

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00604-0 - The Taming of the Shrew, Volume 32

William Shakespeare

Excerpt

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THE
TAMING OF THE SHREW

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Scene: Padua, and Petruchio's house
in the country

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

(a) *The Induction*

A Lord

CHRISTOPHER SLY, *a drunken tinker*

A Hostess

*Page, Players, Huntsmen, and Servants attending
on the Lord*

(b) *The Taming of the Shrew*

BAPTISTA, *a rich gentleman of Padua*

VINCENTIO, *an old gentleman of Pisa*

LUCENTIO, *son to Vincentio, in love with Bianca*

PETRUCHIO, *a gentleman of Verona, suitor to Katharina*

GREMIO
HORTENSIO } *suitors to Bianca*

TRANIO
BIONDELLO, *a boy* } *servants to Lucentio*

GRUMIO, *a man of small stature, Petruchio's lackey*

CURTIS, *an aged serving-man, in charge of Petruchio's house
in the country*

NATHANIEL
PHILIP
JOSEPH
NICHOLAS
PETER } *other servants to Petruchio*

A Pedant of Mantua

KATHARINA, *the Shrew*
BIANCA } *daughters to Baptista*

A Widow

*Tailor, Haberdasher, and Servants attending on
Baptista and Petruchio*

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THE INDUCTION

[i.] *Before an alehouse on a heath*

*The door opens and SLR staggers out, driven
forth by 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!

Hostess. You will not pay for the glasses you have
burst?

Sly. No, not a denier... Go by, S. Jeronimy—go to thy
cold bed, and warm thee.

[he totters forward and falls beneath a bush]

Hostess. I know my remedy, I must go fetch the third- 10
borough. *[she goes off]*

Sly. Third, or fourth, or fifth borough, I'll answer
him by law. I'll not budge an inch, boy: let him come,
and kindly. *['falls asleep' and begins to snore]*

*There is a sound of horns. A lord and his train are
seen crossing the heath, as from hunting*

Lord. Huntsman, I charge thee, tender well
my hounds.

†Broach Merriman—the poor cur is embossed,
And couple Clowder with the deep-mouthed brach.
Saw'st thou not, boy, how Silver made it good

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4 THE TAMING OF THE SHREW IND. I. 19

At the hedge corner, in the coldest fault?

20 I would not lose the dog for twenty pound.

1 *Huntsman*. Why, Belman is as good as he, my lord—

He cried upon it at the merest loss,

And twice to-day picked out the dullest scent.

Trust me, I take him for the better dog.

1 *Lord*. 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.

To-morrow I intend to hunt again.

1 *Huntsman*. I will, my lord. [*they see Sly*]30 *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.

1 *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,

And brave attendants near him when he wakes,

40 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.1 *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 with warm distilléd waters,

And burn sweet wood to make the lodging sweet:

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IND. i. 49 THE TAMING OF THE SHREW 5

Procure me music ready when he wakes,
 To make a dulcet and a heavenly sound; 50
 And if he chance to speak, be ready straight
 And with a low submissive reverence
 Say 'What is it your honour will command?'
 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,
 And ask him what apparel he will wear;
 Another tell him of his hounds and horse, 60
 And that his lady mourns at his disease:
 Persuade him that he hath been lunatic;
 And when he says he is Sly, say that he dreams,
 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.

I *Huntsman*. My lord, I warrant you we will play
 our part,
 As he shall think by our true diligence
 He is no less than what we say he is. 70
Lord. Take him up gently and to bed with him,
 And each one to his office when he wakes....

[*they bear Sly away. A trumpet
 sounds*]

Sirrah, go see what trumpet 'tis that sounds—
 [*a serving-man goes off*]
 Belike some noble gentleman that means,
 Travelling some journey, to repose him here.

The serving-man returns

How now? who is it?

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6 THE TAMING OF THE SHREW IND.i.76

Serving-man. An't please your honour, players
That offer service to your lordship.

Lord. Bid them come near.

The players approach

Now, fellows, you are welcome.

Players. We thank your honour.

80 *Lord.* Do you intend to stay with me to-night?

A 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—

'Twas where you wooed the gentlewoman so well:

I have forgot your name; but, sure, that part

Was aptly fitted and naturally performed.

A player. I think 'twas Soto that your honour means.

Lord. 'Tis very true—thou didst it excellent.

Well, you are come to me in happy time,

90 The rather for I have some sport in hand,

Wherein your cunning can assist me much.

There is a lord will hear you play to-night;

But I am doubtful of your modesties,

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.

A player. Fear not, my lord, we can contain ourselves,
100 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.

[*a servant leads the players away*]

Sirrah, go you to Barthol'mew my page,

And see him dressed in all suits like a lady:

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IND. i. 106 THE TAMING OF THE SHREW 7

That done, conduct him to the drunkard's chamber,
 And call him 'madam,' do him obeisance:
 Tell him from me, as he will win my love,
 He bear himself with honourable action,
 Such as he hath observed in noble ladies 110
 Unto their lords, by them accomplishéd:
 Such duty to the drunkard let him do,
 With soft low tongue and lowly courtesy,
 And say: 'What is't your honour will command,
 Wherein your lady and your humble wife
 May show her duty and make known her love?'
 And then with kind embracements, tempting kisses,
 And with declining head into his bosom,
 Bid him shed tears, as being overjoyed
 To see her noble lord restored to health, 120
 Who for this seven years hath esteemed him
 No better than a poor and loathsome beggar:
 And if the boy have not a woman's gift
 To rain a shower of commanded tears,
 An onion will do well for such a shift,
 Which in a napkin being close conveyed,
 Shall in despite enforce a watery eye..
 See this dispatched with all the haste thou canst—
 Anon I'll give thee more instructions.

[a servant departs

I know the boy will well usurp the grace, 130
 Voice, gait, and action of a gentlewoman:
 I long to hear him call the drunkard husband,
 And how my men will stay themselves from laughter
 When they do homage to this simple peasant.
 I'll in to counsel them: haply my presence
 May well abate the over-merry spleen,
 Which otherwise would grow into extremes.

[he goes, the huntsmen following

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8 THE TAMING OF THE SHREW IND. II. I

[ii.] *A richly furnished bedroom in the Lord's house*

SLR, clad in a night-dress, asleep in a chair with attendants at hand; 'some with apparel, others with basin and ewer and other appurtenances.' The Lord enters the room

Sly [awakening]. For God's sake, a pot of small ale.

1 *Servant.* Will't please your lordship drink a cup of sack?

2 *Servant.* Will't please your honour taste of these conserves?

3 *Servant.* What raiment will your honour wear to-day?

Sly. I am Christophero Sly, call not me 'honour' nor 'lordship': I ne'er drank sack in my life: and if you give me any conserves, give me conserves of beef: ne'er ask me what raiment I'll wear, for I have no more doublets than backs, no more stockings than legs, nor
10 no more shoes than feet, nay, sometime more feet than shoes, or such shoes as my toes look through the over-leather.

Lord. Heaven cease this idle humour in your honour! O, that a mighty man, of such descent, Of such possessions and so high esteem, Should be infuséd with so foul a spirit!

Sly. What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath, by birth a pedlar, by education a card-maker, by transmutation
20 a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, if she know me not: if she say I am not xiiii. d. on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lyingest knave in Christendom. [*a servant brings him a pot of ale*] What! I am not bestraught: here's— [*he drinks*]

3 *Servant.* O, this it is that makes your lady mourn.

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IND. ii. 27 THE TAMING OF THE SHREW 9

2 Servant. O, this it is that makes your servants droop.*Lord.* Hence comes it that your kindred shuns
your house,

As beaten hence by your strange lunacy.

O, noble lord, bethink thee of thy birth, 30

Call home thy ancient thoughts from banishment,

And banish hence these abject lowly dreams:

Look, how thy servants do attend on thee,

Each in his office ready at thy beck.

Wilt thou have music? Hark! Apollo plays, [*'music'*]

And twenty cagéd nightingales do sing.

Or wilt thou sleep? we'll have thee to a couch,

Softer and sweeter than the lustful bed

On purpose trimmed up for Semiramis.

Say thou wilt walk; we will bestow the ground: 40

Or wilt thou ride? thy horses shall be trapped,

Their harness studded all with gold and pearl.

Dost thou love hawking? thou hast hawks will soar

Above the morning lark. Or wilt thou hunt?

Thy hounds shall make the welkin answer them,

And fetch shrill echoes from the hollow earth.

1 Servant. Say thou wilt course—thy greyhounds are
as swift

As breathéd stags: ay, fleeter than the roe.

2 Servant. Dost thou love pictures? we will fetch
thee straight

Adonis painted by a running brook, 50

And Cytherea all in sedges hid,

Which seem to move and wanton with her breath,

Even as the waving sedges play with wind.

Lord. We'll show thee Io as she was a maid,

And how she was beguiléd and surprised,

As lively painted as the deed was done.

3 Servant. Or Daphne roaming through a thorny wood,

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10 THE TAMING OF THE SHREW IND. ii. 58

Scratching her legs that one shall swear she bleeds,
And at that sight shall sad Apollo weep,

60 So workmanly the blood and tears are drawn.

Lord. Thou art a lord, and nothing but a lord:
Thou hast a lady far more beautiful
Than any woman in this waning age.

1 *Servant.* And till the tears that she hath shed
for thee

Like envious floods o'er-run her lovely face,
She was the fairest creature in the world—
And yet she is inferior to none.

Sly. Am I a lord? and have I such a lady?
Or do I dream? or have I dreamed till now?

70 I do not sleep: I see, I hear, I speak;
I smell sweet savours and I feel soft things:
Upon my life, I am a lord indeed,
And not a tinker nor Christophero Sly.
Well, bring our lady hither to our sight—
And once again a pot o'th' smallest ale.

2 *Servant* [*presents the basin*]. Will't please your
mightiness to wash your hands? [*Sly washes*

O, how we joy to see your wit restored!

O, that once more you knew but what you are!

These fifteen years you have been in a dream,

80 Or when you waked, so waked as if you slept.

Sly. These fifteen years! by my fay, a goodly nap.
But did I never speak of all that time?

1 *Servant.* O, yes, my lord, but very idle words,
For though you lay here in this goodly chamber,
Yet would you say ye were beaten out of door,
And rail upon the hostess of the house,
And say you would present her at the leet,
Because she brought stone jugs and no sealed quarts:
Sometimes, you would call out for Cicely Hacket.

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IND. ii. 90 THE TAMING OF THE SHREW 11

Sly. Ay, the woman's maid of the house. 90

3 *Servant.* Why, sir, you know no house, nor no
such maid,

Nor no such men as you have reckoned up,
As Stephen Sly, and old John Naps of Greece,
And Peter Turph, and Henry Pimpernell;
And twenty more such names and men as these,
Which never were nor no man ever saw.

Sly. Now, Lord be thankéd for my good amends!

All. Amen.

Sly. I thank thee, thou shalt not lose by it.

*The page enters as a 'lady with attendants'; one
proffers Sly a pot of ale*

Page. How fares my noble lord? 100

Sly. Marry, I fare well—for here is cheer enough.

Where is my wife? [*he drinks*]

Page. Here, noble lord, what is thy will with her?

Sly. Are you my wife and will not call me husband?

My men should call me 'lord,' I am your goodman.

Page. My husband and my lord, my lord and husband,
I am your wife in all obedience.

Sly. I know it well. What must I call her?

Lord. Madam.

Sly. Al'ce madam, or Joan madam? 110

Lord. 'Madam' and nothing else, so lords call ladies.

Sly. Madam wife, they say that I have dreamed
And slept above some fifteen year or more.

Page. Ay, and the time seems thirty unto me,
Being all this time abandoned from your bed.

Sly. 'Tis much! Servants, leave me and her alone.

[*the servants withdraw*]

Madam, undress you and come now to bed.

Page. Thrice-noble lord, let me entreat of you

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12 THE TAMING OF THE SHREW IND. ii. 119

To pardon me yet for a night or two;
 120 Or, if not so, until the sun be set:
 For your physicians have expressly charged,
 In peril to incur your former malady,
 That I should yet absent me from your bed:
 I hope this reason stands for my excuse.
Sly. Ay, it stands so that I may hardly tarry so long.
 But I would be loath to fall into my dreams again: I
 will therefore tarry in despite of the flesh and the blood.

I *Servant re-enters*

I *Servant.* Your honour's players, hearing your
 amendment,
 Are come to play a pleasant comedy,
 130 For your doctors hold it very meet,
 Seeing too much sadness hath congealed your blood,
 And melancholy is the nurse of frenzy.
 Therefore they thought it good you hear a play
 And frame your mind to mirth and merriment,
 Which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life.
Sly. Marry, I will; let them play it. Is not a †com-
 modity a Christmas gambold or a tumbling-trick?
Page. No, my good lord, it is more pleasing stuff.
Sly. What, household stuff?
 140 *Page.* It is a kind of history.
Sly. Well, we'll see't. Come, madam wife, sit by
 my side and let the world slip, we shall ne'er be younger.
 [*the page sits beside him*]

A 'flourish' of trumpets