



Tom Jones (Oxford World's Classics)

Henry Fielding, Simon Stern

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Fielding's comic masterpiece of 1749 was immediately attacked as `A motley history of bastardism, fornication, and adultery'. Indeed, his populous novel overflows with a marvellous assortment of prudes, whores, libertines, bumpkins, misanthropes, hypocrites, scoundrels, virgins, and all too fallible humanitarians. At the centre of one of the most ingenious plots in English fiction stands a hero whose actions were, in 1749, as shocking as they are funny today.

Expelled from Mr Allworthy's country estate for his wild temper and sexual conquests, the good-hearted foundling Tom Jones loses his money, joins the army, and pursues his beloved across Britain to London, where he becomes a kept lover and confronts the possibility of incest. Tom Jones is rightly regarded as Fielding's greatest work, and one of the first and most influential of English novels.

This carefully modernized edition is based on Fielding's emended fourth edition text and offers the most thorough notes, maps, and bibliography. The introduction uses the latest scholarship to examine how Tom Jones exemplifies the role of the novel in the emerging eighteenth-century public sphere.

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