

SUBJECT : ENGLISH

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TOPIC- SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

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PLOT CONSTRUCTION OF THE PLAY, “SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER”

The plot of the play, “She Stoops to Conquer” is the combination of two episodes, Kate-Marlow lovestory and Hastings-Neville lovestory. The two episodes are fused together into one harmonious whole by the expert dramatic skill of Marlowe. Indeed they are interwoven in such a subtle manner that it is only on close analysis that one can separate the two strands of web.

Young Marlow has come to play a visit to the Hardcastles and makes a courtship with Miss Hardcastle, their

marriage being conceded by their fathers. Marlow loses his way and is imposed upon by the trickstering Tony who conducts him to the old rumbling mansion of Mr. Hardcastle as if it were an inn. This is the central episode of the main story, and this initial blunder leads on to certain humorous situations till at last the mistake is found out and the hands of the lovers Kate and Marlow, are united. In the other plot we find Hastings in love with Miss Neville, the cousin of Kate Hardcastle. Hastings too is a victim of the machination of Tony, but he is soon undeceived by Miss Neville, whom he finds in the house. They plan elopement and are assisted by Tony, but their scheme fails due to the accident of a letter. At last explanations follow and ringing of bells of the double marriage rounds off the story.

An Important link between the two stories is established by the fact that Marlow and Hastings are friends, while Kate and Miss Neville are cousins. Marlow is induced by his father to pay a visit to the Hardcastles but a formal courtship with

a decent lady unnerves him. He has not the self-assurance needed for that. He cannot even look her in the face, let alone the questions of making a formal proposal. His objects in coming, as he confesses to Hastings, is to be instrumental in forwarding Hastings's happiness, not his own. Thus the main plot may be said to be set in motion by the sub-plot. But for Hastings, Marlow would not have consented to visit the family only at the request of the father. Again Miss Neville, the heroine of the sub-plot, tells the heroine of the main plot the truth about Marlow. She has learnt from her lover Hastings that among women of reputations he is the modest man alive but his acquaintance gives him "a very different character among creatures of another stamp." It is this which determines Miss Hardcastle to test the character of Marlow by playing first the barmaid and then a poor relation of the family. Thus it may be said, Miss Neville is directly responsible for Miss Hardcastle's trick of stooping to conquer. Thus the two plots are intermixed together with great skill.

Again, Tony is the connecting link between the two stories in more scenes than one. He plays his practical joke on both Marlow and Hastings and sets the two stories going. He plays an important part in the sub-plot, by stealing the jewels of Miss Neville, by helping on her elopement and, at last when it is frustrated, by the reprisal on the mother by the ride at the end. Marlow, too, influences the course of the second love-story, by placing the stolen jewels into the hands of Mrs Hardcastle, under the notion that they were stolen by the servants.

Thus the two love-stories run side by side, often meeting and in the end they are rounded off by the hearty consent of the two old friends who are figures in the main plot.
