

The Taming of the Shrew

Induction 1

Enter Christopher Sly the beggar, and the Hostess

SLY I'll feeze you, in faith.

HOSTESS A pair of stocks, you rogue.

SLY You're a baggage. The Slys are no rogues. Look in the Chronicles±±we came in with Richard Conqueror, therefore *paucas palabras*, let the world slide. Sessa! 5

HOSTESS You will not pay for the glasses you have burst?

SLY No, not a denier. Go by, Saint Jeronimy! Go to thy cold bed and warm thee.

HOSTESS I know my remedy, I must go fetch the headborough. 10

Exit

SLY Third or fourth or fifth borough, I'll answer him by law. I'll not budge an inch, boy. Let him come, and kindly.

He falls asleep.

Horns sound. Enter a Lord from hunting, with his train

LORD

Huntsman, I charge thee, tender well my hounds.
Breathe Merriman±±the poor cur is embossed±± 15
And couple Clowder with the deep-mouthed brach.
Saw'st thou not, boy, how Silver made it good
At the hedge corner, in the coldest fault?
I would not lose the dog for twenty pound.

FIRST HUNTSMAN

Why, Belman is as good as he, my lord. 20
He cried upon it at the merest loss,
And twice today picked out the dullest scent.
Trust me, I take him for the better dog.

LORD

Thou art a fool. If Echo were as fleet
I would esteem him worth a dozen such. 25
But sup them well, and look unto them all.
Tomorrow I intend to hunt again.

FIRST HUNTSMAN I will, my lord.

LORD (*seeing Sly*)

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

SECOND HUNTSMAN

He breathes, my lord. Were he not warmed with ale 30
This were a bed but cold to sleep so soundly.

LORD

O monstrous beast! How like a swine he lies.
Grim death, how foul and loathsome is thine image.
Sirs, I will practise on this drunken man.
What think you: if he were conveyed to bed, 35
Wrapped in sweet clothes, rings put upon his fingers,
A most delicious banquet by his bed,
And brave attendants near him when he wakes±±
Would not the beggar then forget himself?

FIRST HUNTSMAN

Believe me, lord, I think he cannot choose. 40

SECOND HUNTSMAN

It would seem strange unto him when he waked.

LORD

Even as a flatt'ring dream or worthless fancy.
Then take him up, and manage well the jest.
Carry him gently to my fairest chamber,
And hang it round with all my wanton pictures. 45
Balm his foul head in warm distill'd waters,
And burn sweet wood to make the lodging sweet.
Procure me music ready when he wakes
To make a dulcet and a heavenly sound,
And if he chance to speak be ready straight, 50
And with a low submissive reverence
Say 'What is it your honour will command?'
Let one attend him with a silver basin
Full of rose-water and bestrewed with flowers;
Another bear the ewer, the third a diaper, 55
And say 'Will't please your lordship cool your hands?'
Someone be ready with a costly suit,
And ask him what apparel he will wear.
Another tell him of his hounds and horse,
And that his lady mourns at his disease. 60
Persuade him that he hath been lunatic,

And when he says he is, say that he dreams,
For he is nothing but a mighty lord.
This do, and do it kindly, gentle sirs.
It will be pastime passing excellent,
If it be husbanded with modesty.

65

FIRST HUNTSMAN

My lord, I warrant you we will play our part
As he shall think by our true diligence
He is no less than what we say he is.

LORD

Take him up gently, and to bed with him;
And each one to his office when he wakes.

70

Servingmen carry Sly out

Trumpets sound

Sirrah, go see what trumpet 'tis that sounds.

Exit a Servingman

Belike some noble gentleman that means,
Travelling some journey, to repose him here.

Enter a Servingman

How now? Who is it?

SERVINGMAN An't please your honour, players
That offer service to your lordship.

75

Enter Players

LORD

Bid them come near. Now fellows, you are welcome.

PLAYERS We thank your honour.

LORD

Do you intend to stay with me tonight?

A PLAYER

So please your lordship to accept our duty.

80

LORD

With all my heart. This fellow I remember
Since once he played a farmer's eldest son.
'Twas where you wooed the gentlewoman so well.
I have forgot your name, but sure that part
Was aptly fitted and naturally performed.

85

ANOTHER PLAYER

I think 'twas Soto that your honour means.

LORD

'Tis very true. Thou didst it excellent.
Well, you are come to me in happy time,

The rather for I have some sport in hand
 Wherein your cunning can assist me much. 90
 There is a lord will hear you play tonight;
 But I am doubtful of your modesties
 Lest, over-eyeing of his odd behaviour±±
 For yet his honour never heard a play±±
 You break into some merry passion, 95
 And so offend him; for I tell you, sirs,
 If you should smile he grows impatient.

A PLAYER

Fear not, my lord, we can contain ourselves
 Were he the veriest antic in the world.

LORD *(to a Servingman)*

Go, sirrah, take them to the buttery 100
 And give them friendly welcome every one.
 Let them want nothing that my house affords.

Exit one with the Players

(To a Servingman) Sirrah, go you to Barthol'mew, my
 page,

And see him dressed in all suits like a lady.
 That done, conduct him to the drunkard's chamber 105
 And call him 'madam', do him obeisance.
 Tell him from me, as he will win my love,
 He bear himself with honourable action
 Such as he hath observed in noble ladies
 Unto their lords by them accomplisheÁd. 110
 Such duty to the drunkard let him do
 With soft low tongue and lowly courtesy,
 And say 'What is't your honour will command
 Wherein your lady and your humble wife
 May show her duty and make known her love?' 115
 And then with kind embracements, tempting kisses,
 And with declining head into his bosom
 Bid him shed tears, as being overjoyed
 To see her noble lord restored to health,
 Who for this seven years hath esteemeÁd him 120
 No better than a poor and loathsome beggar.
 And if the boy have not a woman's gift
 To rain a shower of commanded tears,
 An onion will do well for such a shift,

Which, in a napkin being close conveyed, 125
Shall in despite enforce a watery eye.
See this dispatched with all the haste thou canst.
Anon I'll give thee more instructions.

Exit a Servingman

I know the boy will well usurp the grace,
Voice, gait, and action of a gentlewoman. 130
I long to hear him call the drunkard husband,
And how my men will stay themselves from laughter
When they do homage to this simple peasant.
I'll in to counsel them. Haply my presence
May well abate the over-merry spleen 135
Which otherwise would grow into extremes.

Exeunt