

## Chapter 22

I had many melancholy hours at the Bath after the company was gone; for though I went to Bristol sometime for the disposing my effects, and for recruits of money, yet I chose to come back to Bath for my residence, because being on good terms with the woman in whose house I lodged in the summer, I found that during the winter I lived rather cheaper there than I could do anywhere else. Here, I say, I passed the winter as heavily as I had passed the autumn cheerfully; but having contracted a nearer intimacy with the said woman in whose house I lodged, I could not avoid communicating to her something of what lay hardest upon my mind and particularly the narrowness of my circumstances, and the loss of my fortune by the damage of my goods at sea. I told her also, that I had a mother and a brother in Virginia in good circumstances; and as I had really written back to my mother in particular to represent my condition, and the great loss I had received, which indeed came to almost #500, so I did not fail to let my new friend know that I expected a supply from thence, and so indeed I did; and as the ships went from Bristol to York River, in Virginia, and back again generally in less time from London, and that my brother corresponded chiefly at Bristol, I thought it was much better for me to wait here for my returns than to go to London, where also I had not the least acquaintance. My new friend appeared sensibly affected with my condition, and indeed was so very kind as to reduce the rate of my living with her to so low a price during the winter, that she convinced me she got nothing by me; and as for

lodging, during the winter I paid nothing at all.

When the spring season came on, she continued to be as kind to me as she could, and I lodged with her for a time, till it was found necessary to do otherwise. She had some persons of character that frequently lodged in her house, and in particular the gentleman who, as I said, singled me out for his companion the winter before; and he came down again with another gentleman in his company and two servants, and lodged in the same house. I suspected that my landlady had invited him thither, letting him know that I was still with her; but she denied it, and protested to me that she did not, and he said the same.

In a word, this gentleman came down and continued to single me out for his peculiar confidence as well as conversation. He was a complete gentleman, that must be confessed, and his company was very agreeable to me, as mine, if I might believe him, was to him. He made no professions to be but of an extraordinary respect, and he had such an opinion of my virtue, that, as he often professed, he believed if he should offer anything else, I should reject him with contempt. He soon understood from me that I was a widow; that I had arrived at Bristol from Virginia by the last ships; and that I waited at Bath till the next Virginia fleet should arrive, by which I expected considerable effects. I understood by him, and by others of him, that he had a wife, but that the lady was distempered in her head, and was under the conduct of her own relations, which he consented to, to avoid any reflections

that might (as was not unusual in such cases) be cast on him for mismanaging her cure; and in the meantime he came to the Bath to divert his thoughts from the disturbance of such a melancholy circumstance as that was.

My landlady, who of her own accord encouraged the correspondence on all occasions, gave me an advantageous character of him, as a man of honour and of virtue, as well as of great estate. And indeed I had a great deal of reason to say so of him too; for though we lodged both on a floor, and he had frequently come into my chamber, even when I was in bed, and I also into his when he was in bed, yet he never offered anything to me further than a kiss, or so much as solicited me to anything till long after, as you shall hear.

I frequently took notice to my landlady of his exceeding modesty, and she again used to tell me, she believed it was so from the beginning; however, she used to tell me that she thought I ought to expect some gratification from him for my company, for indeed he did, as it were, engross me, and I was seldom from him. I told her I had not given him the least occasion to think I wanted it, or that I would accept of it from him. She told me she would take that part upon her, and she did so, and managed it so dexterously, that the first time we were together alone, after she had talked with him, he began to inquire a little into my circumstances, as how I had subsisted myself since I came on shore, and whether I did not want money. I

stood off very boldly. I told him that though my cargo of tobacco was damaged, yet that it was not quite lost; that the merchant I had been consigned to had so honestly managed for me that I had not wanted, and that I hoped, with frugal management, I should make it hold out till more would come, which I expected by the next fleet; that in the meantime I had retrenched my expenses, and whereas I kept a maid last season, now I lived without; and whereas I had a chamber and a dining-room then on the first floor, as he knew, I now had but one room, two pair of stairs, and the like. 'But I live,' said I, 'as well satisfied now as I did then'; adding, that his company had been a means to make me live much more cheerfully than otherwise I should have done, for which I was much obliged to him; and so I put off all room for any offer for the present. However, it was not long before he attacked me again, and told me he found that I was backward to trust him with the secret of my circumstances, which he was sorry for; assuring me that he inquired into it with no design to satisfy his own curiosity, but merely to assist me, if there was any occasion; but since I would not own myself to stand in need of any assistance, he had but one thing more to desire of me, and that was, that I would promise him that when I was any way straitened, or like to be so, I would frankly tell him of it, and that I would make use of him with the same freedom that he made the offer; adding, that I should always find I had a true friend, though perhaps I was afraid to trust him.

I omitted nothing that was fit to be said by one infinitely obliged, to let him

know that I had a due sense of his kindness; and indeed from that time I did not appear so much reserved to him as I had done before, though still within the bounds of the strictest virtue on both sides; but how free soever our conversation was, I could not arrive to that sort of freedom which he desired, viz. to tell him I wanted money, though I was secretly very glad of his offer.

Some weeks passed after this, and still I never asked him for money; when my landlady, a cunning creature, who had often pressed me to it, but found that I could not do it, makes a story of her own inventing, and comes in bluntly to me when we were together. 'Oh, widow!' says she, 'I have bad news to tell you this morning.' 'What is that?' said I; 'are the Virginia ships taken by the French?'--for that was my fear. 'No, no,' says she, 'but the man you sent to Bristol yesterday for money is come back, and says he has brought none.'

Now I could by no means like her project; I though it looked too much like prompting him, which indeed he did not want, and I clearly that I should lose nothing by being backward to ask, so I took her up short. 'I can't image why he should say so to you,' said I, 'for I assure you he brought me all the money I sent him for, and here it is,' said I (pulling out my purse with about twelve guineas in it); and added, 'I intend you shall have most of it by and by.'

He seemed distasted a little at her talking as she did at first, as well as I,

taking it, as I fancied he would, as something forward of her; but when he saw me give such an answer, he came immediately to himself again. The next morning we talked of it again, when I found he was fully satisfied, and, smiling, said he hoped I would not want money and not tell him of it, and that I had promised him otherwise. I told him I had been very much dissatisfied at my landlady's talking so publicly the day before of what she had nothing to do with; but I supposed she wanted what I owed her, which was about eight guineas, which I had resolved to give her, and had accordingly given it her the same night she talked so foolishly.

He was in a might good humour when he heard me say I had paid her, and it went off into some other discourse at that time. But the next morning, he having heard me up about my room before him, he called to me, and I answering, he asked me to come into his chamber. He was in bed when I came in, and he made me come and sit down on his bedside, for he said he had something to say to me which was of some moment. After some very kind expressions, he asked me if I would be very honest to him, and give a sincere answer to one thing he would desire of me. After some little cavil at the word 'sincere,' and asking him if I had ever given him any answers which were not sincere, I promised him I would. Why, then, his request was, he said, to let him see my purse. I immediately put my hand into my pocket, and, laughing to him, pulled it out, and there was in it three guineas and a half. Then he asked me if there was all the money I had. I told him No, laughing again, not by a great deal.

Well, then, he said, he would have me promise to go and fetch him all the money I had, every farthing. I told him I would, and I went into my chamber and fetched him a little private drawer, where I had about six guineas more, and some silver, and threw it all down upon the bed, and told him there was all my wealth, honestly to a shilling. He looked a little at it, but did not tell it, and huddled it all into the drawer again, and then reaching his pocket, pulled out a key, and bade me open a little walnut-tree box he had upon the table, and bring him such a drawer, which I did. In which drawer there was a great deal of money in gold, I believe near two hundred guineas, but I knew not how much. He took the drawer, and taking my hand, made me put it in and take a whole handful. I was backward at that, but he held my hand hard in his hand, and put it into the drawer, and made me take out as many guineas almost as I could well take up at once.