

LETTER XI
DEAR MOTHER,

Well, I can't find my letter, and so I'll try to recollect it all, and be as brief as I can. All went well enough in the main for some time after my letter but one. At last, I saw some reason to suspect; for he would look upon me, whenever he saw me, in such a manner, as shewed not well; and one day he came to me, as I was in the summer-house in the little garden, at work with my needle, and Mrs. Jervis was just gone from me; and I would have gone out, but he said, No don't go, Pamela; I have something to say to you; and you always fly me when I come near you, as if you were afraid of me.

I was much out of countenance, you may well think; but said, at last, It does not become your good servant to stay in your presence, sir, without your business required it; and I hope I shall always know my place.

Well, says he, my business does require it sometimes; and I have a mind you should stay to hear what I have to say to you.

I stood still confounded, and began to tremble, and the more when he took me by the hand; for now no soul was near us.

My sister Davers, said he, (and seemed, I thought, to be as much at a loss for words as I,) would have had you live with her; but she would not do for you what I am resolved to do, if you continue faithful and obliging. What say'st thou, my girl? said he, with some eagerness; had'st thou not rather stay with me, than go to my sister Davers? He looked so, as filled me with affrightment; I don't know how; wildly, I thought.

I said, when I could speak, Your honour will forgive me; but as you have no lady for me to wait upon, and my good lady has been now dead this twelvemonth, I had rather, if it would not displease you, wait upon Lady Davers, because—

I was proceeding, and he said, a little hastily—Because you are a little fool, and know not what's good for yourself. I tell you I will make a gentlewoman of you, if you be obliging, and don't stand in your own light; and so saying, he put his arm about me, and kissed me!

Now, you will say, all his wickedness appeared plainly. I struggled and trembled, and was so benumbed with terror, that I sunk down, not in a fit, and yet not myself; and I found myself in his arms, quite void of strength; and he kissed me two or three times, with frightful eagerness.

- At last I burst from him, and was getting out of the summer-house; but he held me back, and shut the door.

I would have given my life for a farthing. And he said, I'll do you no harm, Pamela; don't be afraid of me. I said, I won't stay. You won't, hussy! said he: Do you know whom you speak to? I lost all fear, and all respect, and said, Yes, I do, sir, too well!--Well may I forget that I am your servant, when you forget what belongs to a master.

I sobbed and cried most sadly. What a foolish hussy you are! said he:

Have I done you any harm? Yes, sir, said I, the greatest harm in the world: You have taught me to forget myself and what belongs to me, and have lessened the distance that fortune has made between us, by demeaning yourself, to be so free to a poor servant. Yet, sir, I will be bold to say, I am honest, though poor: and if you was a prince, I would not be otherwise.

He was angry, and said, Who would have you otherwise, you foolish slut! Cease your blubbering. I own I have demeaned myself; but it was only to try you. If you can keep this matter secret, you'll give me the better opinion of your prudence; and here's something, said he, putting some gold in my hand, to make you amends for the fright I put you in. Go, take a walk in the garden, and don't go in till your blubbering is over: and I charge you say nothing of what is past, and all shall be well, and I'll forgive you.

I won't take the money, indeed, sir, said I, poor as I am I won't take it. For, to say truth, I thought it looked like taking earnest, and so I put it upon the bench; and as he seemed vexed

and confused at what he had done, I took the opportunity to open the door, and went out of the summer-house.

He called to me, and said, Be secret; I charge you, Pamela; and don't go in yet, as I told you.

O how poor and mean must those actions be, and how little must they make the best of gentlemen look, when they offer such things as are unworthy of themselves, and put it into the power of their inferiors to be greater than they!

I took a turn or two in the garden, but in sight of the house, for fear of the worst; and breathed upon my hand to dry my eyes, because I would not be too disobedient. My next shall tell you more.

Pray for me, my dear father and mother: and don't be angry I have not yet run away from this house, so late my comfort and delight, but now my terror and anguish. I am forced to break off hastily.

Your dutiful and honest DAUGHTER.

From Richardson's Pamela, 1741