

The Taming of the Shrew

Cast

<i>Kate</i>	<i>Frances Barber</i>
<i>Petruchio</i>	<i>Roger Allam</i>
<i>Lucentio</i>	<i>Alan Cox</i>
<i>Tranio</i>	<i>Clarence Smith</i>
<i>Hortensio</i>	<i>Charles Simpson</i>
<i>Baptista</i>	<i>Sean Baker</i>
<i>Gremio</i>	<i>John Hollis</i>
<i>Bianca</i>	<i>Elizabeth Anne O'Brien</i>
<i>Grumio</i>	<i>Michael Higgs</i>
<i>Vincentio</i>	<i>Keith Drinkel</i>
<i>Pedant</i>	<i>Michael Deacon</i>
<i>Widow</i>	<i>Jenny Howe</i>
<i>Biondello</i>	<i>Richard Pearce</i>
<i>Tailor</i>	<i>Robert Morgan</i>
<i>Curtis</i>	<i>Max Digby</i>

Play description

ACT I

Induction 1. Christopher Sly, a beggar, is found asleep drunk outside an alehouse by a Lord returning from hunting with his men. The Lord amuses himself by taking Sly back to his house and having him dressed in sumptuous clothes.

Induction 2. When Sly awakes, the Lord and his servants convince him that he is a nobleman returning to sanity after years of lunacy. A group of players arrives to entertain him, and what follows is the play they perform.

Scene 1. Lucentio, son of Vincentio, a rich Pisan merchant, has come to Padua eager to study. His servant Tranio cautions him that “No profit grows where is no pleasure ta’en.” They overhear the wealthy Baptista announcing that he will not give his daughter Bianca in marriage until he has married off her older sister, Kate, whose bad temper and scolding tongue are famous. Rival suitors Gremio and Hortensio agree that they will try to find a husband for Kate, thus clearing their way to Bianca.

Meanwhile, Lucentio has fallen in love with Bianca himself. Tranio suggests that Lucentio disguise himself as a schoolmaster in order to gain access to her. To avoid raising suspicions in the town, they exchange roles: Tranio becoming the master, Lucentio, his servant.

Scene 2. When Petruchio and his servant Grumio arrive in Padua, Petruchio tells Hortensio that he wants a rich wife. Hearing of Kate, he resolves to win her, despite her reputation as a shrew. Hortensio also decides to enter Baptista’s house disguised as a schoolmaster so as to gain access to Bianca.

Gremio and Hortensio agree to share the cost of Petruchio’s courtship. Tranio, posing as Lucentio, arrives and announces that he, too, intends to woo Bianca.

ACT II

Scene 1. Kate strikes Bianca and berates her. As Baptista despairs at his violent-tempered daughter the various suitors arrive. Petruchio presents Hortensio as the music teacher Licio and Lucentio is presented as a scholar named Cambio. Petruchio states his intention of marrying Kate as soon as possible. Kate gives Petruchio a taste of her sharp tongue; he, however, gives as good as he gets, and insists that they will be married on Sunday.

ACT III

Scene 1. Lucentio reveals his true identity to Bianca. Hortensio gives her a note declaring his passion for her. Word arrives that she must prepare for Kate’s wedding.

Scene 2. It is Kate’s and Petruchio’s wedding day but there is no sign of the bridegroom. Kate, furious and humiliated, rails against Petruchio. Finally, he arrives, bizarrely-dressed and upon a broken horse. During the wedding ceremony, he behaves like a madman, striking the priest and throwing wine in the sexton’s face. Afterwards, he refuses to stay for the wedding feast, forcing Kate to leave with him.

ACT IV

Scene 1. Grumio arrives at Petruchio's house, ahead of his master and new mistress. Curtis asks if Kate is as shrewish as she is reported; Grumio replies that the freezing weather has tamed her and describes the hardships she has suffered on the journey from Padua, unaided by Petruchio. Once home, Petruchio abuses his servants so much, that even Kate is moved to defend them. Once alone, he reveals that this behavior is part of his plan to master his wife.

Scene 2. Tranio and Hortensio witness a loving exchange between Lucentio and Bianca. Hortensio, realizing that Bianca has fallen in love elsewhere, decides to marry a wealthy widow. Tranio tricks a Mantuan pedant into impersonating Lucentio's father Vincentio.

Scene 3. Kate tells Grumio how Petruchio has not allowed her to eat or sleep for days, but he colludes with his master, taunting her with food she cannot have. A tailor and a haberdasher arrive with new clothes for Kate, but Petruchio will accept nothing. Announcing that they are to leave for her father's house, he continues to bait her, insisting that, however absurd his statements may be, he is always right.

Scene 4. The Pedant, masquerading as Vincentio, arrives at Baptista's house and the two men agree that Lucentio (Tranio in disguise) shall marry Bianca. At this, the real Lucentio leaves to take Bianca to church, where a priest is waiting to marry them.

Scene 5. Petruchio, Kate and Hortensio are on the road to Padua. Petruchio torments his wife by forcing her to concede that the sun is, in fact, the moon and then, when she agrees with him, accusing her of lying. They meet Vincentio who is on his way to visit Lucentio. Petruchio tells him of his son's marriage to Bianca.

ACT V

Scene 1. Vincentio arrives at his son's house only to be greeted by the Pedant who claims that he is Lucentio's father. Confusion reigns, but Lucentio and Bianca (now married) enter and explain everything. Kate consents to kiss Petruchio in public, with what seems to be genuine affection.

Scene 2. At a banquet at Lucentio's house Petruchio wagers a hundred marks with Hortensio and Lucentio that his is the most obedient wife. Both Bianca and the widow (Hortensio's new wife) refuse to come when their husbands call; Kate, however, arrives immediately, the picture of docile obedience. She then lectures the other women on their wifely obligations, telling them "Such duty as the subject owes the prince,/Even such a woman oweth to her husband."

Track list

Disc 1

Track 1	Induction i
Track 2	Induction ii
Track 3	Act I Scene i
Track 4	Act I Scene ii
Track 5	Act II Scene i
Track 6	Act III Scene I

Disk 2

Track 1	Act III Scene ii
Track 2	Act IV Scene i
Track 3	Act IV Scene ii
Track 4	Act IV Scene iii
Track 5	Act IV Scene iv
Track 6	Act IV Scene v
Track 7	Act V Scene i
Track 8	Act V Scene ii