

The Taming of the Shrew

Induction 2

*Enter aloft Sly, the drunkard, with attendants,
some with apparel, basin, and ewer, and other
appurtenances; and Lord*

SLY For God's sake, a pot of small ale!

FIRST SERVINGMAN

Will't please your lordship drink a cup of sack?

SECOND SERVINGMAN

Will't please your honour taste of these conserves?

THIRD SERVINGMAN

What raiment will your honour wear today?

SLY I am Christophero Sly. Call not me `honour' nor 5
`lordship'. I ne'er drank sack in my life, and if you give
me any conserves, give me conserves of beef. Ne'er ask
me what raiment I'll wear, for I have no more doublets
than backs, no more stockings than legs, nor no more
shoes than feet±±nay, sometime more feet than shoes, 10
or such shoes as my toes look through the over-leather.

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 infuseÁd with so foul a spirit. 15

SLY What, would you make me mad? Am not I
Christopher Sly±±old Sly's son of Burton Heath, by
birth a pedlar, by education a cardmaker, by transmuta-
tion a bearherd, and now by present profession a
tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat alewife of Wincot, 20
if she know me not. If she say I am not fourteen pence
on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lying'st
knave in Christendom. What, I am not bestraught;
here's±±

THIRD SERVINGMAN

O, this it is that makes your lady mourn. 25

SECOND SERVINGMAN

O, this is it 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.
Call home thy ancient thoughts from banishment, 30
And banish hence these abject lowly dreams.
Look how thy servants do attend on thee,
Each in his office, ready at thy beck.
Wilt thou have music?

Music

Hark, Apollo plays,
And twenty cageÁd nightingales do sing. 35
Or wilt thou sleep? We'll have thee to a couch
Softer and sweeter than the lustful bed
On purpose trimmed up for Semiramis.
Say thou wilt walk, we will bestrew the ground.
Or wilt thou ride, thy horses shall be trapped, 40
Their harness studded all with gold and pearl.
Dost thou love hawking? Thou hast hawks will soar
Above the morning lark. Or wilt thou hunt,
Thy hounds shall make the welkin answer them
And fetch shrill echoes from the hollow earth. 45

FIRST SERVINGMAN

Say thou wilt course, thy greyhounds are as swift
As breatheÁd stags, ay, fleeter than the roe.

SECOND SERVINGMAN

Dost thou love pictures? We will fetch thee straight
Adonis painted by a running brook,
And Cytherea all in sedges hid, 50
Which seem to move and wanton with her breath
Even as the waving sedges play wi'th' wind.

LORD

We'll show thee lo as she was a maid,
And how she was beguileÁd and surprised,
As lively painted as the deed was done. 55

THIRD SERVINGMAN

Or Daphne roaming through a thorny wood,
Scratching her legs that one shall swear she bleeds,
And at that sight shall sad Apollo weep,
So workmanly the blood and tears are drawn.

LORD

Thou art a lord, and nothing but a lord. 60

Thou hast a lady far more beautiful
Than any woman in this waning age.

FIRST SERVINGMAN

And till the tears that she hath shed for thee
Like envious floods o'errun her lovely face
She was the fairest creature in the world; 65
And yet she is inferior to none.

SLY

Am I a lord, and have I such a lady?
Or do I dream? Or have I dreamed till now?
I do not sleep. I see, I hear, I speak.
I smell sweet savours, and I feel soft things. 70
Upon my life, I am a lord indeed,
And not a tinker, nor Christopher Sly.
Well, bring our lady hither to our sight,
And once again a pot o'th' smallest ale.

SECOND SERVINGMAN

Will't please your mightiness to wash your hands? 75
O, how we joy to see your wit restored!
O that once more you knew but what you are!
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. 80
But did I never speak of all that time?

FIRST SERVINGMAN

O yes, my lord, but very idle words,
For though you lay here in this goodly chamber
Yet would you say ye were beaten out of door,
And rail upon the hostess of the house, 85
And say you would present her at the leet
Because she brought stone jugs and no sealed quarts.
Sometimes you would call out for Cicely Hacket.

SLY Ay, the woman's maid of the house.

THIRD SERVINGMAN

Why, sir, you know no house, nor no such maid, 90
Nor no such men as you have reckoned up,
As Stephen Sly, and old John Naps of Greet,
And Peter Turf, and Henry Pimpernel,
And twenty more such names and men as these,
Which never were, nor no man ever saw. 95

SLY

Now Lord be thankeÁd for my good amends.

ALL Amen.

SLY I thank thee. Thou shalt not lose by it.

Enter Bartholomew the Page, as Lady, with attendants

BARTHOLOMEW

How fares my noble lord?

SLY Marry, I fare well,

For here is cheer enough. Where is my wife? 100

BARTHOLOMEW

Here, noble lord. What is thy will with her?

SLY

Are you my wife, and will not call me husband?

My men should call me lord. I am your goodman.

BARTHOLOMEW

My husband and my lord, my lord and husband;

I am your wife in all obedience. 105

SLY

I know it well. *(To the Lord)* What must I call her?

LORD

Madam.

SLY Al'ce Madam or Joan Madam?

LORD

Madam, and nothing else. So lords call ladies.

SLY

Madam wife, they say that I have dreamed,

And slept above some fifteen year or more. 110

BARTHOLOMEW

Ay, and the time seems thirty unto me,

Being all this time abandoned from your bed.

SLY

'Tis much. Servants, leave me and her alone.

Exeunt [Lord and] attendants

Madam, undress you and come now to bed.

BARTHOLOMEW

Thrice-noble lord, let me entreat of you 115

To pardon me yet for a night or two,

Or if not so, until the sun be set,

For your physicians have expressly charged,

In peril to incur your former malady,

That I should yet absent me from your bed. 120
I hope this reason stands for my excuse.

SLY Ay, it stands so that I may hardly tarry so long. But
I would be loath to fall into my dreams again. I will
therefore tarry in despite of the flesh and the blood.

Enter a Messenger

MESSENGER

Your honour's players, hearing your amendment, 125
Are come to play a pleasant comedy,
For so your doctors hold it very meet,
Seeing too much sadness hath congealed your blood,
And melancholy is the nurse of frenzy.
Therefore they thought it good you hear a play 130
And frame your mind to mirth and merriment,
Which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life.

SLY

Marry, I will let them play it. Is not a comonty
A Christmas gambol, or a tumbling trick?

BARTHOLOMEW

No, my good lord, it is more pleasing stuff. 135

SLY

What, household stuff?

BARTHOLOMEW

It is a kind of history.

SLY

Well, we'll see't. Come, madam wife, sit by my side
And let the world slip. We shall ne'er be younger.

Bartholomew sits