



List of characters

The Induction

(set in Warwickshire)

CHRISTOPHER SLY a tinker

HOSTESS of an alehouse

LORD

BARTHOLOMEW the Lord's page (pretends to be Sly's wife)

Huntsmen and Servingmen attending the Lord

A Troupe of Actors visiting the Lord

who present

The Taming of the Shrew

(set in Padua)

The Minola family

KATHERINA the Shrew

BIANCA her younger sister

BAPTISTA MINOLA her father

The suitors

PETRUCHIO

LUCENTIO (pretends to be Cambio)

HORTENSIO (pretends to be Litio)

GREMIO a rich old man

The servants

GRUMIO Petruchio's personal servant

TRANIO Lucentio's personal servant (pretends to be Lucentio)

BIONDELLO Lucentio's second servant

CURTIS, NATHANIEL, PHILIP, JOSEPH, NICHOLAS, PETER Petruchio's servants

Servants attending on Baptista and Lucentio

Other characters

VINCENTIO Lucentio's father

MERCHANT (pretends to be Vincentio)

WIDOW in love with Hortensio

HABERDASHER

TAILOR



Christopher Sly quarrels with the Hostess as she throws him out of her tavern. He falls into a drunken sleep.
A nobleman returns from the hunt and talks about the day's sport.

Stagecraft

Staging the scene (by yourself)

Induction I opens in the middle of an aggressive argument between a man and a woman. Different productions have tried elaborate ways of grabbing the audience's attention. One was set in a modern wine bar, others in a working-men's club, in a pub outside Stratford-upon-Avon, in an Italian café and even on a cruise ship.

- How would you stage this first scene for greatest impact? Think about where you would set the scene and then consider how you would want the characters to be portrayed. What would they look like? What clothes would they wear? Would they have accents? How would you advise the actors to use the available stage space?
- Begin a Director's Journal in which you record your ideas about *The Taming of the Shrew* in performance. Add to your journal as you continue reading, exploring aspects of stagecraft, actors' perspectives and dramatic possibilities.

1 Christopher Sly (in small groups)

Christopher Sly is terribly drunk in lines 1–11.

- Read through these lines and then compile a list that highlights examples of his drunken behaviour. Talk together about other kinds of behaviour you might expect from stereotypical representations of people who are drunk, and add them to the list with your own ideas.
- Afterwards, write a stage direction for each of Sly's lines to emphasise how outrageous his behaviour is.

2 Two dramatic entrances (in pairs)

Compare the entrances of Christopher Sly and the Lord in the script opposite, and consider the two levels of society that Shakespeare presents at the start of the play.

- Sly does not say much, but his few lines suggest a great deal about his character. How would you choose to portray him: what appearance, costume and accent would suit him best?
- The Lord makes an equally dramatic entrance, with his hunting dogs and Servingmen. He uses a very different style of language from Sly. How would you choose to portray the Lord?

feeze fix
A pair of stocks suitable punishment for Sly
baggage good-for-nothing woman, prostitute
Chronicles historical chronicles
Richard Conqueror Sly's error for William the Conqueror
paucas pallabris few words
slide pass, go by
Sessa! be quiet! (or push off!)
denier French coin of low value
Saint Jeronimy Sly mixes up Saint Jerome with a character called Hieronimo in a play called *The Spanish Tragedy*
thirdborough officer
by law in the courts
and kindly by all means (Sly is being ironic)
Wind horns blow the horns
Breathe Merriman give Merriman breathing space
embossed foaming at the mouth from exhaustion
brach bitch
made it good found the lost scent
in the coldest fault at the point where the scent was nearly lost

The Taming of the Shrew

Induction 1

Outside an Alehouse in Warwickshire

Enter CHRISTOPHER SLY and the HOSTESS.

SLY I'll feeze you, in faith.
 HOSTESS A pair of stocks, you rogue!
 SLY Y'are a baggage, the Slys are no rogues. Look in the Chronicles;
 we came in with Richard Conqueror. Therefore *paucas pallabris*,
 let the world slide. Sessa! 5
 HOSTESS You will not pay for the glasses you have burst?
 SLY No, not a denier. Go by, Saint Jeronimy, go to thy cold bed and
 warm thee.
[He lies down.]
 HOSTESS I know my remedy; I must go fetch the thirdborough. *[Exit]*
 SLY Third, or fourth, or fifth borough, I'll answer him by law. I'll not 10
 budge an inch, boy. Let him come, and kindly.
He falls asleep.

*Wind horns. Enter a LORD from hunting, with his train [of
 HUNTSMEN and SERVINGMEN].*

LORD Huntsman, I charge thee, tender well my hounds.
 Breathe Merriman – the poor cur is embossed –
 And couple Clowder with the deep-mouthed brach.
 Saw'st thou not, boy, how Silver made it good 15
 At the hedge corner, in the coldest fault?
 I would not lose the dog for twenty pound.



The Lord challenges the Huntsman's assessment of his hounds. Seeing Sly asleep, he decides to play a trick on the drunkard. When the low-born Sly wakes, everyone will pretend he is really a nobleman.

1 'dead, or drunk?' (in small groups)

At line 27, the Lord and his Servingmen discover the drunken Sly. In groups, form a tableau (a 'human sculpture', like a still photograph), featuring Sly, the Lord and the others on stage in the positions you imagine them to hold at this point. Your postures should project a sense of each character's status and personality. Before forming your tableaux, talk together about what you want to suggest by your choice of staging.

Themes

Transformation through trickery (in pairs)

The Lord decides to play an amusing trick on Sly. Deception is an important motif in the play, and this first example comes very early.

- Read lines 32–50 aloud together, taking alternate lines. Then compile a list of questions you want to ask the Lord about the details of his plan to trick Sly and what he hopes to achieve by this deception.
- Put the Lord in the hot-seat. Take turns in role as the Lord and try to answer the questions you compiled above. List his reasons in order, from the most fun to potentially the most harmful.

▼ The entrance of the huntsmen in this production is ominous, with the Lord towering over Sly slumped on the floor, and large shadows looming above them. Is this how you imagine the entrance of the huntsmen?



cried ... merest loss

discovered and cried out upon the right scent when it seemed completely lost

fleet fast

sup feed

image likeness

practise play a trick

brave finely dressed

wanton erotic or sexy

Balm bathe, anoint

distilled fragrant, perfumed

sweet wood juniper, which gives off a sweet smell when burning

music not just an entertainment, but also a cure for distraction or madness

dulcet melodious

reverence bow, curtsy

1 HUNTSMAN	Why, Belman is as good as he, my lord; He cried upon it at the merest loss, And twice today picked out the dulllest scent.	20
LORD	Trust me, I take him for the better dog. Thou art a fool. If Echo were as fleet I would esteem him worth a dozen such. But sup them well, and look unto them all: Tomorrow I intend to hunt again.	25
1 HUNTSMAN	I will, my lord.	
LORD	What's here? One dead, or drunk? See, doth he breathe?	
2 HUNTSMAN	He breathes, my lord. Were he not warmed with ale, This were a bed but cold to sleep so soundly.	
LORD	O monstrous beast, how like a swine he lies! Grim death, how foul and loathsome is thine image! Sirs, I will practise on this drunken man. What think you, if he were conveyed to bed, Wrapped in sweet clothes, rings put upon his fingers, A most delicious banquet by his bed,	30 35
1 HUNTSMAN	And brave attendants near him when he wakes – Would not the beggar then forget himself?	
1 HUNTSMAN	Believe me, lord, I think he cannot choose.	
2 HUNTSMAN	It would seem strange unto him when he waked –	
LORD	Even as a flatt'ring dream or worthless fancy. Then take him up, and manage well the jest. Carry him gently to my fairest chamber And hang it round with all my wanton pictures; Balm his foul head in warm distillèd waters And burn sweet wood to make the lodging sweet; Procure me music ready when he wakes To make a dulcet and a heavenly sound; And if he chance to speak, be ready straight And with a low submissive reverence Say, 'What is it your honour will command?'	40 45 50



The Lord gives detailed instructions for the execution of his plan, and Sly is carried off to the Lord’s house. Trumpets sound, which herald the arrival of a company of actors.

1 **Luxury (in fours)**

- a** One person reads aloud lines 42–64. The others ‘echo’ words associated with certain topics by whispering them back to the reader. One of the ‘whisperers’ should echo words that suggest wealth and luxury. Another should echo words that suggest a master–servant relationship. The third person should echo the verbs in the passage. Afterwards, swap roles, so that a different person is the reader, and repeat the exercise.
- b** Collect images from magazines or the Internet that reflect the sense of luxury and service that the Lord creates through his language. Assemble these into a collage and annotate it with suitable quotations from this scene.

Stagecraft

Stage directions (by yourself)

There is a great deal of movement on stage during lines 68–76, and Shakespeare included several directions to the actors about sound effects, movement, entrances and exits.

- In role as a director, write more detailed stage directions that tell the cast exactly how you would like this part of the scene to end in your own production. Think about when and how you want Sly’s exit to take place. Does he wake up as he is moved? What are the other characters doing on stage while this is happening?

Write about it

‘He is no less than what we say he is’

Through a series of deceptions, the Lord aims to persuade the low-born Sly that he is actually ‘a mighty lord’ too. The first Huntsman agrees that treating Sly as if he were a lord will make the drunkard believe he really is a member of the nobility. Do you agree?

- a** In pairs, discuss how treating someone differently might cause them to change their behaviour and assume a different identity.
- b** Write a paragraph in which you predict what will happen when Sly wakes up to find himself being treated like a lord.

bestrewed covered
ewer large jug
diaper towel, napkin

apparel clothes

disease disorder (in Sly’s case it is mental rather than physical)

when he says he is when he says he must be mad now

kindly naturally, convincingly

passing extremely

husbanded with modesty
managed with moderation

As so that

to his office perform his duty

Belike perhaps

repose rest

An’t if it

players an itinerant group of actors

Let one attend him with a silver basin
Full of rose-water and bestrewed with flowers;
Another bear the ewer, the third a diaper,
And say, 'Will't please your lordship cool your hands?'
Some one be ready with a costly suit 55
And ask him what apparel he will wear;
Another tell him of his hounds and horse,
And that his lady mourns at his disease.
Persuade him that he hath been lunatic,
And when he says he is, say that he dreams, 60
For he is nothing but a mighty lord.
This do, and do it kindly, gentle sirs.
It will be pastime passing excellent,
If it be husbanded with modesty.
1 HUNTSMAN My lord, I warrant you we will play our part 65
As he shall think by our true diligence
He is no less than what we say he is.
LORD Take him up gently and to bed with him,
And each one to his office when he wakes.
[*Sly is carried off*]
Sound trumpets.
Sirrah, go see what trumpet 'tis that sounds. 70
[*Exit Servingman*]
Belike some noble gentleman that means,
Travelling some journey, to repose him here.
Enter Servingman.
How now? Who is it?
SERVINGMAN An't please your honour, players
That offer service to your lordship.
LORD Bid them come near.



The Lord welcomes the players and willingly agrees that they should stay at his house. He asks them to perform before a 'Lord' (Sly), but warns them that the 'Lord' is given to strange behaviour.

1 The players' entrance

Some productions have staged the entrance of the players in modern dress, with the actors wearing clothes that they would normally wear for rehearsal or for travelling. Other performances have made more theatrically bold decisions by featuring, for example, a *commedia dell'arte* troupe, acrobats and musicians – even Elizabethan players with a lookalike Shakespeare!

- On page 2, you began a Director's Journal. Add to this now, making notes about how you would like the players to appear; what clothes they would wear and what props they would carry.

2 The farmer's eldest son (in pairs)

In lines 80–1, the Lord refers to a character from popular plays about courtship – the farmer's eldest son, who was well known for wooing the gentlewoman 'so well'.

- What other characters or stereotypes might you expect to see in plays about courtship and marriage? Look at the list below and choose an adjective for each person.

the _____ bride
the _____ groom
the _____ mother-in-law
the _____ father
the _____ sister.

Write about it

Layers of illusion

The Taming of the Shrew is filled with performances. Some of them are designed to deceive people, and some are part of the role play and display of everyday life. In the script opposite, the players arrive and receive a commission from the Lord to perform for Christopher Sly that evening.

- How would you use the stage space to show that some of the characters (from the Induction) are watching another performance (the play to be performed by the travelling players)? Write your ideas about how to stage this 'performance within a performance' as notes in your Director's Journal. Where will you place the two groups of players on the stage? How will you ensure that the audience doesn't get confused by these layers of performance?

So please if it please

aptly fitted well suited, well played
naturally with a 'natural' style of acting

in happy time just at the right time

The rather for especially because

doubtful of your modesties
uncertain whether you can control yourselves

over-eyeing of observing
merry passion fit of merriment

veriest antic oddest and most complete buffoon

buttery pantry, kitchen storeroom

want lack

affords offers

	<i>Enter PLAYERS.</i>	
	Now, fellows, you are welcome.	75
PLAYERS	We thank your honour.	
LORD	Do you intend to stay with me tonight?	
1 PLAYER	So please your lordship to accept our duty.	
LORD	With all my heart. This fellow I remember Since once he played a farmer's eldest son –	80
	'Twas where you wooed the gentlewoman so well – I have forgot your name, but sure that part Was aptly fitted and naturally performed.	
2 PLAYER	I think 'twas Soto that your honour means.	
LORD	'Tis very true; thou didst it excellent.	85
	Well, you are come to me in happy time, The rather for I have some sport in hand Wherein your cunning can assist me much. There is a lord will hear you play tonight – But I am doubtful of your modesties,	90
	Lest over-eyeing of his odd behaviour (For yet his honour never heard a play) You break into some merry passion And so offend him; for I tell you, sirs, If you should smile, he grows impatient.	95
1 PLAYER	Fear not, my lord, we can contain ourselves Were he the veriest antic in the world.	
LORD	Go, sirrah, take them to the buttery And give them friendly welcome every one. Let them want nothing that my house affords.	100
	<i>Exit one with the Players</i>	



The Lord has a further idea. He will provide Sly with a ‘wife’ in the shape of a young page dressed as a woman.
The Lord himself will act as the calming influence to dampen excessive hilarity.

Themes

A wife’s duty (in small groups)

Bartholomew is the first example of many characters in the play pretending to be someone they are not. The Lord issues detailed instructions on how his page should play a humble and dutiful wife – a central theme in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

- a One person reads through lines 101–24. The others note down the key words that suggest what the Lord expects from a dutiful wife.
- b Work together to present a tableau that reflects the Lord’s view of how a wife should behave towards her husband. Then put together a tableau that reflects other views of the role of a wife – perhaps showing how Christopher Sly sees women, or how wives are viewed in different cultural contexts from around the world.

Write about it

The ‘noble’ wife of a ‘drunken beggar’

The Lord gives elaborate instructions for Bartholomew to follow so that he can give a convincing performance as Sly’s dutiful ‘wife’. How do you think Bartholomew feels about enacting this deceit?

- Write his diary at the end of the day. What was it like pretending to be the ‘noble’ wife of a ‘drunken beggar’? Where did he get his ideas for how such a noble wife would behave? How did he like using the stage trick mentioned in line 122?

see him dressed arrange for him to be dressed
in all suits in all respects
as ... love if he wants to be sure of winning my love

lowly courtesy humble curtsy

esteemèd him thought himself

commanded forced, calculated
shift purpose

in despite against nature

usurp assume, feign

Haply perhaps
abate control
over-merry spleen excessive impulse to laughter (the spleen was thought to be the seat of merriment and other strong emotions)

1 Laughing with the Lord (in small groups)

- a A volunteer slowly reads lines 127–34 as the Lord. The rest of the group become servants who are keen to win his favour. Whenever you have the chance, laugh at the idea of Sly and his ‘wife’ to show your approval of the Lord’s wit. Notice that the Lord assumes that the absurdity of the situation will come not from a boy pretending to be a woman, but from a tinker thinking he is a lord.
- b Script a conversation between the Lord and one of his servants, in which they discuss these ideas in relation to the trick they are playing on Sly. Remember that the Elizabethans had strong ideas about the appropriate social order, based on a chain of being, with God at the top of a strict hierarchical structure.