

Clara Reeve

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ENGL 4460

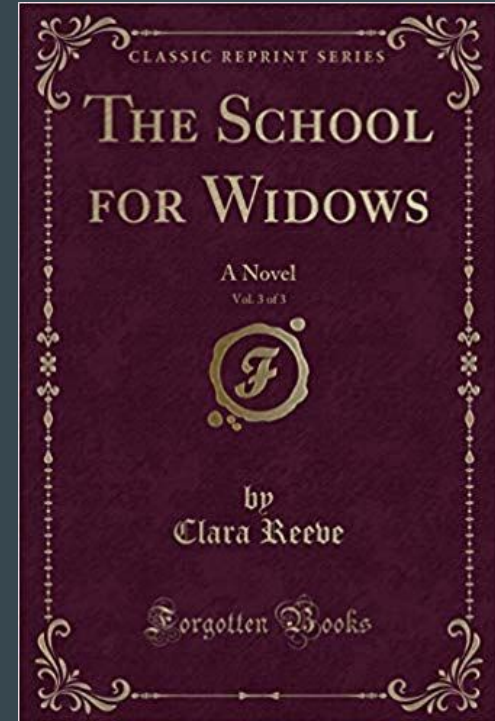
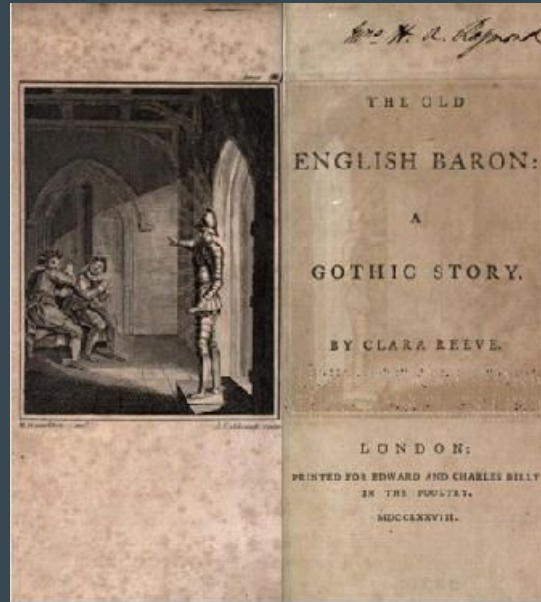
Personal Life

- Born Ipswich, Suffolk - January 1729 into poor family
- 7 siblings
- Worked to help support family
- Father had biggest influence over academic growth
- Death of father led to increased responsibility in family and move to Colchester



Famous Works

- *The Old English Baron*: “the literary offspring of Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto*”
 - extremely successful
 - harsh critics
 - similar plots with different goals
- *The School for Widows*: “a lighter work, written for the circulating library, sprinkled, however, with moral inference.”
 - describes and teaches skills to women
 - showcased political and moral beliefs



Role in Society and Politics

- Supported father's belief in eighteenth-century classical republicans
- Major advocate for educational reform and equality
- Supported French Revolution until it became extremely violent



“To my Friend, Mrs. --”

On the weak brains of our soft sex;

Works worse vagaries in the fancy,

Then Holland's gin, or royal Nancy.

In short, to what you will compare it,

Few women's heads have strength to bear it.

See some with strong and lively fancies,

Write essays, novels, and romances.

Others by serious cares and pains,

With politics o'er set their brains. (Reeve 69-82)

What by my talents have I gained?

By those I lov'd to be disdain'd,

By some despis'd, by others fear'd,

Envy'd by fools, by witlings jeer'd.

See what success my labours crown'd,

By birds and beasts alike disown'd.

Those talents that were once my pride,

I find it requisite to hide;

For what in man is most respected,

In woman's form shall be rejected.

(Reeve 132-141)

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[equality-of-both-the-sexes/](http://poeticalscavenger.sfsuenglishdh.net/poems/clara-reeve-to-my-friend-mrs-on-her-holding-an-argument-in-favour-of-the-natural-equality-of-both-the-sexes/).

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