

The Taming of the Shrew
by
William Shakespeare

a
Shakespeare In The Ruins
Study Guide

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Introduction

In Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada in 2008, *The Taming of the Shrew* seems an odd sort of comedy. The title alone is enough to put off many Humanists, and even more so those who consider themselves Feminists. I ordered the books last Spring, having no idea how I would deal with this play in class. With a little persuasion, I convinced my friend and colleague, Esme Keith, to do the same.

Reading it through for the first time in many years I had to admit it was funny – there is a good deal of word play and there are layers of switched and mistaken identities – but it is also quite troubling. After all, shouldn't we condemn the men who desire "tamed" wives who are 100% subservient to every male whim? Is this play proof that Shakespeare was a misogynist after all?

As an optimist and a Shakespeare-lover, my answer to question #1 is "Yes!" and to question #2, "No!"

Shakespeare was a sly one; he knew his audiences and what they would tolerate in the way of new ideas related to gender roles. When the play was first produced, Elizabeth I was queen and her rule created anxiety (in men, at least) about women's place in society and at home. This anxiety about changing social relations was so acute that shrewishness (along with scolding, bastardy and witchcraft) became actual punishable crimes. It was thought that women who exhibited these characteristics were a threat to society and their punishment often included various forms of public humiliation. In this play, Kate's "self-confidence and independence, which the male characters disparage by calling her a "devil," threaten the hierarchical organization of Renaissance society in which women were believed inferior. The price of Kate's resistance is summed up in Hortensio's taunt, 'No mates for you,/Unless you were of gentler, milder mold" (Newman 229).

During Shakespeare's time, the family was not only a social unit, but perhaps more importantly, an economic and political unit; "...the wife's duty to obey her husband [was] equated with the subject's duty to obey the prince...a woman who murdered her spouse was tried not for murder as was her male counterpart but for treason, and her punishment was correspondingly more severe" (Newman 233).

So, is Shakespeare merely reflecting the society and mores of his time, or is he ever-so-subtly encouraging us to question what is acceptable in the world around us?

Michael Wood has this to say: "In 1592, William Shakespeare's work was rapidly broadening out to include richly comic and romantic pieces, often about men and women who fall in love despite the pressures of society, family and convention. One early show, *The Taming of the Shrew*, represented his first foray into a favourite area, the battle of the sexes. In this reworking of an older comedy, he questioned some of the patriarchal assumptions of Tudor society, but in the ending rather lamely (to our taste at least) acquiesced in the male view... throughout the 1590s he would quarry these themes with increasing assurance and humour and write great women's parts that pricked the pretensions of men. The many women in his audience would surely have expected no less" (141-142).

Another view on the ending can be found in "A Modern Perspective" by Karen Newman: "No lines in the play have been more variously interpreted than [the] final speech in which Kate advocates women's submission to their husbands' wills. Some critics have accepted Kate's speech simply as testimony that she has been tamed; others argue that it must be understood ironically as pretense, a strategy for living peaceably in patriarchal culture. Although either interpretation can be supported by the text and by a director's choices in the theatre, what is

perhaps most striking about Kate's final speech is that at the very moment the ideology of women's silence and submission is most forcefully articulated, we find a woman (or at any rate, a boy playing a woman's part, since on the Elizabethan stage all women's parts were played by boy actors) speaking forcefully and in public the longest speech in the play, at the most dramatic moment in the action. *In short, Kate's speaking as she does contradicts the very sentiments she affirms.*" (Editor's italics).

This is the view most of my students have taken. In general, they seem to fit Newman's description of audiences who "in a time of rapid social change when traditional gender roles are being challenged and the malleability of identity is increasingly acknowledged...take pleasure in *The Taming of the Shrew's* representation of the instability both of conventional gender hierarchies and of human identity itself" (237). Most of them believe that Kate is really the one with the power. Few are willing to accept the alternative. That's good news, I think. That they find the literal words so distasteful and impossible gives me hope for real understanding and balance between men and women, and fairness for us all as today's young people continue to mature.

Thanks, especially, to aficionado and teacher-extraordinaire, Esme Keith, and to my grade 11 English class at St. John's – Ravenscourt School.

As always, Shakespeare In The Ruins' presentation is sure to be original, energetic, entertaining and thought provoking. Just a few tidbits from Debbie Patterson, the show's Director: think Frontier mining town, rough & dirty, promenading that takes place outdoors and in, audience participation...

*Come, madam wife, sit by my
side, and let the world slip. We shall ne'er be
younger.* (Ind. Sc.2)

Enjoy the show!

Study Guide Compiled and Edited by

Pamela Lockman for **Shakespeare in the Ruins, May 2008.**

Works Consulted:

Newman, Karen. "The Taming of the Shrew: A Modern Perspective" in The New Folger Library Shakespeare edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*, 1992 (229 -238).

Wood, Michael. *Shakespeare*. Basic Books, a member of the Perseus Books Group. New York: 2003 (141 – 142).

Synopsis

(As found in Folger Shakespeare Library, *The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare, Edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, Washington Square Press. New York, N.Y., 1992.)

1.1 Lucentio has come with his servant Tranio to Padua to study philosophy. They witness an encounter between Baptista and his daughters, in which Baptista announces that Bianca cannot marry until the elder and bad-tempered Katherine does. Bianca's suitors decide to search for a husband for Katherine. Meanwhile Lucentio has fallen in love with Bianca and decides to have Tranio impersonate him so that Lucentio, in the disguise of a schoolmaster, can secretly woo Bianca. The two men exchange clothes.

1.2 Petruchio, with his servant Grumio, has just arrived in Padua. His friend Hortensio suggests that Petruchio woo Katherine. Petruchio enthusiastically agrees. He agrees also to present Hortensio, in disguise, to Baptista as a music teacher named Licio. Gremio appears with Lucentio, who is disguised as a teacher named Cambio. Last of all comes Tranio, now impersonating Lucentio and declaring his intention to woo Bianca. Gremio, Hortensio, and Tranio (as Lucentio) agree to help Petruchio win Katherine.

2.1 Baptista stops Katherine from abusing Bianca and receives a visit from Petruchio, who presents Hortensio (disguised as Licio, a music teacher); Gremio introduces Lucentio (disguised as Cambio, a teacher of languages). Tranio, impersonating Lucentio, announces his wish to marry Bianca, and Petruchio his desire to marry Katherine. Baptista insists that Petruchio must get Katherine's love. Petruchio and Katherine, left alone, enter into a furious bout of wordplay. Petruchio then lies to Baptista, insisting that Katherine loves him but that the couple have agreed that she will pretend to dislike him in public. Katherine's wedding is arranged, and Baptista hears the offers that Gremio and Tranio (as Lucentio) make for Bianca. Tranio-Lucentio outbids Gremio and is awarded Bianca, provided that Vincentio, Lucentio's father, will guarantee the dowry. Tranio-Lucentio sets out to find someone to impersonate Vincentio and provide the guarantee.

3.1 Under cover of their disguises as schoolmasters, first Lucentio (as Cambio) and then Hortensio (as Licio) try for Bianca's love. Hortensio notices Lucentio-Cambio's affection for Bianca and determines to abandon her if she shows any interest in such a social inferior as Hortensio believes Cambio to be.

3.2 Petruchio is late arriving for his wedding, to Katherine's great embarrassment. When he finally presents himself, he is dressed in ridiculous clothes. At the wedding, according to Gremio's report, Petruchio behaves rudely and abusively. He refuses to attend the supper that traditionally follows a wedding, and he insists on taking Katherine away as well. Over her protests, he forces her to go with him, making a show of defending her against the interference of her family and friends.

4.1 At Petruchio's house in the country, Grumio tells his fellow servant Curtis about the wild journey home to Petruchio's after the wedding. When Petruchio and Katherine arrive, Petruchio attacks his servants verbally and physically. He refuses to let Katherine eat, saying the dinner is burnt and throwing it to the floor. At the end of the scene he confides to the audience that he intends to tame Katherine in the same way that a hunter tames a falcon – by starving it and keeping it sleepless.

4.2 In Padua, Hortensio (as Licio) leads Tranio (as Lucentio) to spy on Bianca and Lucentio-Cambio as the couple kiss and talk of love. Hortensio, doffing his disguise as Licio, then rejects Bianca forever, resolves to marry a wealthy widow who loves him, and sets off to observe

Petruchio's taming of Katherine. In the meantime, Biondello has found a traveling merchant whom Tranio persuades to impersonate Lucentio's father, Vincentio.

4.3 At Petruchio's home, Grumio torments Katherine by promising her food that he fails to bring. Petruchio then serves Katherine himself, demanding her thanks. The Haberdasher and Tailor bring in the cap and gown that Katherine plans to wear for Bianca's wedding feast, but Petruchio refuses them. Petruchio threatens that she may not return to her father's for Bianca's wedding feast unless Katherine agrees with everything he says, no matter how self-evidently false it is.

4.4 In Padua, the Merchant impersonating Vincentio visits Baptista with Tranio, who is still disguised as Lucentio. Baptista accepts the Merchant's guarantee of Bianca's dowry and sends "Cambio" to Bianca to tell her the marriage plans. Meanwhile, Baptista arranges to visit "Lucentio" and "Vincentio" at their lodging to finalize the marriage contract. Biondello tells Lucentio that all the arrangements have been made for Lucentio to elope with Bianca.

4.5 Katherine now gives assent to every word Petruchio says. On their way to her father's, they meet the true Vincentio, who is going to Padua to visit his son. They travel together to Padua.

5.1 After Bianca has secretly married Lucentio, Petruchio, Katherine, and Lucentio's father arrive at Lucentio's lodging. They are rebuffed by the Merchant impersonating Vincentio. Vincentio denounces as frauds the Merchant and then Tranio, who turns up still disguised as Lucentio. As Vincentio is about to be carried off to jail by an officer, the true Lucentio arrives with his bride, successfully begs his father's pardon for the secret marriage, and explains the disguises.

5.2 Three couples attend the wedding banquet – Lucentio and Bianca, Petruchio and Katherine, and Hortensio and the Widow. Petruchio is repeatedly teased about being married to a shrew. In retaliation Petruchio wagers with Lucentio and Hortensio that if they all summon their wives to them, his Katherine will be the most obedient in responding. When Bianca and the Widow refuse to come at all and Katherine promptly appears, Petruchio wins, and then he sends Katherine to bring the other wives to their husbands. When they return, Petruchio tells Katherine to instruct the other wives in their wifely duty. Katherine delivers a long speech in praise of women's submission to their husbands. Petruchio kisses Katherine, and they go off to bed.

Teaching Notes and Activities

(Esme Keith)

Induction

Read aloud

Class lecture topics:

Induction as framing device; setting up story within a story

- Comp to two men in balcony in muppets, or boy listening to story in Princess Bride
- Effect? Artificiality of internal story?

Disguise:

- boy as girl
- Beggar as lord
- Some with knowledge, some (Sly) actor in spite of self, disguised from self
- Even actors “acting” Ind. Sc. 1, ll. 95-100
- Bartholomew to act: as lady: 110-135

Class Divisions

- Differences between Sly and lord
- Sly: ale house, poverty, sleep in street, quarrels, no respect, threat of law
- Lord: lordly concerns: hunting, entertaining self; many luxuries available, listed in detail

Sex

- wanton pictures Ind, sc.1, l.49; Ind., sc.2, ll.49-60
- lady fair, sc. 2, 61-74; 101-29
- sex as a joke on the lustful
- look don't touch

While studying The Taming of the Shrew, you will be given regular reading and research assignments. These assignments are to be completed in point note form, in your daily homework notebook. Take notes using the format, recording the question number your notes respond to and the act, scene, and line where you found relevant material. Quote the relevant material or summarize concisely, and include a note on the implications of the material where appropriate. Your notes may be useful to you later as the bases for your essays and creative work. So it is worth your while to be thorough. I reserve the right to collect and grade your notes at any moment.

Act 1, Scene 1

Teaching notes:

Another show within a show: first Sly and lord watch this play; now Lucentio and Tranio essentially stand back and watch another play: Baptista and his daughters; Tranio calls it “some show to welcome us to town” line 47; Lucentio enters into the action

Questions:

1. We meet many many characters in this opening scene, and it might be tricky keeping track of everyone. Make a list of all the characters and make a note of the chief features and interests of each. Don't worry too much about subtleties of character and personality. Instead, try to identify the chief interests and characteristics of each character. Who are they and what do they want. Be sure to make a note for each of the following:

Lucentio

Tranio

Biondello

Baptista

Gremio

Hortensio

Katherine
Bianca

Feel free to use the notes and synopses in the text to help you assemble this list.

Teaching notes:

Typical parts of comedy:

Stock characters:

- the pantaloon;
- the young lovers (Lucentio, high romance language eg ll.71-2; 85; 169-72; 176-8; 224-6)
- the clever servant (Tranio) (ll.191-7)
- foolish servant (Biondello) (l.241)
- the senex irratu (l.188)

Stock plot events:

- love at first sight (Lucentio)
- the eldest married first; bar to younger sibling
- switch and disguise of characters (Lucentio and Tranio) (ll.205-23, and cover story for it ll.234-40)
- disguise introduces change in status: servant is master, master becomes poor tutor; change in hierarchy; misrule
- antics, rough-house, mayhem (from Katherine)

Act 1, Scene 2

Questions:

1. Take notes to describe the character of Petruchio. Who is he? Why is he in Padua? Try to figure out his general character and desires.
2. Take notes to describe the character of Grumio. What is he like?
3. Record every act of violence, assault, or physical injury enacted or referred to in this scene.
4. Make a list. Who is wooing (or pretending to woo) Bianca by the end of this scene. In each case, make a note of any strategy the lover is using to advance his suit.

Teaching Notes:

Continuation of standard comic strategies:

- Another foolish servant character in Grumio (ll.6-20)
- Mayhem, rough-housing antics (l.18)
- "who's on first" misunderstanding ("knock me" ll.5-44)
- Another disguised lover (Hortensio as a tutor, ll.132-8)
- False names: Lucentio becomes Cambio, a school teacher
- Foolish old lover: Gremio introduces Lucentio into household, undoes himself (ll.146-61)

Doubling

- Two disguised lovers infiltrating house as suitors
- Two sisters
- Two foolish servants
- Doubling of names: Grumio (servant of Petruchio) and Gremio (the old man, pantaloon, lover of Bianca)

Act 2, scene 1

1. Take notes to describe the character of Katherine. What are her chief traits?
2. Take notes to describe the character of Bianca. What is she like?
3. Take note of any act of violence in this scene. In each case, note who is violent, and towards whom. Is this violence humorous in character, as the violence in act 1 was? Explain.
4. How does Petruchio present himself as a suitor? What are his strategies for trying to win Katherine? Take detailed notes.

5. Katherine and Petruchio finally meet at line 190, and they talk for the next 100 lines. How would you characterize this conversation? What sort of feelings do they appear to have for one another? Take notes to show.
6. Take note of any conversation about money. What role does money play in this romantic comedy?

Teaching notes:

Continuation of standard comic strategies:

- Possibilities for confusion
 - False name: Hortensio becomes Litio; False name: Tranio takes over role of Lucentio
 - Tranio (as Lucentio) requires a false father to endorse proposal to Bianca

Doubling:

- Introduction of two false tutors (Hortensio as Litio and Lucentio as Cambio)
- Two sisters being wooed
- Auction of Bianca between Gremio and Tranio-as-Lucentio

Money

- Romantic comedy, and yet lots of talk of money
- 1.1: lots of talk about study from Lucentio and from Bianca
- But when love comes up, no one talks about learning any more
- And weirdly, they do talk about money
- Kate difficult to marry off “though her father be very rich” (1.1.126)
- “there be good fellows in the world, [if] a man could light on them, [who] would take her with all faults and money enough” (1.1.130-2)
- “I had as life take her dowry with this condition: to be whipped at the high cross every morning” (1.1.133-5)
- Petruchio to Padua: “Happily to wive and thrive, as best I may. / Crowns in my purse I have and goods at home, ...” (1.2.57-8); interconnection wealth and marriage
- Hortensio: “Petruchio, shall I then come roundly to thee / And wish thee to a shrewd ill-favoured wife? / ...And yet I’ll promise thee she shall be rich, / And very rich” (1.2.60-4)
- Petruchio: “...if thou know / One rich enough to be Petruchio’s wife / (As wealth is burden of my wooing dance), / ...She moves me not, or not removes at least / Affection’s edge in me ... / I come to wive it wealthily in Padua; / If wealthily, then happily in Padua.” (1.2.68-77)
- Grumio: “Why, give him gold enough and marry him to a puppet or an aglet-baby, or an old trot Why, nothing comes amiss, so money comes withal.” (1.2.79-83)
- Hortensio: “I can, Petruchio, help thee to a wife / With wealth enough, and young and beautiful / Her only fault ... / Is that she is intolerable curst, / And shrewd, and forward, so beyond all measure / That, were my state far worse than it is, / I would not wed her for a mine of gold.” (1.2.86-93)
- Petruchio: “Hortensio, peace. Thou know’st not gold’s effect.” (1.2.94)
- Hortensio describes Bianca as his “treasure” (1.2.119) and “the jewel of my life” (1.2.120)
- Gremio promises to pay extra “Over and beside / Signior Baptista’s liberality, / I’ll mend it with a largess.” (1.2.149-51); will be paying the tutor he sends to Bianca (Lucentio, disguised); also sends gifts of books, all about love
- Grumio: says Gremio will prove his love with his “bags” (1.2.179) (moneybags)
- Hortensio says P. will marry Kate “if her dowry please” (1.2.186)
- Katherine, asking Bianca whom she loves, when B. says she is not interested in Hortensio: “O, then belike you fancy riches more. / You will have Gremio to keep you fair.” (2.1.16-7)
- Kate, of Bianca to Baptista: “She is your treasure” (2.1.35)
- Petruchio recommends himself in part by wealth: “You knew my father well, and in him me, / Left solely heir to all his lands and goods, / Which I have bettered rather than decreased.” (2.1.123-5)

- Petruchio, down to business: “Then tell me, if I get your daughter’s love, / What dowry shall I have with her to wife?” (2.1.126-7)
- Baptista: “After my death, the one half of my lands, / And, in possession, twenty thousand crowns.” (2.1.128-9)
- Petruchio confirms a widow’s portion for Katherine (2.1.130-4)
- Still, Baptista stipulates Petruchio must win Katherine’s love, more important (he says) than anything else (2.1.135-6)
- As P. courts Katherine: “your father hath consented / That you shall be my wife, your dowry ’greed on, / And, will you, nill you, I will marry you.” (2.1.284-6)
- P announcing upcoming wedding: “I will to Venice / To buy apparel ’gainst the wedding day.” (2.1.334); “We will have rings, and things, and fine array, / And kiss me, Kate. We will be married o’ Sunday.” (2.1.342-3)
- Baptista characterizes marriage as a desperate capitalist risk: “Faith, gentlemen, now I play a merchant’s part / And venture madly on a desperate mart.” (2.1.345-6); merchandise metaphor continues on next lines: Kate is a “commodity” (2.1.347) and Baptista seeks “gain” (2.1.349)
- Baptista offers to sell Bianca to the highest bidder: “’Tis deeds must win the prize, and he of both / That can assure my daughter greatest dower / Shall have my Bianca’s love.” (2.1.362-4); Gremio and Tranio (as Lucentio) describe their wealth

Learning, education

- “tutors” are really lovers: Lucentio disguised and Hortensio disguised
- Gifts of music and books are love tokens
- Learning and courting are the same thing
- Gremio and Petruchio introduce “tutors” (Lucentio/Cambio and Hortensio/Litio) as courtship gifts
- Tranio disguised as Lucentio gives instrument and books as courting gift

Act 3, scene 1

1. Describe Bianca’s behaviour in this scene. How would you describe her?

Act 3, scene 2

1. What does Katherine’s attitude to marriage seem to be in this scene? What is her attitude to Petruchio in this scene? Generally how would you describe her character here?
2. Take detailed notes on Petruchio in this scene. What is he wearing? What kind of horse is he riding? How is the horse saddled? How is Petruchio’s servant dressed? How does Petruchio behave? Overall, what kind of note does Petruchio strike in this scene?

Teaching notes:

Duplication:

- Tranio tells Lucentio he will find a Vincentio in Padua to imitate real father
- Petruchio as a duplicate Kate? She being mad is madly mated
- Duplication at end of scene: Tranio as Lucentio to supply the groom’s place and Bianca to take Kate’s place at the bridal dinner

Money and goods:

- Kate becomes goods, chattels 3.1.235-46
- A little different from being treasure or a jewel

Wedding

- Music, feast, new clothes; all proper parts of celebration and rites; here disturbed; Petruchio shows up in old clothes, won’t stay to feast
- The wedding itself is mangled too: priest drops book; Petruchio hits him; Petruchio throws wine at sexton
- All rites mangled, like the wedding is not quite right; still not a whole marriage

Act 4, scene 1

1. Make a list of all the accidents, inconveniences, and unpleasant events that Kate has endured in her journey with Petruchio before she appears in this scene, and again once she appears on stage.
2. Take note of every kind or attentive thing that Petruchio says to Kate. Note also any action he performs for her which he says is kind or helpful to her.
3. Take note of all the cruel, violent, or illogical things that Petruchio does in this scene.
4. Why is Petruchio behaving as he is? Take note of any hint or clue you get as to his motives or the effect of his behaviour.

Teaching notes:

Mayhem: disturbance, misrule; in Petruchio, beating servants and throwing food; part of comedy form, overturning usual rules and behaviours; also needed, a return to order; this can't last; lord of misrule; agent of chaos

Act 4, scene 2

1. Take note of all the tactics that Lucentio is using to advance his courtship of Bianca.
2. What faults do people attribute to Bianca in this scene? Make a complete list. In each case, make a note indicating whether or not you feel that the fault-finder is accurately describing Bianca's behaviour, and whether you agree that Bianca's behaviour is actually bad.
3. What is Hortensio looking for in a wife? Look at what he says and what he does as you answer this question.

Teaching notes:

Continued complications:

- get rid of competition in Hortensio, introduce new issue in false Vincentio
- Tranio persuading false Vincentio of peril to his life in Padua

Is Bianca participating in all this? She's a little more aggressive than we thought?

Act 4, scene 3

1. Take notes to list all the pain and discomforts that Katherine suffers in this scene. How do you respond to her suffering? Is it all in good fun? Are you disturbed by it? Try to measure your own reactions, and explain them if possible.
2. Take note of every good, tempting, and attractive thing that Petruchio (or his friends and servants) places in front of Katherine but does not allow her actually to have, use, or enjoy.
3. Note all the different tones and moods Petruchio adopts during this scene. To whom is he loving and kind? With whom is he angry and critical, maybe even violent? What provokes his moods? Are his emotional reactions logical? Are they real or is he acting? Take notes to support your opinion.

Act 4, scene 4

1. The merchant is playing the role of Lucentio's father. What qualities does he display in this role? According to him, what is fatherly behaviour? Take notes to support your ideas.

Act 4, scene 5

1. Demonstrate that Katherine agrees with everything Petruchio says or suggests in this scene.
2. What is the emotional tone of this scene? Is it happy? Confused? Anxious? Contented? Where do you find these emotions? Take notes to show.

Act 5, scene 1

Teaching ideas:

spectators:

- we've lost Sly, lost that framing device
- but Kate and Petruchio watch events; retreat to watch at ll.62-3; emerge to comment at l.145

Typical parts of comedy:

stock plot events:

- disguise introduces change in status: master is denied/ignored by servant; change in hierarchy; misrule
- antics, rough-house, mayhem

Questions

1. Take note of any examples of role reversal. Who is imitating whom? What servants are wearing the clothes of their masters? What servants are refusing to recognize their masters?
2. Take note of any confusion, rough-housing, or mayhem. Do you find these events comic? Can you explain why or why not?
3. How would you characterize the relationship between Katherine and Petruchio, as it is shown in this scene? Take notes to support your reading.

Act 5, scene 2

Teaching ideas:

Comedy:

- the end of the comedy: marriage, feast, music, dance?, banter, joking;
- emblems of harmony (music, dance?, community)
- lots of bawdy suggestions (marriage, sex: comedy as fertility ritual)

Questions

1. Take notes to describe the tenor of the relationships between the different married couples. How do Hortensio and his widow behave towards one another, and feel about one another? What about Bianca and Lucentio? Katherine and Petruchio? Take notes to support your opinions.
2. According to the characters in this scene, how should a good wife behave? Take specific notes, and be sure to note what particular attitude or behaviour each character calls for or demonstrates.

Writing Assignment:

Read "Implied Stage Action," (pp xxiv-xxv, in the Folger Shakespeare Library edition). Then choose one of the following selections from scenes, and rewrite the scene with detailed stage directions. Essentially, your job is to be a cross between the director, deciding what actions, gestures, and facial expressions the actors should adopt, and the narrator, describing all this business to your reader. You should aim to expand the original segment to about 500 or 750 words. The material you insert will be all narrative, describing the actions of the characters on stage during this scene.

Scene Options:

Induction, scene 1, lines 1-15

Induction, scene 2, lines 1-46

Induction scene 2, lines 101-29

1.1.48-106

1.1.227-58

1.2.1-48

Student Prepared Guides for Each Act

Before reading the play aloud, I divided the class into five groups. Each group was responsible for preparing and then reading their assigned Act aloud to the class, answering questions along the way.

When we finished the reading and discussion, each group prepared a Study Guide for the assigned Act. The results follow.

ACT 1 **Alex, Anita, Borjan, Ian**

Favourite Part of the Act

1.2.60-270

At this point in the play, Hortensio has gone with Grumio to find a suitor for Katherine. Petruchio is the man they find. This is an excellent part in Act 1 because it truly highlights the character of Petruchio along with some comical anecdotes. Petruchio's overwhelming confidence in his ability to woo Katherine is humorous to not only the reader but also the two characters who are listening to him (Hortensio and Grumio). During this part they continually warn Petruchio about "Katherine the curst" (1. 2. 130), yet oblivious Petruchio rants on in his own world of his greatness and capabilities that he has. The tone of this part of Act 1 is probably the most defined because we finally get a sense of one of the characters and the plot is starting to thicken. During conversations between Hortensio, Tranio and Grumio, Petruchio interrupts to comment that he has "heard the sea, puffed up with winds, rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat" (1. 2. 204-205) and that attracting Katherine will not be hard at all.

Silliest Part

1.2.1-45

The silliest part of Act 1 was, without a doubt, the beginning of Scene 2 when Petruchio and Grumio are talking just after arriving in Padua. Grumio plays on the word "knock" and makes jokes to Petruchio about whether or not he means to rap on the door or to hit him. Grumio finds the word play quite amusing; however, Petruchio does not share the same outlook and actually wrings Grumio by the ears. Grumio yells out "Help...My Master is mad" (1.2.19) in response to the violence. He does not understand why Petruchio does not find the word play funny. Grumio is compared to a villain multiple times by Petruchio, but the reader knows that Grumio is just trying to have a good time. We have seen this word play before in other Shakespeare plays and this technique was used to lighten up the mood during the play. It was quite a silly part to read out in class and we all enjoyed it.

Most Confusing Part

1.2

Our two scenes were pretty easy to understand, as there weren't too many characters introduced yet. It is a little confusing when Tranio shows up dressed as Lucentio in Act 1 Scene 2. He implies that he is interested in a woman in the house of Minola, and you are not sure how much the other suitors realise. This is confusing because, first off, he is impersonating another person and you aren't sure if the others know about it, and because when he implies that he is interested in a woman in the house of Minola, you don't know if the other suitors know whether it is Bianca or

Kate he wants. This makes it hard to draw a conclusion about the circumstances. The way to get through this is to just read through the rest of the act.

Best Scene to Act out

1.2

This scene contains only a few areas that would be entertaining to act out. The most appealing area in Act 1 Scene 2, however, is after Tranio and Lucentio have exchanged identities and we come across the new Lucentio who is really Tranio. This is the first out of many disguises that occur in the play, which is why it would be the best to act out. At this moment, the story is beginning to unfold and excitement is mounting. One of the most crucial motifs in the Taming of the Shrew is “disguises”. This is what makes the play exciting and keeps readers on their feet. The reader is constantly anticipating that someone will find out the true identity of another person. This scene where Tranio has to fully impersonate Lucentio is amusing and quite difficult to pull off. This is because not only would the person have to take on the role of Tranio, but also a Tranio acting as Lucentio. The challenge behind the acting of the scene and the final result makes it the most appealing to act out.

Why is this Play worth Reading?

We definitely thought this play was worth reading. This play was really the foundation of all modern day movies and books about the battle of the sexes. The male characters played very dominant forceful roles and the majority of the women played weaker and tamer roles. This clear distinction between the males and females made it obvious that Kate would change at the end of the play. The girls in our group took a more feminist point of view on Kate’s last speech, hoping that Kate was really stronger than Petruchio and had outwitted him. The guys felt that Kate had given in and the man had the upper hand. Even though our group had different views on the ending we all felt that it was very interesting that Shakespeare left the ending very open. If you think about it, Kate’s speech could go either way; she could be tamed or she could be deceiving everyone. Even with a confusing “Induction” to start off the play, we all thought it was a fun play to read and unlike any other Shakespearean play we have ever read before. The only negative thing to comment on about the play was that it was a little predictable. Overall, a unique and interesting play to read and it should be very interesting to see this play acted out later this month!

ACT 2

Dilendra, Emily, Evan, Patrick

Favourite/Silliest/Funniest/Most Confusing Part

2.1.210 – 230

During these lines, Katherine and Petruchio meet for the first time and Petruchio is trying very hard to woo Katherine. Their conversation is full of sexual innuendo. Petruchio’s way of trying to woo Katherine is very silly and a little confusing, partly due to the fact that we’re not used to Shakespeare’s language, but it’s still very funny! In general, high school kids today find sexual innuendo funny. This was very evident in our class because everyone was laughing and enjoying the conversation between these two.

A good song to pair with this section is “Where Life Begins” (Album: *Erotica*, Madonna, Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., WB Music Corp., 1995).

Rap Summary for Act 2

“Shrew Rap” by EZE Dawg & Co.

Lucentio wants Bianca
But little does he know
Katherine must be wooed
Before he even gets ha’

So Petruchio comes along
For the money
He’s the one
Who’s gonna tame the honey

But you know
You can’t call her that
Her personality is
Really mean and wack

He gives it a go
He’s got a little plan
He’ll convince her that
He’s the man

She’s not a fan – She’s no man’s land!

Sexual innuendo
To the max
This makes Katherine
A little more relaxed

Now for Bianca
There’s a competition
Tranio or Gremio
Who’s got more ammunition?

I’ve got three boats
One will say
Well I’ve got 12 times you
Any given day!

Who’ll Bianca choose?
That’s the question
One must lose
Who’s the best selection?

Why is this Play worth Reading?

- Lots of men pretending to be someone else.
- Multiple levels of lies, deception, and lots of fighting are enjoyable to watch!
- The whole play is based on a number of men chasing after two women, and they will stop at almost nothing!
- It’s funny and fun!

ACT 3
Christopher, Justin, Megan, Sarah, Tommy

Favourite/Silliest/Best Scene to Act

3.2

This scene is the most comical. It is also the most animated: Petruchio enters the wedding wearing outlandish clothing and laughing about the wedding. It is the most dynamic scene and would be fun to see. It would probably be the most visually engaging.

Most Confusing Part

3.1.30-47

This is where Lucentio gives a lesson to Bianca. Many lines are in Italian and we had to look up words on the opposite page. It's hard to tell who is who and whether Hortensio can hear the discussion between Bianca and Lucentio. Lucentio is carrying on two conversations with Bianca at the same time.

To get over the confusion, we made a character list and tried to follow the conversation carefully. We also consulted a few other resources. Mostly we tried to picture what is going on to keep it all straight.

A good song to pair with Act 3 Scene 2 lines 8-62 is Avril Lavigne's "Complicated".

Rap Summary for Act 3

Tis the day of Katherine and Petruchio getting married,
Lucentio's final plans are yet to be carried,
He tells Bianca through mock translation
About his deep desire and true desperation.
Bianca naive knows not a word of Latin,
Closer Lucentio gets to courting Bianca in satin.
All the while Hortensio sits waiting
While Lucentio works magic with his Latin translating.
Hortensio's chances with Bianca grow slim
As he becomes history like Jacob Ludvig Karl Grim.

Soon Katherine begins to worry
That Petruchio is gone, ditched her in a hurry.
But before Katherine can shed a tear,
Petruchio runs in dressed-up, looking kind of weird.
But as the wedding begins, things start to look bad,
As Petruchio throws food around as if he's mad.
Kate draws the line, but Petruchio persistent as ever
Claims she is his wife and he must defend her.

The rest of the party dazed, fazed, and amazed
That such a marriage between two had ever been raised
The scene comes back to the father, Baptista,
As Bianca chose Lucentio, leaving Hortensio just as Buena Vista.
Lucentio and Baptista begin to discuss the wedding
As that white satin gown will soon need re-threading.

ACT 4

Adam, Gurjot, Kristian, Melissa, Mike

Favourite Parts of the Act

4.2

This scene is not funny, nor is it overly dramatic or exciting, yet it is probably the most important scene in the play. In this scene the central conflict of the play is quelled. The original goal of the men was to win Bianca. In this scene “Cambio” (Lucentio) and Bianca talk of love and “Litio” (Hortensio) decides to give up on Bianca and marry a rich Widow who loves him. In this scene the main goal of the men is accomplished, and one man finally emerges victorious. Furthermore, Biondello finds a man who agrees to impersonate Lucentio’s father so that Baptista will give his blessing for the marriage.

4.4 between the fake Vincentio, Hortensio and the real Vincentio

The merchant has just been introduced as Vincentio, and this fake Vincentio claims that Lucentio has all the wonders and treasures he has previously lied about having. Soon the REAL Vincentio is introduced and the audience learns that he is traveling to Padua to see his son. This scene foreshadows the conflict that is soon to come, and gives the audience a hint as to what they can expect.

Silliest Parts

4.1 between Grumio and Curtis

Grumio tells Curtis about his journey home from Petruccio’s wedding. His story is elaborate and, most likely, false:

“First, know my horse is tired, my master and mistress fallen out.” (4.1.49-50)

“...thou shouldst have heard how her horse fell, and she under her horse; thou shouldst have heard in how miry a place, how she was bemoiled, how he left her with the horse upon her, how he beat me because her horse stumbled, how she waded through the dirt to puck him off me, how he swore, how she prayed that never prayed before, how I cried, how the horses ran away, how her bridle was burst, how I lost my crupper, with many things of worthy memory which now shall die in oblivion, and thou return unexperienced to thy grave.” 4.1.68-77).

Petruccio’s plan is a ridiculous tactic to obtain a goal that cannot be obtained within such a short time.

4.3 between Katherine and Petruccio

Petruccio, once again, attempts to starve his new bride. She is becoming increasingly hostile at this point:

*What, did he marry me to famish me?
Beggars that come unto my father’s door
Upon entreaty have a present alms.
If not, elsewhere they meet with charity.*

*But I, who never knew how to entreat,
Nor never needed that I should entreat,
Am starved for meat, giddy for lack of sleep,
With oaths kept waking and with brawling feed. (4.3.3-10)*

4.3 between Katherine, Petruchio, Tailor and Haberdasher

The Tailor and Haberdasher come to make Katherine garments for her sister, Bianca's, wedding, but Petruchio has given them strange orders. He does not allow Katherine to purchase the dress that she deems the most fashionable gown she has ever seen. He engages in a dispute with the Tailor claiming he never ordered him to make the dress. The Tailor finds a note which proves that Petruchio did order him to make a "loose bodied gown" (4.3.139) with "trunk sleeves...[that are] curiously cut" (4.3.147-149). Petruchio has given the tailor very odd directions for making the dress because he does not want to make Katherine happy.

Best Scene to Act Out

4.3

A good scene to act out is Act 4 scene 3. This scene consists of Grumio and Petruchio tormenting Katherine by failing to bring her food or by altering her wedding gown. This scene also consists of Petruchio threatening Katherine by telling her that she may not return to her father's for Bianca's wedding feast unless she agrees with one condition. This condition is she must agree with everything he says no matter how false they are. This scene consists of Katherine, Grumio, Petruchio, and the tailor all arguing plotting to make Katherine's life hell unless she is "tame". Petruchio is successful in doing this. The scene is the best to act out because it is filled with humour and it shows how two ego consisted characters go after each other.

A good song to pair with this Act is "Façade" by Jekyll and Hyde.

Rap Summary for Act 4

As a new married couple to start a new life
Petruchio has Katherine his very curst wife

He aims to tame her and to teach her a lesson
And plans on giving her a taste of her own medicine

To tame his wife like one tames a falcon
Is how he is able to make her be welcome

Hortensio gives up on Bianca and goes for the widow
As a merchant impersonates the father of Lucentio

Petruchio is mean to his girl Kate
Making her wear a dress she hates

To make it worse the servants give no food
Because their master's wife is too much a shrew

Katherine is blackmailed to do as he says
No matter how horrible and stupid it is

Lucentio had prepared to elope
Bianca and marriage being his only hope

Petruchio's wife agrees to do as he pleases
She decides to put up with him and his teases

Petruchio then allows his wife to go
Meeting, on the way, the real Vincentio

Why is this play worth reading?

1. Shakespeare wrote it
2. Shows humour in very odd ways
3. Comedy and craziness of it all
4. Enjoyable to watch developing characters grow
5. The impersonations of the characters are enjoyable

ACT 5

Dave, Hunna, Lewis, Sally, Scott

Favourite Part of this Act

5.1

Vincentio, Petruchio, and Katherine are on their way to Baptista's house where the fake Vincentio and Lucentio are staying. When they arrive, they meet the impostors and there's confusion among them as they try to decipher who is the real Vincentio. This is our favourite part of the act because it shows the humour of the play. This section is very entertaining and shows real comedy, a genre of Shakespeare play that we haven't often encountered in our reading at school. All characters are involved in the scene which makes it more entertaining. Also, everything is revealed and it's entertaining to read about how the characters react to each other's secrets.

It is the silliest part because the entire premise is ridiculous. They argue about who's who. The idea of fake Vincentio and Lucentio have managed to fool Baptista and the others for so long and it's kind of unbelievable. It's also silly because everyone's talking over each other and arguing over nothing. It's comical because Tranio, who is pretending to be Lucentio, knows the **real** Vincentio, yet he continues to argue that **he** is the real Lucentio and that the **merchant** is the **real** Vincentio until the **real** real Lucentio enters and reveals the truth. (Especially lines 31-139.)

This is also the most confusing part because there are so many characters involved and it's hard to keep track of who is talking. There are two Vincentios and two Lucentios and they're all arguing at the same time. In this little scene, lots of things happen. It tends to be overwhelming to take in all the information. You get over this confusion by reading over and over. Reading out loud helps also.

This is also the best part to act out because there is lots of entertainment, drama, characters, revelations, and comedy. There are lots of character interactions so they can banter and play off of each other.

A good song to pair with this Act is "Survivor" by Destiny's Child.

Rap Summary for Act 5
(Shakespeare in the 21st Century)

Cruising down the hood in my six fo,
Petruchio, Kate and Vincentio,
Went to the house to get the scoop,
But then they found out that they'd been duped.

The merchant rolls up, what's to see?
Nothing but a little trickery.
What's with you trying to be me and my son?
Wait one sec, let me get my gun.

*Cuz the boyz n the hood are always hard
Ya come talking that trash, don't play that card,
Knowing nothing in life but to be legit,
Don't quote me, cuz I ain't this.*

The 5-0 rolls up, scopin us hard,
They don't know what to think,
We caught them off-guard,
They came to take Vince away,
But Lucentio came, and saved the day.

*Cuz the boyz n the hood are always hard
Ya come talking that trash, don't play that card,
Knowing nothing in life but to be legit,
Don't quote me, cuz I ain't this.*

We all went to this wedding, we went to the pad,
They all said something that made him mad,
They started talking smack about his beau,
He made a little bet on her and whadya know,

It was that one shorty who won the show.
She told it to them like they was Wang Ho.
Women should be slaves working for their pimps,
Trainin them like they aint nothing but chimps.

Why is this Play worth Reading?

This is a play worth reading because it shows the empowerment of women and that they're not as weak as they are made out to be. For example, the inner shrew is revealed in both Bianca and the widow when, in the end, they refuse to be commanded by their husbands who summons them. Shakespeare shows that women can be quite powerful. The last speech of Katherine can be deciphered in two ways. One, she has transformed into an obedient lady, or that she's actually fooling Petruchio and going along with what he says but not really changing herself. This is another empowerment of women showing that Katherine is actually on top of Petruchio.

Excerpts from Student Responses to the Question: What do you make of Katherine's final speech?

Katherine's long speech includes lots of descriptions of how women should treat their men. The once shrewish Katherine has transformed and now she's preaching to her "nice" sister, Bianca, and to Hortensio's Widow about how they should not be disrespectful. But in another way, Katherine may actually be playing with Petruchio, saying stuff about women's duty, following her husband's orders, and agreeing with everything he says. She is not actually transformed, but she is hiding her true feelings and playing along with Petruchio's little game because it's most beneficial for her.

In the beginning of their marriage Petruchio did not feed her, let her wear anything she likes, and constantly argued and threatened her if she didn't agree. Kathrine catches on quickly and figures that if she doesn't go along, she won't be able to live her life. When Petruchio argues that the sun is the moon, she says, "be it moon, or sun, or what you please./And if you please to call it a rush candle,/Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me" (IV.v.15-17). Right after Katherine says this, Petruchio says that it actually is the sun and calls her a liar. She replies, "Then God be blest, it [is] the sun./And sun it is not, when you say it is not,/And the moon changes even as your mind./What you will have it named, even that it is,/And so it shall be true for Katherine" (IV.v.21-25). She is basically saying that she doesn't care if it is the moon or the sun, but whatever you want it to be, it shall be for her. She says this stuff just to get him off her back.

Shakespeare is known for his sneaky double meanings. Throughout this whole play there are double meanings and plays on words. During Shakespeare's lifetime, the dominant person in the family was the male. Women were looked down upon and weren't allowed to do a lot of things, including acting on stage. Shakespeare was the original feminist and wrote this speech to please both genders. Males would be pleased to be viewed as the kings and lords with women told to be respectful. Females able to catch the subtle under-meaning would be pleased that Petruchio gets fooled and that Katherine secretly has the upper hand in the relationship.

Hunna Shin

In the final scene, Petruchio and his male friends make a bet on whose wife is the most obedient. Biondello and Hortensio think that they are sure to win because of Katherine's past as a shrew. However, when the men beckon their wives to come, Katherine is the first to appear. She then, continuing to follow Petruchio's direction, lectures the other women that "thy husband is thy lord" (5.2.162). It appears that Petruchio has actually gotten through to her and that his method of starvation and embarrassment prevailed. However, all is not always how it seems. It is highly unlikely that Katherine actually changed her ways.

First, the time span in which Petruchio attempts to break her down is minute in comparison to how long she has been a shrew. Furthermore, Kate has proven to be an independent and intelligent woman and it is highly unlikely that she would change so drastically.

Lucentio finishes the play with an intriguing line that sheds light on the true meaning of Katherine's speech. Lucentio says that "'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tamed so" (5.2.206), implying that he is not completely convinced of Katherine's tamed nature.

Katherine may have lied so she will appear to be obedient and not subjected again to starvation. She may also realize that she needs to pick her battles if she wants to win the war, and thus is really just leading Petruchio into a false sense of security.

If we determine that what Katherine says in the final scene is different from what she really means, we must wonder "Why?". Shakespeare included this to show the intelligence of women and prove that women can be cunning and plot as well as men. He did not reveal her true feelings because that would provoke a fight. He wants to leave the reader guessing but allow those who see the deeper meaning to leave smiling because they know the truth.

Adam Yan

The final speech that Katherine makes is a symbol of how women can easily become oppressed. At first, Katherine does what she wants, speaks her mind, and is not afraid to do anything – even tie her sister up! In her speech, however, she expands on how women are weak and must serve men and husbands, who are their superiors, because men do so much for undeserving women. The stark change in her comes about as Petruchio starves her and keeps her awake all night until she has no choice but to do what he wants and thus be obedient. It was this easy for him to break her spirit until she became less of a shrew and more of a docile woman. The speech proves that this is possible and far preferable as no one seems to miss the old Katherine.

Sarah Weirich

Shakespeare wrote this speech to help show what real, everyday women were like. He knew that not all women were willing to do what their husbands asked or simply obey mindlessly. He recognized that women had opinions and voices of their own, most of which were never heard. And so he wrote this speech. He was trying to show that women were not as innocent, naive or compliant as all men thought they were. Rather, all of them had some shrewishness within.

But he also realized that it was not quite as simple as women merely speaking their minds and breaking away from their husbands' rule and power. Women had to undermine their husbands and manipulate them in order to achieve and maintain some sort of freedom. Through such manipulations, women would be able to keep their values and opinions.

Katherine's last speech is quite significant in many ways. It shows the manipulation and the determination of women, illustrating the way that women will go to any length to attain and maintain their goals and freedom.

Sally Kang

Taken out of context, Katherine's speech, in which she praises the submission of wives by their husbands, would appear to fit in with the attitudes of the time, and to be a happy ending. However, taken within the context of the play, it makes for a rather depressing end. Although Katherine is not the most sympathetic character in the play (she attacks her sister, etc.), she still does not deserve Petruchio's mistreatment. The speech shows that Petruchio's attempts to tame

her by denying her food and sleep have succeeded. She probably does not truly believe what she is saying, but knows that to disobey Petruchio is to doom herself to starvation.

To the other male characters, Petruchio has done something great by taming (i.e. controlling) her. However, to the audience, Petruchio is a cruel man unworthy of admiration, and every word of Katherine's speech praising the husband as a provider is an obvious lie.

It is very likely that Shakespeare was taking a stab at the traditional view of an ideal wife by showing that these views of women are false. Katherine's speech is not anti-feminist, but a satire of traditional views of women. Taken in context, the speech makes this very clear.

Evan Amabile