

Modern Version

The Taming of The Shrew: Act III (scene ii)

On stage: Tranio, Lucentio, Biondello, Attendants

Enter Gremio

TRANIO: *(as Lucentio)* Mr. Gremio, are you coming from the church?

GREMIO As eagerly as I ever came from school.

TRANIO And will the bride and bridegroom be here soon?

GREMIO Bridegroom? This guy is more like the groom who cleans the stable—a grumbling groom at that, as the poor girl is discovering.

TRANIO *(speaking as Lucentio)* You mean he's worse than she is? That's not possible!

GREMIO No, he's a devil—a devil, I tell you! An utter fiend.

TRANIO No, she's a devil—a devil, I tell you. The devil's grandmother.

GREMIO Why, she's a lamb, a dove, a child compared to him! Picture this: when the priest asked Katherine if she would have him, he answered, "Hell, yes!" and swore so loud that the priest dropped the prayer book. Everyone froze, and as the priest stooped to pick it up again the lunatic bridegroom smacked him so hard that the priest and book went flying! Then he said, "Now pick them up—if anyone dares."

TRANIO What did the girl say when the priest got up?

GREMIO She trembled and shook because he stamped and swore and carried on as though the priest were trying to put something over on him. Finally, the ceremony done, he called for wine. "Good health!" he shouted, like some sailor aboard ship, carousing with his mates after a storm. Then he chugs the wine and throws the dregs in the sexton's face. Why? Because the fellow's beard looked thin, he said, and it seemed to be asking him for the dregs while he was drinking. Next he slung his arm around the bride's neck and kissed her with such a smack that when they parted the sound of their lips made the whole church echo. That was the limit for me. I got out of there as fast as I

could. I know the rest of the crowd isn't far behind me. It's disgraceful! You never saw such a mockery of a marriage in your life!

Music plays

There go the musicians. They've started up.

Enter Petruchio and Katherine with Bianca, Baptista, Hortensio, Grumio and members of the wedding procession.

PETRUCHIO Gentlemen and friends, thanks for bothering to come. I know you expect me to stay to dinner and have prepared a celebratory feast, but as it happens I'm called away. So let me say goodbye.

BAPTISTA You're not thinking of leaving tonight, surely?

PETRUCHIO Not tonight—today. If you knew the reason, you'd understand and would urge me to go rather than stay. Good friends, I thank you all for coming to see me wed this patient, sweet, virtuous wife. Dine with my father and drink a health to me. I have to leave. Goodbye to you all.

TRANIO Please, stay till after dinner.

PETRUCHIO Can't do it.

GREMIO As a favor to me?

PETRUCHIO Nope.

KATHERINE As a favor to me?

PETRUCHIO I'm delighted.

KATHERINE Delighted to stay?

PETRUCHIO Delighted to hear you ask so nicely, but I won't stay in any case.

KATHERINE Look, if you love me, stay.

PETRUCHIO Grumio, get me my horse.

GRUMIO Yes, sir, they're ready. They've eaten themselves sick.

KATHERINE All right, then, do what you like. I won't leave today. Not tomorrow, either. I'll leave when I'm good and ready. The door is open, sir. Feel free to use it. Go on, wear your boots out! As for me, I'll leave when I like. If you're this high-handed to start with, I can imagine how arrogant you'll be as a husband.

PETRUCHIO Calm down, Kate. Please don't be angry.

KATHERINE I will be angry. What business is it of yours?—Father, be quiet. He'll stay as long as I say.

GREMIO Okay, now it starts.

KATHERINE Gentlemen, on to the bridal dinner. I see a woman may be made a fool of if she doesn't have nerve enough to stand up for herself.

PETRUCHIO They shall go in to the bridal dinner, Kate—they're yours to command. Obey the bride, guests! Go to the banquet: revel, feast, and carouse! Be wild and merry—or go to hell. But as for my beautiful Kate, she must come with me. No, don't puff out your chests and stamp and stare. I will be master of what belongs to me. She is my property, one of my possessions—just like my house and everything and my field, my barn, my horse, my ox, my donkey—anything of mine you care to name. Here she is; I dare you to touch her! I'll sue anyone in Padua who tries to stand in my way, no matter how powerful he is. Grumio, draw your sword! We are surrounded by thieves. Rescue your mistress! Prove yourself a man! Don't be afraid, sweet girl, I won't let them touch you. I'll protect you, Kate, against a million of them.

Petruchio, Katherine and Grumio exit.

BAPTISTA No, let them go. They're certainly a peaceful couple!

GREMIO If they hadn't left soon, I would have died laughing.

TRANIO Of all the mad matches, this is by far the craziest.

LUCENTIO *(as Cambio)* Mistress, what's your opinion of your sister?

BIANCA That since she's mad herself, she's married a madman.

GREMIO I guarantee you, Petruchio's going to suffer from his Kate.

BAPTISTA Neighbors and friends, though we don't have anyone for the bride and bridegroom's places at the table, you know there's nothing missing in the feast itself. (Come, gentlemen, let's go in. *(to Tranio)* Lucentio, you shall assume the bridegroom's place and let Bianca take her sister's seat.

TRANIO Sweet Bianca shall practice how to be a bride?

They all exit

