

The Taming of the Shrew

A “play within a play,” *Taming* starts as a story about itinerant tinker Christopher Sly. Finding him in a drunken stupor, a lord, his retainers and a troupe of players contrive to make Sly believe that he is a lord just waking up from a deep coma, and that the players have come to entertain him.

The play that they perform is a rough-and-tumble romp and stomp through the battle of the sexes. Bianca Minola has many eligible marriage suitors, but her father Baptista will not allow Bianca to marry until her older sister Katherine has wed. Bianca’s suitors band together to find a suitor for outspoken Katherine, and they dispatch Petruccio to woo and wed her. He blusters and brawls his way into an unsettled marriage to Katherine, ultimately grinding out a peace with her. The other suitors scheme and counter scheme to gain Bianca’s affection. Bianca weds her Lucentio, and all the newly married men bet on their beloved’s wifely compliance. Imagine the shock when Katherine and Petruccio have the best match.

All is well-ish.

AVAILABLE ROLES:

INDUCTION

Hostess—an alewife—Ensemble

Lord—Ensemble

Bartholomew—Ensemble

Huntsmen—Ensemble

Servants—Ensemble

Players—Ensemble

PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY

Grumio—Petruccio’s groom—any age, man

Hortensio—Petruccio’s friend, suitor to Bianca—20s/30s, contemporary of Petruccio, man

Lucentio—a gentleman of Pisa, suitor to Bianca—20’s/30s, younger than Petruccio, man

Tranio—Lucentio’s servant—20s/30s, maybe a bit older than Lucentio, man

Biondello—Lucentio’s servant,—20s, younger than Tranio and Lucentio, man

Gremio—a rich old man, suitor to Bianca—60’s-80’s, clearly the oldest person onstage, man

Vincentio—Lucentio’s father—50s-70s, man, ensemble track

Widow—Hortensio’s wife, eventually—20s-40s, woman, ensemble track

Tailor—Any age, any gender, ensemble track

Haberdasher—Any age, any gender, ensemble track

Servants (some named), attendants—Any age, any gender, ensemble tracks