



**CLASSICS TO GO**

**SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER  
OR, THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT**  
A COMEDY

**OLIVER GOLDSMITH**



# **She Stoops To Conquer**

**Or, The Mistakes Of A Night  
A Comedy**

**Oliver Goldsmith**

## **To Samuel Johnson, LL.D.**

Dear Sir,—By inscribing this slight performance to you, I do not mean so much to compliment you as myself. It may do me some honour to inform the public, that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them, that the greatest wit may be found in a character, without impairing the most unaffected piety.

I have, particularly, reason to thank you for your partiality to this performance. The undertaking a comedy not merely sentimental was very dangerous; and Mr. Colman, who saw this piece in its various stages, always thought it so. However, I ventured to trust it to the public; and, though it was necessarily delayed till late in the season, I have every reason to be grateful.

I am, dear Sir, your most sincere friend and admirer,

*OLIVER GOLDSMITH.*

# PROLOGUE

**By David Garrick, Esq.**

Enter MR. WOODWARD, dressed in black, and holding a handkerchief to his eyes.

Excuse me, sirs, I pray—I can't yet speak—  
I'm crying now—and have been all the week.  
"Tis not alone this mourning suit," good masters:  
"I've that within"—for which there are no plasters!  
Pray, would you know the reason why I'm crying?  
The Comic Muse, long sick, is now a-dying!  
And if she goes, my tears will never stop;  
For as a player, I can't squeeze out one drop:  
I am undone, that's all—shall lose my bread—  
I'd rather, but that's nothing—lose my head.  
When the sweet maid is laid upon the bier,  
Shuter and I shall be chief mourners here.  
To her a mawkish drab of spurious breed,  
Who deals in sentimentals, will succeed!  
Poor Ned and I are dead to all intents;  
We can as soon speak Greek as sentiments!  
Both nervous grown, to keep our spirits up.  
We now and then take down a hearty cup.  
What shall we do? If Comedy forsake us,  
They'll turn us out, and no one else will take us.  
But why can't I be moral?—Let me try—  
My heart thus pressing—fixed my face and eye—  
With a sententious look, that nothing means,  
(Faces are blocks in sentimental scenes)  
Thus I begin: "All is not gold that glitters,  
"Pleasure seems sweet, but proves a glass of bitters.  
"When Ignorance enters, Folly is at hand:  
"Learning is better far than house and land.  
"Let not your virtue trip; who trips may stumble,  
"And virtue is not virtue, if she tumble."

I give it up—morals won't do for me;  
To make you laugh, I must play tragedy.  
One hope remains—hearing the maid was ill,  
A Doctor comes this night to show his skill.  
To cheer her heart, and give your muscles motion,  
He, in Five Draughts prepar'd, presents a potion:  
A kind of magic charm—for be assur'd,  
If you will swallow it, the maid is cur'd:  
But desperate the Doctor, and her case is,  
If you reject the dose, and make wry faces!  
This truth he boasts, will boast it while he lives,  
No poisonous drugs are mixed in what he gives.  
Should he succeed, you'll give him his degree;  
If not, within he will receive no fee!

The College YOU, must his pretensions back,  
Pronounce him Regular, or dub him Quack.

# DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

## MEN.

SIR CHARLES MARLOW	Mr. Gardner.
YOUNG MARLOW (His Son)	Mr. Lee Lewes.
HARDCASTLE	Mr. Shuter.
HASTINGS	Mr. Dubellamy.
TONY LUMPKIN	Mr. Quick.
DIGGORY	Mr. Saunders.

## WOMEN.

MRS. HARDCASTLE	Mrs. Green.
MISS HARDCASTLE	Mrs. Bulkley.
MISS NEVILLE	Mrs. Kniveton.
MAID	Miss Williams.

LANDLORD, SERVANTS, Etc. Etc.

## **ACT THE FIRST.**

SCENE—A Chamber in an old-fashioned House.

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE and MR. HARDCASTLE.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. I vow, Mr. Hardcastle, you're very particular. Is there a creature in the whole country but ourselves, that does not take a trip to town now and then, to rub off the rust a little? There's the two Miss Hoggs, and our neighbour Mrs. Grigsby, go to take a month's polishing every winter.

HARDCASTLE. Ay, and bring back vanity and affectation to last them the whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home! In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us, but now they travel faster than a stage-coach. Its fopperies come down not only as inside passengers, but in the very basket.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Ay, your times were fine times indeed; you have been telling us of them for many a long year. Here we live in an old rumbling mansion, that looks for all the world like an inn, but that we never see company. Our best visitors are old Mrs. Oddfish, the curate's wife, and little Cripplegate, the lame dancing-master; and all our entertainment your old stories of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough. I hate such old-fashioned trumpery.

HARDCASTLE. And I love it. I love everything that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine; and I believe, Dorothy (taking her hand), you'll own I have been pretty fond of an old wife.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Lord, Mr. Hardcastle, you're for ever at your Dorothys and your old wives. You may be a Darby, but I'll be no Joan, I promise you. I'm not so old as you'd make me, by more than one good year. Add twenty to twenty, and make money of that.

HARDCASTLE. Let me see; twenty added to twenty makes just fifty and seven.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. It's false, Mr. Hardcastle; I was but twenty when I was brought to bed of Tony, that I had by Mr. Lumpkin, my first husband; and he's not come to years of discretion yet.

HARDCASTLE. Nor ever will, I dare answer for him. Ay, you have taught him finely.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. No matter. Tony Lumpkin has a good fortune. My son is not to live by his learning. I don't think a boy wants much learning to spend fifteen hundred a year.

HARDCASTLE. Learning, quotha! a mere composition of tricks and mischief.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Humour, my dear; nothing but humour. Come, Mr. Hardcastle, you must allow the boy a little humour.

HARDCASTLE. I'd sooner allow him a horse-pond. If burning the footmen's shoes, frightening the maids, and worrying the kittens be humour, he has it. It was but yesterday he fastened my wig to the back of my chair, and when I went to make a bow, I popt my bald head in Mrs. Frizzle's face.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. And am I to blame? The poor boy was always too sickly to do any good. A school would be his death. When he comes to be a little stronger, who knows what a year or two's Latin may do for him?



HARDCASTLE. Latin for him! A cat and fiddle. No, no; the alehouse and the stable are the only schools he'll ever go to.

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

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

MRS. HARDCASTLE. He coughs sometimes.

HARDCASTLE. Yes, when his liquor goes the wrong way.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. I'm actually afraid of his lungs.

HARDCASTLE. And truly so am I; for he sometimes whoops like a speaking trumpet—(Tony hallooing behind the scenes)—O, there he goes—a very consumptive figure, truly.

Enter TONY, crossing the stage.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Tony, where are you going, my charmer? Won't you give papa and I a little of your company, lovee?

TONY. I'm in haste, mother; I cannot stay.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. You shan't venture out this raw evening, my dear; you look most shockingly.

TONY. I can't stay, I tell you. The Three Pigeons expects me down every moment. There's some fun going forward.

HARDCASTLE. Ay; the alehouse, the old place: I thought so.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. A low, paltry set of fellows.