



Φρόσω Μαντά Σελίδα 1 04/06/2012

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW  
By William Shakespeare

The Taming of the Shrew is a story of two courtships. Lucentio arrives from Pisa to study at the University of Padua. As he and his servant Tranio stand talking, they observe two suitors, young Hortensio and elderly Gremio, arguing with the father of the woman both pursue. The father is wealthy Baptista Minola. Baptista will not let anyone woo his sweet younger daughter, Bianca, until the elder sister, Katherina, is married. And Katherina is so bad-tempered that no one will approach her. While watching this meeting, Lucentio has fallen in love with Bianca. He and Tranio hit upon a plan. They change clothes. Lucentio pretends to be Cambio's tutor. The purpose of the disguise is to gain Lucentio access to the forbidden Bianca. Meanwhile, Tranio will pretend to be Lucentio.

Now the play's second and main courtship begins with the arrival in Padua of Petruchio. Petruchio intends to find a rich wife. As soon as his friend Hortensio hears this news, he realizes that he may have found a husband for Katherina. Though he tells Petruchio what a shrew Katherina is, that problem doesn't phase Petruchio a bit. He believes he can deal with any woman's temper. Because Petruchio's marrying Katherina will free Bianca, Hortensio, Gremio, and Tranio (dressed as Lucentio) tell Petruchio they will help pay the expenses of his courtship.

When the entire party arrives at Baptista's house, Petruchio immediately offers himself as a suitor to Katherina and presents Hortensio, now dressed as the tutor Litio, to teach the girls music. Gremio presents Lucentio, dressed as Cambio, to teach Bianca literature. And Tranio, dressed as Lucentio, presents himself as the third suitor to Bianca.

As soon as the others have gone, Petruchio and Baptista agree on a large dowry to be paid Petruchio for marrying Katherina. But Baptista thinks that the wedding will never occur because Petruchio will not be able to stomach Katherina nor will he be able to win her love.

When Petruchio and Katherina meet, the sparks of battle fly. The two are clearly a match for each other. Petruchio flatters Katherina, but she fights his every word. He nonetheless maintains that he is delighted with her and that they will be married the next Sunday. When the others return, Petruchio falsely reports that she has agreed to the wedding and that she acts shrewish only when other people are around.

With Katherina promised, the rivalry over Bianca comes to a head. Baptista auctions off his younger daughter to Tranio/Lucentio, who offers a higher price than does old Gremio. Unfortunately, Tranio has promised the fortune of Lucentio's father--Vincentio—without Vincentio's consent. Baptista insists

that Vincentio must agree to the bargain in person. So, though one problem--the marriage of Katherina--is solved, another one--how to find a "pretend" father who will consent to Lucentio's marriage--has been created. And Petruchio has still not tamed Katherina.

Petruchio keeps everyone in suspense on the wedding day by arriving late. Worse, he is dressed in outlandish rags and rides a worn-out horse. At the wedding, Petruchio humiliates Katherina by behaving even worse than she does. After the ceremony, he insists on leaving at once for his own house and will not wait to eat the wedding dinner. When Katherina does not want to leave immediately, he declares that he "will be master of what is mine own."

The "taming" continues at Petruchio's house. He tells us that he will weary Katherina and keep her without food until she accepts his mastery. So, protesting that things aren't good enough for her, Petruchio throws the food off the table, tosses sheets and pillows off the bed, and shouts and quarrels all night. When a tailor and a haberdasher (accessory maker) come next day to show the bride new clothes, Petruchio sends everything back, shouting that the clothes are poorly made.

Meanwhile, Tranio (still disguised as "Lucentio") continues the excellent job he's doing for his master. He makes a pact with Hortensio that neither of them should marry Bianca, since she clearly prefers the schoolmaster "Cambio" (the real Lucentio). Hortensio decides to marry a widow who has loved him for some time.

Shortly thereafter, the "father" Tranio has been seeking for Lucentio turns up in the shape of a newly arrived scholar, the Pedant (a Merchant in some editions of the play). Tranio deceives the Pedant into pretending to be Vincentio. He introduces the Pedant to Baptista, who agrees to let Bianca marry Lucentio--but of course he means Tranio, who has been impersonating him. Cambio is sent to tell Bianca what has happened. But instead, he arranges to be secretly married to her at once, just in case the plot is revealed.

Petruchio has decided to bring Katherina back to her father's house. He has told her directly that she must not argue with him any more. To test her, Petruchio on the way praises the sun but calls it the moon, and then, being contradicted by Katherina, orders the whole party to return to his house. She capitulates, saying that it can be sun or moon just as he wishes. The taming has worked--she is obedient and compliant. To prove it, Petruchio orders her to greet a traveler on the road as a young girl, although the person is an old man. She does so at once. Then Petruchio corrects her and tells her to make good her mistake, and she does so. The old man is surprised and a little uneasy at these apparently crazy people, but he decides to travel with them to Padua. He is Vincentio, the real father of Lucentio.

The stage is now set for a confrontation between the real and the pretended Vincentio. It happens in front of Lucentio's house. Lucentio's servants pretend not to know Vincentio, and the uproar is so great that Vincentio is about to be arrested, when in come Lucentio and Bianca, just married. Lucentio kneels to ask his father's forgiveness.

The story ends at a wedding feast for Petruchio, Lucentio, and Hortensio and their three new wives, Katherina, Bianca, and the Widow. Petruchio proposes a gamble that the other two grooms readily accept. The husband whose wife comes immediately when summoned will win the pot. Bianca and the Widow refuse to come; Katherina arrives at once. At Petruchio's orders she goes back to get the two other women and then speaks to all assembled about the duty of women to men. Katherina and Petruchio depart in triumph, leaving Lucentio and Hortensio astonished and less than pleased with their own wives.



## VOCABULARY INDEX

Courtship	Ερωτοτροπία	Return	Επιστρέφω
Servant	Υπηρέτης	Falsely	Ψευδώς
Observe	Παρατηρώ	Report	Αναφέρω
Suitor	Μνηστήρας	Promise	Υπόσχομαι
Argue	Τσακώνομαι	Rivalry	Αντιπαλότητα
Pursue	Καταδιώκω, κυνηγώ	Come to head	Φτάνω σε κρίσιμο σημείο
Wealthy	Ευκατάστατος	Auction	Δημοπρασία
Woo	Φλερτάρω	Unfortunately	Δυστυχώς
Bad-tempered	Δύστροπος	Fortune	Περιουσία
Approach	Προσεγγίζω	Without	Χωρίς
Pretend	Προσποιούμαι	Consent	Συγκατατίθεμαι
Disguise	Μεταμφιέζομαι	Create	Δημιουργώ
Gain	Αποκτώ	Tame	Εξημερώνω
Access	Πρόσβαση	Suspense	Αγωνία
Forbidden	Απαγορευμένος	Outlandish	Παράξενος, εξωτικός
Meanwhile	Εν τω μεταξύ	Rags	Κουρέλια
Arrival	Άφιξη	Worn-out	Ξεθωμένος
Intend to	Προτίθεμαι	Humiliate	Εξευτελίζω
As soon as	Αμέσως μόλις	Behave	Συμπεριφέρομαι

Realise	Αντιλαμβάνομαι	Ceremony	Τελετή
Though	Αν και	Insist	Επιμένω
Shrew	Μέγαιρα, στρίγγλα,φωνακλού	Declare	Δηλώνω
Phase	Εκτελώ σε στάδια	Weary	Κουράζω
Deal with	Ασχολούμαι	Mastery	Επιβολή, υπεροχή
Temper	Διάθεση, χαρακτήρας	Protest	Διαμαρτύρομαι
Expenses	Δαπάνες	Toss	Εκτοξεύω
Entire	Ολόκληρος	Sheet	Σεντόνι
Offer	Προσφέρω	Pillow	Μαξιλάρι
Present	Παρουσιάζω	Shout	Φωνάζω
Literature	Λογοτεχνία	Quarrel	Λογομαχώ
Dowry	Προίκα	Tailor	Ράφτης
Occur	Λαμβάνω χώρα	Bride	Νύφη
Spark	Πετώ σπίθες	Make a pact	Κάνω συμφωνία
Battle	Μάχη	Since	Αφού, επειδή
Match	Ταίρι	Clearly	Σαφώς
Flatter	Κολακεύω	Prefer	Προτιμώ
Nonetheless	Παρόλα αυτά	Widow	Χήρα
Maintain	Διατηρώ	Shortly thereafter	Μετά από λίγο
Delighted	Πανευτυχής	Although	Αν και
Turn up	Εμφανίζομαι	Uneasy	Αμήχανος
scholar	Λόγιος	Apparently	Προφανώς
Impersonate	Μιμούμαι, υποδύομαι	Confrontation	Αντιπαράθεση
Instead	Αντί	Uproar	Οχλαγωγία
Arrange	Κανονίζω	Kneel	Γονατίζω
At once	Αμέσως	Forgiveness	Συγχώρεση
Plot	Πλοκή	Gamble	Χαρτοπαίζω, τζόγος
Reveal	Αποκαλύπτω	Groom	Γαμπρός
Praise	Επαινώ	Readily	Πρόθυμα
Contradict	Αντιλέγω, αντιφάσκω	Accept	Δέχομαι
order	Διατάζω	Summon	Καλώ, κλητεύω
Whole	Ολόκληρος	Assemble	Συναθροίζομαι
Party	Ομάδα	Duty	Καθήκον
Capitulate	Συνθηκολογώ	Depart	Αναχωρώ
Obedient	Υπάκουος	In triumph	Θριαμβευτικά
Compliant	Υποχωρητικός	Astonished	Κατάπληκτος
Greet	χαιρετώ	pleased	Ευχαριστημένος

## SECTION A

Find words with the same meaning as the following.

Go confidently  
in the direction  
of your dreams!  
**Live the life**  
you've imagined.

-Thoreau

Quarrel		Unluckily	
Chase		Anxiety	
Feign		Strange	
Dress as		Persist	
Obtain		Tire	
In the meantime		Because	
Mean to		Would rather	
Although		Appear	
Mood		Imitate	
Whole		Immediately	
Take place		Embarrassed	
Fight		Obviously	
However		Dispute	
Overjoyed		Bet	

## WRITING/SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss the title *The Taming of the Shrew*. Webster defines shrew as "a vexatious, scolding, or brawling woman." Kate is also described in the play as headstrong, cursed, mad, and choleric. What images do you get from the word taming? Webster defines tame as "changed from the wild state, domesticated." What is suggested by the word domesticated? Webster offers, "converted to the home life; tame"

2.a. Power relationships - Discuss how power is used, abused, or subverted in each of the following relationships:

1. Master-servant
2. Father-child
3. Husband-wife
4. Nobility-lower class

b. Courtship/dating - Discuss how these issues affect events in the play and current opinions of each:

1. Male ideas on courtship/dating
2. Female ideas on courtship/dating
3. Boyfriend/girlfriend as a status symbol or possession
4. Parental interference in courtship/dating
5. Romantic love/love at first sight
6. Male/female expectations in relationships
7. Honesty and deception in relationships

c. Sisters - Discuss how Shakespeare draws on realistic conflicts between sisters in these situations:

1. Rivalry/jealousy
2. Resentments of comparison

d. Deception - Discuss the roles deception and disguise play in each of the following characters' relationships and examine if each is more deceptive or deceived:

1. Lucentio
2. Tranio
3. Petruchio
4. Bianca
5. Kate

e. Social roles and society's expectations about them - Discuss how pressure to conform affects the charact

3. Suppose that Kate and Petruchio each decide to write an advice column. Write a letter from a modern figure who asks for advice on marriage or dating, and then write the reply that Kate and Petruchio would give. (For example, what would Kate and Petruchio tell Oprah ?)

4. Suppose that Lucentio and Bianca, Petruchio and Kate, and Hortensio and the widow meet again one year after their marriage to celebrate their anniversaries. What might they say to each other? In small groups, write an anniversary banquet scene

5. Petruchio says that he is "rough and woo[s] not like a babe" (II, i, 137) [p. 83]. How violent is he? We have a different understanding of domestic violence now. Would he be considered abusive today? Imagine that Kate has him arrested. Write a newspaper report of the arrest and the charges.\* Or as a TV newscaster, report the events including interviews with Kate, Petruchio, the servants, etc.

6. Kate and Bianca do not particularly get along. Imagine that you are a family counselor who has interviewed both women. Write a summary of Kate's complaints about Bianca and also a summary of Bianca's complaints about Kate. Suggest changes to each woman to help them improve their relationship.

7. Write a letter from Katherina to a friend (make one up) explaining in as much detail as possible her initial thoughts and impressions of Petruchio. In the letter you should include the Katherina's opinion on the following:

- the way he looks
- his personality and manners
- his treatment of her / his threats
- the impending marriage
- Baptista's treatment of her
- her sister and suitors
- how she really feels about the whole situation.



8. Read Katherina's speech very carefully at least twice ( lines 135-178) and carefully answer the following questions:

1. Who is the speech aimed at?
2. How does she describe husbands?
3. How does she describe men's role in life?
4. How does she describe the female's role?
5. How does Katherina think that a woman should act towards her husband?
6. What does she describe in detail as women's weaknesses?
7. What does she say she will gladly do at the end of the speech?
8. Go back through the speech and note down the lines where it moves on to another subject or changes tone or approach. Think about who each section is aimed at and try to jot down a subject heading for each different section.
9. Why does Katherina give this speech? Put down as many reasons as possible explaining why you believe / disbelieve each reason.
10. Katherina says 'Thy husband is thy lord'. What do you think about this? Write as much as you can, explaining in detail both what you think about this statement (and the speech as a whole) and whether you think this play is sexist or not.

IF AT FIRST  
YOU DON'T  
SUCCEED,  
TRY, TRY  
AGAIN!

(AMERICAN PROVERB)

## SECTION B

Answer the questions.

1. Where is the play set? What difference does this make?

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2. Which character is described as an "irksome brawling scold?" Is this a fitting description?

3. Why does Bianca have so many suitors? Who are they?

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4. What happens when Lucentio arrives in town?

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5. What is Petruchio's chief goal for his arrival in Padua?

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6. In what ways does Kate attack Bianca? How does Bianca respond? What does this tell us about the characters?

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7. Do you think Kate and Petruchio enjoy their first meeting? Why or why not?

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8. What evidence can you give to support the view that Kate and Petruchio are well matched, even though they spar verbally and appear to be hostile to one another when they first meet?

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9. Is Petruchio attracted to Kate, or is he merely interested in her because she is wealthy? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Read Biondello's description of Petruchio's arrival at the wedding. Write a modern equivalent about a bridegroom arriving at the church in an old ugly car.

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11. What meaning do you think there is in Petruchio's strange attire?

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12. Read Katherina's speech lines 190-210. In this speech Kate fights back-and loses. She says she has 'a spirit to resist', and tries a number of different tactics during the scene. How is her behavior similar and different from her behavior in previous scenes?

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13. Why do you think Shakespeare didn't show the wedding on stage?

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For questions 1-7 write the name of the character that best fits the description. For questions 8-12 write true or false.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Bianca was attacked by this character.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ This character disguises himself as Litio, the music tutor.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ This character disguises himself as Cambio, the poetry (latin) tutor.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ This character disguises himself as Lucentio, the suitor for Bianca
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Baptista says her suitor must win this daughter's love before any marriage agreement can be made.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ These characters fight with words proving they have similar skills.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ This character goes to Venice to purchase clothes for a wedding.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Both Lucentio and Hortensio reveal their identities to Bianca while tutoring her.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Baptista and Petruchio grow worried when Kate is late for the wedding.

10. \_\_\_\_\_ Gremio says that Kate acted like a shrew at the wedding.

11. \_\_\_\_\_ After the wedding, Kate leaves willingly when Petruchio says they cannot stay for the celebration.

12. \_\_\_\_\_ Petruchio's actions are frequently odd and unreasonable in Act 3.

### MORE QUESTIONS



1. What are two examples of how Petruchio tries to tame Kate in scene 1?

What is he doing? Why is he doing it this way? Is it funny? Why?

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2. What are two instances where Petruchio shows anger in scene 1? Who is the anger directed at and why does he show it?

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3. In scene 2, what decision does Hortensio make regarding his suit for Bianca? What does this show us about Hortensio's view of women and love? What does it say about his societies views of love and marriage?

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4. Examine the way Petruchio treats the servants and the way he treats Kate in scene1. Explain the difference between Petruchio's treatment of the servants and his treatment of his wife. What does this mean?

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5. In scene 1, what does Petruchio mean when he says he knows how to "kill a wife with kindness"?

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6. Prove that the reason Tranio gives the pedant for assuming Vincentio's identity is clever.

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5. What do you think Katherine is thinking and feeling during the scene with the Tailor and Haberdasher?

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5. Read this scientific description of the shrew:  
"Shrews are very active, solitary, surface-dwellers. They are very voracious and suffer from lack of food within a few hours...Shrews are preyed upon extensively by birds, but much less so by mammalian carnivores...Dispersion is maintained by aggressive behavior at all times, except during the brief period of oestrus and copulation. The fighting is stereotyped and involves great use of the voice, resulting in 'squeaking matches'." (Corbert, *The Terrestrial Mammals of Western Europe*) Do you think Katherine is anything like this description? Think about the whole of this scene and earlier scenes.

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8. How does Petruchio test Katherine's acceptance of his authority? What is he trying to prove?

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9. How do you think Katherine feels about her actions in this scene?

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10. Is she in fact "tamed"? Explain.

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11. What is the conclusion of the subplot?

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12. How many arguments are there in Act 5? Which couple is the notable exception?

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13. What does Kate say in her final speech?



**1: Which of the following is not a theme in *The Taming of the Shrew*?**

- a. The battle of the sexes
- b. Appearance vs. reality
- c. The struggle between the classes
- d. Cruelty to animals

**2: Bartholomew, the page disguised as Sly's wife, says she cannot sleep with Sly because**

- a. he is actually a boy
- b. he has a headache
- c. the Doctor has forbidden it so that Sly does not relapse
- d. it is time to watch the play

**3: Which of the following men are in love with Bianca?**

- a. Lucentio, Hortensio, Grumio

- b. Lucentio, Hortensio, Gremio
- c. Lucentio, Tranio, Hortensio
- d. Hortensio, Gremio, Petruchio

**4: Which of the following statements is not true?**

- a. Hortensio is from Padua
- b. Petruchio is from Rome
- c. Lucentio is from Florence
- d. Bianca is from Padua

**5: The action of the play switches from Warwickshire to what city?**

- a. Mantua
- b. Pisa
- c. Padua
- d. Verona

**6: What does Lucentio disguise himself as?**

- a. A traveling musician
- b. An artist
- c. A Latin tutor
- d. A servant

**7: Why does Kate bind Bianca's hands?**

- a. Bianca stole Kate's ring.
- b. Kate is in love with Gremio.
- c. Bianca slapped Kate for being too shrewish.
- d. Kate wants to know which suitor Bianca prefers.

**8: Petruchio claims he will tame Kate by doing what?**

- a. Beating her
- b. Contradicting everything she says
- c. Locking her away
- d. Kidnapping her

**9: How does Petruchio show up on his wedding day?**

- a. Dressed crazily and riding an old, run-down horse

- b. In a wagon, dressed all in black
- c. On foot, dragging a mangy dog behind him
- d. With another woman

**10: Whom does Vincentio swear to seek revenge on?**

- a. Lucentio
- b. Tranio
- c. Biondello
- d. Hortensio

**11: What does Petruchio do during the wedding ceremony?**

- a. He gives a monetary contribution to the church.
- b. He throws wine in Kate's face.
- c. He punches the priest.
- d. He brawls with Baptista.

**12: From the time Petruchio meets Baptista Minola until the day of the wedding, how much time passes?**

- a. About 3 weeks
- b. About 3 months
- c. About 1 year
- d. About 1 week

**13: In preparation for the trip back to Padua, Petruchio**

- a. arranges for Kate to have new clothes
- b. instructs his servants to prepare a wedding feast
- c. goes hunting with his falcon
- d. goes to the barn to saddle his horse

**14: Lucentio takes on the disguise of**

- a. Litio
- b. Grumio
- c. Cambio
- d. Tranio

**15: Who says the following: "I come to wive it wealthily in Padua. / If wealthily, then happily in Padua."**

- a. Peter
- b. Sly
- c. Petruchio
- d. Tranio



### SECTION C

Fill in the gaps with a word deriving from the one given in brackets.

#### Themes in The Taming of the Shrew

1.----- (marry) as an Economic Institution

As a romantic comedy, the play focuses 2.----- (principal) on the romantic 3.----- (relation) between men and women as they develop from initial interest into marriage. In this respect, the play is a typical romantic comedy. However, unlike other Shakespearean comedies, The Taming of the Shrew does not conclude its 4.----- (exam) of love and marriage with the wedding. Rather, it offers a significant glimpse into the future lives of married couples, one that serves to round out its 5.----- (explore) of the social dimension of love.

Unlike in Romeo and Juliet, inner 6.----- (emotion) desire plays only a secondary role in The Taming of the Shrew's exploration of love. Instead, The Taming of the Shrew emphasizes the economic aspects of marriage—specifically, how economic 7.----- (consider) determine who marries whom. The play tends to explore romantic relationships from a social perspective, addressing the institutions of courtship and marriage rather than the inner passions of lovers. Moreover, the play focuses on how courtship affects not just the lovers 8.----- (they), but also their parents, their servants, and their friends. In general, while the husband and the wife conduct the marriage relationship after the wedding, the courtship relationship is 9.----- (negotiation) between the future husband and the father of the future wife. As such, marriage becomes a transaction involving the transfer of money. Lucentio wins Bianca's heart, but he is given 10.----- (permit) to marry her only after he is able to convince Baptista that he is 11.----- (fabulous) rich. Had Hortensio offered more

money, he would have married Bianca, **12.**----- (regard) of whether she loved Lucentio.

The Effect of Social Roles on Individual **13.**----- (Happy)

Each person in the play occupies a specific social position that carries with it certain expectations about how that person should behave. A character's social position is defined by such things as his or her wealth, age, gender, profession, parentage, and education; the rules governing how each of them should behave are harshly **14.**----- (force) by family, friends, and society as a whole. For instance, Lucentio occupies the social role of a wealthy young student, Tranio that of a servant, and Bianca and Katherine the roles of upper-class young maidens-in-waiting. At the very least, they are supposed to occupy these roles—but, as the play shows, in **15.**----- (real), Kate wants nothing to do with her social role, and her shrewishness results directly from her **16.**----- (frustrate) concerning her position. Because she does not live up to the **17.**----- (behavior) expectations of her society, she faces the cold **18.**----- (approve) of that society, and, due to her **19.**----- (alien), she becomes miserably unhappy. Kate is only one of the many characters in *The Taming of the Shrew* who attempt to circumvent or deny their socially defined roles, however: Lucentio transforms himself into a working-class Latin tutor, Tranio transforms himself into a wealthy young aristocrat.

Compared with Katherine's more serious anguish about her role, the other characters' attempts to circumvent social expectations seem like **20.**----- (harm) fun. However, the play illustrates that each **21.**----- (transform) must be undone before conventional life can resume at the end of the play. Ultimately, society's happiness depends upon everyone playing his or her prescribed roles. Through the motif of disguise, the play entertains the idea that a person's apparel determines his or her social position, but it ultimately affirms that this is not the case. A servant may put on the clothes of a lord, but he remains a servant, one who must return to his place, as we see with Tranio. Likewise, Lucentio must reveal his subterfuge to his father and to Baptista before moving forward with Bianca. Kate's **22.**----- (develop) over the course of the play is basically determined by her gradual **23.**----- (adapt) to her new social role as wife. She complies with Petruccio's **24.**----- (humiliate) regimen of taming because she knows on some level that, whether she likes the role of wife or not, she will be happier accepting her social **25.**----- (oblige) than living as she has been at odds with everyone



connected to her. In fact, the primary **26**.------(excite)  
in *The Taming of the Shrew* stems from its permeable social  
boundaries, crisscrossed continually by those who employ a disguise  
or a clever lie. In the end, however, the conventional order  
reestablishes itself, and those characters who harmonize with that  
order achieve personal happiness.