

## A Comedy for All Times

By: Anna B

Loves Last Shift, The Lady's Last Stake, The Careless Husband, She Would & She Would Not, and She Stoops to Conquer, are all titles of comedies written during the Restoration Period. All were about love, and all but the last have long since been forgotten (Colley). She Stoops To Conquer, by Oliver Goldsmith is a play that has never been put aside. The production has been performed for centuries and is popular even now. She Stoops to Conquer is an engaging play that could not be forgotten like the other productions of its day. This is because it is a simple story that is hilariously convoluted, the comedy is fast paced, and although the plot is preposterous, the central characters are ones an audience can relate to.

The basic plot of She Stoops to Conquer can be summed up in very few words: this is a story about [written at eastern alamanca hs in 05] two couples falling in love and getting married. Unlike many romantic comedies, for example A Midsummer Night's Dream, the correct women love the correct men; the parents, for the most part, are in favor of the matches; and there are no rivals for anyone's affection. The hilarity and wit comes when you add a suitor with schizophrenic tendencies, a meddling mother who is out for gold, and a brother who enjoys practical jokes, not to mention a house that looks like a hotel. Goldsmith turns a story that's easily understood into a madhouse. The fact this love story is so simple, yet so original in the confusing intricacies added to the plot, make the play one of a kind.

She Stoops to Conquer is unbelievably fast paced. One thing happens right after another so that you are caught up in a whirlwind of activity. Readers and audiences are kept on their toes trying to figure out who is in possession of the jewels, whether or not the goofy half brother is actually helping the main characters, and why the father, Mr. Hardcastle, likes his daughter to dress like a barmaid. Information is thrown at the audience fast and furiously, which gives someone enjoying the play little time to think about how preposterous the plot truly is. Goldsmith cleverly hides this unbelievable plot by the speed at [written at eastern alamanca hs in 05] which things turn upside down and all around. Mrs. Hardcastle states during the last act of the play. "I wish we were at home again. I never met so many accidents in so short a journey. Drenched in the mud, overturned in a ditch, stuck fast in a slough, jolted to a jelly, and at last to lose our way. Whereabouts do you think we are, Tony?" (Goldsmith V). This is just one example of the numerous accidents that occur during the play, and at the end the audience members feel a bit like Mrs. Hardcastle, not quite sure where they are, but in the case of the audience, having enjoyed the ride. When a reader gets to the end of the play his stomach hurts from laughing and his head hurts from confusion.

The central characters in She Stoops to Conquer are developed famously. This is especially true with the heroine, Kate, and her half brother, Tony. Kate is a girl who knows what she wants and is willing to go after it. She is brave and a person many girls could relate to. She is pleasant, beautiful, and has a strong personality. Tony acts like a fool and is very lazy but then masterminds a feasible plot to help his cousin, and himself of course, by pulling the wool over his mother's eyes. His idea doesn't quite work, but that doesn't mean it wasn't genius. Kate's suitor, Mr. Marlow, is someone readers can

easily connect with. He believes himself resigned to never marry because he is very shy when around women of high class. Women that are below him in status do not scare him at all. Most people can relate to having strange fears that hold them back no matter how little basis in [written at eastern alamanca hs in 05] reality these fears have. Some minor characters are only types, but the main characters are understandable and their motives are very clear. When these vivid characters are combined with a far out plot, the result is a very funny play (Oliver).

She Stoops to Conquer is a play that will never be put away only for scholars interested in dramas of the 18th century. It is fresh, new, and funny to each new person that reads the script. The play is a comedic gem. Dr. Samuel Johnson, the person to whom the play is dedicated and a writer himself, said this, "I know of no comedy that has so much exhilarated an audience, that has answered so much the great end of comedy-- making an audience merry" (Johnson).

### Works Cited

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