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Family Plays

A black silhouette of a woman with short hair, wearing a suit jacket and a skirt, holding a glass in her right hand. The text is overlaid on the silhouette.

Oliver Goldsmith's

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

Comedy adapted
into one act by

I.E. Clark

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

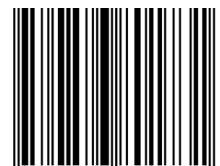
Comedy. Adapted by I.E. Clark. From the play by Oliver Goldsmith. *Cast: 5m., 3w., extras.* Upon a background of mistaken identity, Oliver Goldsmith built one of the most favorite comedies of all time, and this one-act adaptation retains the fun of the five-act original. Kate is an 18th-century country girl who gets few chances to meet young men. So when one comes along, she isn't about to let him get away, even if she has to stoop to conquer. To fill this void, her father has invited young Marlow out for a visit. Marlow has a strange quirk: he is so shy that he can't bear to look a young lady in the eye—but with the serving girls ... wow! To complicate the plot even further, Tony Lumpkin, a real rascal, tells Marlow that the Hardcastle house is an inn; and Marlow rudely rejects the friendly advances of Mr. Hardcastle, whom he believes to be an overbearing innkeeper. Finally, stooping to conquer, Kate pretends to be a barmaid to win Marlow's attention. *A director's script is available containing drawings of costumes and set, details on all technical aspects of staging, and discussion of characterization, plot and theme. It also suggests the complete blocking and full stage directions for all movement and business. Set: a country mansion in England. Time: 18th century. Costumes: period. Approximate running time: 30 to 35 minutes. Code: SY3.*

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She Stoops to Conquer

OLIVER GOLDSMITH'S

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Adapted into a one-act play

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I.E. CLARK

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(SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER)

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SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

The one-act version of *She Stoops to Conquer* presented in the following pages is based on the production script developed by I. E. Clark in adapting and directing the play for the Schulenburg Fine Arts Festival. The original cast was as follows:

<i>Mr. Hardcastle</i>	.....	Leonard Schulze
<i>Mrs. Hardcastle</i>	.....	Dorothy Haas
<i>Tony Lumpkin</i>	.....	Gerry Owen
<i>Kate Hardcastle</i>	.....	Lynanne Fitch
<i>Constance Neville</i>	.....	Alida Ihle
<i>Marlow</i>	.....	Irvin Lippman
<i>Hastings</i>	.....	Fred Nix
<i>*1st Servant</i>	.....	Ronnie Herzik
<i>2nd Servant</i>	.....	Lloyd Holz
<i>Sir Charles</i>	.....	Johnny Coleman

Scene: *A country mansion in England
in the eighteenth century*

*This role may be played by a girl; or both Servant roles may be played by the same actor.

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NOTES ON THE PLAY

Kate Hardcastle lives in the country—and this is 18th century England, where transportation is slow. So Kate has few opportunities to meet prospective husbands. To fill this void, her father has invited young Marlow out for a visit. But Marlow has a strange quirk: he is so shy that he can't bear to look a young Lady in the eye—but with the serving girls...wow! To complicate the plot even further, Tony Lumpkin, a real rascal, tells Marlow that the Hardcastle house is an inn; and Marlow rudely rejects the friendly advances of Hardcastle, whom he believes to be an overbearing innkeeper. And finally, to win Marlow's attention, Kate pretends to be a bar-maid. Upon this background of mistaken identity, Oliver Goldsmith built one of the favorite comedies of all time, and this adaptation retains the fun of the five-act original.

Oliver Goldsmith's

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

Adapted by I. E. Clark

[*At rise, HARDCASTLE is seated in his chair reading and smoking a long-stemmed clay pipe. MRS. HARDCASTLE is on a love seat embroidering and looking unhappy. HARDCASTLE becomes aware of Audience, places his book on table and addresses Audience.*]

HARDCASTLE. Ah, good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Mr. Hardcastle, and this is my house—which, according to Dorothy here [*gestures to MRS. HARDCASTLE*] looks for all the world like an inn. And so it must, for therein lies the tale I am about to tell you. I love this old house; I love everything that's old—and—I have been pretty fond of an old wife.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Lord, Mr. Hardcastle, you're forever at your 'Dorothy's' and your 'old wives.' I was but twenty at the birth of Tony, that I had by Mr. Lumpkin, my first husband; and he's not come to years of discretion yet.

HARD. Nor ever will, I dare answer for him. It was but yesterday he fastened my wig to the back of my chair, and when I went to make a bow, I popped my bald head in Mrs. Frizzle's face.

MRS. HARD. Well, we must not snub the poor boy now, for I believe we shan't have him long among us. [*Wipes a tear*] Anybody that looks in his face may see he's consumptive.

HARD. Ay, if growing too fat be one of the symptoms.

MRS. HARD. He coughs sometimes.

HARD. Yes, when his liquor goes the wrong way. [*Starts violently when TONY whoops offstage*] O there he goes—a very consumptive figure, truly.

[*TONY stomps in, looking for his wig. He is singing*

"Coming Through the Rye" in a loud voice, off-key. He finds his wig under the table, slaps it askew on his head, and strides toward exit.]

MRS. HARD. [*Speaking tenderly as she intercepts him*] Tony, where are you going, my charmer? Won't you give Papa and I a little of your company, lovee?

TONY. I can't stay, Mother. [*He tries to pull away from her.*]

HARD. Ay; the ale-house calls.

MRS. HARD. Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night at least.

TONY. As for disappointing *them* I should not so much mind; but I can't abide to disappoint *myself*.

MRS. HARD. [*Clutching his arm tighter*] You shan't go.

TONY. We'll see which of us is strongest. [*He exits, dragging her out since she refuses to release his arm.*]

HARD. [*Laughing, addressing Audience*] That's my stepson, Tony. And then there's my pretty darling Kate. [*KATE enters carrying wine decanter. She curtsies to him as he speaks to her.*] Blessings on my pretty innocence. [*To Audience*] Kate and I have an agreement. I allow her to dress as fancy as she pleases in the morning; but in the evening she puts on a simple dress to please me. I recall how I first told her of the young gentleman I had chosen to be her husband.... [*To KATE*] Mr. Marlow is the son of my old friend, Sir Charles Marlow. I expect him from town this very day. The young gentleman has been bred a scholar, and I am told he's a man of an excellent understanding.

KATE. Is he?

HARD. Very generous.

KATE. I believe I shall like him.

HARD. Young and brave.

KATE. I'm sure I shall like him.

HARD. And very handsome.

KATE. My dear papa, say no more—he's mine, I'll have him.

HARD. And, to crown all, Kate, he's one of the most bashful and reserved young fellows in all the world.

KATE. Eh! You have frozen me to death again. That word 'reserved' has undone all the rest of his accomplishments. [*Fills decanter on table.*]

HARD. [*To Audience*] There is one more member of my household—Kate's cousin, Miss Constance Neville. [*CONSTANCE appears, curtsies to Audience, and she and KATE embrace. They turn to the table, backs to Audience, and tableau until CONSTANCE speaks.*] The poor child's parents died a short time ago, and she became my wife's ward—along with a small fortune in jewels. My hopeful Dorothy immediately began courting her—and her jewels—for that pretty monster Tony. But Tony had his own ideas—[*confidentially*] an equally consumptive young thing at the nearest tavern. And Constance here was in love with Mr. Hastings, young Marlow's best friend. In fact, Constance knew both young gentlemen well....

CONSTANCE. [*She and KATE both turn so that Audience can see their faces*] Mr. Marlow is a very singular character, I assure you. Among women of reputation and virtue he is the modestest man alive; but among creatures of a lower station....[*KATE catches on with wide-mouthed shock. Both exit giggling.*]

HARD. Yes, this young Marlow was an odd character indeed. Of course, I did not know this at the time, for I had never met the young gentleman before his arrival here. And that arrival was most extraordinary.... [*gestures toward entrance as he exits.*]

[*MARLOW and HASTINGS enter, preceded by a SERVANT.*]

MARLOW. We are Mr. Marlow and Mr. Hastings from London, and we have lost our way. [*They give the SERVANT the hats they have been carrying.*] A fat young fellow at the tavern down the road told us that we might find lodging for the night at this inn.

SERVANT. [*Befuddled*] Inn? I—I'll go fetch my master, sir. [*Exit*]

HASTINGS. As I was saying, Charles, in the company of women of reputation I never saw such an idiot, such a trembler. At this rate, man, how can you ever expect to marry?

MARL. Never! To go through all the terrors of a formal courtship, together with the episode of aunts, grandmothers, and cousins, and at last to blurt out the broad staring question of, 'Madam, will you marry me?' No, no, that's a strain much above me, I assure you.

HAST. How is it, then, that you are such a gay blade with barmaids and innkeepers' daughters?

MARL. Well, after all, George, those little darlings...did I ever tell you about that tempting little cook-maid at...[*he is just about to sit when HARDCASTLE enters*] pshaw, this fellow here to interrupt us.

HARD. [*Entering with a big smile*] Gentlemen, you are heartily welcome. Which is Mr. Marlow [*MARLOW nods coldly*]. Sir, you are heartily welcome.

MARL. [*Aside to HASTINGS*] He has got our names from the servants already. I have been thinking, George, of changing our travelling dress in the morning....

HARD. [*Shocked, he speaks their names in reprimand; then catches himself and follows them, remembering that he is supposed to be hospitable*] Mr. Marlow! Mr. Hastings! Gentlemen—pray be under no restraint in this house. This is Liberty-Hall, gentlemen. You may do just as you please here.

HAST. [*They try to avoid the old gentleman*] I fancy, Charles, you're right; the first blow is half the battle. I intend opening the campaign with the white and gold.

HARD. Your talking of a campaign, Mr. Marlow, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough, when we went to besiege Denain. He first summoned the garrison....

MARL. Don't you think the *ventre dor* waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

HARD. [*He can't understand their rudeness, but he is determined to tell his story. He talks a little louder to top their conversation*] He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men....

HAST. I think not; brown and yellow mix but very poorly.

HARD. I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, he summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men....

MARL. The girls like finery.

HARD. ...which might consist of about five thousand men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war. 'Now,' says the Duke of Marlborough to George Brooks, that stood next to him—you must have heard of George Brooks—'I'll pawn my dukedom,' says he, 'but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood,' so—

MARL. Instead of the Duke of Marlborough I believe it's almost time to talk about supper. What has your *generalship* got in the house for supper?

HARD. [*He can't believe his ears*] For supper, Sir! [*Aside*] Was ever such a request to a man in his own house!

MARL. Yes, Sir, supper, Sir; I begin to feel an appetite. I shall make dev'lish work tonight in the larder, I promise you. [*Exit.*]

HARD. [*Following*] Well, Sir, I'm resolved at least to attend you. [*Aside*] This may be modern *modesty*, but I never saw anything look so like old-fashioned *impudence*! [*Exit.*]

HAST. [*Beginning to follow*] This fellow seems to forget he's an innkeeper. Ha! What do I see? Miss Neville, by all that's happy!

CONSTANCE. [*Entering from garden with basket*] My dear Hastings!

HAST. I could never have hoped to meet my dearest Constance at an *inn*.

CON. An inn! Sure, you mistake! My aunt—my guardian—lives here. What could induce you to think this house an inn?

HAST. My friend, Mr. Marlow, and I were directed here as to an inn by a young fellow whom we met at a tavern down the road.