

**A MAN OF  
SENTIMENT:  
A NOVEL**

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A Man of Sentiment: A Novel by Thomas Cobb

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**THOMAS COBB**

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# A MAN OF SENTIMENT

## I

### THE COMING OF EILEEN

JACK DONOVON walked along Oxford Street one bright April afternoon, but the bare statement is entirely inadequate to describe his triumphant progress. He felt as if he was treading upon air, and his warmest admirer could scarcely deny that he swaggered.

A noticeable figure at any time, with his wide shoulders, small hips, his curled black moustache, his frock coat fastened by one button at the waist, bulging slightly at his prominent chest, he could borrow a ten-pound note with an air of condescension, although he fondly believed that his borrowing days were nearly ended.

Swinging round the corner of Davies Street,

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he stopped at a house on the left, admitted himself with a latch-key, and entered his sitting-room on the first floor. There he saw his landlady kneeling beside an armchair, on which she was mending a piece of gimp.

"Miss Wendover, my dear friend, congratulate me!" cried Jack, as she rose with the needle in her right hand.

"Have you just come into a fortune, Mr. Donovan?" she asked.

"I am engaged to be married to the most beautiful young lady in the world," he answered, and her round, comely face turned quite pale for a moment.

Miss Wendover was in her thirtieth year, and a little younger than Jack Donovan. Her mother's death, three years ago, had left her in possession of the leasehold house in Davies Street, with its contents, and her only resource had been to continue to let portions of it to single gentlemen. Just tall enough to escape the dumpiness which Byron hated, she had an attractive figure; her dark serge frock fitted it like a glove, whilst her pink bib and apron appeared to add to its charm.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" she exclaimed, cleverly converting a sigh into a smile.



"And why not, Miss Wendover?" demanded Jack.

"She is a brave woman," was the answer.

"It isn't I who would marry a coward."

"Is the young lady rich?" she inquired.

"She has three thousand a year," he returned, with obvious satisfaction; "her poor father and mother are dead, and she is the most charming girl you ever saw."

"Poor soul!" murmured Miss Wendover. "Hasn't she any friends?"

"It is true," Jack admitted, "she has a brother."

"What does he say about it?" she asked significantly.

Jack thrust his right hand in the breast of his coat, as he regarded Miss Wendover with crushing severity.

"I scarcely understand what you mean!" he exclaimed.

"Mr. Donovan," she retorted, "I have never had a pleasanter gentleman in the house, but when it comes to husbands——"

"A husband is what I will come to," he said, and as she turned towards the door he stepped forward to open it. Having closed it behind her, he went to the marble-topped side-

board and took out a decanter of whisky. He had poured a liberal quantity into a tumbler, and was in the act of drinking Camilla's health, when he heard the bell ring.

Hastening to empty his glass, Jack walked to one of the two windows, and standing cautiously behind its curtain, peered into the street; for it was his misfortune occasionally to be troubled by unwelcome visitors. In the present case he saw a four-wheeled cab at the door, whilst the cabman was in the act of lifting a trunk from the roof. On the pavement stood a middle-aged lady and a young one.

"By Jove, if it isn't Eileen!" Jack exclaimed.

When the cabman had carried the trunk into the house, the middle-aged lady re-entered the cab, the horse started, and a minute later the door of Jack's room was hesitatingly opened to admit a tall, dark-haired girl of seventeen or eighteen years of age.

As Jack stood surveying her in the middle of the room, she stopped, looking up into his face with a wistful expression.

"It's a young woman you have become, Eileen!" he cried, holding out both hands.

"What else did you expect?" she answered, with the faintest of smiles. "But," she added the next instant, "why didn't you meet me at the railway station?"

"Meet you!" he said, with an air of bewilderment.

"Instead of troubling Miss Stainton to bring me here, and leave me like a bundle of rubbish!"

"I thought you were at Margate," he returned.

"Miss Stainton wrote to tell you the holidays began to-day."

"I put her letter into the fire, Eileen."

"Without even reading it?" she asked.

"Her letters have not been agreeable to read," said Jack. "But I would like to hear what you have done to be sent away."

"It's something you have left undone," she answered.

"Ah, there are plenty of those things, Eileen," cried Jack, with tears in his voice.

"Miss Stainton said you had not sent any money for a year and a half," said Eileen.

"And what is a year and a half?" he demanded scornfully.