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Dramatic Publishing



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

The Taming of the Shrew

freely adapted as a one-act play

by **LUELLA E. McMAHON**



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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(THE TAMING OF THE SHREW)

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THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

A Play in One Act
For 5 Men and 3 Women

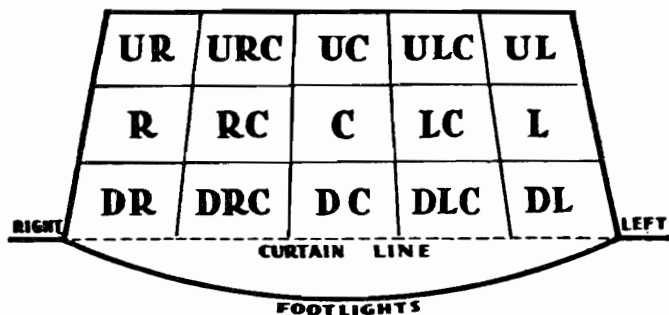
CHARACTERS

BAPTISTA a rich gentleman
KATHERINA Baptista's daughter
BIANCA another daughter
PETRUCHIO a suitor to Katherina
BIONDELLO Baptista's servant
LUCENTIO a suitor to Bianca
HORTENSIO another suitor to Bianca
GRUMELLA Petruchio's housekeeper
MARIA wife of Hortensio

PLACE: Various places in Padua.

TIME: Sixteenth century.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

NOTES ON CHARACTERS
AND COSTUMES

GENERAL NOTE: All boys wear low-heeled slippers of loafer type, not conspicuously styled. All girls may wear knit or mesh-type bedroom slippers or low-heeled slippers or flats.

The costumes described may be made easily with very little expense, but if they appear difficult, evening gowns of almost any style and vintage may be used. These can be borrowed with a little effort. In this case, colors may vary from the descriptions. These dresses, with the addition of sashes, scarfs, small hats, etc. may be turned into acceptable costumes.

All dresses are at least ankle length. For those appearing in several scenes, the costumes may be varied by the addition of a cape or the like. This is not necessary, however.

All wear "junk jewelry."

KATHERINA: She wears a light blue cotton dress with full skirt, white eyelet lace around cuffs and collar, wide white satin ribbon sash, skull cap (blue) with matching ribbon. Katherina is indeed a shrew, aggressive, very abusive to everyone until she meets more than her match in Petruchio. She tries to overpower him with her wicked tongue but finds the attempt useless.

BIANCA: Bianca wears a white sateen dress with black lace around cuffs and back of collar, a black velvet sash, and a small black hat trimmed with white sateen. Bianca, Katherina's

younger sister, is the exact opposite of Katherina. She is meek, has many suitors, but she (according to the law) may not marry until Katherina "has been disposed of."

BAPTISTA: Baptista, the father of Katherina, is clad in a lavender ankle-length gown (graduation type), red scarf at neck, red tam cap, slippers. He has a well-trimmed goatee and, possibly, a small mustache. Baptista is almost at his wits' end with Katherina. He is most eager to marry her off; yet he speaks honestly of the hazards a husband will take. He is rich and influential in Padua.

PETRUCHIO: Petruccio is a blustery gentleman from Verona. He wears dark blue tights, white long-sleeved overblouse (or light blue) which reaches mid-thigh, belted with chain; may use black cape (mid-thigh), black cotton beret with feathers. He has come to seek Katherina's hand in marriage and will not take "no" for an answer. The more Katherina rants, the more obnoxious (pretending it's all solicitude for her) Petruccio becomes. Finally, in sheer desperation, Katherina gives up and becomes the perfect wife. Petruccio is rich in his own right.

LUCENTIO: He is a young gentleman of Padua. He is dressed in red tights, black long-sleeved blouse (mid-thigh), red sash scarf and cap (all made from cotton). Lucentio is a suitor to Bianca and eventually marries her.

HORTENSIO: Hortensio wears green tights, light green long-sleeved turtleneck, yellow sleeveless blouse (mid-thigh), dark green sash and cap.

MARIA (wife of Hortensio): Maria wears a gold and green print two-piece dress with green lining, silk panels; small ribbon hat made from green lining silk.

GRUMELLA: Conservative dress of brown, gray, or black with matching cap. Some relief in white as collar or kerchief.

BIONDELLO: He wears brown tights, tan long-sleeved turtleneck, brown overblouse, yellow cap.

BOY SERVANT: He wears clothes similar to Biondello's.

PROPERTIES

GENERAL: Table, four straight chairs to be used as indicated in various scenes; tree stump, if desired, for Baptista's yard; music stand at stage R to hold signs placed by servant:

Signs as Follows

Before Baptista's House
A Room in Baptista's House
Petruccio's Country House
Katherina's Room

KATHERINA: Ribbon or bracelets to bind wrists, mirror and brush.

PETRUCCIO: Lady's hat, scroll, bag of money.

GRUMELLA: Bread, oranges.

BAPTISTA: Bag of money.

LUCENTIO: Bag of money.

HORTENSIO: Bag of money.

The Taming of the Shrew

(As the curtain opens, the stage is unoccupied. A SERVANT enters quickly, places sign which reads BEFORE BAPTISTA'S HOUSE, exits rapidly. As the SERVANT goes out, BAPTISTA, KATHERINA and BIANCA enter DR. BAPTISTA is speaking.)

BAPTISTA.

I am resolved firmly, as you know, not to bestow Bianca

Before you have a husband, Katherina.

KATHERINA (glaring at BIANCA). Bianca -- always Bianca! (Starts for BIANCA. BIANCA dodges around behind her father, who protects her from KATHERINA's onslaught.)

BIANCA (dodging). Sister, content you in my discontent. (KATHERINA, at her father's impatient signal, retreats UL, arms folded belligerently.)

BAPTISTA.

Let it not displease thee, good Bianca,
That Katherina must wed first,
For I will love thee ne'er the less, my girl.
Go in, Bianca.

BIANCA (to BAPTISTA, bowing).

Sir, to your pleasure humbly I subscribe:
My books and instruments shall be my company,
On them to look and practice by myself.
(Goes into the house L.)

BAPTISTA (impatiently to KATHERINA). How is it, girl, you have no suitor? What of Tranio?

KATHERINA. Tranio! I'll comb his noodle with a three-legged stool!

BAPTISTA. Lucentio, then?

KATHERINA. I'll paint his face chalk white. The silly clown!

BAPTISTA. Vincentio--perhaps?

KATHERINA. I'll use him like the fool he is.

BAPTISTA (throwing up his hands).

Farewell, then, Katherina, you may stay.

For I have more to commune with Bianca.

(Goes into house L.)

KATHERINA.

Why, and I trust I may go, too; may I not?

What! Shall I be appointed hours, as though,

belike,

I knew not what to take and what to leave? Ha!

(Exits angrily into house, L.)

(SERVANT enters quickly, places a couple of chairs and a sign: A ROOM IN BAPTISTA'S HOUSE. As the SERVANT leaves, KATHERINA and BIANCA enter. KATHERINA is pulling BIANCA, whose hands she has tied. BIANCA is pleading with KATHERINA.)

BIANCA.

Good sister, wrong me not, nor wrong yourself,

To make a bondmaid and a slave of me

But for these baubles. (Indicates bracelets, etc.)

They shall be yours.

Unbind my hands, I'll pull them off myself.

Yea, all my raiment, to my petticoats all shall

be yours.

Or what you will command me will I do,

So well I know my duty to my elders.

KATHERINA.

Of all thy suitors, here I charge thee, tell
Whom thou lovest best! See thou dissemble not.

BIANCA.

Believe me, sister, of all men alive
I never yet beheld that special face
Which I could fancy more than any other.

KATHERINA (threateningly). Thou liest. Is't
not Hortensio?

BIANCA.

If you desire him, sister, here I swear
I'll plead for you myself and you shall have him.

KATHERINA.

Oh, then belike, you fancy riches more:
You will have Marcio to keep you fair.

BIANCA.

Is it for him you do so envy me? (Relieved.)
Nay, then you jest! and now I well perceive
You have but jested with me all this while!
Dear Sister Kate, prithee, untię my hands.

KATHERINA. If that be jest then all the rest
was so. (Strikes her.)

(BIANCA starts to cry. BAPTISTA enters UC.)

BAPTISTA (angrily, as he jerks KATHERINA away
from BIANCA). Why, how now, dame! Whence
grows this insolence? Bianca, stand aside.

(BIANCA goes UL, crying. BAPTISTA looks
at her pityingly.) Poor girl! She weeps.

(BAPTISTA turns angrily to KATHERINA.)

Go ply thy needle; meddle not with her.

Why dost thou wrong her that did ne'er wrong
thee?

When did she cross thee with a bitter word?

KATHERINA (sulkily). Her silence flouts me,
and I'll be revenged. (KATHERINA flies after

BIANCA, who runs to the other side of the stage to escape. BAPTISTA comes quickly between them. He stops KATHERINA, who struggles in his grasp.)

BAPTISTA (struggling to hold KATHERINA).

Bianca, get thee gone! (BIANCA runs out L. KATHERINA breaks away from her father, dashes UR.)

KATHERINA.

Now I see all!

She is your treasure! She must have a husband! Though I dance barefoot on her wedding day.

BAPTISTA (approaching KATHERINA, to calm her). Katherina, now, now ---- (She jerks away.)

KATHERINA.

Talk not to me: I will go sit and weep Till I can find occasion of revenge. (Dashes out L.)

BAPTISTA (rolling his eyes Heavenward). Was ever gentleman thus grieved as I? (There is a sharp rap at the door UC.) But who comes here? (PETRUCHIO enters with a flourish.)

PETRUCHIO. Good morrow, Signior Baptista. (Bows deeply.)

BAPTISTA. Good morrow, sir. God save you. Whence are you? What may I call your name?

PETRUCHIO.

Petruchio is my name, Antonio's son, A man well known throughout all Italy.

BAPTISTA. I knew him well; you are welcome for his sake. (Takes PETRUCHIO'S hand.)

PETRUCHIO.

Thank you, good sir. Pray, have you not a daughter?

Called Katherina, fair and virtuous?

BAPTISTA. I have a daughter, sir, called
Katherina.

PETRUCHIO.

I am a gentleman of Verona, sir,
That hearing of her beauty and her wit,
Her affability and bashful modesty,
Her wondrous qualities and mild behavior,
Am bold to show myself a forward guest
Within your house, to make mine eye the
witness

Of that report which I so oft have heard.

BAPTISTA.

You're welcome, sir.

But for my daughter Katherina, this I know,
She is not for your turn, the more my grief.

PETRUCHIO.

I see you do not mean to part with her,
Or else you like not of my company.

BAPTISTA. Mistake me not, I speak but as I find.

PETRUCHIO. Pardon me, sir. I would fain be doing.

BAPTISTA. I doubt it not, sir; but you will curse
your wooing.

PETRUCHIO. Signior Baptista, I have no time to
trifle.

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.
Then tell me, if I win your daughter's love,
What dowry shall I have with her to wife?

BAPTISTA.

After my death, the one-half of my lands,
And at your marriage, twenty thousand crowns.

PETRUCHIO.

And for that dowry, I'll assure her of
Her widow's share if she survives me,
In all my lands and leases. . . .
And do not fear that I will fail with her.

I am as peremptory as she proud-minded;
And where two raging fires meet together
They do consume the thing that feeds their fury;
For I am rough and woo not like a babe.

(There is a racket from an inner room and a servant, BIONDELLO, comes running in from L, holding his head.)

BAPTISTA. What is it, Biondello?

BIONDELLO.

Mistress Katherina, sir.
Her teacher but took her hand to teach her
fingering;
And she grabbed the lute and struck him on the
head . . .
Then turned on me -- Forgive me that I fled.
(Runs off R.)

PETRUCHIO.

Now, by the world, it is a lusty wench!
I love her ten times more than e'er I did;
Oh, how I long to have some chat with her!

BAPTISTA.

Then, Signior Petruchio, will you go with me,
Or shall I send my daughter, Kate, to you?

PETRUCHIO.

I pray you do; I will attend her here.
And woo her with some spirit when she comes.

BAPTISTA. Give me your hand, Petruchio. 'Tis
a match. (Shakes hands; exits L. PETRUCHIO
walks about, musing to himself.)

PETRUCHIO.

Say that she rail, why then I'll tell her
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale;
Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear
As morning roses newly washed with dew;
Say she be mute and will not speak a word,
Then I'll commend her volubility.

If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks,
As though she bid me stay by her a week;
If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day
When I shall ask the banns, and when be
married . . .

But here she comes and now, Petruchio, speak.

(KATHERINA enters UL, ready to do battle.)

PETRUCHIO. Good morrow, Kate; for that's
your name, I hear.

KATHERINA.

Well, then, you must be something hard of
hearing.

They call me Katherina that do talk of me.

PETRUCHIO.

You lie, in faith, for you are called plain Kate,
And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate, the curst;
But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom
Kate of Kate - Hall, my superdainty Kate,
For dainties are all Kates: and therefore, Kate,
Take this of me, Kate of my consolation:
Hearing thy mildness praised in every town,
Thy virtues spoke of, and thy beauty sounded--
Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs--
Myself am moved to woo thee for my wife.

(PETRUCHIO is circling around her, studying
her as though she were a prize race horse.)

KATHERINA (going after him).

Moved! Let him that moved you hither
Remove you hence.

I knew at the first that you were a movable.

PETRUCHIO (pinning her arms to keep her from
belting him). Why, what's a movable?

KATHERINA. A joint stool.

PETRUCHIO (sitting down; pulling her toward him).
Thou hast hit it; come sit on me.