commedia*-like ensemble of 8 men, 8 women can play all the roles)

**Henry Fielding**, the author-narrator  
**Squire Allworthy**, Tom's guardian  
**Bridget Allworthy**, the Squire's sister  
**Wilkens**, Allworthy's housekeeper  
**Jenny Jones**, a servant; Tom's alleged mother  
**Partridge**, a teacher; Tom's alleged father  
**Captain Blifil**, Bridget's husband  
**Master Blifil**, their son  
**Tom Jones**, a foundling  
**Square** }  
**Thwackum** } tutors  
**Molly Seagrim**, the gamekeeper's daughter  
**Mr. Western**, owner of neighboring estate  
**Sophia Western**, his daughter  
**Honour**, Sophia's maidservant  
**Doctor**  
**Judge Dowling**, justice from London  
**Mistress Western**, Mr. Western's sister  
**Mrs. Waters**, wandering widow  
**Highwayman**, thief  
**Harriet Fitzpatrick**, Sophia's cousin  
**Fitzpatrick**, her husband  
**Innkeeper**  
**Innkeeper's Wife**  
**Lady Bellaston**, Sophia's London acquaintance  
**Maid**, in Lady Bellaston's employ  
**Hangman**  
**Servants, revelers, courtroom spectators**



PLACE: England

TIME: The 18th Century

First performed at Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas.

**PRODUCTION NOTES***Props***ACT I, Scene 1**

Boxes of props & costumes—The Players  
Large manuscript—Fielding

**Scene 2**

Feather dusters, brooms, etc.—Servants  
Silverware—Servant 5  
Baby in blanket—Servant 7

**Scene 5**

Whips—Square, Thwackum

**Scene 7**

Stick horses (optional)—Western, Sophia, Tom

**Scene 8**

Food—on table

**Scene 12**

Letter—Dowling

**Scene 14**

Bottle (liquor) & glass—Servant

**Scene 15**

Baggage—Honour

**ACT II, Scene 1**

Road sign (“London ⇒”)  
Pistol—Highwayman  
Baggage—Honour

**Scene 2**

Food (fried or baked chicken)  
Handbag—Sophia

**Scene 4**

Note—Tom

**Scene 5**

Sophia’s handbag—Tom

**Scene 6**

Masks—all characters (all colors but red)  
Red mask—Lady Bellaston

**Scene 7**

Swords—Fitzpatrick, Tom

**Scene 8**

Noose—Hangman

*Costumes*

The original production used modified Georgian period costume pieces designed to facilitate quick and stark changes. Each character had a basic costume—shirt, breeches, or dress. Most changes were made by the addition or subtraction of hat, coat, apron, vest, cape, overdress, scarf, bonnet, etc. As the “strolling players” appeared at the opening of the play, they were already in their basic costumes, holding accessories in tableau. The opening movement involved simply applying an apron, a vest, and so on.

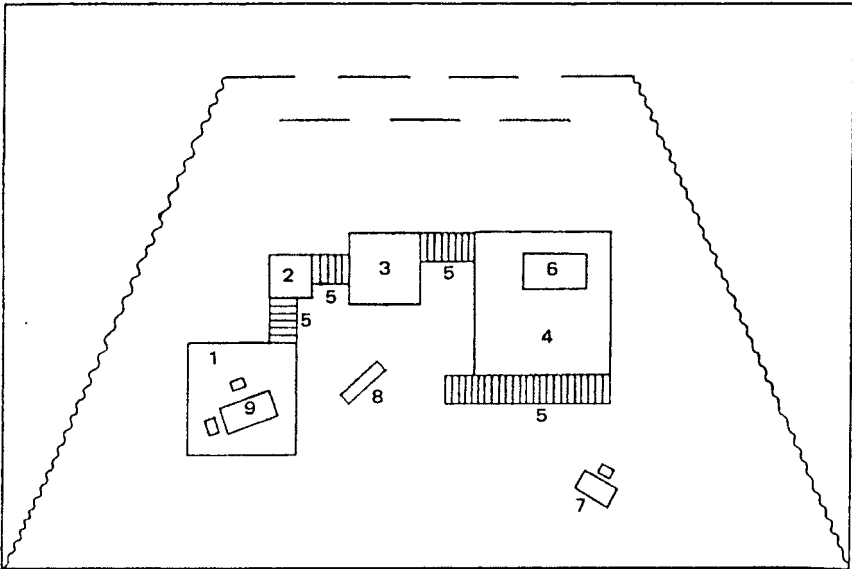
### The Set

An arrangement of platforms and risers, of varying heights, connected by step units and ramps, can accommodate all the scenes. The original set consisted of three woodgrain platforms connected by free-standing stairs. The Stage Right platform was three feet high and had a table and two chairs. The Center platform was eight feet high with an entryway underneath and a bench. The Stage Left platform was five feet high and the bed with a draw curtain sat upon it. Down Left was a writing table and stool for Fielding.

In the original production, a troupe of strolling players entered carrying props and costumes, as though they were arriving on a stage, or in an innyard. They arranged the set, dressed each other, and prepared to start the play. The servants rearranged the props for each scene as the dialog and action continued.

The designations in the text of "Servant 1," "Servant 2," etc. are given only for the convenience of the director and cast in blocking the play. "Servant 1" does not have to be the same actor throughout. Since the servants doubled in the other roles, nearly every cast member appeared as a servant at one time or another in the premiere.

### Floor Plan



- 1—3' high platform
- 2—6' high platform
- 3—8' high platform
- 4—5' high platform
- 5—Stairs (some may be ramps)

- 6—Bed, with draw curtain
- 7—Fielding's writing table and stool
- 8—Bench
- 9—Table and chairs (or stools)

# THE HISTORY OF TOM JONES

*[A unit set is recommended to avoid delays in the action. See Production Notes, pp. 77ff.]*

## ACT I

### Scene 1

*[ACTORS enter to period music, striking various poses as they dress one another. On final movement, the tableau is set. FIELDING enters with large manuscript and begins. (NOTE: All narration is handled in story-theatre fashion.)]*

FIELDING. Good people, I now present to you the labors of several years of my life. I have employed all the wit and humor of which I am master. In the following history I have endeavored to laugh man out of his favorite follies and vices. I hope you will find, from the very outset of this work and through its course, nothing prejudicial to true virtue or inconsistent with the strictest laws of decency. On the contrary, I declare my purpose is to recommend goodness and innocence and to show that man's true interests will direct him on or away from the path of innocence and virtue. Though indiscretion and folly may create anxiety and chaos in life, it cannot deter the inward comfort of virtue, just as deceit and villainy can only triumph on the surface of life for a short time before it is exposed for what it is. Thus I say that it is easier to make a good man wise than a bad man good. How well I have succeeded in my endeavor I shall leave to your judgment, with only two requests: First, that you will not expect to find perfection in this work, and secondly, that you will excuse any parts that fall short of the merit I had hoped to give them. I will detain the history no longer. I remain with the highest respect, your obedient servant, Henry Fielding.

### Scene 2

*[ALLWORTHY's home. FIELDING moves into playing area]*

SERVANT 1. This history begins in a part of the kingdom known as Somersetshire wherein there lived a gentleman named Allworthy.

SERVANT 2. Allworthy could be called a favorite of fortune and nature, for both blessed and enriched him.

SERVANT 3. He was an agreeable person with a benevolent heart and the largest estate in the county.

SERVANT 4. He had no family of his own but resided with his sister, Bridget, for whom he had the tenderest of affection.

SERVANT 5. Bridget was now somewhat past the age of thirty, an era at which “Old Maid” may be assumed by some.

SERVANT 6. She was the kind of woman to whom you would attribute good qualities rather than beauty.

SERVANT 7. She was truly a good sort of woman.

SERVANT 8. Allworthy had been on business in London for a full quarter of a year, and the household was now in hectic preparation for his anticipated return. [*SERVANTS pantomime cleaning and straightening*]

BRIDGET. Hurry, hurry, all must be made ready.

SERVANT 1. Yes, Mistress.

SERVANT 2. Aye, mum.

WILKENS. Get those walls proper. You there, be sure there is clean linen everywhere.

SERVANT 3. Yes, mum.

SERVANT 4. What should I do with this, Mistress? [*Holding bench*]

BRIDGET. Upstairs.

SERVANT 5. And the silver, mum?

BRIDGET. Over there.

SERVANT 7. And this, mum? [*Holding bundle*]

WILKENS. Up there.

SERVANT 7. [*Discovering child in bundle*] And what should I do with the baby?

WILKENS. Oh . . . upstairs on the bed should be fine. [*ALL freeze*]

SERVANT 8. Baby?

SERVANT 9. What baby?

SERVANT 10. Where could it have come from?

SERVANT 1. Come from? Who cares where it came from? What will we do with it?

SERVANT 5. The Squire’s coming!!!

WILKENS. Oh my God! What is to be done? What can we do? What will the Squire say?

SERVANT 7. [*As baby is tossed from one to another*] Here, you take it.

SERVANT 9. It ain’t mine!

SERVANT 1. Well, hide it.

SERVANT 9. Here.

SERVANT 2. No, you take it.

SERVANT 3. You.

SERVANT 4. No, you.

BRIDGET. The bedroom! [*Just as baby is hid, ALLWORTHY enters*]

SERVANTS. [*Converging on him*] Welcome home, Squire.

ALLWORTHY. Ah, it is good to be home. Bridget darling. [*Embraces her*] You have kept the house in marvelous order. It is the same as I left it.

BRIDGET. Not quite. How was your journey? Did all go well?

SERVANTS. Yes, Squire, tell us of your experiences in London.

ALLWORTHY. Oh, London is London. Hundreds of people packed like herring in a barrel. The common people are ever so common and the rich are forever nursing the newest rage of fashion in costume and mores. It is all too much for me. Thank God my business is done and I am home, surrounded by my loving sister and faithful servants. I have returned to my simple country life.

BRIDGET. We've missed you, Thomas.

SERVANTS. It is not the same without you, Squire.

ALLWORTHY. Dear ones, I would love nothing more than to chat with you, but I have been driven by one thought since I left London and that is to once again sleep in my own bed.

SERVANT 1. [*Stopping Allworthy at stairs*] Bed?

SERVANT 2. You mean the bed in your bedroom?

SERVANT 3. Your bedroom?

SERVANT 4. It is awfully early to be going to bed.

SERVANT 5. Perhaps you would like some wine after your long trip.

SERVANT 6. Not wine—we want to keep him awake.

SERVANT 5. Tea sir, would you like some tea?

ALLWORTHY. No. I . . .

SERVANT 7. Food, food for the Squire.

SERVANT 8. Jenkins, run out and kill a cow.

SERVANT 9. A cow?

SERVANT 10. She means a fatted calf.

ALLWORTHY. No. It is . . .

SERVANT 9. No trouble, Squire. We'll have it killed, cooked, and ready in no time at all.

ALLWORTHY. Perhaps tomorrow . . .

BRIDGET. How about a nice long walk about the estate?

ALLWORTHY. A nice long walk? Bridget, I just traveled from London!!

SERVANT 1. You could use a bit of exercise, Lordship. London life has made you a little soft in the middle.

ALLWORTHY. Soft in my middle?

BRIDGET. It is a bit noticeable.

SERVANT 2. But only to those who know you well.

ALLWORTHY. Enough! Soft in my middle. Back, everyone, back. I am going to my room and no one will dissuade me from my purpose. Soft in the middle indeed! [*Enters room*] You may think I have not noticed your odd behavior, but I have. I do not know what you are up to but mark me, [*comes back out*] I will uncover the reasons for it. [*Take back into bedroom, reenters with baby in blanket*] There was a baby in my bed.

SERVANT 10. A baby in his bed?

SERVANT 9. Oh my.

SERVANT 8. What a surprising event?

SERVANT 7. I wonder where it came from?

SERVANT 6. Congratulations, Squire.

ALLWORTHY. Bridget, what is this about?

BRIDGET. What a pretty child . . . [*checking under blanket*] . . . and it is a boy.

ALLWORTHY. Yes, it is. But damnation, where did it come from?

SERVANT 5. Perhaps a stork . . .

ALLWORTHY. Wilkens, what do you know of this?

WILKENS. I don't know anything about it, Squire. The child was discovered just before your arrival.

ALLWORTHY. Well, obviously this child did not just come from the cabbage patch.

SERVANT 4. It didn't?

ALLWORTHY. It must have a mother, a father.

SERVANT 1. That is the normal process.

WILKENS. Preserve us from Evil! I'll wager that child is the vile offspring of some promiscuous relationship. It is a bastard!

ALLWORTHY. You think so? Bridget?

WILKENS. Faugh. You see how it stinks. It certainly doesn't smell like a Christian.

ALLWORTHY. Good woman, you are over dramatizing, and I am afraid the child's odor has nothing to do with its standing in the Christian community. Here. [*Gives it to Bridget*] One of you must know something about the disposition of this child. I call upon whomever

you are to stand forth and enlighten me concerning this situation. [*SERVANTS freeze, giving takes to one another*]

JENNY. To know your Lordship and not be moved by your will could only reflect a lack of goodness on that individual's part. I am the child's mother.

ALLWORTHY. Jenny Jones? You?

SERVANTS. Gasp!

JENNY. Since I have no husband— [*SERVANTS interrupt with laughter*] —my hope was that you would take this child and give it the care I could never give it.

WILKENS. The wanton slut admits it. Well, thank God that is something I will never have to do.

JENNY. Wilkens, you would never get the opportunity.

WILKENS. Watch your tongue. We are Christians here.

SERVANT 1. She should be whipped for what she has done.

SERVANT 5. Yes, stripped naked and whipped.

SERVANT 2. Or sent to prison.

SERVANT 3. Yes, prison.

SERVANT 4. That's the place for her kind.

SERVANT 5. Prison is too good for her.

SERVANT 6. She should be hanged.

SERVANT 7. Hang the slut.

SERVANT 5. Yes, strip her naked and hang her.

ALLWORTHY. You go too far!

BRIDGET. Yes, much too far. I have never seen any wanton behavior in poor Jenny. Obviously some artful villain has betrayed her—no—forced her into her present situation. I pity her. As we should all pity her.

ALLWORTHY. [*Taking Jenny aside*] You know, child, it is within my power to punish you for what you have done. But I shall defer any judgment to one whose favor is of much greater importance than mine. I only ask that you tell us who the father is.

JENNY. [*Recoiling*] No, I cannot. I shall not.

WILKENS. I'll tell you who the father is, it's Partridge the teacher.

PARTRIDGE. Me?!!

SERVANT 8. Yes. It must be you. Every evening I see the two of you walking together.

PARTRIDGE. I have been teaching poor Jenny to read.

SERVANT 8. A likely story.



PARTRIDGE. But I was teaching her to read, I was. Jenny, read something for them.

JENNY. He is not the father.

WILKENS. She is lying to protect him.

PARTRIDGE. You must believe me. I am a teacher and a sexton at the church. I lead the choir. I've never given you reason to doubt me.

SERVANT 9. It's always the quiet ones.

SERVANT 10. Yes, outside a teacher and cleric, inside a seething cauldron of lust.

PARTRIDGE. Lust?!!!

ALLWORTHY. I fear there is no recourse in this matter. I have neither the heart nor the will to punish either of you. But for your own good, Jenny, I must dismiss you. The knowledge of this deed will make your life in this county impossible. As for you, Partridge, the presumptions which have been made will soon destroy both the county's and the church's credibility in you. Likewise, it would be best if you left.

SERVANT 1. He let them off too easy, I say.

SERVANT 5. Yes, he should have stripped them and hung them naked.

SERVANT 6. That would have been the Christian thing to do.

JENNY. I understand your reasoning, Lordship, and accept it. Come, Partridge. I can only say that some day you will know the full story and truth of this matter. *[Exit]*

WILKENS. Here, take this stinking brat with you. *[Grabbing baby]*

BRIDGET. *[Grabbing back]* No! They cannot.

WILKENS. It would be best to be rid of the child, Mistress. No good ever comes of a bastard.

BRIDGET. *[To Allworthy]* They cannot take the child. What kind of an upbringing would it have?

ALLWORTHY. I will not condemn an innocent child to a life of such uncertainty. Bridget, if you will agree to care for this child, I will assume guardianship as Jenny Jones wished.

BRIDGET. I shall gladly accept the task. It is a beautiful baby.

ALLWORTHY. The matter is settled then.

SERVANT 7. Except for a name, Squire.

ALLWORTHY. *[Taking baby]* Well, we shall call him Jones after his mother, and . . .

BRIDGET. And Thomas, after you.

ALLWORTHY. So be it. Welcome to your new home, Tom Jones. *[Tableau]*

## Scene 3

*[Tableau dissolves. BRIDGET & CAPT. BLIFIL mime the following]*

SERVANT 3. These were the unusual circumstances in which our hero, Tom, came to be the ward of Squire Allworthy.

SERVANT 2. He, along with Bridget, could not have cared more for the child.

SERVANT 1. Bridget took to the role of mother with amazing energy considering her spinster status.

SERVANT 4. It was thought that it was caring for the baby which brought about certain youthful changes in Bridget, but all would soon discover that it was something, or should I say someone, else who excited youthful fancies in her.

SERVANT 5. Enter a strange character by the name of Captain Blifil.

SERVANT 6. He was a crude, vulgar sort, who on the surface had little in common with the gentle Bridget.

SERVANT 5. But who can ever explain love?

SERVANT 4. A chance meeting becomes a liaison and then matrimony.

SERVANT 3. Nature blessed the marriage of Blifil and Bridget with a fine young boy, although several months premature.

SERVANT 2. They named him Blifil.

SERVANT 1. This charming scene would last only a year, for Captain Blifil would, under uncertain circumstances, die of apoplexy. *[Pantomime ends]*

## Scene 4

FIELDING. The next sixteen years would find Tom and Blifil raised as brothers under the guidance of Allworthy. The good Squire showed equal favor to both boys, despite Tom's heritage, but their growth over the years would disclose drastic differences in the temperaments of the boys. *[BLIFIL enters]* Master Blifil had a remarkable disposition for one of his age. He was courteous, sober, discreet, pious, and studious. Tom, however . . . well . . . Tom would only be paled in comparison, for you see, it was a general consensus that Tom was born to be hung. *[SOUNDS of whipping and cries of pain followed by entrance of TOM, SQUARE, and THWACKUM]*

SQUARE. Must we do this every day, Jones? Your propensity to vice and its resultant reward is becoming extremely tiresome.

THWACKUM. Will there be no end to your trickery? Lying, petty theft, fighting, slothful habits . . .

BLIFIL. . . . and trifling with young ladies.

SQUARE. Ladies? He! Wenches and sluts! But you would know nothing of such things, would you, Master Blifil?

THWACKUM. No, not Master Blifil. Master Blifil is too virtuous to know of such things, while you, Jones, seem to know nothing else.

TOM. I know and understand your positions, Mr. Square and Mr. Thwackum. Squire Allworthy has employed you to tutor us . . .

BLIFIL. . . . and educate us in the ways of truth, honesty, and virtue.

TOM. Yes. I realize that the punishment I receive from you is always in my best interest. It is just that I never endeavor to do wrong!

THWACKUM. The problem is that you never endeavor to do right!

SQUARE. Well said, Thwackum.

THWACKUM. Thank you, Square. You must learn to fight against your natural inclinations. Those base human instincts which lead you into trouble.

BLIFIL. As you so often say, sir, "Human nature after the fall of Adam is nothing but a sink of iniquity, until saved by the grace of God."

THWACKUM. Well said, Master Blifil.

SQUARE. I agree that there is an inherent problem in this boy, but I must differ with your opinion of human nature. "Nature . . .

BLIFIL. . . . is the perfection of all virtue, and vice is a deviation from nature and thus human nature. Vice is like a deformity in the body."

SQUARE. Excellent, Master Blifil. Thus he must fight against his unnatural inclinations toward sin.

BLIFIL. With deference to both of your concepts, gentlemen, which are, I think, equally true, though somewhat contradictory; it may be advisable to discuss a more direct stimulus for dear Tom's aberrant behavior.

THWACKUM. Speak on.

BLIFIL. Well, sir . . . I wish to put it as delicately as possible . . .

SQUARE. I am sure you will put it admirably.

BLIFIL. I believe you are being too hard on dear Tom. I mean to say, gentlemen, that he may not be totally responsible for his actions. His parentage is questionable and the only certainty is that he is illegitimate. What can be expected from him?

TOM. [*Attacking Blifil*] You little twit!

BLIFIL. [*Retreating*] You see! You see! Look at that irrational behavior

TOM. He calls me a bastard and wishes me to be rational!

BLIFIL. I did not call you such a name. I would never utter a word like that.

TOM. Say it once more and you'll never utter another word again.

BLIFIL. I merely speak the truth, apparently something you have no concept of.

TOM. Damnation, I know the meaning of the word "truth." The "truth" is that you are a sniveling little weasel.

BLIFIL. Fine talk. Where did you learn such talk? From your friend Black George, the gamekeeper, that peasant thief. You are always with him; drinking, gambling, and who knows what? When your time could be better employed pursuing the wisdom of our tutors and raising yourself from the base level from which you originate.

TOM. Well, my dear Master Blifil, if you represent the level I wish to attain, I prefer the company of Black George.

SQUARE. [*Grabbing Tom*] Enough, Jones. You have already said more than enough to warrant another thrashing.

TOM. I warrant a thrashing?

THWACKUM. [*Embracing Blifil*] Master Blifil has only spoken the truth. You are illegitimate. It is a fact you had best accept.

SQUARE. [*With Tom in headlock*] And you do insist on keeping company with rabble such as that villain, Black George. Master Blifil was only trying to enlighten you and perhaps save you from your evil tendencies. We shall leave it at that. Now perhaps we could have time for your lessons. Let us begin with mathematics . . .

BLIFIL. [*Whisper to Tom*] Bastard.

TOM. That does it. [*Attacks Blifil, taking him to floor*]

### Scene 5

[*THWACKUM and SQUARE pull Tom off Blifil. ALLWORTHY enters*]

ALLWORTHY. What in the name of the Almighty is going on here!

SQUARE. Squire, this boy is incorrigible.

THWACKUM. [*Consoling Blifil*] Suddenly, like a bolt, he leapt upon poor Master Blifil and began pommeling him.

BLIFIL. He smashed my nose!

TOM. He called me a bastard!

BLIFIL. I did not. I would never say such a naughty word.

TOM. Liar!

ALLWORTHY. Thwackum, take Blifil away and clean him up.  
*[THWACKUM and BLIFIL exit]*

SQUARE. Squire, I must demand that this boy receive a severe beating.

ALLWORTHY. It appears to me, Mr. Square, that your entire system of education is based upon the rod.

SQUARE. In the case of Jones, I can offer no other course of action. Our only hope is to beat the devil out of him.

ALLWORTHY. If that is possible, why don't you then beat him with a large Bible. As you beat the devil out, you could drive the goodness in.

SQUARE. You are taking this matter much too lightly. Jones' behavior is scurrilous at best. Left unchecked it may have a detrimental effect on Master Blifil.

ALLWORTHY. Yes, yes, Square. Excuse my flippancy. Tom, what have you to say for yourself?

TOM. As always, there seems to be no defense for my actions.

ALLWORTHY. Oh, don't be a ninny. You are many things but not a whining fool. You understand your problem as well as I. You are impetuous, you react without thinking, you leap full force before you know where or into what you are leaping. You must consider your actions.

SQUARE. And what of his punishment, Squire?

ALLWORTHY. *[Feigning cruelty]* Ah . . . punishment . . . Yes, for your punishment—you must count to ten before reacting to anything. Mind you, a full ten.

SQUARE. I must protest.

ALLWORTHY. You think it's too much?

SQUARE. Agh! *[Exits in a huff]*

ALLWORTHY. *[Laughing]* You are not a bad boy, Tom. And I do love you.

TOM. Oh, Squire . . . *[moves to embrace]*

ALLWORTHY. Tom!

TOM. Oh. *[Counts quickly to ten]* Squire, you could not be a better man.

ALLWORTHY. *[Changing]* I hope you will still think that after what I must tell you.

TOM. Nothing could change my opinion.

ALLWORTHY. *[Moving to Stage Right platform and sitting]* Your friend, Black George, my gamekeeper. I have been forced to dismiss him.

TOM. *[Following]* George? For what reasons?

ALLWORTHY. He was caught poaching on a neighboring estate. He had killed several birds and was . . .

TOM. *[Protesting]* You cannot dismiss him, though. Not for his sake, but for his family's. He has a wife and five children who already have only enough for mere existence. You cannot condemn his innocent family to hunger and privation.

ALLWORTHY. I realize the situation, Tom, and I do not enjoy the thought of bringing grief to his family. But I cannot retain a known thief. If his family was in need he could have asked for assistance.

TOM. Did anyone actually see him kill anything?

ALLWORTHY. No. But he was found yesterday leaving the estate with a sack filled with freshly killed birds.

TOM. *[Counts to ten]* Squire, I shot those birds.

ALLWORTHY. Tom, do you know what you are saying?

TOM. I shot the birds and gave them to George. I am the thief.

ALLWORTHY. George said nothing of that.

TOM. He was trying to protect me. Now you cannot dismiss him. He deserves no punishment, for it is my crime. I should receive the punishment.

ALLWORTHY. Tom . . .

TOM. I swear to God, I did it. *[Pause]* Forgive me, Squire.

ALLWORTHY. Very well, as you wish it. If it is your crime you shall be punished for it.

TOM. And Black George will be retained?

ALLWORTHY. Yes, I shall send a note to him with my apology. Why must you do these things, Tom? Thwackum! Square!

TOM. The pain of displeasing you is the worst punishment of all, sir. *[THWACKUM, SQUARE enter, followed by BLIFIL]*

ALLWORTHY. You have your wish, Square. Employ your rod, Thwackum. I pray this will be the last of such occurrences.

TOM. It shall, sir. *[They begin to whip him. TOM is taken to Center platform and the sound of his whipping underscores the following monologue]*