Of Open Hearts

Long Live Hugh

Chapter 1 Long Live Hugh

Hugh Kingsley-Smythe, Earl of Ashton, had a lot on his mind. He was thinking about his upcoming wedding to the lovely Lady Eleanor Bellingham, the sister of his best friend, Sir Edmund Bellingham. He was also thinking about the mysterious letter he had received from a blackmailer, threatening to expose his secret if he did not pay a large sum of money. He was thinking about the upcoming ball he was hosting at his country estate, Ashton Hall, and the guest list he had to finalize. He was thinking about the new horse he had purchased, a magnificent stallion named Thunderbolt, and the race he was planning to enter it in. He was thinking about the weather, which was cold and rainy, and the fire that was burning in the fireplace of his study, and the warmth it was giving him. He was thinking about the book he was reading, a novel by Jane Austen, and the characters in the book, and the plot of the book, and the ending of the book, which was happy and satisfying and romantic and perfect. He was thinking about the ending of the book, and the happy ending he was hoping for in his own life, and the happy ending he was trying to make for himself and for his friends and for his family and for his country and for the world. He was thinking about the happy ending he was trying to make for himself and for his friends and for his family and for his country and for the world, and he