



The Taming of the Shrew

The opening scenes present an unresolved framework to the play: Christopher Sly, a drunken tinker is taken in by a lord who wishes to make sport of him. Sly is dressed and placed in the lord's bedroom, then told that he is a nobleman who had been struck by insanity for some 15 years (from which he has just recovered). For his entertainment, a group of players will present a play entitled "The Taming of the Shrew." (**Note:** these scenes are commonly omitted from stage productions, as Sly and the rest of the bunch from the Inductions never return to complete the "framework.")

Baptista, a wealthy merchant of Padua, has two daughters: Katherina and Bianca. Because of Katherina's shrewish disposition, her father has declared that no one shall wed Bianca until such time as Katherina has been married. Lucentio of Pisa, one of many suitors to the younger and kinder Bianca, devises a scheme in which he and Tranio (his servant) will switch clothes, and thus disguised, Lucentio will offer his services as a tutor for Bianca in order to get closer to her. At his point, enter Petruchio of Verona, in Padua to visit his friend Hortensio (another suitor to Bianca). Attracted by Katherina's large dowry, Petruchio resolves to woo her.

To the surprise of everyone, Petruchio claims that he finds Katherina charming and pleasant. A marriage is arranged, and Petruchio immediately sets out to tame Katherina through a series of increasingly worse tricks. This involves everything from showing up late to his own wedding to constant contradictions to whatever she says, even to the point of claiming that the sun is in fact the moon. After many trying days and nights, an exhausted Katherina is indeed "tamed" into docility.

By the end of the play, Lucentio has won Bianca's heart and Hortensio settles for a rich widow in Padua. During an evening feast for Bianca and Lucentio, Petruchio makes and wins a wager in which he proposes that he has the most obedient wife of all the men there, at which point Katherina gives Bianca a lecture on how to be a good and loving wife herself.

Dramatis Personae

A Lord

Hostess, Page, Players, Huntsmen, and Servants

Christopher Sly, a tinker

Baptista Minola, of Padua

Vincentio, old gentleman of Pisa

Hortensio, suitor to Bianca

Tranio, servant to Lucentio

Biondello, servant to Lucentio

Grumio, servant to Petruchio

Curtis, servant to Petruchio

A Pedant

Lucentio, son of Vincentio, in love with Bianca

Petruchio, gentleman of Verona, suitor to Katherina

Gremio, suitor to Bianca

Katherina, the shrew, daughter of Baptista

Bianca, daughter of Baptista

Widow

Tailor, Haberdasher, and Servants