CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews

Henry Fielding · *1741 · original English text (Project Gutenberg #30962)*

Shamela Andrews writes to her mother that she shall set out in the Waggon on Monday, desiring a lodging near her, handsome, and not above two stories high. The hosted text is Fielding's original English, Project Gutenberg #30962, a short satire of Pamela. For older students (11–12). Teach with tact. No prurience on the map.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What is Fielding doing to a famous story of virtue rewarded, and how should a school read this short parody as a warning about false virtue without turning it into a scandal sheet?

"This comes to acquaint you, that I shall set out in the Waggon on _Monday_, desiring you to commodate me with a Ludgin, as near you as possible, in _Coulstin's-Court_, or _Wild-Street_, or somewhere"
Letter I

This is a parody of Richardson's Pamela, written as letters from Shamela Andrews. The virtue on the surface is a scheme. Teach it as a satire of false virtue and of a fashion of tearful praise, for grades 11–12, with tact. It is not a substitute for Pamela, and it is not a manual of deceit. No prurience on the map. Quote Shamela's letters, not only the Project Gutenberg header, and not only the mock dedications that stand first.

KEY CHARACTERS

Shamela Andrews
The letter-writer, whose show of virtue is a scheme

Mrs. Henrietta Maria Honora Andrews
The mother at the Fan and Pepper-Box in Drury-Lane

Parson Williams
Already named in the first letter; part of the satire

A LETTER ABOUT A WAGGON

> *"This comes to acquaint you, that I shall set out in the Waggon on _Monday_, desiring you to commodate me with a Ludgin, as near you as possible, in _Coulstin's-Court_, or _Wild-Street_, or somewhere"*
> Letter I

Grades 11–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01
Letter I, in the Waggon
LETTER I

Shamela writes to Mrs. Henrietta Maria Honora Andrews at the Fan and Pepper-Box in Drury-Lane. She will come up on Monday and wants a "Ludgin," handsome, and not high. Parson Williams has already been promised in the same letter.

- The first sentences of the letter proper are exact. Keep "Waggon," "commodate," "Ludgin," and the underscored place-names as printed.
- Mock dedications and a front epistle stand first in the file; quote the letters, not only that frame.
- For grades 11–12. Tact.
- This is Fielding, 1741, PG #30962.

> *"This comes to acquaint you, that I shall set out in the Waggon on _Monday_, desiring you to commodate me with a Ludgin, as near you as possible, in _Coulstin's-Court_, or _Wild-Street_, or somewhere"*
> Letter I

02
A Parody of Pamela
THE BOOK AS A WHOLE

The target is a celebrated novel of virtue rewarded, and the public praise that had already begun to "preach it up." The joke is not only against a girl; it is against a fashion of reading.

- A school should name Pamela as the book being answered, without requiring students to have finished it first.
- This is not a substitute for Richardson, and not a hatchet only.
- Teach false virtue, not a sneer at all virtue.
- Quote Fielding's letters, not a later essay about the quarrel.

> *"This comes to acquaint you, that I shall set out in the Waggon on _Monday_, desiring you to commodate me with a Ludgin, as near you as possible, in _Coulstin's-Court_, or _Wild-Street_, or somewhere"*
> Letter I

03
False Virtue
THE LETTERS

Shamela's language of virtue is a cover for a scheme. The comedy is sharp. A school should teach the moral point—that a show of goodness can be a tool—and should not linger on the intrigue as entertainment.

- Tact. No prurience on the map. Adult/Advanced matter, 11–12.
- The book is short; finish it without making it a scandal sheet.
- Keep the comic misspellings and names as printed.
- Parson Williams belongs to the satire; do not turn the clergy into a cheap joke beyond what the book does.

> *"This comes to acquaint you, that I shall set out in the Waggon on _Monday_, desiring you to commodate me with a Ludgin, as near you as possible, in _Coulstin's-Court_, or _Wild-Street_, or somewhere"*
> Letter I

04
Letters, and a Frame
THE FORM

The book is an apology in letters, with a mocking frame. Quote the letters themselves for the map. The frame tells you how to take the joke; it is not the whole work.

- Do not quote only the Project Gutenberg header or the mock title-page.
- The letter form is part of the parody of Pamela.
- Short complete text.
- 11–12.

> *"This comes to acquaint you, that I shall set out in the Waggon on _Monday_, desiring you to commodate me with a Ludgin, as near you as possible, in _Coulstin's-Court_, or _Wild-Street_, or somewhere"*
> Letter I

05
This File
THE EDITION

Original English, PG #30962. Complete and short.

- Year 1741.
- Teach with tact.
- No prurience.
- Letter I is the right first quotation.

> *"This comes to acquaint you, that I shall set out in the Waggon on _Monday_, desiring you to commodate me with a Ludgin, as near you as possible, in _Coulstin's-Court_, or _Wild-Street_, or somewhere"*
> Letter I

False Virtue · A Parody · A Fashion of Praise · Letters as a Weapon · A Short, Sharp Book

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 11–12

1. Letter I begins: "This comes to acquaint you, that I shall set out in the Waggon on Monday, desiring you to commodate me with a Ludgin." Keep "Waggon," "commodate," and "Ludgin." Mock dedications stand first; quote the letters.
2. This is Fielding, 1741, PG #30962, a short parody of Richardson's Pamela. For grades 11–12. Tact. No prurience on the map.
3. Teach it as a satire of false virtue and of a fashion of tearful praise, not as a scandal sheet, and not as a substitute for Pamela.
4. The book is short; finish it. Do not linger on the intrigue as entertainment.
5. Do not quote only the Gutenberg header or the mock title-page.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text (Project Gutenberg #30962), Project Gutenberg #30962, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/fielding-shamela/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.