**SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER**

**Oliver Goldsmith**

Oliver Goldsmith is a famous Irish novelist, playwright, and poet of his age. Some of his famous works are “The Vicar of [Wakefield”](http://www.englishwithchhaganarora.com/blogs/) (novel), “[The Deserted Village”](http://www.englishwithchhaganarora.com/blogs/) [a poem] and “The Good-Natur’d Man” [play] and “She Stoops to Conquer”. *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) is one of the most ground breaking Anti-sentimental Comedies by Oliver Goldsmith, a renowned poet, playwright, novelist, editor and essayist of the 18th Century. Anti-sentimental comedy was emerged as a dramatic form in a reaction against ‘Sentimental Comedy’ of the 18th century. Goldsmith laid its foundation and pioneered this movement in England along with R.B.Sheridan.

  “She Stoops to Conquer” is a comedy of manners. It has a polite society setting, the comedy arises from the gap between the characters’ attempts to preserve standards of polite behavior and their true behavior. It is a five-act comedy play with a prologue and an epilogue. The subtitle of the play is *Mistakes of a Night* and the events in the play take place in one long night. In the prologue of the play Mr. Woodward, a comic contemporary actor of Goldsmith is shown as weeping because comedy is allegedly dead. Mr. Woodward hopes that this play will make him laugh, thereby bringing the comic arts back to life.

**Character List:**

**Sir Charles Marlow**

The father of Young Marlow and friend of Hardcastle. A respectable and aristocratic fellow from the town who believes his son is of very modest character.

**Marlow**

Ostensibly the hero of a play. A respectable fellow who comes to Hardcastle's home to meet Kate Hardcastle. Possessed of a strange contradictory character, wherein he is mortified to speak to any "modest" woman, but is lively and excitable in conversation with barmaids or other low-class women.

**Hardcastle**

The patriarch of the Hardcastle family, and owner of the estate where the play is set. He despises the ways of the town, and is dedicated to the simplicity of country life and old-fashioned traditions.

**Hastings**

Friend of Marlow's, and lover of Constance Neville. A decent fellow who is willing to marry Constance even without her money.

**Tony Lumpkin**

Son of Mrs. Hardcastle from an earlier marriage, and known for his free-wheeling ways of drinking and tomfoolery. Loves to play practical jokes. Proves to be good-natured and kind despite his superficial disdain for everyone. His mother wants him to marry Constance but he is set against the idea.

**Diggory**

Hardcastle's head servant.

**Mrs. Hardcastle**

Matriarch of the Hardcastle family, most notable for her pronounced vanity. She coddles her son Tony, and wants him to marry her niece, Constance Neville.

**Kate Hardcastle**

Called "Miss Hardcastle" in the play. The heroine of the play, she is able to balance the "refined simplicity" of country life with the love of life associated with the town. She pretends to be a barmaid in order to judge her suitor Marlow's true character.

**Constance Neville**

Called "Miss Neville" in the play. Niece of Mrs. Hardcastle, an orphan whose only inheritance is a set of jewels in the care of her aunt. Her aunt wishes her to marry Tony Lumpkin, but Constance wants to marry Hastings.

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**Act One:**

This act starts with the character Mr. Hardcastle. He has a daughter named Kate. He has to select a husband for his daughter Kate. He selects his old friend Sir Charles Marlow’s son for her daughter. Kate’s would be husband is a stranger for both father and daughter. This person is a reserved man of good looks. In the second scene, Tony Lumpkin is introduced. Tony is Mr. Hardcastle’s stepson. He is the son of Mrs. Hardcastle. In this scene, Tony is enjoying a daydream at the Three Jolly Pigeons alehouse. Here Mr. Marlow and his friend Hastings come and ask for the directions of Hardcastle’s house. Tony plays a prank by telling them that they are very far from Hardcastle’s house and will have to stay overnight at an inn. Tony gives them directions but describes Hardcastle’s house as an inn. He tells them inn’s owner is a peculiar man who thinks himself a gentleman.

**Act Two:**

The servants of Mr. Hardcastle gather by him, who are farmworkers, and he explains to them that there is an expected visit from his future son-in-law, Marlow. Mr. Hardcastle confuses his servants by ordering them to behave like the servants of a gentleman. Meanwhile, Mr. Marlow and his friend Hastings are on their way to Hardcastle’s house thinking as an inn, Marlow confesses to Hastings that around upper-class ladies he feels shy and around working-class women feels like a rogue. On arriving at Hardcastle’s home, both behave rudely with Mr. Hardcastle because in their opinion he is the innkeeper.  When Mr. Hastings meets Mrs. Hardcastle’s niece and her beloved Miss Constance Neville, the situation becomes clear to him. She tells him this is not an inn, Mr. Hardcastle’s house. His response is to try to get her with the intention of fleeing to France with him. However, she doesn’t want to leave without her jewels. So, both devise a plan to get hold of her jewels. Hastings agrees not to tell Marlow that this is the home of Mr. Hardcastle, because its ashamed Marlow and may ruin Hastings’ and Constance’s plans.

 Constance and Kate Hardcastle are introduced to Marlow by Hastings. Being an upper-class lady Kate finds that Marlow is very shy and reserve natured person. Kate finds him very handsome but due to his shy behavior thinks about her life after marriage. Then after the arrival of Mrs. Hardcastle Hastings teases her about London’s fashionable society and her not having any connection with London. When Hasting talks to Tony, Tony tells him that Mrs. Hardcastle is forcing him to marry Constance, so that Constance’s inheritance remains in the family. Tony is not in favor of this idea, so he promises to help them in getting back Constance’s inheritance, but also fleeing to France.

 [**Act**](http://www.englishwithchhaganarora.com/blogs/)**Three:**

 Mr. Hardcastle is shown confused as to why his old friend, Sir Marlow, would recommend his rude son for Kate. He and her daughter discuss Marlow as a double personality person, who is rude with Hardcastle because he thinks him an innkeeper and is reserved and shy around Kate because he knows her to be an upper-class lady. Meanwhile, Tony steels Constance’s jewels and send them to Hastings. Constance asks Mrs. Hardcastle for wearing her jewels, as she has the intention of taking them with her after eloping. This fails the plan of Tony. When Mrs. Hardcastle asks what to do in this situation Tony suggests his mother tell Constance that the jewels are lost, which she does.

 Now Kate finds out about the prank Tony has played on Marlow and Hastings by telling them that this is not Mr. Hardcastle house but an inn by a servant. She doesn’t reveal the truth to them but instead insists on continuing it. Due to the illusion of inn Marlow mistakes Kate for a barmaid, and flirts with her because she is working -class and speaking slang. Hardcastle catches both when they are flirting, and Marlow runs off, but Kate, who now loves Marlow, is certain she can prove he is a respectable person.

 **Act Four:**

 Constance tells Hastings about Sir Marlow’s expected visit. Tony gives Hastings Constance’s jewels and Hasting gives them to Marlow for safekeeping, but without any commands, so Marlow gives them to one of the female servants, thinking her the landlady of the inn. The servant gives them back to Mrs. Hardcastle. when Hastings asks about the jewels, Marlow answers that he returned them to the landlady of the inn. Now due to the expected coming of Sir Marlow, Hastings decides that he and Constance will have to elope without the jewels.

 When Mr.  Hardcastle gets upset that Marlow has provoked the servants to get drunk than Marlow finally understands that this house is not an inn. When he confirms this to Kate she conforms but continues to carry on her role of the barmaid. Marlow confesses her that he would marry her after permission of society and his father. But he says this is not possible. Meanwhile, Mrs. Hardcastle, after getting again the possession of Constance’s jewels, forces Tony to marry Constance.  Tony again plans for eloping of Constance with Hastings by preparing horses. Mrs. Hardcastle finds out about the elopement and to fail this plan take Constance away to her Aunt Pedigree’s home. When Marlow finds the truth, he becomes angry with Hastings. On the other side, Hastings is angry with Marlow for returning the jewels to Mrs. Hardcastle. With Constance gone, Now Tony comes up with a superb plan.

 **Act Five:**

 Sir Marlow and Hardcastle discuss the marriage of Marlow and Kate. Tony according to his plan doesn’t take Mrs. Hardcastle and Constance to Aunt Pedigree’s, but ultimately leads them back to their starting point. Constance decides not to flee but honorable marriage with Hastings by getting the approval of Hardcastle family. Kate’s true identity is known to Marlow. The play ends with both couples marrying.

 In the[Epilogue, Goldsmith summarizes](http://www.englishwithchhaganarora.com/blogs/) the play and tells how Kate stooped in her rank to conquer the difficulties put upon the characters by society.