

# SHAKESPEARE IN 30 MINUTES: THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Adapted by Mike Willis

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THE TAMING OF THE SHREW  
Adapted by Mike Willis**

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:**

“Shakespeare in 30 Minutes” is available as an anthology of four award-winning adaptations by Mike Willis, or each adaptation separately. Mr. Willis is a high school drama director who spent twelve seasons with the Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival Acting Company. He used his Shakespearean experience to fashion four 30-minute adaptations were entered in the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association’s Fall Play Festival Competition. In order to be selected as an “all-state” play and given the opportunity to perform at the state festival, a production is required to participate at sub-district, district, and sectional levels and be awarded advance recommendations from two of three adjudicators. Each of the four adaptations in this collection received all-state recognition and were performed at the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association’s State Theatre Festival. Along with their all-state selection, these plays were also accorded several other awards, including: ten student outstanding acting awards, four state outstanding director’s awards, and “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” was chosen to receive the Critic’s Choice Award at the 1993 state festival. These adaptations are easily staged and unlike some adaptations of Shakespeare, they keep the poetry of the dialogue intact. Each adaptation is ideal for one act play competitions and school productions where resources do not allow for a full-length Shakespearean production.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

The Lord and Sly remain on stage throughout the play as on-stage observers. The transitions from scene to scene are made possible through the use of these two characters. Their dialogue is meant to tie the scenes together and inform the audience of locale changes. The play should be played to its fullest taking advantage of its many comedic elements. The play can be done without a sound system. The light Madrigal selection at the beginning and end of the play is sung without accompaniment. The selection used in the original production of this script was “Now is The Time for Maying.” However, any light selection will work. The play can be done with just curtains, however, it is best to have Sly and the Lord off to one side or on an elevated platform so their reactions can be noted.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

(13 MEN, 4 WOMEN)

SLY .....a drunkard (23 lines)  
HOSTESS .....an innkeeper (7 lines)  
LORD.....a lord (18 lines)  
1<sup>st</sup> PAGE .....servant to the lord (3 lines)  
2<sup>nd</sup> PAGE .....servant to the lord (3 lines)  
3<sup>rd</sup> PAGE.....servant to the lord (4 lines)  
BAPTISTA .....wealthy lord father to Katharina, Bianca (28  
lines)  
GREMIO.....suitor of Bianca (21 lines)  
HORTENSIO.....suitor of Bianca (33 lines)  
KATHARINA.....the shrew (34 lines)  
BIANCA .....younger, kinder sister (7 lines)  
LUCENTIO.....in love with Bianca (15 lines)  
TRANIO .....Lucentio’s servant (9 lines)  
PETRUCHIO .....suitor to Katharina (67 lines)  
GRUMIO .....servant to Petruchio (26 lines)  
CURTIS .....servant to Petruchio (12 lines)  
WIDOW .....Hortensio’s wife (Non-Speaking)

## INTRODUCTION

In this adaptation of “The Taming of The Shrew,” portions of the Induction and Epilogue are included. It is common practice with many full productions of this play to omit these scenes from the play. However, this one act adaptation of the play utilizes the drunken character of “Sly,” along with some of the other characters in the Induction, to identify the locale of the different scenes in the play. The drunken Sly is tricked into believing that he is a lord and that the players are there to perform a play just for him. Once Sly is convinced that he is a lord and that the players are there to perform for him, the action opens in the house of Baptista, the father of the lovely Bianca and the shrewish Katharina. Sly falls asleep off and on throughout the play, but awakens periodically to clap or be told where and what is happening in the play. The play follows the path of the original text with some of the minor characters dropped and some speeches either edited or omitted. In the end, the shrew has been tamed and Sly is awakened to proclaim, “. . . thou hast waked me out of the best dream that ever I had in my life . . .”

**SETTING:**

*The set consists of a raised platform placed up center stage. There is a five foot wide arch on each side of the platform. These arches are angled slightly down left and down right. The platform and archways are Elizabethan in design. The platform up center is five foot high and has steps leading up on each end. There is a throne on the platform. The archways are free-standing. There are side curtains dressing the wings and a number of entrances and exits are off left and off right. There are two small benches, one placed at extreme down left and one at extreme down right.*

*As lights come up, a number of the actors come center stage. They proceed to sing a Madrigal selection without accompaniment. The selection is light and lively. They exit quickly after the second verse.*

**THE INDUCTION  
NEAR THE LORD'S HOUSE**

*Sly and Hostess enter from right arguing.*

**SLY:** I'll pheeze you, in faith.

**HOSTESS:** A pair of stocks, you rogue!

**SLY:** Ye 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 to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

**HOSTESS:** I know my remedy; I must go fetch the third borough.

*(Hostess exits right.)*

**SLY:** *(Sly crosses up on platform and sits in throne.)* Third, or fourth or fifth borough, I'll answer him by law: I'll not budge an inch boy: let him come, and kindly. *(Sly falls asleep.)*

*Horns sound, the Lord enters with three pages.*

**LORD:** What's here? One dead, or drunk? See, doth he breathe?

**1st PAGE:** *(Crosses to Sly.)* He breathes, my lord. Were he not warm'd with ale.

**LORD:** O monstrous beast! how like a swine he lies!

Sirs, I will practice on this drunken man.

What think you, if he were wrapp'd in sweet clothes,

Rings put upon his fingers, and brave attendants

Near him when he wakes, would not the beggar then

Forget himself?

**2nd PAGE:** Believe me, lord, I think he cannot choose.

It would seem strange unto him when he waked.

**3rd PAGE:** My lord, I warrant you we will play our part.

**LORD:** (*Hands his cape and hat to pages.*) Take him up gently And each one to his office when he wakes. (*Pages cross to Sly and put Lord's cape and hat on him.*)

**SLY:** (*Awakes.*) For God's sake, a pot of small ale.

**1st PAGE:** Will't please your lordship have a cup of sack?

**2nd PAGE:** Will't please your honour taste of some conserves?

**SLY:** I am Christophero Sly; call me not honour nor lordship:

I ne'er drank sack in my life; and if you give me any Conserves, give me conserves of beef.

**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 infused with so foul a spirit!

**SLY:** What would you make me mad? Am I not Christopher

Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath, by birth a pedlar,

by education a card-maker, by transmutation a bear-

herd, and now by present profession a tinker?

**LORD:** O, this it is that makes your lady mourn!

**3rd PAGE:** 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.

Thou art a lord and nothing but a lord.

**SLY:** Am I a lord, or do I dream? or have I dream'd till now?

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 Christophero Sly.

**2nd PAGE:** O, how we joy to see your wit restored!

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

**3rd PAGE:** These fifteen years you have been in a dream;

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

**SLY:** These fifteen years! by my fay, a goodly nap.

Now lord be thanked for my good amends.

**ALL:** Amen.

**SLY:** I thank thee: thou shalt not lose by it.

*The remainder of the acting company enters from the wings and stands onstage looking up to Sly.*

**LORD:** *(Indicating the actors.)*

You're honour's players, hearing of your amendment,

Are come to play a pleasant comedy;

For so your doctors hold it very meet,

Seeing too much sadness hath congeal'd your blood.

**SLY:** Marry, I will let them play it.

*All the actors bow and leave except Lucentio and Tranio who cross to down right bench where Lucentio sits, Lord and Sly remain on the platform.*

## SCENE 1

### BAPTISTA'S HOUSE IN PADUA

**LORD:** In this first scene my lord, we find young Signior

Lucentio and his trusty servant Tranio resting in front of

Signior Baptista's house in Padua. Young Lucentio has

left home to seek out adventure and love. *(Noise.)*

Hark, here comes Signior Baptista.

*Baptista, Katharina, Bianca, Hortensio, Gremio enter through up right arch.*

**BAPTISTA:** Gentlemen, importune me no farther,

For how I firmly am resolve you know;

That is, not to bestow my youngest daughter  
Before I have a husband for the elder:  
If either of you both love Katharina,  
Because I know you well and love you well,  
Leave shall you have to court her at your pleasure.

**GREMIO:** (*Aside.*) To cart her rather: she's too rough for me.

There, there, Hortensio, will you any wife?

**KATHARINA:** I pray you, sir, is it your will  
To make a stale of me amongst these mates?

**HORTENSIO:** Mates, maid! How mean you that? No mates for you,  
unless you were of gentler, milder mold.

**KATHARINA:** I' faith sir, you shall never need to fear.

**HORTENSIO:** From all such devils, good Lord deliver us!

**GREMIO:** And me too, good Lord!

**TRANIO:** Hush, master! here's some good passtime toward:  
That wench is stark mad or wonderful forward.

**LUCENTIO:** (*Looking at Bianca.*) But in the other's silence do I see  
Maid's mild behavior and sobriety.

**BAPTISTA:** Gentlemen, content ye; I am resolved:

Go in, Bianca:

And for I know she taketh most delight  
In music, instruments and poetry,  
Schoolmasters will I keep within my house,  
Fit to instruct her youth. If you, Hortensio  
Go Signior Gremio, you, know any such,  
Prefer them hither;  
And so farewell. Katharina, you may stay;  
For I have more to commune with Bianca.

*Bianca and Baptista exit up right arch.*

**KATHARINA:** 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? (*Katharina exits up right.*)

**GREMIO:** You may go to the devil's dam: your gifts are so good,  
here's none will hold you.

**HORTENSIO:** Signior Gremio, but a word, I pray.

**GREMIO:** What's that, I pray?

**HORTENSIO:** Marry sir, we must get a husband for her sister.

**GREMIO:** A husband! a devil.

**HORTENSIO:** I say, a husband.

**GREMIO:** I say, a devil. Thinkest thou, Hortensio, though her father be very rich, any man is so very a fool to be married to hell?

**HORTENSIO:** Tush Gremio, there be good fellows in the world, an a man could light on them, would take her with all her faults, and money enough.

**GREMIO:** I cannot tell; but I have lief take her dowry with this condition, to be whipped at the high cross every morning.

**HORTENSIO:** Faith, as you say, there's small choice in rotten apples. But come; by helping Baptista's eldest daughter to a husband we set his youngest free for a husband then have to 't afresh. How say you, Signior Gremio?

**GREMIO:** I am agreed; and would I had given him the best horse in Padua to begin his wooing that would thoroughly woo her, wed her and bed her and rid the house of her! Come on.

*Hortensio and Gremio exit down left.*

**TRANIO:** I pray, sir, tell me, is it possible  
That love should of a sudden take such hold?

**LUCENTIO:** O Tranio, till I found it to be true,  
I never thought it possible or likely;  
But see, while idly I stood looking on,  
I found the effect of love in idleness.

**TRANIO:** Master, you look'd so longly on the maid,  
Perhaps you mark'd not what's the pith of all.

**LUCENTIO:** O yes, I saw sweet beauty in her face.

**TRANIO:** Saw you no more?

Her eldest sister is so curst and shrewd  
That till the father rid his hands of her.  
Master, your love must live a maid at home.

**LUCENTIO:** Ah, Tranio, what a cruel father's he!  
But art thou not advised, he took some care  
To get her cunning schoolmasters to instruct her?

**TRANIO:** Ay marry, am I sir; and now 'tis plotted.

**You** will be schoolmaster

And undertake the teaching of the maid:

That's your device.

**LUCENTIO:** It is: Come Tranio.

'Tis plotted then!

*Tranio and Lucentio exit down left.*

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