

# **The Taming of the Shrew**

**by William Shakespeare**

Presented by Paul W. Collins

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## *Induction* **Sly Transformation**

A loud disturbance bursts from the tavern into the chill fall air: “I’ll freeze *you*, i’ faith!” a drunken customer retorts, as the hostess drives him brusquely from an old inn at the edge of town, near open fields and an ancient English wood.

The buxom woman had expected a gratuity from the tattered tinker, based on her alluring looks and patient company at the bar, but her only return has been abuse. “A pair of *stocks*,”—wooden leg restraints, “*you rogue!*” she threatens, as he stumbles into the dirt road.

“Ye are a *baggage!*” he shouts back. “The *Slys* are no rogues!—look in the *chronicles!*—we came in with Richard *Conqueror!*” he contends haughtily—while backing away from her, showing little of William’s conquering spirit, and nothing akin to Richard’s lion heart.

“Therefore, *paucas pallabris,*”—*in few words*, “let the world *slide! Sessa!*”—let all *cease*.

“You will not pay for the *glasses* you have burst?”

“*No*, not a *denier!* *Go*, by Jeronimy!—go to thy *cold bed*, then *warm* thee!”—die, and roast in hellfire.

“I know my *remedy!*” cries the formidable female, glowering. “I must go fetch the third-borough!”—deputy constable.

The tall miscreant waves imperiously. “Third, or fourth, or *fifth* borough!—I’ll answer him, by God, *I’ll not budge an inch, boy!*” He watches—wishfully, now—as the comely companion flounces into the village in search of an officer.

“Let him come,” the man mutters. “But *kindly.*” He reels back toward the tap house, slips and tumbles, falling against the wall near the door. He starts to rise, thinks better of it, and with his back against the weather-worn plaster, slides slowly down.

There, feeling the warmth of late-afternoon sun, Sly closes his eyes and drifts into comforting dreams.

The country calm is troubled once again: a blaring trumpet heralds the arrival at the inn of a neighbor, a wealthy gentleman on horseback, dusty from the hunt, and followed by a clamorous pack of barking, howling dogs and a train of mounted attendants.

“Huntsman, I charge thee, tend my hounds well!” As he dismounts, the silver-haired squire directs that two of the pack be mated. “Brach poor Merriman; the cur is *embossed!*”—lathered from exercise. “And couple Clowder with the *deep*-mouthed brach”—loud bitch.

He was delighted by his hounds’ performance today. “Saw’st thou not, boy, how Silver made it good at the hedge-corner, in the *coldest fault?*”—regained the fox’s trail despite a dodge. “I would not lose that dog for twenty pound!”

“Why, *Belman* is as good as *he*, my lord!” the huntsman replies. “He cried upon it at the nearest loss—and twice today picked out the dullest scent! Trust me, I take him for the better dog!”

“Thou art a fool!” scoffs the exhilarated old squire. “If *Echo* were as fleet, I would esteem him worth a *dozen* such!”

He hands the reins to an attendant, as the huntsmen struggle to gather and leash the swirling animals for kenneling. “But sup them well, and look unto them all. Tomorrow I intend to hunt again!”

“I will, my lord.”

The squire heads toward the alehouse for some refreshment before going home, across the road and just south, to supper. He spots the questionable heir to the Normans’ glory. “What’s here? One dead, or drunk?” He motions to an attendant. “See—doth he breathe?”

The man kneels beside Sly. “He breathes, my lord. Were he not warmed with *ale*, this were a bed but cold to sleep in so soundly!”

The gentleman is disgusted by the sight. “Oh, monstrous beast! How like a *swine* he lies! Grim death, how foul and loathsome is thine image!”

But he is in a jovial mood after the day’s vigorous pursuits—and he craves entertainment for tonight. “Sirs, I will practise on this drunken man!” he tells the huntsmen mischievously. “What think you: if he were conveyed to a *bed*, and wrapped in sweet clothes, *rings* put upon his fingers, a most delicious *banquet* by his bed, fine *attendants* near him—when he wakes, would not the beggar then forget himself?”

The chief huntsman laughs. “Believe me, lord, I think he cannot choose!”

His young assistant considers. “It would seem *strange* unto him when he waked....”

“Even as a flattering *dream*, or a worthless fantasy,” says the squire. He has decided. “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—ones depicting women in scant attire. “Balm his foul head in warm, distilled 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, and with a low, submissive reverence, say, ‘What is it Your Honour will command?’ Let one attend him with a silver basin bestrewed with flowers, another bear an ewer full of rose-water, and a third a towel; and say ‘Will’t please Your Lordship cool your hands?’

“Some one 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! It will be pastime surpassing excellent if he be *husbanded*—with modesty.

“Persuade him that he hath been *lunatic*; and when he says what he *is*, say that he *dreams*—for he is nothing but a *mighty lord!* This do, and do it *kindly*, gentle sirs.”

“My lord, I warrant you we will play our part so as he shall think, by our ‘true diligence,’ he is no less than what we *say* he is!” the chief huntsman assures him.

The squire motions to his attendants. “Take him up gently, and to bed with him; and each one do his office when he wakes!”

Two men lift the tinker by the arms, a third by the ankles, and they carry him across the road and down to the manor house. Others run ahead to gather appurtenances of the incipient lord’s new station.

With the huntsman, the squire has again started to go in for ale when the call of a horn halts him outside the tavern. “Sirrah, go see what trumpet ’tis that sounds.” A boy trots around a corner of the wide building to find out. “Belike that means some noble gentleman, travelling on some journey, is to repose him here.” The lad returns. “How now! Who is it?”

“An’t please Your Honour, *players!*—that offer *service* to Your Lordship!” says the lad hopefully.

“Bid them come near.”

Soon the band of touring actors arrives outside the inn., with their baggage in a mule-drawn cart. The company’s leader bows elegantly to the gentleman.

“Now, fellows, you are *welcome!*” the squire tells them.

“We thank Your Honour!”

“Do you intend to stay with *me* tonight?”

“So please Your Lordship to accept our duty—”

“With all my heart!” cries the squire eagerly. He notes a particularly handsome actor—one who resembles Sly, were he restored to sobriety and good health: “*This* fellow I remember, since once he played a farmer’s eldest son!” He thinks, recalling with pleasure. “’Twas where you *wooded* the gentlewoman so well,” he tells the player. “I have forgot your name; but, surely that part was *aptly fitted* and naturally *performed!*”

“I think ’twas ‘Solo’ that Your Honour means,” says the striking bachelor, citing his favorite role.

“’Tis very *true!*—thou didst it *excellent!*

“Well, you are come to me in a happy time, the rather for I have some sport in hand wherein your cunning can assist me much. There is a *lord* who will hear you play tonight!” He regards them carefully. “But—for yet his honour never heard a play—I am doubtful of your modesties, lest, over-eyeing of his... *odd* behavior, you break into some *merry* mood—and so *offend* him! For I tell you, sirs, if you should even *smile*, he’ll grow impatient....”

“Fear not, my lord,” the leader assures him. “We can contain ourselves, were he the veriest antic in the world!”

The gentleman nods, and motions for an attendant. “Go, sirrah, take them to the buttery, and give them friendly *welcome*, every *one!*” The actors are delighted with a chance to perform—and the promise of free food and lodging. They bow, and a man takes them across the road to their supper in the ample country kitchen. “Let them want nothing that my house affords!”

The host rubs his hands together happily in anticipation. He summons another man.

“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; call him ‘*Madam,*’ and do him obeisance. Tell him from me: as he would win my love he must bear himself with *honourable* action, such as he hath observed in noble ladies, by them accomplished unto their lords.

“Such duty to the drunkard let him do, with soft, low tongue and lowly curtesy, and say,”—he now speaks demurely, in a soft, high-pitched voice, “‘What is’t Your Honour will command, wherein your lady and your humble wife may *show* her duty, and make *known* her love?’”

The servant laughs, amused by the squire’s coy simulation.

“And then with kind *embracements*, tempting *kisses*—and with declining head into his bosom, bid him shed *tears*, as if being overjoyed to see her noble lord restored to *health*, who for this seven years hath esteemed himself no better than a poor and loathsome *beggar!*

“And if the boy have not a woman’s gift for raining a shower of commanded tears, an *onion* will do well for such a shift, which in a napkin being close conveyed shall in despite *enforce* a watery eye!

“See this dispatched with all the haste thou canst! Anon I’ll give thee more instructions.

“I know the boy will well usurp the grace, voice, gait and action of a *gentlewoman!* 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 which otherwise would grow into extremes!”

The servant goes to inform young Bartholomew and the others.

**A**fter supper that evening, in the main upstairs bedchamber of the gentleman’s country home, his household servants are most attentive to the new nobleman.

Bathed, and dressed in night clothes while still mumbling, oblivious, Sly has since lain, snoring, on the canopied bed in a robe. Now he awakens, nauseous, and sits up to find his eyes stinging, ears ringing, and head pounding. He moans and coughs. “For God’s sake, a pot of small ale!” he rasps.

An older man comes to him. “Will’t please Your Lordship drink a cup of sack?”—white wine imported from Spain.

“Will’t please Your Honour taste of these conserves?” asks another, offering a silver tray holding dainty dishes of sugared fruit.

A third servant approaches. “What raiment will Your Honour wear today?”

“I am *Christopher Sly,*” groans the tinker, his head dropping back against the clean pillow. “Call not *me* ‘honour’ nor ‘lordship!’ I ne’er drank *sack* in my life; and if you give me any conserves, give me conserves of *beef!*”—salted and dried meat. “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, sometimes *more* feet than shoes, or such shoes as my toes look *through* from under the leather!”

Says a tall attendant, unhappily, “Heaven *cease* this idle mood in Your Honour! Oh, that a mighty man of such descent, of such *possessions* and so high *esteem*, should be infused with so foul a spirit!”

The guest stares. “What, would you make me mad?” He sits up, painfully, holding a hand atop his head as if to hold it on. “Am *not* I Christopher *Sly*, old *Sly*’s son from Burtonheath?—by birth a pedlar, by education a card-marker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a *tinker*!”

“Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, if *she* know me not! If she say I am not *fourteen pence* on the *score*”—tab—“for sheer *ale*, score *me* up for the lying-est knave in Christendom!”

He sees their pitying glances. “*What?* Am I *distraught*!” He looks at a familiar scar on his hand. “Here’s—”

“*Oh,*” moans a servant, “*this* it is that makes your *lady* mourn!”

“*Oh, this* is it that makes your *servants* droop!” wails another.

A tall, graying man—steward of the house, perhaps—regards *Sly*. “*Hence* comes it that your kindred shun your house, as if *beaten* hence by your strange *lunacy*!”

“O noble lord, bethink thee of thy *birth*, call *home* thy ancient thoughts from banishment, 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*? Hark! *Apollo* plays!”—musicians in a corner of the high-ceilinged bedroom begin a melody, with lute, haughboy and flute—“and twenty caged nightingales do sing!”

“Or wilt thou *sleep*? We’ll have thee to a couch softer and sweeter than the bed trimmed up on lustful purpose for *Semiramis*!”—the woman who founded exotic Babylon. “Say thou wilt *walk*; we will strew rushes before thee! Or wilt thou *ride*?—thy horse shall be trapped out in 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”—the sky—“*answer* them, and fetch shrill echoes from the hollow earth!”

“Say thou wilt *course*,” the first servant says to *Sly*. “Thy greyhounds are as swift as breathèd stags!”—ones in heat. “*Aye*, fleeter than the *roe*!”

The second servant raises an eyebrow knowingly. “Dost thou love *pictures*? We will fetch thee straight Adonis painted by a running brook—with *Cytherea* almost hid by hedges which seem to *move* and *wanton* with her breath, even as the waving sedges play with *wind*!”

“We’ll show thee, *Io*, when she was a *virgin*,” the older man promises, “and how she was beguiled and surprised!—*painted* as lively as the deed was *done*!”

A third servant nods—with unfeigned enthusiasm. “Or *Daphne* roaming through a thorny wood, scratching her legs such that one shall swear she bleeds—and at that sight shall sad *Apollo* weep, so workmanly the blood and tears are drawn!”

The grizzled steward would move beyond details of classical imagery. “Thou art a *lord*, and nothing *but* a lord—thou hast a *lady* far more beautiful than any woman of *this* waning age!”

“*Aye*, until the tears that she hath shed for thee like envious floods o’er-ran her lovely face, she was the fairest creature in the *world*!” says a servant mournfully. “Even *yet* she is inferior to none!”

*Sly* blinks slowly, still dizzy. “Am I a *lord*? And have I such a *lady*? Or do I dream?”

“Or have I dreamed till *now*?” He peers around him “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 a *tinker*, nor Christopher *Sly*!”

“Well, bring our lady hither to our sight!” he commands with a grand wave—and winces at the sudden movement. “And once again,” he adds, gingerly, “a pot o’ the smallest ale.”

A servant with a soft, white cloth laid across a bent arm comes to him and bows; he holds an ewer of scented water and a basin, both of polished silver. “Will’t please Your Mightiness to wash your hands? Oh, how we *joy* to see your wit *restored!* Oh, 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!*”

“These *fifteen years!*” cries Sly. “By my faith, a goodly *nap!* But did I never *speak* in all that time?”

“Oh, yes, my lord—but very *idle* words.” The man actually recalls some. “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; and say you would prevent her at the *leet,*”—manorial court, “because she brought you stone jugs, and not sealed quarts”—she unlawfully served untaxed brew. “Sometimes you would call out for Cicely Hackit.”

Sly smiles warmly. “*Aye,* the woman’s *made* in that house!”

The servant frowns. “Why, sir, you know no *house,* nor no such *maid!*—nor no such *men* as you have beckoned up, such as Steep’n Sly in Greece, then old John Naps—and Peter Turph and Harry Pimpernell—and twenty more such names, and men as these which never were, nor no man ever saw!”

Looking around at the room’s costly furnishings, at the supplicating servants, Sly considers. “Now *Lord be praised* for my good *amends!*”

The serving-men smile. “*Amen!*”

“I thank thee!” the restored soul tells the steward. “Thou shalt not lose by it.” He sees a well-dressed lady entering the room.

“How fares my noble lord?” she asks softly.

“Marry, I fare *well,*” says Sly, “for here is cheer enough.” Her perfumed presence arouses a thought. “Where is my wife?”

The lady blushes. “*Here,* noble lord. What is thy will with her?”

Sly is puzzled. “Are you my wife, but will not call me *husband?* My *men* should call me ‘lord.’ I am your ‘*goodman.*’”

She says, courteously and with a delicate nod, “My husband and my lord, my lord and husband. I am your wife in all obedience.”

“I know it well.” Sly looks to the silver-haired steward. “What must I call her?”

“Madam.”

Sly knows *madams* of only one sort. “*Alice* madam, or *Joan* madam?”

“Madam’ and nothing else; so lords call ladies.”

The tinker regards her. “Madam Wife, they say that I have slept and dreamed, about some fifteen year or more.”

The powdered page replies prettily, “*Aye,* and the time seems *thirty* unto me, being all this time abandoned from your *bed.*”

“’Tis *much,*” says Sly, eager to rectify. “Servants, leave me and her alone! Madam, *undress* you and come now to bed!”

Says the beautified boy quickly, “Thrice-noble lord, let me entreat of you to *pardon* me yet for a night or two... or, if not so, until the *sun* be set! For your *physicians* have expressly charged, on peril of your former malady’s recurring, that I should yet absent me from your bed!

“I hope this reason stands for my *excuse,*” he pleads—sincerely.

“*Aye,* it *stands,*” says the tinker dryly. “So much 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.”

Another servant, a balding man with a long, straight nose, has come from the main hall downstairs. He bows to Christopher Sly. “Your Honour’s *players,* hearing of your amendment,

are come to play a pleasant *comedy*. For so your doctors hold it very meet, seeing that too much sadness hath congealed your blood; and melancholy is the nurse of frenzy.

“Therefore they thought it good you hear a *play*, and frame your mind to *mirth* and *merriment*—which bars a thousand harms, and lengthens life.”

Sly is accommodating. “Marry, I will let them play it.” But his knowledge of the stage is slim. “Is not a comonty a Christmas gambold, or a tumbling trick?”

The boyish lady is relieved. “No, my good lord; it is more *pleasing* stuff!”

“What, household stuff?”

“It is a kind of *history*,” she explains.

“Well, we’ll see’t.” Sly edges off the bed and, cautiously, stands up straight. “Come, Madam Wife, sit by my side and let the world slip!—we shall ne’er be *younger!*”

As two attendants quickly prepare to clothe him in evening finery and bring him boots, the major-domo leads the others downstairs, to settle themselves comfortably in the torch-lit hall and await the start of the evening’s entertainment.

It is called *The Taming of the Shrew*, and it takes place in old Italy...

## *Chapter One* **Signior Minola’s Daughters**

**T**wo handsome young men survey a sunny public square near the university this brisk autumn morning. They look around happily, watching the pigeons feed.

Lucentio’s costly clothes and feathered hat proclaim the wealth of the gentleman’s family. “Tranio, since I had a great desire to see fair Padua, nursery of the arts, I am arrived in fruitful Lombardy, the pleasant garden of great Italy!—and, by my father’s love and leave, am armèd with his good will and thy good company, my trusty servant, well approved in all!

“Here let us breathe, and perhaps institute an ingenious course of *learning* and *studies*

“Pisa is renownèd for grave citizens, and the first among them my *father*, a merchant of great traffic through the world: *Vincentio*, Count of Bentivoli, gave me my being

“It shall become *Vincentio*’s *son*, brought up in Pisa, to serve all hopes conceivèd to bedeck that fortune with his virtuous deeds!

“And therefore, *Tranio*, for a time I’ll study *virtue*—and especially that part of philosophy will I apply which treats of *happiness* to be achieved by virtue. Tell me thy mind; for I have Pisa left and am to Padua come as he that leaves a shallow *plash* to plunge himself in the *deep*, and seeks to quench his thirst to satiety!”

“*Mi pardonato*, gentle master mine,” says *Tranio*, who has been watching three attractive young women who are crossing the square. “I am in all affected as *yourself*—glad that you thus continue your resolve to suck the *sweetest* from sweet philosophy.

“Only, good master, *while* we do admire this virtue and this moral discipline, let’s be no *stoics!*—not wear stocks, I pray, nor be so devoted to Aristotle’s constraints that *Ovid* be an outcast, quite abjured!” He has studied closely the Roman’s *Ars Amatoria* —*The Art of Loving*. “Bulk up what acquaintance you have with *logic*, and practice *rhetoric* in your common talk—but *music* and *poesy* use in *action!* The *mathematics* and the *metaphysics*,”—he shrugs—“fall to them as you find your stomach serves you.” But, he warns: “No *profit* grows where no *pleasure* is ta’en!

“In brief, sir, study what you most affect!”

Lucentio grins; he, too, has noted the young ladies’ smiling glances. “*Grand mercies*, *Tranio*; *well* dost thou advise!” He looks around impatiently for his other servant. “If *Biondello* now wert come ashore, we could at once put us in readiness, and take a lodging fit to entertain such *friends* as time in Padua shall beget.

“But stay a while; what company is *this?*”

“Master, some *show* to welcome us to town!” suggests Tranio dryly. They stand back, listening, as well-dressed citizens—several older noblemen and two young ladies—stop nearby in animated discussion.

“Gentlemen, importune me no farther,” insists Baptista Minola, a wealthy lord of fifty-five, “for how I am firmly resolvèd you *know*: that is, not bestow my younger daughter before I have a husband for the *elder*!”

At the door of his tall, gray-stone house on the square, he regards the other two gentlemen of means. “If either of you, or both, love *Katherina*, because I know you well and love you well, you shall have leave to court *her* at your pleasure.”

Gremio, forty-eight, smiles weakly as he thinks to himself: *To cart her rather!—she’s too rough for me!* He turns to his rival. “There, then, Hortensio—will you take a *wife*?”

But Katherina, fair-haired and twenty-five, is irked; she glares at her father: “I pray you, sir, is it your will to make a *whore* of me amongst these *mates*?”—*sailors*.

“*Mates*, maid?” says Hortensio. “How mean you *that*? No *mate* for you, unless you were of gentler, milder mould!”

“In faith, sir, *you* shall never need to fear!” scowls Katherina—who pointedly does not seek marriage. “Believe it: that is not *halfway* into *her* heart!” She scowls, red-faced, at the mild-mannered Hortensio. “But if it *were*, doubt not that her concern should be to drop a ‘comb’ on your noddle—a *three-legged stool*!—and *paint your face*, and use you as a *fool*!”

Hortensio quickly moves back from the virago. “From all such devils, good Lord, *deliver me!*”

“And *me, too*, good Lord!” adds Gremio.

- Lucentio and Tranio are chuckling. “Hush, master!” says Tranio, “here’s some good *pastime* toward!—that wench is stark *mad*, or wonderful froward!”

- Lucentio is staring at the younger sister. “But in the *other’s* silence do I see a maiden’s mild behavior and sobriety. *Peace*, Tranio....”

- “Well *said*, master!—*mum!*” He smiles, watching Lucentio’s fascination. “And gaze your fill!”

Signior Minola is resolute. “Gentlemen, so that I may *soon* make good what I have said—“ He pauses. “Bianca, get you in. And let it not displease thee, good Bianca, for I will love thee ne’er the less, my girl.”

“A pretty *pet!*” sneers Katherina, annoyed by her sister’s nod of dutiful compliance. “She *would* begin to *cry*—if she only knew *why!*”

Bianca, dark-haired and twenty-two, is calm. “Sister, content you with my discontent.” She turns to their father, her delicate features even more lovely in repose. “Sir, to your pleasure humbly I subscribe. My books and instruments shall be my company, on them to look and practise, by myself....”

- Lucentio is completely enchanted with Bianca. “Hark, Tranio—thou may’st hear *Minerva* speak!” The Roman goddess epitomizes wisdom.

Hortensio protests: “Signior Baptista, must you be so difficult? Sorry am I that our *good will* effects Bianca’s *grief!*”

“Why will you mew her up, Signior Baptista, for this *fiend of hell!*” demands Gremio, “and make her bear the penance for *her* tongue!”

“Gentlemen, *content* ye,” says Baptista. “I am resolvèd. Go *in*, Bianca.” She curtsies and enters the building. “And, as 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, or Signior Gremio, you, know any such, recommend them hither. For to knowledgeable men I will be very kind, and liberal to mine own children in good bringing up.” He turns to go inside. “And so farewell.

“Katherina, you may *stay*, for I have more to commune with Bianca.” He goes into his house.

The harpy fumes: “Well, I trust I may *go*, too, may I not? What?—shall I be *appointed hours*, as though belike I’d know not when to stay, when to *leave!*” She stalks away—an unescorted lady—down the city street.

“You may go to the *devil’s dam!*—*your* gifts are *that* good,” mutters Gremio, watching her. “*Here’s* none will hold you!”

Looking up at Signior Baptista’s mansion, where the younger maiden is to spend much of her time alone, he stroke his gray-streaked beard. “Here our luck is not so great, Hortensio, but that we may *together* blow on our nails, and fairly *fast it out!*”—wait hungrily, to the advantage of neither. “Our cake’s dough on *both* sides.” He sighs. “Farewell.

“Yet for the love I bear my sweet Bianca, if I can by any means light on a man fit to teach her that wherein she delights, I will whisk him to her father.” He starts to leave.

Hortensio, a bachelor of forty-one, nods. “So will I, Signior Gremio. But a word, I pray.

“Though the nature of our quarrel yet never brooked *parle*, know now, upon advice: it toucheth us *both* that we may yet again have access to our fair mistress, as happy rivals for Bianca’s love; then labour we to *effect one thing especially.*”

“What’s that, I pray?”

“Marry, sir—to get a *husband* for her sister.”

“A husband? A *devil!*”

“I say a husband.”

“*I say a devil!*” cries Gremio. “Thinkest thou, Hortensio, though her father be very *rich*, any man is so very a *fool* as to be *married to hell?*”

But Hortensio has considered the idea. “Gremio, though it pass *your* patience and *mine* to endure her loud alarms, why, man, there be good fellows in the world, if one could but light on them, who would take her with all faults—and *money* enough!”

“I cannot tell,” says Gremio doubtfully. “But I had as lief take *her* dowry as *this* condition: to be *whipped* at the high cross *every morning!*”

Hortensio laughs. “Faith, as you say, there’s small choice in *rotten* apples! But come! Since this ban, like a *law*, makes us *friends*, it shall be friendly *maintained* so far forth that, by helping Baptista’s elder daughter to a husband, we set his *younger* free for a husband.

“And then—*have at it afresh! Happy man* be his dole: he that runs fastest gets the *ring!*—and sweet *Bianca!* How say you, Signior Gremio?”

“I am agreed,” says he. The older gentleman tries to imagine a suitor for Katherina. “And I would I had *already* given him the best horse in Padua to begin his wooing, whoever would thoroughly woo *her!*—wed her and bed her—and *rid the house* of her!

“Come on.” The two would-be competitors walk away together to confer.

Lucentio is drawn closer to Bianca’s house on the square, and Tranio notes his daze. “I pray, sir, tell me: is it possible that *love* should of a sudden take such *hold?*”

“Oh, Tranio, till I found it to be *true*, I never thought it likely—or *possible!* But *see!*—while idly I stood looking on, I found the effect of ‘love in idleness,’”—the passion-inducing blossom, “and now in plainness do confess to thee, who art to me as secret and as dear as Anna to the Queen of Carthage was, Tranio: I *burn*, I *pine!*—I *perish*, Tranio, if I achieve not this young, modest girl!

“*Counsel* me, Tranio, for I know thou *canst*; *assist* me, Tranio, for I know thou *wilt!*”

His companion nods. “Master, it is no time to *hide* you now; affection is not *berated* out of the heart. If *love* have touched you,” he says, with a wry smile, “nought remains but so: ‘*Redime te captum quam queas minimo!*’—save yourself as best as you can.

Lucentio laughs, relieved not to be teased even further. “*Gramercies*, lad!—go forward! This contents me; the rest will *comfort*, for thy counsel’s sound.”

Tranio thinks. “Master, you looked so longingly on the maid that perhaps you marked not what’s the *pith* of all—”

“Oh, *yes!*—I saw sweet *beauty* in her face, such as the daughter of Agenor had, that made great *Jove* to humble him to her hand, when with his knees he kissed the Cretan strand!”

“Saw you no *more?* Marked you not how her *sister* began to scold, and raise up such a *storm* that mortal ears might hardly endure the din?”

Lucentio’s blue eyes picture only Bianca: “Tranio, I saw her coral *lips* moving—and with her breath she did perfume the *air*; sweet and sacred was all that I saw in her!”

Tranio laughs, shaking his head. “Nay, then, ’tis time to stir him from his *trance!* I pray, *awake*, sir! If you love the maid, bend thoughts and wits to *achieve* her!”

“Thus it stands: her elder sister is so curst and beshrewèd that, till the father rid his hands of her, master, *your* love must live as a *maiden at home!* And he has closely mewed her up, so she will not be annoyed by *suitors.*”

“Ah, Tranio, what a *cruel* father’s he!” says Lucentio. “But art thou not advisèd that he took some care to get for her cunning *schoolmasters* to instruct her?”

Tranio grins. “*Aye*, marry, I *am*, sir—and now ’tis *plotted!*”

“I *have* it, Tranio!”

“By this hand, master, *both* our inventions meet and jump *as one!*”

“Tell me thine first!”

“*You* will be a schoolmaster, and undertake the teaching of the maid!—that’s *your* device!”

“*It is!*” says Lucentio. “May it be done?”

Tranio shakes his head. “Not possible,” he says, pretending to demur. “For then who shall bear *your* part, and in Padua, here, be Vincentio’s son, keep house and ply his book, welcome his friends, visit his countrymen—and *banquet* them?”

“*Basta!*”—*enough*, laughs Lucentio. “Content thee, for I have it in full: we have not yet been seen in any house here, nor can we be distinguished by our *faces* for man or master. Then it follows thus: *thou* shalt be master, Tranio, in my *stead*—keep house and port and servants as I should.

“I will some *other* be—some Florentine, some Neapolitan, or a more humble man of *Pisa*.

“’Tis *hatched*, and shall be *so!* Tranio, at once uncase thee: take my coloured hat and cloak! When Biondello comes, he waits on *thee!*—but first I will trick him into holding his tongue.”

“So had you need,” says Tranio, taking the plumed hat in exchange for his plain cap, and donning, with a flourish, the costly, elegant cloak. “In brief, sir, sith it *your* pleasure is, I am tied to be *obedient*—for so your father charged me at our parting: ‘Be serviceable to my son,’ quoth he—although I think ’twas in another sense.” Lucentio laughs.

Tranio clearly relishes the chance to live as noblemen do. He sighs in mock resignation. “I am content to be ‘*Lucentio*’ because so well I *love* Lucentio.”

“Tranio, *be* so—because *Lucentio* loves! And let me be a *slave*—to achieving that maid whose sudden sight hath thrallèd my wounded eye!” He spots Biondello down the street. “Here comes the rogue! Sirrah, where have you *been?*” he calls.

“Where have I been?” demands Biondello, sixteen, hurrying to the two. “Nay, *how now*, where were *you?*” He looks them up and down. “Master, has my fellow stolen your clothes?—or you stolen his?—or *both?* Pray, what’s the news?”

“Sirrah, come hither,” says Lucentio urgently. “’Tis no time to *jest*, and therefore frame your manners to the time! Your fellow, Tranio, here, to *save my life*, puts my apparel and my *countenance* on, and I for my *escape* have put on his—for in a quarrel since I came ashore I *killed a man*, and fear I was descried!”

“Wait you on *him* as is becoming, I charge you, while I make way from hence to save my life! You understand me?”

“I, sir? Ne’er a *whit!*” Biondello doesn’t believe a word of it.

Lucentio persists: “And not a jot of ‘*Tranio*’ in your mouth—Tranio is changed into *Lucentio.*”

“The better for *him!* Would I were so, too!”

Tranio clasps an arm around the lad's shoulder. "I' faith, boy, you should want to share the *next wish after*: that Lucentio *in deed* had Baptista's younger daughter!" Now Biondello understands—and grins mischievously. "But, sirrah, not for *my* sake, but your master's, I advise you use your manners discreetly in all kind of *companies*. When I am alone, why, then I am Tranio; but in all places else, your master Lucentio."

Biondello nods assent.

"Tranio, let's go," says Lucentio. "One thing more rests for myself to execute, to make me one among these wooers, so that if they ask me, my 'reasoning' will suffice as both *good* and *weighty*!" He leads them to find a bookseller.

## *Chapter Two* **Petruchio Goes Wiving**

**A**t the front of the English manor's main hall near the glowing hearth at one side, a servant approaches Christopher Sly with another flagon of wine for his small table.

"My lord, you nod; you do not follow the *play*..."

"Yes, by Saint Anne, *do* I," insists the tinker, blinking and sliding back up in the cushioned chair. "A good matter, surely." He yawns. "Comes there any more of it?"

"My lord, 'tis but *begun*," says the rosy-cheeked gentlewoman sitting beside him.

"'Tis a very excellent piece of work, Madam Lady," says Sly, eyeing her again. He quaffs deeply. "Would 'twere *done*." He smiles warmly.

As the players return, the tinker's apprehensive "wife" fills his glass generously.

The nominal nobleman drains it, eases back and closes his eyes; the actors' illusions—strange, yet charming—are apparently to continue.

Young Bartholomew leans forward, watching and listening.

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**R**ugged and good looking, a tall, well-built country gentleman of thirty strides past carefully tended beds of flowers, now drooping after an early frost, toward the front entrance of a tall mansion.

Signior Petruchio glances around the sunny, well-paved city square at its proud limestone buildings and fine old trees, most of them sporting the bright reds and yellows of fall. "Verona, for a while I take my leave, to see my friends in Padua—and of *all*, my best beloved and approved friend, *Hortensio*!

"And I trow this is his house." Here, sirrah Grumio, knock, I say!"

His servant is a short, barrel-shaped man of fifty. "*Knock*, sir? *Whom* should I knock? Is there man has *reused* Your Worship?"

"Villain, I say knock me here *sound-ly*!"

"Knock *you* here, sir! Why, sir, what am *I*, sir, that I should knock you here, sir?"

"*Villain*, I say knock me at this gate!—and rap me *well*, or I'll knock your knave's pate!"

"My master is grown quarrelsome," mutters Grumio. "I should knock you *first*, and then I'd know, after, who comes by it the *worse*!"

Petruchio is, as always, impatient and impulsive. "Will it not *be*? 'Faith, sirrah, an you'll not *knock*, I'll *ring* it!" he cries, seizing the rascal's ear and wringing it. "I'll learn how you can *fa*, *sol*, and *sing* it!"

Grumio drops to his knees and grasps the gentleman's sleeve. "*Help*, masters, *help*!" he calls, struggling. "My master is *mad*!"

Petruchio releases him with a shove. "Now *knock* when I bid you, sirrah *villain*!"

The front door swings open and Signior Hortensio peers out. “*How now? What’s the matter?*” He sees the visitors. “My old friend *Grumio!* And my good friend *Petruchio!* How do you all at *Verona?*”

Petruchio smiles. “Signior Hortensio, come you to part the fray? *Contutti le core bene trobatto,*”—heartfelt greetings, “may I say!”

Hortensio comes out and shakes his hand warmly. “*Alla nostra casa ben venuto!*”—welcome to our house. “*Multo honorata, signor mio Petruchio!* Rise, Grumio, rise! We will resolve this quarrel!”

“*Nay,* ’tis no matter, sir, what he alleges *in Latin!*” says Grumio, wincing as he touches his burning ear. “If *this* be not a lawful case for me to *leave his service!*—

“Look you, sir, he *bid* me knock him, and rap him *soundly,* sir! Well, was it *fit* for a servant to use his master so?—he whom I would to God I *had* well knocked at first, being perhaps, for aught I see, of two-and-thirty *short* a pip!”—shy of a winning hand at cards; dim. “Then had not Grumio come by the worse!”

Petruchio scoffs. “A senseless villain. Good Hortensio, I bade the rascal knock upon your door, but for my heart could not get him to *do* it!”

Grumio objects. “Knock at the *door?! Oh, heavens!* Spake you not *these* words plain: ‘Sirrah, knock *me* here, rap *me* here, knock *me* well, and knock *me* soundly’? And come you *now* with knocking *at the door?*”

Petruchio waves the chubby churl away. “Sirrah, be *gone!*—or *talk* not, I advise you!”

Urbane Hortensio knows these two farm-dwellers well. “Petruchio, *patience;* I am Grumio’s surety! Why, this’s a sad occurrence ’twixt him and you, your ancient, trusty, *pleasant* servant Grumio!

“But tell me now, sweet friend, what happy gale blows you to Padua, here, from old Verona?”

Petruchio’s usual good humor returns. “Such wind as scatters young men through the world, to seek their fortunes farther than at home, where small *experience* grows!

“But, in a few, Signior Hortensio, thus it stands with me: Antonio, my father, is deceased; and I have thrust myself into this maze, haply to *wive* and *thrive* as best I may! Crowns in my purse I have, and goods at home, and so am come abroad to see the *world!*”

Hortensio has a sudden thought—but he laughs. “Petruchio, shall I then come *roundly* to thee, and wish thee to a *shrewd, ill-favoured wife?* Thou’ldst thank me but a little for my counsel!

“And yet, I’ll promise thee, she shall be *rich*—and *very rich!*”

“But thou’rt too much my *friend,* and I’ll not wish thee to *her!*”

Now the Veronese gentleman smiles. “Signior Hortensio, ’twixt such friends as we, few words suffice, and therefore: if thou know one rich enough to be *Petruchio’s* wife, as *wealth* is the burden”—the chorus—“of my wooing dance, be she as foul as was Florentius’ love, as old as Sibyl, and as curst and shrewd as Socrates’ Xanthippe, or a *worse,* she perturbs me not!—and it not removes, at least, *interest’s* edge in me, were she as rough as are the Adriatic’s swelling *seas!*

“I come to wive it *wealthily* in Padua—if *wealthily,* then *happily* in Padua!”

Grumio confirms the intention. “Aye, look you, sir, he tells you flatly what his mind is. Why, give him *gold* enough and marry him to a *puppet,* or a *fishing* lure, or an old trot with ne’er a *tooth* in her head, though she have as many *diseases* as *two-and-fifty!*”—the whole deck. “Why, *nothing* comes amiss, if *money* comes withal!”

Hortensio is encouraged. “Petruchio, since we are stepped thus far in, I will continue what I broached in jest. I *can,* Petruchio, help thee to a wife with wealth enough—and *young* and *beauteous,* brought up as best *becomes* a gentlewoman! Her only fault, and that is fault *enough,* is that she is intolerably *curst* and *shrewd* and *froward!*—so far beyond all measure that, were my state even worse than it is, I would not wed her for a *mine* of gold!”

“Hortensio, peace!” laughs Petruchio. “Thou know’st not gold’s *effects!*”—all it can do. “Tell me her father’s name, and ’tis enough!—for I will board her, though she chide as loud as *thunder* when the clouds in autumn crack!”

“Her father is Baptista *Minola*, an affable and courteous gentleman. Her name is *Katherina Minola*—renowned in Padua for her scolding tongue.”

Petruchio nods; Signior Minola is widely well regarded as a conveyor of goods. “I know her father, though I know not her; and he knew my deceased father well.

“I will not *sleep*, Hortensio, till I *see* her! And therefore let me be so bold as to leave you at this first encounter—unless you will accompany me thither....”

Grumio, eager to witness such a promising encounter, tells Hortensio, “I pray you, sir, let him go while the mood lasts! On my word, if she knew him as well as I do, she would think *scolding* would do little good upon *him!* She may perhaps call him half-a-score ‘*knaves*’ or so; why, that’s *nothing!*”

“Once *he* begins, he’ll *rail* in his rope-tricks!”—tie her up, verbally. “I’ll tell you *what*, sir: if she withstand him even a little, he will throw a *figure*”—a rhetorical device—“in her face, and so *dis-figure* her with it that she shall have no more to *see* withal than a cat’s-eye!”—a gemstone. He shakes his head. “You know him *not*, sir!”

“Tarry, Petruchio!” says Hortensio. “I must go *with* thee, for in Baptista’s keep *my* treasure is! He hath the jewel of my life in *hold*—his younger daughter, beautiful *Bianca*—and withholds her from me—and others *more*, suitors to her and rivals in my love—supposing it a thing impossible, for those defects I have before recited, that ever Katherina will be wooed.

“Therefore this order hath Baptista ta’en: that none shall have access unto Bianca till Katherina the curst have got a husband!”

“*Katherina the Curst*” laughs Grumio. “A *title* for a maid!”—as in chivalry. “Of all titles, the *worst!*”

Hortensio has concocted a scheme. “Now shall my friend Petruchio do me grace, and offer me, *disguised* in sober robes, to old Baptista as a *schoolmaster* well seen in *music*, to instruct Bianca—so that I may by this device at least have leave and leisure to talk to her of love, and unsuspected to court her by herself!”

Grumio *tsks*. “*Here’s* no knavery!” says the rustic. “See how, to beguile the old folks, the young folks lay their heads together!”

He spots a gentleman coming down the street and talking with a young man whose books and threadbare coat imply that he is a scholar. “Master, master, look about you! Who goes there?”

“Peace, Grumio,” says Hortensio, “it is the rival of my love. Petruchio, stand by awhile....”

Grumio watches the graying Gremio. “A *proper* stripling,” he says wryly, “yet an amorous!”

Signior Gremio has just employed the man with him as a tutor in poetry. “Very well. I have perused the note,” he says, folding a list as they walk. “Hark you, sir, I’ll have them very *fairly bound*—all books on *love*; see to *that* in any case—and see that you read no other lectures to her!”

He pauses. “You understand me?—over and beside Signior *Baptista’s* liberality, *I’ll* amend it with largess.”

They start up the walk toward the house. “Take you *papers*, too,”—sonnets, love songs—“and let them be very well *perfumed*, for she to whom they go is sweeter than perfume itself!

“What will you read to her?”

“Whate’er I read to her, I’ll plead for *you*, as my patron, stand you assured, as firmly as if *yourself* were ever in place,” the disguised Lucentio tells him. “Yea, and perhaps with more *successful* words than you, unless you were a scholar, sir.”

Gremio is pleased. “Oh, this *learning*, what a thing it is!”

- Grumio is amused. “Oh, this woodcock, what an *ass* it is!”

- “*Peace*, sirrah!” Petruchio tells him.

“Grumio, *mum!*” says Hortensio. He nods politely as the gentleman arrives. “God save you, Signior Gremio.”

“And *you* are well met, Signior Hortensio. Trow you whither I am going? To Baptista Minola! I promised to inquire carefully about a schoolmaster for the fair Bianca, and by good fortune I have lighted well on *this* young man—for learning and behavior fit for her turn, well read in poetry and other books—*good* ones, I warrant ye!”

“’Tis well,” says Hortensio, apparently undisturbed. “And *I* have met a gentleman who hath promised me to help me to meet another: a fine *musician* to instruct our mistress!” He adds, pointedly: “So shall I no whit be behind in duty to fair Bianca, so beloved by me.”

“Beloved by *me!*” asserts Gremio. “And that my *deeds* shall prove!”

Thinks Grumio, *And that his bags shall prove!* He has an idea what a woman might find attractive about Gremio: *moneybags*.

Hortensio chides: “Gremio, ’tis now no time to *vent* our love! Listen to me, and if you speak me fair, I’ll tell you *news* good for *either* of us indifferently!” He nods toward Petruccio. “Here is a gentleman I met by chance who, upon agreement from us to his liking, will undertake *to woo curst Katherina!*—yea, and to *marry* her, if her dowry please him!”

“So said, so *done* as well!” says Gremio. But he has doubts. “Hortensio, have you told him all her *faults?*”

Petruccio steps forward. “I know she is an irksome, brawling *scold*. If that be all, masters, I hear no harm.”

Gremio is surprised, but delighted. “No?—say ’st me *so*, friend!” He eyes the strapping young squire. “What countryman?”

“Born in Verona, old Antonio’s son. My father dead, his fortune lives for *me*; and I do hope *good* days, and *long*, to see!”

Gremio speaks frankly: “Oh, sir, *such* a life with such a *wife* were... unlikely. But if you have the stomach, *to* it in God’s name!—you shall have me assisting you in all!

“Then will you woo this wild-cat?”

Smiling, Petruccio spreads his arms wide: “Will I *live?*”

Grumio hopes the fierce female will avenge his still-stinging ear. “Will he *woo* her? *Aye!*” Or *I’ll hang her!*

Petruccio is completely confident. “Why came I *hither*, but to that intent?

“Think you a little *din* can daunt *mine* ears? Have I not in my time heard *lions* roar? Have I not heard the *sea*, chafèd with winds, rage like an *angry boar* puffed up with sweat? Have I not heard great *artillery* in the field, and *heaven’s* ord’nance thunder in the skies? Have I not in a pitchèd battle heard loud *larums*, neighing *steeds*, and *trumpets’* clangor?

“And do you tell me of a *woman’s* tongue, that gives not *half* so great a blow to hearing as will a *chestnut* in a farmer’s fire?” He laughs. “Scare *boys* with *bugs!*”

*For he fears none*, thinks Grumio; bugs aren’t scary. But an *angry woman*....

Gremio likes what he hears. “Hortensio, hark! This gentleman is happily arrived, my mind presumes, for *his* own good and *ours!*”

“I promised we would be contributors,” Hortensio tells him, “and bear his charging for the wooing, whatsoever.”

Gremio nods agreement. “And so we *will*—provided that he *win* her!”

Grumio has no doubt. *I would I were as sure of a good dinner!*

Just then a stranger and his servant approach the gate. “Gentlemen, God save you,” says the debonair young gentleman. “If I may be so bold: tell me, I beseech you, which is the readiest way to the house of Signior Baptista Minola?”

“He that has a fair *daughter*,” adds the boy. He looks to his master. “Is’t he you mean?”

“Even he, Biondello,” says dressed-up Tranio.

Gremio scowls; he has competition enough already. “Hark you, sir; you mean not her to—”

“Perhaps I’m to her, sir,” says Tranio sharply. “What have *you* to do with it?” He is indignant, in his new role as the gentleman Lucentio from Pisa.

Petruchio interjects: “Not her that *chides*, sir, I pray, in any event...”

“I love *no* chiders, sir,” replies proud Tranio pointedly. “Biondello, let’s away.”

As they turn and go, they pass the poetry tutor—the real Lucentio—who whispers, “Well *begun*, Tranio!” He especially enjoyed the man’s disdainful, patrician demeanor.

Hortensio hails Tranio. “Sir, a *word* ere you go!—*are* you a suitor to the maid you talk of, yea or no?”

Tranio frowns. “And if I *be*, sir, is it any offence?”

“No,” growls Gremio, “if without more words you will get you *hence!*”

Tranio faces him squarely. “Why, sir, I pray, are not the streets as free for me as for you?”

“But so is not *she*,” Gremio contends, flushing.

“For what reason, I beseech you?”

“For this reason, if you’ll know: that she’s the choice love of *Signior Gremio!*”

“That she’s the chosen of Signior *Hortensio!*” counters his younger rival.

“*Softly*, my masters!” says *Lucentio/Tranio*. “If you be *gentlemen*, do me this right: hear me with patience. Baptista is a noble gentleman to whom my *father* is not at all unknown; and were his daughter no more fair than *he* is, she might suitors have—and *me* for one! Fair Leda’s daughter had a *thousand* wooers; then well *one more* may fair *Bianca* have!

“And so she *shall*,” he declares. “*Lucentio* shall become one, though *Paris* came in hope of speeding along alone!” They all know the legend: the Trojan prince’s Helen of Troy was stolen from her husband.

“*What?* This gentleman will out-*talk* us *all!*” complains Gremio.

Gremio’s new man of letters reassures him: “Sir, give him his head; I know he’ll prove a jade!”—a worn-out nag. Thus one imposter teases another.

Petruchio is impatient, eager to undertake his own project. “Hortensio, to what end are all these *words?*”

But Hortensio persists; he says to Tranio, “Sir, let me be so bold as ask you, did you yet ever *see* Baptista’s daughter?”

“No, sir; but hear I do that he hath *two*, the one as famous for a scolding tongue as is the other for beauteous modesty.”

“Sir, sir, the *first’s* for *me*,” Petruchio insists. “Let her go by.”

“Yea, leave that *labour* to great *Hercules*,” mutters Gremio. “And it may be more than Alcides’ *twelve!*”—the powerful hero’s set of difficult tasks.

Petruchio elaborates to Tranio’s “*Lucentio*.” “Sir, understand you this from me: in sooth the *younger* daughter, whom you hearken for, her father keeps from all access of suitors, and will not promise her to any man until the elder sister first be *wed*. The younger *then* is free—and not before.”

*Lucentio/Tranio* considers. “If it be so, sir, then you are the man who must stead us *all*, me amongst the rest. And if you break the ice and *do* this—seek, achieve the elder; set the younger free for our access—whoever’s hap shall be to *have* her will not so graceless be as to be ingrate!”

“Sir, you say well, and well you do *understand*,” Hortensio tells the newcomer. “And since you do profess to be a suitor, you must, as we do, gratify this gentleman, to whom we all rest generally beholding.”

Tranio nods agreement. “Sir, I shall not be slack! As sign whereof, please ye we may connive this afternoon, and quaff carouses to our mistress’ health, and do as adversaries do at *law*: strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends!”

The hungry serving-men approve. “Oh, *excellent* motion!” says Grumio. “Fellow, let’s be gone!” says Biondello.

“The motion’s good indeed,” says Hortensio, “and be it *so!*”

“Petruccio, I shall be your *ben venuto!*” The bold Veronese gentleman will stay at his friend’s house while courting the famously fiery lady of Padua.

### Chapter Three Suitors and Tutors

**B**ianca enters the reception hall of Signior Minola’s house—running; she is being pursued by an angry, spiteful Katherina, who has taken away the younger gentlewoman’s pink scarf and tied her wrists together with it.

Bianca holds up the silk restraint: “Good sister, *wrong* me not, nor *wrong yourself*, by making a *bondmaid* and a *slave* of me!—that I disdain!” She regards her dully dressed assailant. “But, as for these outer goods, unbind my hands and I’ll pull them off *myself!*—yea, all my raiment, to my petticoat! Or what you will command me will I do, so well I know my duty to my *elders!*”

Katherina’s aggression is aggravated by her sister’s seeming submission—and especially by the word *elders*. “Of all thy suitors, here I charge thee, tell whom thou lovest best!—see thou *dissemble not!*”

“*Believe* me, sister: of all the men alive, I never yet beheld that special face which I could fancy more than any other.” She is young, and that is true.

“*Minion*, thou *liest!*” Katherina thinks about men—often. “Is’t not Hortensio?”

“If *you* affect him, sister, here I swear I’ll plead for you *myself*, and you shall *have* him!”

Katherina’s eyes narrow. “*Oh*, then, belike, you fancy *riches* more!—you will have *Gremio* to keep you fair!”

“Is it for *him* you do envy me?—nay, then you *jest!*—and now I well perceive you have but jested with me all this while!” laughs Bianca. “I prithee, sister Kate, untie my hands....”

Katherina smacks her face. “If *that* be jest, then all the *rest* was so!”

Their father has heard the disturbance, and has arrived in time to see the blow. “Why, *how now*, dame!” he cries, staring at Katherina. “Whence grows *this* insolence?”

He steps between them. “Bianca, stand aside. Poor girl, she *weeps!*” Baptista unties her, and gives her the scarf. “Go, ply thy needle,” he says, patting her hand reassuringly. “Meddle not with *her!*” The young lady smiles up at him tearfully.

He turns to Katherina. “For *shame*, thou childing of a *devilish spirit!* Why dost thou *wrong* her that did ne’er wrong *thee*? When did she cross thee with a bitter *word*?”

“Her *silence* flouts me!” retorts the irascible termagant. She starts toward Bianca. “And I’ll be *revenged!*”

Baptista grabs Katherina’s arm, pulling her back. “*What?*—in my *sight*?”

“Bianca, get thee in.” The young lady nods politely and leaves them.

Katherina pulls free. “What, will you not suffer *me* to go? Nay, *now* I see: *she* is your treasure, *she* must have a husband! *I* must dance *barefoot* on her wedding day!” she shrieks, “and because of your love for *her*, must lead *apes* into *Hell!*”—the fate awaiting unmarried women. “*Talk not to me!* I will go sit and *weep*—till I can find occasion for *revenge!*” she shouts, storming up the stairs to her bedroom.

Baptista stands perplexed. *Was ever gentleman thus aggrieved as I?* He hears a servant admitting guests at the entrance. *But who comes here...?*

Signior Gremio has brought Lucentio, clothed as an impoverished scholar, and carrying some new books of poetry and a stack of printed sheets. Signior Petruccio brings along the music tutor found by Hortensio. And Tranio, posing as Signior Lucentio, arrives with Biondello, who also carries books—and a lute.

“Good morrow, neighbour Baptista!” says Gremio.

“Good morrow, neighbour Gremio. God save you, gentlemen.”

“And you, good sir!” says Petruchio. “Pray, have you not a daughter called Katherina, fair and virtuous?”

Baptista winces. “I have a daughter, sir, called Katherina.”

Gremio sees Baptista’s glum look. “You are too blunt,” he warns Petruchio quietly. “Go to it *orderly*.”

“You *wrong* me, Signior Gremio!” replies Petruchio. “Give me leave.

“I am a gentleman of Verona, sir,” he tells Baptista, stepping forward, “who, hearing of her beauty and her wit, her *affability* and bashful *modesty*, her wondrous qualities and *mild* behavior, am bold to show myself a forward guest within your house, to make mine eye the *witness* of that report which I so oft have heard!”

Signior Minola stares at him, wide-eyed. *Katherina?*

“And, as an entrance to my being entertained here,” Petruchio continues, “I do present you with a man of mine, cunning in music and the mathematics, to instruct her fully in those sciences, whereof I know she is not ignorant.” He smiles, placing a hand on the tutor’s shoulder. “*Accept* of him, or else you do me wrong! His name is Latio, born in Mantua.”

“Latio”—Hortensio, disguised with a false moustache, attired as a poor schoolmaster, and holding a lute—smiles and gives a priggish little bow. Only Petruchio and Grumio know who he is.

“You are *welcome*, sir. And he for *your* good sake,” Baptista tells Petruchio. “But as for my daughter Katherina, this I know: she is not for your *return*, the more my grief!”

Petruchio frowns. “I see you do not mean to *part* with her—or else you like not of *my* company!”

“Mistake me not,” says Baptista, “I speak but as I find. Whence are you, sir?” he asks kindly. “What may I call your name?”

“Petruchio is my name—*Antonio*’s son, a man known throughout all Italy.”

“I knew him well,” says Baptista, smiling as he shakes Petruchio’s hand. “You are welcome for *his* sake!”

“Saving *your* tale, Petruchio,” says Gremio, “I pray you let *us*, that are poor petitioners, speak, *too!* *Baccare!*”—*back off*, he means, though the Latin does not. “You are marvellous forward!”

Petruchio shrugs. “Oh, pardon me, Signior Gremio; *I* would fain be *doing!*”

“I doubt it not, sir.” *But you will curse your wooing!* he thinks. Gremio turns to Baptista. “*Neighbour*, this is a gift very *graceful*,” he says, with a glance at Latio, “I am sure of it.

“To express the *like* kindness, *myself*—who have been more kindly beholden to you than any!—freely give unto you *this* young scholar, who hath been long studying at Rheims—as cunning in Greek, Latin, and other languages as the *other* in music and mathematics.

“His name is *Cambio*; pray, accept his service!”

The disguised Lucentio straightens his black-rimmed spectacles precisely and bows.

“A thousand *thanks*, Signior Gremio!” says Baptista. “*Welcome*, good Cambio.” He turns now to the youngest gentleman. “But, gentle sir, methinks you walk like a stranger; may I be so bold?—I would know the cause of *your* coming....”

Tranio bows as gracefully as would the real Lucentio. “Pardon *me*, sir; the *boldness* is mine own, who, being a stranger in this city here, do make myself a *suitor* to *your* daughter—unto *Bianca*, fair and virtuous!

“Nor is your firm resolve unknown to me, in the preferment of the elder sister. This liberty is all that I request: that, upon knowledge of my parentage, I may have welcome ’mongst the *rest* that woo, and as free access and favour as the rest.

“And, toward the education of your daughters, I here bestow a simple instrument,” he says, pointing to the lute, hanging from Biondello’s fingers, “and this small packet of Greek and Latin books. If *you* accept them, then their worth is great!”

Biondello steps closer; clasped in his arms is a big stack of leather-bound books, each carefully listed in a note clamped to the top by his chin.

Baptista opens one of the heavy black volumes, then examines the signed paper. “*Lucentio* is your name; of whence, I pray?”

“Of *Pisa*, sir; son to *Vincentio*.”

Baptista nods. “A mighty man of *Pisa*; by report I know him well.

“You are very *welcome*, sir! Take you the lute,” he tells *Litio/Hortensio*, “and *you* the set of books,” he says to *Cambio/Lucentio*, replacing the tome on the pile.

“You shall go see your pupils *immediately!* *Holla*, within!” he calls, and a servant comes to him from a side chamber. “*Sirrah*, lead these gentlemen to my daughters; and tell them both, these are their *tutors*. Bid them use them well.”

The man bows and escorts *Litio* and *Cambio* to the mansion’s comfortable library.

Baptista smiles at his three gentle guests; it is nearing noon. “We will go walk a little in the orchard, and then to dinner. You are surpassingly *welcome!*—and I pray you all to think yourselves so!”

“Signior Baptista,” says *Petruchio*, “my business asketh *haste*, and I cannot come every day to woo.

“You knew my father well, and in him, *me*—left sole heir to all his lands and goods, which I have *bettered*, rather than decreased. Then tell me: if I get your daughter’s *love*, what *dowry* shall I have with her as wife?”

“After my death, the one-half of my lands in possession,” Baptista states, “and twenty thousand crowns.”

*Petruchio* nods, satisfied. “And, for that dowry, I’ll assure *her*—in her widowhood, be it that she survive me—of all my lands and leases whatsoever. Let specification be therefore drawn between us, so that covenants may be kept on either hand.”

*Katherina*’s father, given *Petruchio*’s unique description of the spitfire, doubts that the suitor’s interest will survive his meeting her. “*Aye*—when the *special* thing is well obtained—that is, her *love*; for that is *all* in *all*.”

“Why, that’s nothing,” says *Petruchio* with utter confidence, “for I tell you, Father, *I* am as peremptory as *she* proud-minded!—and where two raging fires meet together, they do *consume* the thing that feeds their fury!

“Though a little fire grows greater with little wind, yet *extreme* gusts will *blow out* fire and all! So I to her; and so she’ll *yield* to me—for I am rough, and woo not like a *child!*”

“*Well* mayst thou woo, and *happy* be thy speed,” says Baptista hopefully, “but be thou armed for some unhappy words!”

*Petruchio* only laughs. “*Aye!*—as proof as the *mountains* are in *winds*, that shake not though they blow perpetually!”

Just then *Katherina*’s music tutor returns—holding a hand to his head.

“*How now*, my friend!” says Baptista, concerned. “Why dost thou look so *pale?*”

“For *fear*, I promise you, if I look pale!”

“What?—will my daughter not prove a good musician?”

“I think she’ll sooner prove a *soldier!*” cries *Litio/Hortensio*. “*Iron* may hold its own with her, but never lutes!”

“Then thou canst not break her to the lute?”

“No!—for *she hath broken the lute on me!*”

“I did but grasp her hand to teach her fingering, and tell her she *mistook* her frets,”—placed her hand incorrectly on the lute’s neck, “when, with a *most impatient, devilish* spirit quoth she, ‘*Frets*, you call these?’”—the word can mean narrow strips of wood. “‘I’ll *frame* with them!’

“And with that word she *struck me on the head!*—and *through the instrument* my *pate* made way!

“And there I stood amazed for a while, as on a pillory, looking through the lute—while she did call me *rascal fiddler* and *twangling Jack!*—with *twenty* such vile terms, as if had she *studied* to misuse me so!”

Petruchio laughs, delighted. “Now, by the world, this is a *lusty* wench! I love her *ten times* more than e’er I did!” he cries. “Oh, how I long to have some chat with *her!*”

But Baptista consoles poor Litio. “Well, go with me and be not so discomfited! Proceed in practise with my *younger* daughter; she’s *apt* to learning, and *thankful* for good turns!” Suddenly, Hortensio feels much better—he can even take advantage of the instrument brought by a rival.

“Signior Petruchio, will you go with us, or shall I send my daughter Kate to you?” asks Baptista, as the others follow him toward the dining room.

Petruchio beams. “I pray you, *do!*”

**T**hinks Petruchio, as the others go to their luncheon, *I will attend her here, and woo her with some spirit when she comes!*

*Say that she rail; why then I’ll tell her plain she sings as sweetly as a nightingale!*

*Say that she frown; I’ll say she looks as clear as morning roses newly washed with dew!*

*Say she be mute, and will not speak a word; then I’ll commend her volubility!*

*And say she uttereth piercing eloquence: if she do bid me pack, I’ll give her thanks as though she bid me stay by her a week!*

*If she deny to wed, I’ll crave the day when I shall ask the banns, and when be married!*

*But here she comes; and now, Petruchio, speak....* “Good morrow, *Kate!*—for that’s your name, I hear.”

She sneers. “Well, you have heard—but are somewhat *hard of hearing*. They call me *Katherina* that do talk of me.”

“You *lie*, in faith!—for you are called plain *Kate*, and ‘*barmy Kate*,’ and sometimes ‘*Kate the curst!*’”

She blinks, surprised by the stranger’s stunningly rude candor.

“But *Kate*—the prettiest *Kate* in Christendom, *Kate of Kate Hall*, my super-*dainty* *Kate*, for dainties are all *Kates!*”—he pronounces it like *cakes*. “And therefore *Kate*, take this from me, *Kate* of my *consolation*: hearing thy *mildness* praised in every town, thy *virtues* spoke of, and thy *beauty* sounded—yet not so deeply as to thee *belongs*—myself am movèd to woo thee for my *wife!*”

Katherina laughs scornfully. “*Movèd!*”—the word commonly means *provoked, angry*. “*In good time!*”—soon enough. “Let him that movèd you *hither* move you *hence!*” She looks him up and down. “I knew from the first you were a *moveable!*”

“Why, what’s a ‘*moveable*?’”

“A *joined-stool!*”

“Thou hast hit it!” he cries, sounding pleased. “Come—*sit* on me!” he says, mischievously.

“*Asses* are made to bear—and so are *you!*”

“Women are made to *bear*, and so are *you!*”

“No such *jade* as *you*, if *me* you mean!”

“Alas, good *Kate*, I will not *burden* thee, for knowing thee to be but young and *light!*”—also a term for *easily available*.

“Too light for such a swain as *you* to catch!—and yet as heavy as my *weight* should be!”

“Should *bee?*—should *buzz!*”

“Well taken—if like a *buzzard!*”

“O slow-wingèd *turtledove!*—shall a *buzzard* *take* thee?”

“*Aye!*—for a *turtle!*—as *it* takes a *buzzard!*” Tortoises bite back.

“Come, *come*, you *wasp!*—i’ faith, you are too angry!”

“If I be *waspish*, best beware my *sting!*”

Petruchio shrugs. “My remedy, then, is to pluck it out!”

“Aye—if a *fool* could find where it *lies!*”

“Who knows not where a wasp does wear its sting?—in its *tail!*”

She shakes her head; she meant *tells lies*. “In the *tongue!*”

“Whose tongue?”

“*Yours*, if you talk of *my tail!*” She dismisses him haughtily: “And so farewell!”

“*What?*—with *my tongue* in your *tail?*” laughs Petruchio. As she turns away, furious, he grasps her left arm. “Nay, *come again*, good Kate!—I am a *gentleman!*”

“*I’ll find out!*” she cries, hitting him in the face.

As she reaches up with the other hand he seizes her wrists. “I swear I’ll *cuff* you if you strike again.”

Held motionless, she can feel his strength—and see that he means what he says. She glares up at his handsome, stern face. “So may you *lose your arms!* If you strike me, you are no *gentleman*—and if no gentleman, why then no *arms!*”—coat of arms.

“A *herald*, Kate?” he asks sweetly. “Oh, put *me* in thy *books!*” He releases her.

She steps back. “What is *your crest?* A *coxcorn?*”—a fool’s cap.

“A *combless cock*, so Kate will be my *hen!*” he says shamelessly.

She scowls. “No cock of *mine!*—you *crow* too like a *raven!*”

Petruchio smiles broadly. “Nay, come, Kate, *come!*—you must not look so *sour!*”

“It is my fashion,” says Katherina, making a face, “when I see a *crab!*”

“Why, *here’s* no crab,”—as in the louse—“and therefore look not sour!”

“There *is*, there *is!*”

His thought of crabs’ home is lascivious: “Then *show* it me!”

“Had I a *mirror* I would!”

“*What!*—you mean *my face?*”

“Well *aimed,*” she says contemptuously, “for such a young one!”

Petruchio gives her an appraising glance. “Now, by Saint George, I *am* too young for you....”

“Yet you are *withered!*”

He shrugs. “’Tis with *cares.*”

“*I care not!*” she growls, again starting away.

“Nay, *hear* you, Kate! In sooth you ’scape not so!” he says, blocking her way.

“I’ll chafe you if I tarry!” she warns proudly. “Let me go.”

“*No*, not a *whit,*” insists Petruchio, “I find you surpassingly *gentle!* ’Twas told me you were *rough* and *wary* and *sullen*; but now I find Report a very *liar!*—for thou art *pleasant*, *gamesome*, *courteous*—a bit *slow* in speech, yet sweet as spring-time flowers!

“Thou *canst* not frown, thou *canst* not look askance, nor bite the lip as *angry* wenches will; nor hast thou pleasure to be *cross* in talk, but thou with *mildness* entertain’st thy wooers, with gentle conference, soft and affable!”

He stands back, one hand rubbing his chin, and considers her form. “Why does the world report that Kate doth *slouch?*” She flushes in indignation. “Oh, *slanderous* world! Kate is *straight* and *slender*—like the hazel-twig, “—as opposed to voluptuous, as in fact she is, “and as *brown* in hue as hazel nuts!—and sweeter than the kernels!” She backs away, pink cheeks reddening with anger; ladies carefully avoid the sun that tans commoners’ complexions.

“Ah, let me see thee *walk!*” he demands as she strides angrily toward the stairs. “Thou dost *not halt!*”—walk with a limp, he seems to discover happily.

Katherina turns back, livid. “*Go, fool,* and whom thou *keep’st* command!”—domineer your servants.

Petruchio looks her over admiringly. “Did ever Diana”—the virgin goddess—“so become a *grove* as Kate this chamber with her regal gait? Oh, *be* thou Dian, and let *her* be Kate!” He moves closer. “And then let Kate be chaste—and Dian *sportful!*” he says lustily.

“Where did you *study* all this *goodly* speech?” demands the lady, her voice laden with sarcasm.

“It is *extempore*, from my mother-wit.”

“A witty *mother*,” nods Katherina. “Else is her son *witless!*”

“Am I not *wise?*”

“Yes—*do* keep you *warm!*” The saying is that fools are barely wise enough to stay warm.

He grins. “Marry, *I mean to*, sweet Katherina—in *thy bed!*”

“And therefore, setting all this flirting aside, in plain terms ’tis thus: your father hath consented that you shall be my wife; your dowry is ’greed on; and, will you, nill you, *I will marry you!*”

“Now, Kate, *I am* the husband for your turn; for, by this sight whereby I see thy beauty—thy beauty that doth make me *like thee well!*—thou must be married to *no man but me!*”

“For I am *he!*—am *born* to *tame* you, Kate, and bring you from a *wild* Kate to a Kate as conformable as other household Kates!”

He points toward the wide doors. “Here comes your father. Never make denial—I *must* and *will* have Katherina as my *wife!*”

Signior Minola returns, with Signior Gremio and Signior Lucentio—Tranio, actually, in the gentleman’s fine trappings.

Baptista eyes the scowling lady warily. “Now, Signior Petruccio, how speed you with my daughter?”

Petruccio smiles, “How but *well*, sir, how but *well?*—it were *impossible* I should speed amiss!”

His host can see the lady’s ire rising further. “Why, how now, daughter Katherina? In your dumps?”

“Call you me *daughter?*” she cries. “Now I assure you you have shown a *tender, fatherly* regard, to wish me wed to one who is *half lunatic!*—a *mad-cap ruffian* and a *swearing Jack*, that thinks with *oaths* to *ouface* the matter!”

But Petruccio says calmly, “Father, ’tis thus: yourself and all the world that talked of her have talked *amiss* of her! If she be curst, it is only as *policy!*—for she’s not froward, but *modest* as the dove; she is not hot, but *temperate* as the morn; and as for *patience*, she will prove a second *Grissel!*—and a Roman *Lucrece* for her *chastity!*”

“And, to conclude: we have agreed upon all so well together that *Sunday* is the *wedding-day!*”

“I’ll see thee *hanged* on Sunday *first!*” shrieks Katherina.

Gremio stares. “Hark, Petruccio!—she says she’ll see thee *hanged* first!”

Lucentio/Tranio is concerned as well. “Is *this* your speeding?” he asks Petruccio, frowning. “Nay, then, *good night* to our part!”

“Be *patient*, gentlemen,” says Petruccio with easy assurance. “*I* choose her for *myself!* If she and *I* be pleased, what’s that to you?”

He leans closer, as if to confide among men: “’Tis bargained ’twixt us twain, being *alone*,” he explains, “that she shall still be curst in *company*.”

“I tell you, ’tis incredible to believe how much she *loves* me! Oh, the *kindest Kate!* She *hung about my neck!*—and *kiss* on *kiss* she vied so fast, protesting *oath* on *oath*, that in a wink she *won me to her love!*”

“Oh, you are *novices!*” he tells the other men. “’Tis a world unseen!—when men and women are *alone*, how tame and meek a wench the curstest shrew can become!”

“Give me thy hand, Kate!” he cries—grabbing it. “I will unto *Venice*,” he proclaims, as she struggles free, “to buy apparel for the *wedding-day!*”

“Provide the feast, Father, and bid the guests! *I* will be sure my Katherina shall be *fine!*”

Baptista is happily surprised. “I know not what to say! But give me your *hand!* God send you joy, Petruccio! ’Tis a *match!*” They shake hands vigorously as Katherina glares and fumes—for once, speechless.

“*Amen!* say *we*,” cries Gremio hastily.

“We will be *witnesses!*” adds *Lucentio*/Tranio.

Petruchio bows. “Father, and wife, and gentlemen, adieu! I will to Venice! Sunday comes apace!—we will have rings and things and fine *array!*”

“And,” he says, roughly embracing the surprised lady, “*kiss* me, Kate! We will be married on Sunday!”

He busses her with enthusiasm, releases her brusquely, and strides away to begin his journey.

The gentlemen brace themselves for a harangue as she starts to wipe her mouth with the back of her hand; but she pauses without touching her lips, still watching where Petruchio had been.

Katherina stalks from the room in pensive silence.

## **Chapter Four** **Bidding for Bianca**

Gremio is delighted. “Was ever match clapped up so *suddenly?*” Signior Minola, amazed, has hopes—and doubts. “I’ faith, gentlemen, now I’ll play a merchant’s part, and venture madly on a desperate mart!”

Tranio—knowing that the father of his *Lucentio* is also a power in shipping—offers support: “’Twas a commodity that lay *fretting* near you; ’twill bring you gain, or perish on the seas.”

The father of the goods in question truly cares about her. “The *gain* I seek is *quiet* in the match.”

Says Gremio, “No doubt—but he hath not a quiet *catch!*”

“But now, Baptista, to your *younger* daughter: now is the day we long have looked for! I am your neighbour, and was suitor *first!*—”

“And I am one that love Bianca more than words can witness!” claims Tranio, “or your thoughts can guess!”

Gremio bristles: “*Youngling*, thou canst not love so dear as *I!*”

“Greybeard, *thy* love doth freeze!”

“But thine doth *fry!*”—with a play on *small fry*, young fish. “*Skipper*, stand *back*; ’tis *age* that nourisheth!”

“But ’tis *youth* that in ladies’ eyes *flourisheth!*”

Signior Minola interrupts them. “Content you, gentlemen! I will assess in this strife; ’tis *deeds* must win the prize!” *Lucentio* smiles. “And he of you both who can assure my daughter greatest *dowry* shall have my Bianca’s love.” The smile fades.

The magnate continues. “Say, Signior *Gremio*; what can *you* assure her?”

The older man is quite smug. “First, as you know, my house within the *city* is richly furnished with *silver-plate* and *gold*, basins and ewers!... to lave her dainty hands. My hangings are all of *Tyrian* tapestry! In *ivory* coffers I have stuffed my *crowns!*—in cypress chests, my arras *counterpoints*... costly apparel, tents and canopies, fine linen... Turkish cushions bossed with *pearl*, valance of Venice gold in needlework... Pewter and brass—and all things that belong to house or housekeeping!

“Then, at my *farm* I have a hundred *milch-kine* to the pale,”—milk cows in a fenced pasture, “six-score fat *oxen* standing in my stalls, and all things answerable to such portion.

“*Myself* am struck in years, I must confess,” he says, glancing at Baptista, “but if I die tomorrow, all of that is *hers*—if whilst I live she will only be *mine!*”

*Lucentio*’s surrogate suitor comments contemptuously: “That ‘*only*’ came well in!” Tranio turns to Baptista. “Sir, list to me. I am my father’s only son and heir. If *I* may have your daughter to my wife, I’ll leave her *houses*—three of *four* within rich Pisa walls as good as the *one* old Signior Gremio has in Padua! Besides: *two thousand ducats* by the year from fruitful land! All of which shall be her jointure!”

He looks at his competitor. “What?—have I *pinched* you, Signior Gremio?”

“Two thousand ducats by the *year* from land. . . .” The graybeard considers. “My land amounts not to so much *in all*—but she shall have *besides* an *argosy*”—a large merchant ship—“that now is lying in Marseilles’ road!”—at anchor in the French port. He challenges the other suitor. “*What?*—have I *choked* you with an *argosy*?”

Tranio merely laughs. “Gremio, ’tis known my father hath no less than *three* great *argosies*!—besides two *galliases* and twelve tight *galleys*! These I will assure her—and *twice as much* as whate’er thou offer’st *next*!”

Gremio pales. “Nay, I have offered all; I have no more, and she can have no more than *all I have*. If you like *me*,” he tells Baptista, “she shall have me and mine.”

“Why, then the maid is *mine* from all the world!” cries Tranio. “Under your firm promise, Gremio is out-vied!”

Baptista nods. “I must confess your offer is the best. Let your *father* make her the *assurance*, and she is your own!”

“*Or else*—you must pardon me—if you should die *before* him, where’s her dower?” says Gremio.

“That’s but a *cavil*,” Tranio assures them. “He is old, I young.”

Gremio scowls. “And may not *young* men die as well as old?”

But Baptista is very pleased with this day’s progress. “Well, gentlemen, I am thus resolved: on Sunday next you know my daughter Katherina is to be married; now, on the Sunday *following* shall Bianca be bride to you,” he tells *Lucentio*/Tranio, “if you thus assure us.

“If *not*, then to Signior Gremio.

“And so I take my leave, and thank you both!” He bows, courteously, and heads toward the stairs.

“*Adieu*, good *neighbour*!” calls Gremio.

He glares at Tranio. “Now I *fear thee not*, sirrah!—young *gamester*!” He doesn’t believe the youth’s bold gamble will pay off. “Your father would be a *fool* to give thee all,” he tells *Lucentio*, “and in his waning age set foot under *thy* table to be a *toy*!” He laughs at the notion. “An old Italian fox is not so kind, my boy!” With that, he goes to the front door and lets himself out, ever hopeful—and scheming further.

Tranio watches him leave. *A vengeance on your crafty, withered hide!*

He fears that Lucentio’s father might indeed object. *Yet I have faced it with a card of ten!* The playing card’s value is high, but not too high to be paired well in a game of twenty-one.

*’Tis in my head to do my master good*, he thinks, still determined—and an idea comes to him. *I see no solution but that supposèd Lucentio must get a supposèd father, called Vincentio!*

*And that’d be a wonder!—fathers commonly do beget their children; but in this case of wooing, a child shall beget a sire, if I fail not in my cunning!*

## Chapter Five Saturday

**A**t Signior Minola’s house, the two pretend scholars are bickering: which tutor shall be first to instruct lovely Bianca this afternoon?

“*Fiddler*, forbear; you grow too *forward*, sir!” says Lucentio, as *Cambio*. “Have you so soon forgot the entertainment her sister, Katherina, welcomed you withal?”

“But, wrangling *pedant*,” replies Hortensio, as *Litio*, smiling unctuously at Bianca, “*this* is the patroness of heavenly *harmony*! Then give *me* leave to have prerogative—and when in *music* we have spent an hour, your lecture,” he sniffs, “shall have leisure for as much.”

“Preposterous *ass*, that never read so far as to know the *cause* why music was ordained!—was it not to refresh the mind of man *after* his studies, or his usual pains? Then give *me* leave to read *philosophy*—and when I *pause*, serve up your harmony!”

“*Sirrah*, I will not bear these affronts of thine!” cries Hortensio.

Bianca overrules them both. “Why, gentlemen, you do me *double* wrong, striving over that which resteth in *my* choice! I am no *breeches scholar* in a *school*!—I’ll not be tied to hours, nor ’pointed times, but learn my lessons as I please myself!

“And, to cut off all strife, here sit we down. Take you your instrument,” she tells Hortensio. “*Play* you the whiles; his lecture will be done ere you have tuned.”

“You’ll leave his lecture when I am in *tune*?” he asks plaintively, caressing the new lute.

“That will be *never!*” laughs Lucentio. “Tune your *instrument!*”

Hortensio frowns, suspecting a ribald gibe.

Bianca moves closer to Lucentio, who opens a book of lessons in Latin. She smiles warmly. “Where left we last?”

“Here, madam.” He points to the words in the book as he reads: “‘*Hic ibat Simois, hic est Sigeia tellus, hic steterat Priami regia celsa senis.*’”

“Construe them,” she asks, touching his hand.

Hortensio has stepped away, and he sits on the edge of chair, plucking at catgut.

As the musician twangs strings annoyingly, Lucentio pronounces the text aloud—and softly intersperses words of his own.

“‘*Hic ibat,*’ as I told you before, ‘*Simois,*’ I am Lucentio, ‘*hic est,*’ son unto Vincentio of Pisa, ‘*Sigeia tellus,*’ disguisèd thus to get your love! ‘*Hic steterat,*’ and the ‘Lucentio’ who comes a-wooing, ‘*Priami,*’ is my man Tranio, ‘*regia,*’ bearing my identity, ‘*celsa senis,*’ so that we might beguile the old pantaloon!”—Signior Gremio.

Hortensio rises. “Madam, my instrument’s in tune!”

“Let’s hear,” says Bianca. He plays for a moment. “Oh, fie,” she protests, “the treble *jars!*”

“*Spit* in the *hole,* man,” advises Lucentio, “and *tune* again!” Hortensio’s face registers anger at the coarse rudeness—but the young lady has protested, so he must hold his peace. He sits, grasps a peg, and twists it in irritation.

Bianca looks at Lucentio. “Now let me see if *I* can construe it.

“‘*Hic ibat Simois,*’ I know you not, ‘*hic est Sigeia tellus,*’ I trust you not; ‘*Hic steterat Priami,*’ take heed he *hear* us not, ‘*Regia;*’ presume not, ‘*celsa senis*’”—she catches his eye before finishing—“and *despair* not!”

“Madam,” says Hortensio firmly, “’tis now in *tune.*”

Lucentio laughs. “All but the *bass!*”—the other half of the scale.

“The bass is *right,*” scowls Hortensio, “’tis the *base knave* that jars!” His suspicion has been aroused. *How fiery and forward our pedant is! Now, by my life, the knave doth court my love! Pedasculè, I’ll watch you better yet!*

Bianca considers Lucentio’s interpolations: “In *time* I may believe—yet I mistrust...”

“Mistrust it not,” he replies earnestly. Aware of Hortensio’s stare, he points to the book. “For surely *Æacides* was *Ajax*, called so after his grandfather!”

Bianca smiles up at him. “I must believe my master,” she says demurely, “else I promise you I should be arguing still upon that doubt! But let it rest.

“Now, *Litio,* to you.” She sees Hortensio’s glower. “Good master, take it not unkindly, pray, that I have been thus *pleasant* with you *both.*”

Hortensio glares at Lucentio. “You may go *walk,* and give *me* leave a while! My lessons make no music in *three* parts.”

“Are you so *formal,* sir?” asks Lucentio. “Well, I must wait...” *And watch withal! For, but I be deceived, our fine musician groweth amorous!* He stands and steps aside.

Hortensio sits beside Bianca. “Madam, before you touch the instrument to learn the order of *fingering,* I must begin with rudiments of art: to teach you *my gamut*”—scale, “one of a briefer sort, more pleasant, pithy and effectual than hath been taught by any of my trade!” He hands her a sheet of paper. “And there it is in *writing,* fairly drawn!”

Bianca already knows the range of notes. “Why, I am past my *gamut* long ago!”

He whispers fervently, "Yet read the gamut of *Hortensio!*"  
She unfolds the rhyme proffered by the suitor-tutor, and reads silently:

- '*Gamut*: I am the ground of all *accord!*  
'A. *Re*;'—'arrayed' to plead *Hortensio's* passion!  
'B. *Mi*;'—'Be mine.' Bianca, take *him* for thy lord—  
'C. *Fa, Ut*;'—'See far out.'—who loves with all affection!  
'D. *Sol, Re*;'—One clef, two notes have I:  
'E. *La, Mi*;'—*love me and show pity, or I die!*

Bianca thrusts the paper back at *Litio*. "Call you *this* gamut?" she asks. "I like it not. *Old* fashions please me best; I am not so ready to change *true* rules for bold *inventions*."

An elderly serving man comes into the parlor. "Mistress, your father prays you leave your books, and help to dress your sister's chamber up"—supervise the move into Katherina's larger room. His smile is one of happy relief. "You know, tomorrow is the *wedding* day!"

Bianca rises. "Farewell, sweet masters both," she says, her bright eyes flashing at Lucentio. "I must be gone," she says, moving to follow the servant.

Lucentio catches her trailing hand as she goes, and he walks beside her to the door. "Faith, mistress, then I have no cause to stay."

Hortensio angrily snatches up his papers. *But I have cause!—to pry into this pedant! Methinks he looks as though he were in love!*

He is quite peevish: the young lady seems to fancy *Cambio*—a lowly scholar. *Yet if thy thoughts, Bianca, be so humble as to cast thy wandering eyes on every stale, cease, thee that lists!—who leans.*

*For if once I find thee ranging, he vows, Hortensio will be quit from thee, by exchanging!*  
He knows he has another option.

**T**he wedding party's well-dressed gentlemen and ladies wait outside the house of Baptista Minola—who is pacing uneasily. "Signior Lucentio, this is the appointed day that Katherina and Petruchio should be married, and yet we hear *nought* from our son-in-law!" he moans to Tranio. "What will be *said?*—what a *mockery* will it be, to lack the *bridegroom* when the priest is waiting to speak the ceremonial rites of marriage! What says Lucentio to this shame of ours?"

"No shame but *mine!*" cries Katherina. She faces her father angrily. "Must I forsooth be *forced to give my hand*, opposed against my heart, unto a mad-brain *rudesby* full of *spleen?*—who *wooded* in haste and means to wed *at leisure!*

"*I told you!* *Ay*, he was a *frantic fool*, garbing his bitter *jests* in hides of *blunt behavior!* And to be noted as a *merry man* he'll woo a *thousand*—'point a day of marriage, make friends, *invite* and proclaim the banns—yet never means to *wed* where he hath wooed!

"Now must the world point at poor Katherina and say, '*Lo, there is mad Petruchio's* wife—if it would please him to come and *marry* her!'"

"*Patience*, good Katherina, and Baptista, too," says Tranio soothingly, in his role as Lucentio. "Upon my life, Petruchio means but *well*, whatever misfortune stays him from his word! Though he be blunt, I know him surpassing *wise*; though he be merry, yet withal he's *honest!*"

The would-be bride concurs—and so she bursts into tears. "Would *Katherina* had never *seen* him, though!" The lady gathers up the hem of her white-satin wedding gown and hurries into the house, followed by Bianca and their attendants.

Baptista watches, perturbed. "Go, girl; I cannot blame thee now to weep!—for such an injury would vex a very *saint!*—and a shrew of *thy* impatient humour even *more!*"

Biondello comes running down the street; nearly out of breath, he approaches Lucentio/Tranio. "*Master, master! News!*—old news, and such news as you *never* heard of!"

"Is it *new* and old *too?*" challenges Baptista. "How may that be?"

The boy, gasping, is annoyed. "Well, is it *not* news to hear of *Petruchio's* coming?"

Baptista looks eagerly toward the street corner. "Is he *come*?"

"Why no, sir."

"*What then?*"

"He is *coming*."

"When will he be *here*?"

"When he stands where *I* am, and sees you *there*."

Being one himself, Tranio knows well how a serving-man can thwart a lord's supercilious questioning; he breaks in to let the boy speak his piece. "But *say*: what of thine *old* news?"

"Well, Petruchio is coming in a *new hat*—and an *old jerkin*; a pair of *old breeches* thrice turned"—third-hand, "a pair of boots that have been *candle-cases*, one buckled, another laced"—worn out and mismatched, "an *old, rusty sword* ta'en out of the town armory, with a broken hilt, and hopeless with *two* broken *points*!"—the blunted end juts from a partial scabbard.

"His *horse* is hipped with an old, mothy saddle and stirrups of no kindred," the lad tells them, "and, besides being possessed with the glanders and mose in the chine, is troubled with the lamp-ass, infected with the fashions, full of wingdalls, sped with spavins, rayed with yellows, past cure of the fives, stark spoiled with the staggers, begnawn with the bots, *swayed* in the back, and *shoulder-shotten*!"—a veritable catalogue of dire disorders.

Biondello reports that the poor, decrepit beast, "near-leggèd before"—slouched in front, is fitted with: "a half-cheekèd bit in a head-stall of *sheep's* leather, which, being often strained to keep him from *stumbling*, hath been burst and newly repaired with *knots*; one girth six times pierced"—with new holes to permit buckling it closer around the ever-thinning animal's belly; "and a *woman's* crupper of velure, which hath two letters for her name fairly set down in studs, and is here and there mended with packthread!"

Baptista stares—and frowns more deeply as he begins to wonder what strange guests the rustic Veronese gentleman might bring to the wedding. "Who comes with him?"

"Ah, sir—his *lackey*!—for all the world caparisoned like the *horse*—with a linen stocking on one leg and a kersey boot-hose on the other; gartered with red and blue strips; in an old hat, with the whimsy of forty fancies pricked in't for the feather!"—past owners have pierced the felt to position many plumes. "A monster, a very *monster* in apparel!—and not like a *Christian* footboy or a *gentleman's* lackey!" says Biondello, with haughty scorn.

"'Tis some odd *mood* pricks him to this fashion," *Lucentio*/Tranio offers lamely. "Yet oftentimes he goes but mean-apparelled...."

"I am glad he's *come*," says Baptista, wiping his forehead with a handkerchief, "*howsoe'er* he comes!"

Biondello frowns. "Why, sir, he comes not."

"Didst thou not *say* he comes?"

"Who?—that Petruchio came?"

"*Aye*, that *Petruchio* came!"

"No, sir; I say his *horse* comes—with him on its back."

Baptista waves him away. "Why that's all one!"

"*Nay*, by Saint Jamy!—I'll bet you a penny a horse and a man is *more* than *one*," argues Biondello. "But yet, not *many*," he notes, carefully.

And now three horses with two riders—Petruchio and his man—amble down the street and stop at Baptista's gate. They dismount, and the gentleman hands the reins to Grumio, who frowns and passes them, along with those of his horse and the one he's been leading, to Signior Minola's surprised steward—who stands gaping at the bridegroom's colorfully waggish wear. He ties the reins to an iron post.

"*Come*, where be these *gallants*?" cries Petruchio heartily, striding up to Baptista. He looks toward the house. "Who's at *home*?"

"You are *welcome*, sir," mumbles the nobleman.

"But I came *not* well," complains Petruchio.

“Yet you *halted* not,” notes Signior Minola, eyeing the gentleman’s slovenly attire.

“Not so well *apparelled* as I *wish* you were,” scolds *Lucentio*/Tranio.

“Were it *better* should I brush thus?” asks Petruchio, thwacking road dust from his tattered clothes with old, stained riding gloves. “But where is *Kate*? Where is my lovely *bride*? How does my *father*?”

He smiles at the wide-eyed guests—including Gremio, who is even more sour than usual. “Gentles, methinks you *frown!* And wherefore gaze this goodly company as if they saw some wondrous monument, some *comet* or unusual *prodigy*?”

“Why, sir, you *know* this is your *wedding day!*” cries Baptista. “First were we sad, fearing you would not come—now *sadder*, that you come so *unprovided!* *Fie, doff* this habit—a *shame* to your estate, an *eyesore* to our solemn festival!”

“And, *tell us,*” demands *Lucentio*/Tranio, “what occasion of import hath all so long detained you from your wife, and sent you hither so unlike *yourself!*”

But Petruchio puts them off. “Tedious it were to tell, and harsh to hear. Sufficeth it *I am come to keep my word*, though in some parts enforced to *digress*—which, at more leisure, I will so excuse as you shall be well satisfied withal.” He and Grumio had made two stops in the city near his home.

“But where is *Kate*? I stay too long from her! The morning wears—’tis time we were at *church!*” He has already visited there, briefly.

Tranio’s *Lucentio* implores: “See not your bride in these unreverent robes! Go to my chamber—put on clothes of *mine!*” he offers.

“Not *I, believe* me!” laughs Petruchio. “*Thus* I’ll visit her.”

Baptista is aghast. “But thus, I trust, you will not *marry* her?”

“In good sooth, even *thus!* Therefore have done with words!” insists Petruchio. “To *me* she’s married, not unto my *clothes!*”

“Could I repair what she will *wear on me* as well as I can change these poor accoutrements,” he adds lasciviously, “’twere *well* for *Kate*—and *better* for *myself!*”

“But what a fool am I to chat with *you*, when I should bid good morrow to my *bride*, and seal her title with a loving *kiss!*” says he, striding away, with Grumio following, into the Minolas’ fine, tall home.

“He hath some *meaning* in his mad attire,” Tranio assures Baptista. “We will persuade him, be it possible, to put on better ere he go to church.”

Baptista starts toward his house—and Katherina. “I’ll after him, and see the *event* of *this!*” Signior Gremio follows, shaking his head.

## **Chapter Six** **Wedding Day**

While members of the nuptial party are filing into the church just down the street and around the corner from the Minolas’ home, outside that mansion Tranio is finally able to speak alone with the real *Lucentio*, and advise him on progress.

“*Sir Love*”—Cupid—“constraineth us to add her *father*’s liking—which to bring to pass, as I before imparted to Your Worship, I am to get a man—of whate’er skills he be matters not much; we’ll fit him to our turn—and he shall be ‘*Vincentio of Pisa,*’ and make assurance here in Padua of *greater* sums than I have promised!

“So shall you quietly enjoy your hope, and *marry* sweet *Bianca*—with *consent!*”

The disguised nobleman is impatient. “Were it not that my fellow school-master doth watch *Bianca*’s steps so narrowly, ’twere good, methinks, to *steal* our marriage!”—elope. “Which once performed, let all the *world* say ‘no,’ I’d *keep* mine own, in *despite* of all the world!”

Tranio nods. "That we mean to *look into*, by degrees, and watch for your vantage in this business." He is confident: "We'll over-reach the narrow, prying father Minola, the quaint musician, amorous Litio, and the greybeard Gremio—all, for my *master's* sake, Lucentio!"

They look up in surprise as the neighbor himself hastens to rejoin them.

Asks Tranio, "Signior Gremio, came you from the church?"

"As *willingly* as e'er I came from *school!*" he tells them, clearly shaken.

"And are the bride and bridegroom coming home?"

"A *bridegroom* say you? 'Tis a *groom* indeed: a *rumbling* groom!"—obstreperous stable-hand. "And *that,*" says Gremio, "the *girl* shall find!"

"*Curster* than *she*? Why, 'tis impossible!"

"Well, he's a *devil*, a *devil!*" insists Gremio, "a very *fiend!*"

Tranio doubts that anyone could surpass Katherina's harshness. "Why *she's* a devil, *the Devil—the Devil's dam!*"—Lucifer's mother.

Gremio's laugh is grim: "*Hah!* She's a *lamb*, a *dove—a fool* next to *him!*"

"I'll tell you, Signior Lucentio: when the priest asked if Katherina should be his wife, '*Aye, by God's wounds!*' quoth he!—and swore so *loud* that, all-*amazèd*, the priest *let fall the Book!* And as he stooped to take it up again, the mad-brained bridegroom gave him such a *cuff* that down fell *priest and Book!* 'Now, take them up,' quoth he, 'if any list'"—if anyone cares to.

Tranio stares. "What said the wretch when he rose again?"

"*Trembled and shook!*" And then, it seems, Petruccio "stamped and swore as if the vicar meant to *cozen* him!"—cheat him. "But after many ceremonies done, he calls for *wine*. '*A health!*' quoth he!—as if he had been *aboard ship*, carousing to his *mates* after a storm!—quaffed off the muscadel, and threw the *sops*"—wine-soaked bread—"all in the *sexton's face!*—having no other reason but that his *beard* grew thin and hungerly, and seemed, as he was drinking, to *ask* him for sops!"

"*That done,*" Gremio reports, "he took the bride about the neck and kissed her lips with such a clamorous *smack* that at the parting all the *church* did echo!"

"And I, seeing this, came thence for very shame!" He glances back. "And after me, I know, the rout is coming! Such a *mad* marriage never was before! Hark, *hark!*—I hear the minstrels play!"

They all turn toward the corner, where Petruccio strides on ahead of his bride; with him is Grumio, who skips along merrily to the clangorous cadence of a band of musicians with tabor, tambourine and trumpet. At the head of the train of flustered guests following them are Baptista, Bianca, and undisguised Hortensio—all looking dazed after the tumultuous wedding.

The bridegroom marches right past Signior Gremio and the others and into the house. His new family and their guests follow.

"*Gentlemen and friends,*" cries Petruccio in the main hall, "I thank you for your pains! I know you think to dine with me today, and have prepared great store of wedding cheer. But, as it happens, my haste doth call me hence, and therefore here I mean to take my leave."

Baptista is stunned. "Is't possible you will *away* tonight?"

"I must away *today*, before night come! Make it no wonder; if you knew my business, you would *entreat* me rather go than stay.

"And, honest company!" he calls jovially to the throng, "I thank you all, who have beheld me *give away myself* to this most *patient, sweet and virtuous* wife! Dine with my father, drink a health to me!—for I must hence—and farewell to you all!"

"Let us entreat you stay till after dinner!" says Tranio's *Lucentio*.

"It may not be."

"Let me entreat you," mumbles Gremio—without enthusiasm.

"It cannot be."

"Let *me* entreat you!" demands Katherina angrily.

Petruccio nods. "I am content."

Katherina is suspicious. "Are you content to stay?"

"I am content you shall *entreat* me stay—but yet *not* stay, entreat me how you can."

"Now, if you love me," she challenges, "stay!"

"Grumio, my horses," says Petruchio.

"Aye, sir, they be ready. The oats have the horses eaten," grumbles the servant dryly, now he will have to cope with his master's contentious mistress.

Katherina is furious with her new husband. "Nay, then, do what thou *canst*, I will *not* go today!—no, nor *tomorrow!*—not *till I please!*" She points. "The door is open, sir!—there lies *your way!* You may wander whiles your boots are *green!*"—until you grow up. "As for *me*, I'll not be gone till I myself please!" She regards him. "'Tis likely you'd prove a very *surlly* groom, taking it upon you *at the first so roundly!*"

"Oh, Kate, content thee," says Petruchio mildly. "Prithee, be not angry."

"I *will* be angry!" she shouts, livid with fury. "What hast *thou to do?*" she demands, knowing nothing about his journey. Katherina sees Baptista's look. "Father, be *quiet!* He shall *await my leisure!*"

Gremio's prediction is confirmed. "Aye, marry, sir," he murmurs, watching Petruchio, "*now* it begins to work!"

"Gentlemen, *forward* to the *bridal* dinner!" cries Katherina. "I see that a woman may be made a *fool* if she had not the spirit to *resist!*"

Proclaims Petruchio, even *more* loudly, "They *shall* go forward, Kate, *at thy command!* Obey the bride, you that attend on her!" he calls. "Go to the feast, revel and carouse full measure to her *maidenhead*, be mad and merry!" He shrugs. "Or go hang yourselves.

"But as for my bonny Kate, *she* must go *with me!*"

"Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret!" he orders, moving toward her. "I will be *master* of what is mine *own!*"

"She is my goods, my *chattel!*" he roars. "She is my *house*, my household *stuff*, my field—my barn, my horse, my ox, my ass, my *anything!*"

The big gentleman frowns menacingly at the others. "And here she stands—*touch* her whoever dare!—I'll bring mine *action!*"—suit at law—"on the *proudest* he that stops my way from Padua!"

Though no one moves, Petruchio steps back warily. "*Grumio*, draw forth thy *weapon!*" he cries dramatically. "We are beset with *thieves!* *Rescue* thy mistress, if thou be a *man!*" Gremio steps before him and flourishes the tarnished blade of his old, nicked sword.

"*Fear not*, sweet wench, they shall not *touch* thee, Kate!" cries Petruchio, clamping an arm around her slender waist and hauling her roughly out past the door. "I'll shield thee against a *million!*"

Grumio follows, backing away from the wedding guests, and soon the three are on horses and riding away—Petruchio whooping and bellowing on his tottering mount while tugging behind him the reins of his bride's; Katherina shrieking and grasping the pommel, trying to stay on the saddle; and Grumio bouncing along after them on his trotting nag.

For a moment, no one who has come out of the house speaks.

"Nay, let them go—a couple of *quiet* ones," says Baptista.

The others burst into laughter. Gremio tells him, "Went they not *quickly*, I should have died with *laughing!*"

Tranio shakes his head, smiling. "Of all mad matches, never was the like!"

"Mistress, what's your opinion of your sister?" the handsome tutor, Cambio, asks Bianca.

She returns Lucentio's grin. "That, being mad herself, she's madly *mated!*"

Gremio, too, laughs. "I warrant him, Petruchio is *Kated!*"

Baptista raises his hands. "Neighbours and friends," he calls to all the guests, "though bride and bridegroom we lack for taking their places at the *table*, you know there lacks no *custard* for the *feast!*"

“Lucentio, *you* shall supply the bridegroom’s place,” he says, “and let Bianca take her *sister’s!*”

Tranio’s *Lucentio* beams at him. “Shall sweet Bianca practise how to *bride* it?”

“She *shall*, Lucentio! Come, gentlemen, let’s go!”

And so begins their happy afternoon of feasting—as Katherina is jogged and jostled away, angry and hungry, on the long road toward Verona.

**S**tars in the frigid, deep-black night sky twinkle above Petruchio’s wide estate in the country. At the back of the low, rambling farm house built long ago of rough stone, Grumio has finally arrived, shivering, and rubbing his fat hands together.

Now doubly dusty, splotched and spattered with crusty mud, the traveler comes into the cold kitchen muttering, “*Fie, fie* on all tired *jades*,”—stumbling horses, “on all mad *masters*, and all foul *ways!*”—roads. “Was ever man so *beaten*? Was ever man so *soiled*? Was ever man so *weary*?”

As there’s no one to hear him; he complains to himself: *I am sent before to make a fire, and they are coming after to warm them! Now, were I not ‘a little pot soon hot,’ my very lips might freeze to my teeth, my tongue to the roof of my mouth, and my heart to my belly ere I should come by a fire to thaw me!*

*But by blowing their fire into being I shall warm myself—for, considering the weather, a taller man than I could catch cold!*

“*Holla, ho! Curtis!*”

The man comes down the back stairs and finds Grumio crouched by the hearth, hands held over the remaining embers. He grins. “Who is that calls so coldly?”

“A piece of *ice!*” Grumio tells him. “If thou doubt it, thou mayst slide from my shoulder to my heel with no greater a run but my head and my neck! A *fire*, good Curtis!”

“Is my master and his *wife* coming, Grumio?”

“Oh, aye, Curtis, *aye!* And therefore *fire! Fire!* And cast on water!” The gentleman and lady will want to wash up.

“Is she so hot a shrew as she’s reported?”

“She *was*, good Curtis, before this *frost!* But know this, Curtis: *winter* tames man, woman and *beast*, for it hath tamed my old master, my new mistress, and *us!*”

“*Away*, you three-inch fool!—*I* am no *beast.*”

“Am I but *three* inches?”—half-length. “Why, *thy horn*”—the sign of cuckolding—“is a *foot*—and so long am *I* at the least!”

“But *wilt thou make a fire*, or shall I complain of thee to our *mistress?*—whose hand, she being now *at hand*, thou shalt soon *feel*, to thy cold comfort, for being slow in thy hot office!”

But Curtis craves information. “I prithee, good Grumio, *tell* me how goes the world!”

“A *cold* world, Curtis—in every task but *thine!*—and therefore *fire!* Do thy duty, and you may *have* thy duty,”—retain your position, “for my master and mistress are almost *frozen* to death!”

“There’s fire *ready*,” insists Curtis, waving toward the dining room and the front chamber beyond it, “and therefore, good Grumio, *the news!*”

Grumio rises. “Well, ‘*Jack, boy, ho, boy!*’”—as in a popular song, “and as much news as will *thaw!*”

“Come *on*,” demands Curtis impatiently, “you are too full of *cony-catching!*”—playing tricks on innocents.

“Why, therefore *fire!*—for what I *have* caught is extreme *cold!*” cries Grumio in exasperation; he will not be dining in the warmer room with the gentlefolk. He looks around. “Where’s the cook? Is supper ready?—the house trimmed, rushes strewed, cobwebs swept; the serving-men in their *new* fustian, their white stockings; and every officer his wedding-garment on? Be the jacks fair within, the jills fair without, the carpets laid, and everything in order?”

“All *ready!*” the smaller man assures him, “and therefore, I *pray* thee, *news!*”  
 “*First* know, my horse is tired,” says Gremio. “And my master and mistress fallen out.”  
 At odds already? “How?”  
 “Out of their *saddles* into the *dirt!*—and thereby hangs a tale!”  
 “Let’s *ha’t*, good Grumio!”  
 “Lend thine ear.”  
 Curtis moves closer. “Here.”  
 Grumio smacks his head. “*There!*”  
 The startled servant frowns, rubbing his ear. “This is to *feel* a tale, not to hear a tale!”  
 “And therefore ’tis called a *sensible* tale! And that cuff was but to knock at your door and beseech *listening*.  
 “Now I begin. *Imprimis*: we came down a foul hill, my master riding behind my mistress—”  
 “Both on one horse?”  
 Grumio frowns in annoyance. “What’s *that* to *thee?*”  
 “Why, a horse—”  
 “Tell *thou* the tale!” cries Grumio, piqued. “But hadst thou not *crossed* me, thou shouldst have heard how her horse *fell!*—and *she*, *under* her horse! Thou shouldst have heard in how *miry* a place, how she was *bemoiled*, how he *left* her with the horse upon her!  
 “How he *beat me* because her horse stumbled! How she waded through the dirt to pluck him *off me!*  
 “How he *swore!*—how she *beseeches*, who never prayed before! How I *cried!*  
 “How the horses *ran away!* How her *bridle* was burst; how I lost my *crupper!*—  
 “With *many things* worthy of memory which *now* shall die in *oblivion!*—and turn thou, *unexperienced*, unto thy *grave!*”  
 Curtis is astounded. “By *this* reckoning, *he* is more shrew than *she!*”  
 “*Aye!*—and *that* thou and the proudest of you *all* shall find when he comes home!  
 “But why talk I of that? Call forth Nathaniel, Joseph, Nicholas, Philip, Walter, Sugarsop and the rest! Let their heads be sleekly combed, their blue coats brushed, and their garters of a modest knit. Let them curtsy with their left legs—and not presume to touch a hair of my master’s horse’s tail till they have *kissed his and her hands!*  
 “Are they all ready?”  
 “They are.”  
 “Call them forth.”  
 Curtis goes to the door of the kitchen and summons the formerly lax gentleman’s newly liveried servants. “*Do you hear, ho!*—you must meet my master and countenance my mistress!” They come in and line up.  
 Grumio frowns. “Why, she *hath* a face of her own.”  
 “Who knows not that?”  
 “*Thou*, it seems—who call for company to *countenance* her!  
 “I call them forth to *accredit* her”—acknowledge her new role in the household.  
 Grumio carps again, as to *credit*: “Why, she comes to *borrow* nothing from them!”  
 The other serving-men now greet the Petruchio’s *de facto* steward. “Welcome home, Grumio!” says plump Nathaniel. “How now, Grumio!” says Philip. “What, Grumio!” says Joseph. “Fellow Grumio!” says old Nicholas warmly. “How now, old lad?” asks Sugarsop.  
 Grumio nods to each of them: “Welcome, *you*—how now, *you*—what, *you*—fellow, *you*—and thus much for greetings! Now, my spruce companions, is all ready, and all things neat?”  
 “All things is ready,” Nathaniel confirms. “How near is our master?”  
 “E’en at hand!—*alighted* by this; and therefore be not—  
 “*Cock’s passion, silence!*—I hear my master!”  
 The back door flies open and bangs against the wall, and Petruchio bursts in angrily, followed somewhat tentatively by Katherina. “*Where be these knaves?*” demands the master of the house.

“*What?*—no man at *door* to hold my *stirrup*, nor to take my *horse*! Where is Nathaniel, Gregory, Philip?”

“Here!” “Here, sir!” “*Here*, sir!” cry the servants, as Katherina quietly closes the door.

Petruchio glares at them. “‘*Here*, sir! *here*, sir! *here*, sir! *here*, sir!’ You *logger-headed* and unpolished *grooms*! What, *no attendance*? No *regard*? No *duty*?”

“Where is the *knave* I foolishly sent *before*?”

“*Here*, sir—still as foolish as I was before!” says Grumio.

“*You peasant swain*! You *whoreson malt-horse drudge*! Did I not bid thee *meet me in the park*?—and bring *these rascal knaves* along *with thee*?”

“There were none ready but Adam, Ralph, and Gregory! The rest were ragged, old, and beggarly—Nathaniel’s coat, sir, was not full-enough made, and Gabriel’s pumps were all unlinked i’ the heel; there was no ink to colour Peter’s hat, and Walter’s dagger has not come back from sheathing. Yet, such as they are, here are they come to meet you....”

Petruchio waves them all away. “*Go*, rascals, *go*!—and fetch my *supper* in!” The men scramble toward the dining room and its sideboard.

Petruchio tosses his hat onto a wall peg and sings, loudly: “‘*Where is the life that late I led, where are those—*’ Sit down, Kate, and welcome!

“*Soon, soon, soon, soon!*” cries the hungry man impatiently. “Well *when*, I say?” he shouts. He sits on a chair and stretches his long legs out before him. “Nay, good sweet Kate, be *merry!*”

Two servants come back, approaching him fearfully. “*Off with my boots*, you rogues! You villains, *when?*” A man straddles his left leg and pushes the boot’s leather upper toward the foot, as Petruchio sings: “‘*It was the friar of orders grey, as he forth walkèd on his way—*’

“*Out*, you *rogue!*” cries Petruchio angrily, “You’ll *pluck my foot awry!*” His right boot hits the man’s behind, forcing him to stumble away: “Take *that!*—and *mend* the plucking of the *other!*”

“Be *merry*, Kate!” he cries, as the servant leans forward to tug at the second boot, smearing its mud across his own coat and breeches.

“Some *water*, here!—*what, ho!* Where’s my spaniel Troilus? Sirrah, get you hence and bid my cousin Ferdinand come hither—one, Kate, that you must kiss, and be acquainted with!

“Where are my *slippers*? Shall I *have some water?*” he yells; quickly, a man fetches a heavy white ewer, a basin, and a towel. “Come, Kate, and wash—and *welcome*, heartily!”

The burdened servant slops some water. “You *whoreson villain!*” shouts Petruchio. “Will you *let it fall?*” He cuffs the man, who has knelt to wipe up the spill, sending him sprawling into the water.

“*Patience*, I pray you!” gasps Katherina. “‘Twas a fault unwilling!”

“A *whoreson, beetle-headed, flap-eared knave!*” bellows Petruchio, as the servant staggers up and backs away in terror. “Come, Kate, sit *down*; I know you have a *stomach!*” He rises in stocking feet and draws his chair to the plain heavy table, then pulls her onto his lap. “Will you give thanks, sweet Kate; or else shall I?”

“*What’s this?*” he scowls, as two servants bring trays of food. “*Mutton?*”

Nathaniel, arriving with a second platter, nods. “Aye....”

“Who bought it?”

“I,” gulps Peter.

“‘*Tis burnt!*” yelps Petruchio, jumping up and spilling Katherina, who barely manages not to fall. “And so is *all* the meat!

“What *dogs* are *these!*” he yells. “Where is the rascal *cook*? How durst you *villains* bring it from the carver and serve it *thus* to *me*, who *love it not*?”

“*There!*” he shouts, taking one tray from a Nathaniel’s hands and hurling it away, then upsetting the other and pushing it against the man’s front. “*Take it to you*—trenchers, cups, and all!” Meat, bread and potatoes fall into a mishmash on the floor, as dishes and spoons clatter around in disarray.

“You heedless *joltheads* and unmannered *slaves!*” Petruchio regards their stunned, gaping faces. “*What—do you grumble?* I’ll be with *you* straight!” The serving-men men flee from the room in alarm.

Katherina is appalled. “I pray you, husband, be not so *disquiet!* The meat was *well*, if you were so contented as—”

“*I tell thee, Kate, ’twas burnt and dried away!*—and I am expressly forbidden to *touch* it, for it engenders *choler*—planteth *anger!* And better ’twere that both of *us* did *fast*—since, in ourselves, *our selves* are choleric—than *feed it* with such over-roasted flesh!

“Be patient; tomorrow ’t shall be mended,” he says cheerfully. “And for *this* night, we’ll *fast* for longer *company!*” He leers. “Come, I will bring thee to thy bridal chamber!” Sweeping her up into his arms, he carries her swiftly up the creaking wooden stairs at the side.

Seeing that he is gone, Grumio and two of the servants steal quietly back from the dining room—chuckling merrily.

“Didst ever see the *like*, Peter?” whispers Nathaniel.

The other man laughs softly. “He *stills* her *in her own manner!*”

“Where is he?” asks Grumio as Curtis comes back from listening beside the stairs.

“In her chamber—making a sermon on *continence* to her!” He laughs. “And he *rails* and *swears* and *berates* such that *she*, poor soul, knows not which way to stand, to look, to speak—and sits as one new-risen from a *dream!*”

“Away, *away!*” cries Peter, “for he is coming hither!” They dash out, headed for the front.

Petruchio stamps down the steps and strides to the table. He sits, thinking.

*Thus have I politicly begun my reign, and ’tis my hope to end it successfully!*

He intends to train Katherina, as a sportsman would a hunting bird. *My falcon now is sharp—surpassingly empty!—and till she stoop, she must not be full-gorged, for then she’ll never look for her lure!*

*Another way that I must manage my haggard, to make her know her keeper’s call and come, is to maintain watch on her, as we guard those hawks that abate, and beat wings, and will not be obedient. She ate no meat today, nor none shall eat; last night she slept not, nor tonight shall she!*

*As with the meat, some undeservèd fault I’ll find about the making of the bed; and here I’ll fling the pillow, there the bolster, this way the coverlet, another way the sheets!*

*Aye, and amid this hurling I’ll assert that all is done in reverent care of her!*

*But in conclusion she shall watch, awake, all night! And if she chance to nod, I’ll rail and brawl, and with the clamour keep her ever awake!*

*This is the way to kill strife—with its likeness! And thus I’ll curb her mad and headstrong temperament.*

He rises to address, confidently, an imagined world of submissive male spirits. *He that knows how better to tame a shrew, now let him speak!*

In the silence, the master takes a bow.

He murmurs, munificently, “Sharing this is but charity!”

## **Chapter Seven** **Learning in Lombardy**

**H**ortensio, again disguised as a music tutor, has persuaded Tranio—the gentleman suitor *Lucentio*, he believes—to lurk with him outside Signior Baptista’s elegant house in Padua. They stand and wait, concealed among tall, well trimmed shrubs which are still thick and glossy green despite morning frosts.

Asks Tranio, “Is’t possible, friend Litio, that Mistress Bianca doth fancy any other but *Lucentio?* I tell you, sir, she bears me fair in hand!” he says with confidence.

“Sir, to satisfy you in what I have said, stand by and mark the *manner* of his teaching!”

The two quickly move behind the foliage as Bianca strolls home, accompanied by the real Lucentio, in disguise as *Cambio*, her instructor in literature—and especially in the poetry of love. They are holding hands, and talking happily. “Now, mistress, *profit* you in what you read?” he asks, smiling.

“What, master, read *you*?” she asks coyly. “First resolve me that.”

“I read what I profess: *The Art of Loving!*”

Bianca grins. “And may you prove, sir, *master* of your art!”

“While you, sweet dear, prove mistress of my *heart!*” He kisses her—and it’s clear that she does not object. They move from the street to the front-door alcove for more.

“*Quick* procedures, marry!” whispers Hortensio sourly. “*Now* tell me, I pray!—you that durst swear your mistress Bianca loves none in the *world* so well as *Lucentio!*”

“Oh, *despiteful* love!” says Tranio. “*Unconstant* womankind! I tell thee, Litio, this is a *wonder!*”

Hortensio turns to him as they crouch in hiding. “Mistake no more!—I am *not* Litio, nor a musician, as I seem to be, but one who *scorns* to live in this disguise for such a one as *leaves a gentleman,*” he says, glancing at Bianca, “and makes a god of such a *cullion!* Know, sir, that I am called *Hortensio!*”

“Signior Hortensio!” says Tranio. “I have often heard of your entire devotion to Bianca! But since mine eyes are *witness* to her lightness, I will *with* you—if you be so contented—*forswear* Bianca and her love *forever!*”

Hortensio is watching the lovers. “See, how they *kiss* and *court!*”

“Signior Lucentio, here is my hand!—here I firmly vow never to woo her more!—and do forswear her as one *unworthy* of all the former favours that I have foolishly flattered her withal!”

Tranio shakes his hand vigorously. “And here *I* take the unfeignèd oath *never to marry with her,* though she would *entreat!* *Fie on her!*”

They peep around the bushes. “See how beastly she doth court him!” says Tranio.

“I would all the *world* had quite forsworn her!” But now, watching the couple’s strong embrace, Hortensio realizes that he is more envious than jealous; he makes a sudden decision.

“As for me, so that I may surely *keep* mine oath, ere three days pass I will be *married,* to a wealthy widow who hath as long loved *me* as I have loved this proud, disdainful haggard!

“And so farewell, Signior Lucentio! *Kindness* in women, not their beauteous looks, shall win *my* love! And so I take my leave, in resolution as I swore before.”

With that, Signior Hortensio hurries away to visit the newly valued widow.

Once he’s out of sight, Tranio walks over to the pair at the door. “Mistress Bianca, bless you with such grace as belongeth to a *lover’s* blessèd case!”

She smiles, but now he frowns. “Nay, I have ta’en you *napping,* gentle love,” he tells her, in a mock scolding, “and have *forsworn* you—with *Hortensio!*”

“Tranio, *you* jest!” laughs Bianca, “but have you *both* forsworn me?”

He laughs, too. “Mistress, we have!”

Lucentio is delighted. “Then we are rid of *Litio!*”

“I’ faith, he’ll have a lusty *widow,* now,” Tranio tells them, “who shall be woo’d and wedded in a *day!*”

“God give him *joy,*” says tender-hearted Bianca earnestly.

“Aye,” chuckles Tranio, “for he’ll *tame* her!”

Her eyebrows rise. “Says he so, Tranio?”

“Faith, he is gone unto the *taming school!*”

“The *taming* school! *What?*—*is* there such a place?”

“Aye, mistress—and *Petruchio* is the master who teacheth a full deck of tricks to tame a shrew and bewitch her chattering tongue!”

They spot young Biondello hurrying their way; soon he arrives, nearly out of breath. “Oh master, master!” he gasps, “I have searched so long that I am dog-*weary!* But at last, coming down the hill, I spied an ancient agent who will serve the turn!”

“What is he, Biondello?” asks Tranio.

Biondello looks at Lucentio. “Master, a mercatante, or a pedant—I know not what—but in formal apparel, in gait and countenance, surely *like thy father!*”

He points back toward the hill, and they regard the elderly gentleman coming down the street in their direction. Lucentio asks Tranio, “Well, what about him?”

“If he be credulous and *trust* my tale,” says his fellow schemer, “I’ll make him glad to *seem* a Vincentio, and to give Baptista Minola assurance as if he were the *right* Vincentio!”

“Take your love,” he urges, rubbing his hands together, “and then let me work alone!”

Lucentio agrees; he and Bianca go inside and close the door.

In a moment, the merchant comes walking past the house. He smiles and nods. “God save you, sir.”

“And you, sir!” says Tranio. “You are welcome. Travel you far on, or are you at the farthest?”

“Sir, at the farthest for a week or two. But then, up farther, even as far as Rome, and so on to Tripoli, if God lend me life.”

“What countryman, I pray?”

“Of Mantua.”

“Of *Mantua*, sir?” cries Tranio in alarm. “Marry, *God forbid!*—and come to *Padua*, careless of your *life?*”

“My *life*, sir? *How*, I pray?—for *that* goes hard!”

“’Tis *death* for any one from Mantua to come to Padua! Know you not the *cause?* Your *ships* are *stayed* at Venice!—and our duke, from a private *quarrel* ’twixt your duke and him, hath published it openly! But that you are but newly come, you might else have heard it proclaimed about! ’Tis a marvel!”

“*Alas*, sir, it is *worse* for me than some,” moans the traveler, “for I have notes promising money, by exchange from Florence, and must here deliver them!”

Tranio thinks for a moment. “Well, sir, to do you courtesy, this will I do—and in this I will *advise* you. First, tell me, have you ever been at *Pisa?*”

“Aye, sir, in Pisa have I often been! Pisa, renowned for grave citizens—”

“Among them, know you one *Vincentio?*”

“I know him not, but I have heard of him: a merchant of incomparable wealth.”

“He is my *father*, sir,” Tranio’s *Lucentio* tells the gentleman. “And, sooth to say, in countenance somewhat doth *resemble* you.”

Biondello, listening, suppresses a laugh; he knows Lucentio’s aging father, of course. *Much as an apple—an old one—doth an oyster!*

“To *save your life* in this extremity, this courtesy will I do you, for *his* sake,” says Tranio. “And think it not the worst of an your fortunes that you are like to *Signior Vincentio!* His name and credit shall you undertake, and in my house you shall be friendly lodged. Look that you take upon you as you should, if you understand me, sir.

“So shall you stay till you have done with your business in the city. If this be a favour, sir, accept of it!”

The merchant is very relieved—and pleased. “*Oh*, sir, *I do!* And will repute you ever the patron of my life and liberty!”

Says Tranio, “Then go with me to make the matter good.

“This, along the way, I’ll let you understand: my father is here looked for every day, to pass assurance on a dower in marriage ’twixt me and one *Baptista’s* daughter here. In all these circumstances I will instruct you.

“Go with me, to clothe you as becomes you.” They proceed together to Lucentio’s lodging near the university.

And thus the spurious son adopts a feigning father.

**K**atherina has been pleading with Grumio in the dining room of Petruchio’s dwelling on the eastern outskirts of Verona; the table has been set—but no food is in sight.

“No, *no*, forsooth!” he tells her. “I *dare* not for my *life*!”

“The more am I *wronged*, the more I *suffer*, the more his *spite* appears!” she complains. “*What?*—did he marry me to *famish* me? *Beggars* that come unto my father’s door, upon entreaty immediately have *alms*, even if not elsewhere they meet with charity! But *I*, who never knew how to entreat, nor never needed that I *should* entreat, am starved for meat, giddy for lack of sleep—with *oaths* kept waking, and with *brawling* fed!

“And that which spites me more than *all* these wants: he does it under name of perfect *love*!—as if to say that if I should *sleep* or *eat*, ’twere deadly *sickness*, or else present *death*!

“I prithee, go and get me *some* repast! I care not what, so it be wholesome *food*!”

Grumio thinks. “What say you to a neat’s foot?”—boiled hoof of an ox.

“’Tis surpassing good! I prithee let me have it!”

Grumio brow wrinkles. “I fear it is too *choleric* a meat”—one likely to promote ill temper. “How say you to a fat tripe, finely broiled?”

“I like it *well*,” cries Katherina. “Good Grumio, *fetch* it me!”

“I cannot tell,” he says, rubbing his chin, “but I fear ’tis choleric. What say you to a piece of beef, and mustard?”

Katherina’s face lights up. “A dish that I do *love* to feed upon!”

“Aye,” says Grumio, “but the mustard is too *hot* a little....”

“Why then, the *beef*, and let the mustard rest!”

“Nay, then I will *not*,” says the man indignantly. “You shall have the mustard, or else you get no beef of Grumio!”

“Then *both*, or *one*!—or *anything thou wilt*!” cries Katherina, desperate.

Grumio nods. “Why then the mustard without the beef.”

“*Go, get thee gone!*” howls Katherina, flailing at his ducking head and pounding on the back of his hunched shoulders. “Thou *false* deluding *slave*, that feed’st me with the very *name* of meat! *Sorrow* on thee and all the *pack* of you that triumph thus upon my misery! *Go, get thee gone*, I say!”

Grumio flees.

From the kitchen, at the back of the house, Petruchio strides into the room—with Hortensio, who has traveled here to learn how to secure a spouse’s submission. Servants with the gentlemen bring heavy platters—one steaming with roasted beef, onions, and potatoes, another piled with rolls and butter—and laden with pots of condiments, including mustard.

“How fares my Kate? *What*, sweeting—all amot?” asks Petruchio, standing at the table as the enticing smells of hot, savory food are wafted forward.

“Mistress, what cheer?” asks Hortensio.

“Faith, as cold as can be,” Katherina replies glumly, as Grumio ventures back.

“Pluck up thy spirits!—look *cheerfully* upon me!” cries Petruchio. He takes a platter from a servant and shows her the carved roast. “*Here*, love! Thou see’st how diligent I am to dress thy meat *myself* and *bring* it thee!” He regards her morose demeanor. “I am sure, sweet Kate, this kindness merits *thanks*....”

She merely scowls; she wants to encourage no more teasing.

“*What*—not a *word*? Nay, then thou lovest it *not*, and all my pains are sorted to no approval!” He thrusts the platter at Grumio. “Here, take away this dish!”

“I pray you, let it stand.” says Katherina, looking wistfully at the beef.

“The *poorest* service is repaid with *thanks*,” Petruchio tells her, “and so shall be *mine*, before you touch the meat!”

Katherina stares at the platter, entranced by the very sight of the succulent pieces of roast. “I thank you, sir,” she murmurs. Grumio takes the beef to the table.

She looks so crestfallen that even Hortensio must protest, despite Master Litio’s still-sore pate. “Signior Petruchio, *fie!* You are to *blame!* Come, Mistress Kate, I’ll bear you company . . .”

She joins him at the table, eagerly taking up a spoon.

Petruchio sees that his new pupil has yet to learn even the rudiments of shrew-taming. *Eat it all, Hortensio, if thou lovest me*, he thinks—so none will be left for Katherina. *Much good do it unto thy gentle heart!*

“Kate, *eat apace!*” demands Petruchio, as she tastes the first delicious mouthful. “And *now*, my honey love, will we return unto thy father’s house, and *revel it* as bravely as the *best*, with silken coats and caps and golden rings, with ruffs and cuffs and farthingales and things!—with scarfs and fans and *double* charge of bravery, with amber bracelets, beads and *all* that knavery!

“What, thou hast *dined!*” he cries, pulling away her plate; after but two bites she stares at it with longing. “The *tailor* awaits thy leisure, to deck thy body with his ruffling treasure!”

Servants quickly remove all of the hearty meal—except for its lingering aromas—as a maker of dresses, summoned from the city, brings a long, gray-canvas sack into the room.

“Come, tailor, let us *see* these ornaments!—lay forth the *gown!*” The man positions a chair and lays the bag carefully against its back. With him is a haberdasher, carrying several hat boxes. “What news with *you*, sir?” asks Petruchio.

The man unties a string, lifts a lid, and reveals a subtly styled bonnet. “Here is the cap Your Worship did bespeak”—order to specification.

Petruchio frowns, pushing it away. “Why, this was moulded on a *porringer*—a velvet *dish!* *Fie, fie!* ’Tis lewd and filthy! Why, ’tis a cockle or a walnut-shell, a knack, a toy, a trick, a *baby’s* cap! *Away* with it! Come, let me have a bigger!”

But Katherina grabs it. She adores the smart, fashionable hat—and immediately wants to wear it on the trip to Padua. “I’ll have no *bigger!*” she says, trying it on. “This doth fit the time, and gentlewomen wear such caps as these!”

“When *you* are gentle, you shall have one, too,” says Petruchio sternly, pulling it from her head, “and not till then!”

Hortensio sees her redden. *That will not happen in haste!*

“Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to *speak!*” cries Katherina, “and speak I *will!*”

“I am no *child*, no *baby!* Your *bettors* have endured me to say my mind—and if *you* cannot, best you *stop your ears!* My tongue *will* tell the anger of my heart, or else my heart, concealing it, will *break!*—and rather than it shall, I will be *free*, even to the *uttermost*, as I *please*, with *words!*”

Petruchio nods as if he fully concurs—and ignores her meaning. “Why, thou say’st *true!* *It is a paltry* cap—a *custard-coffin*, a bauble, a silken *pie!* I love thee *well* in that thou likest it not!”

“*Love* me or love me *not,*” she retorts, folding her arms, “I *like* the cap—and *it* I will have, or I will have *none!*”

He shrugs; and at his wave, the haberdasher bows curtly and leaves—taking all of the hats with him. Petruchio pretends to hear a question. “Thy *gown?*” he says to her. “Why, *aye!*” He turns to the visitor. “Come, tailor, let us see ’t!”

The man extracts the creation, displaying a stunningly lovely dress made of black silk, figured with floral design, and accented with white lace at the neck and wrists. He holds it up to show the clever construction; its full, slashed sleeves reveal complementing flashes of plum and scarlet velvet.

“Oh, *mercy*, God!” cries Petruchio. “What *masquing* stuff is here?”—gaudy garb for masked-ball wear. “What’s *this?*—a *sleeve?*” he sneers. “’Tis like a *demi-cannon!*” He regards the frock.

“What?—up and down, carved like an *apple tart*?—like a *censer*! Here’s snip and *nip*, and *cut* and *slish* and *slash*!—as in a *barber’s* shop!”

“Why, what i’ devil’s name, tailor, call’st thou *this*?”

Thinks Hortensio, *I see she’s likely to have neither cap nor gown!*

“You bade me make it *orderly* and *well*,” protests the tailor, “according to the *fashion* and the *time*!”

“Marry, *I did*,” says Petruchio, “but, if you be remembered, I did *not* bid you *mar* it to the time! *Go!*—hop it over every puddle *home*, for you shall hop *without my custom*, sir! I’ll *none* of it! *Hence!*” Disdainfully he waves the man away. “Make your best of it.”

Katherina is perturbed—the trim dress’s color, fabric and cut are just right to flatter *her*—her complexion, hair and figure. “I never *saw* a *better*-fashioned gown, more quaint, more *pleasing*, nor more *commendable!*” She glares at the husband with whom she is soon to visit her former home—and remembers his wedding attire. “Belike you mean to make a *puppet* of me!”

“Why, *true!*” cries Petruchio, glaring at the city man. “He means to make a *puppet* of thee!”

“She says *Your Worship* means to make a puppet of her!” retorts the angry tailor.

“Oh, monstrous *arrogance!*” shouts Petruchio. “Thou *liest*, thou *thread*, thou *thimble*—thou *yard*, three-quarters, *half-yard*, *quarter*—thou *nail!* Thou *flea*, thou *nit*, thou *winter-cricket*, thou!

“*Braved in mine own house by a skein of thread?*” he rails, moving forward. “*Away*, thou *rag*, thou *quantity*, thou *remnant!* Or I shall so *be-mete* thee with thy yardstick as thou shalt not *think* on prating whilst thou *livest!* I tell thee—*I!*—that *thou hast marred her gown!*”

The little tailor has been backed away, but still he argues: “Your *Worship* is *deceived!* The gown is made just as my master had *direction*: Grumio *gave order* how it should be done!”

“I gave him no *order*,” claims Grumio. “I gave him the *stuff.*”

The tailor tilts his head back defiantly. “But how did you desire it should be *made?*”

“Marry, sir—with *needle* and *thread.*”

“But did you not request to have it *cut?*”

Grumio’s eyes narrow into a menacing stare. “Thou hast faced *many* things”—lined the edges of many garments.

“I have,” says the adamant tailor.

“Face not *me!* Thou hast *braved*”—made to look splendid—“many men; but *brave not me!* I will be *neither* faced nor *braved!*”—challenged. “I say unto thee: I bid thy master cut out the gown—but I did *not* bid him *cut it to pieces!* Ergo, thou *liest!*”

The wiry tailor, no taller than Grumio, and hardly as stout, flushes. He brings a paper from inside his coat. “Why, here is the note of the fashion to testify!”

“Read it,” Petruchio demands.

“The note *lies* in its *throat*,” Grumio declares, “if it says *I* said so!”

The tailor reads: “*Imprimis*, a loose-bodied gown—”

“Master, if ever *I* said *loose-bodied* gown,”—he takes that to mean *licentious*, “sew me in the skirts of it, and beat me to death with a spool of brown thread! I said ‘*a gown.*’”

“Proceed,” says Petruchio.

The tailor reads: “...with a small-compassed cape...”

Grumio shrugs. “I confess the cape.”

The tailor reads: “...with a trunk sleeve...”

“I confess *two* sleeves!”

The tailor reads: “...the sleeves delicately cut.”

“*Ah*, there’s the *villainy!*” cries Petruchio.

“*Error* in the bill, sir,” cries Grumio, “*error* i’ the *bill!* I commanded the sleeves should be *cut out*, but *sewed up again!*” His look threatens the tailor: “And that I’ll *prove* upon *thee*, though thy little *finger* be armored by a thimble!”

The slender man glares back. “This is *true* that I say! If I had *three* in place,”—he lifts three fingers, “*there* thou shouldst know it!” He lowers two, leaving a one-finger gesture.

"I am *for* thee straight!" cries valiant Grumio. "Take thou the *bill!* Give *me* thy mete-yard, and spare me not!" He would face a *bill*, a heavy spear topped with an axe-blade, while armed with only a wooden yardstick.

Hortensio laughs. "God-a-*mercy*, Grumio, then ye shall have no *odds!*"—a play on a term for *remnants*.

"Well, sir, in brief, the gown is not for me," Petruchio tells the tailor.

Grumio carps. "You are i' the right, sir: 'tis for my *mistress*."

"Go," Petruchio commands the town man, "take it up unto thy master's use."

Grumio, shocked, warns the poor tailor: "Villain, not for thy *life* take up my mistress' gown for thy *master's* use!"

"Why, sir, what's your conceit in that?" demands Petruchio.

"Oh, sir, the *conceit* is deeper than you think for!" growls Grumio, picturing a tailor in taffeta. "Take up my mistress' gown to his *master's* use!—oh, *fie, fie, fie!*"

As the disgusted tailor packs the garment, Katherina watches in dismay.

- Petruchio whispers urgently to his student, Hortensio: "Say that thou wilt see the tailor *paid*. Go, take it hence!—be gone and say no more!"

- The gentleman smiles, understanding, and nods. He helps the tailor to pack the gown, and goes with him to the door. His voice hushed, Hortensio tells the man, "Tailor, I'll *pay* thee for thy gown *tomorrow!* Take no unkindness of his hasty words," he adds, reassuringly. "Away, I say—commend me to thy master!"

- The perplexed tailor holds his peace, lifts the goods onto a shoulder, and heads back to the shop in Verona.

"Well, *come*, my Kate!" says Petruchio happily, "we will unto your father's even in *these* honest, mean habiliments! Our *purses* shall be proud, our garments poor; for 'tis the *mind* that makes the body rich!—and as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds, so *honour* peereth from the meanest habit.

"What, is the jay more precious than the lark because his fathers are more *beautiful?* Or is the adder better than the eel because his painted skin contents the *eye?*

"Oh, *no*, good Kate! Neither art *thou* the worse for this poor furnishing and mean array! If thou account'st it shame, lay it to me—and therefore *tease!*

"We will hence *forthwith*, to feast and sport us at thy father's house!" He has learned from Hortensio that Signior Baptista will soon celebrate Signior Lucentio's having won the hand of fair Bianca.

"Go, call my men," he tells Grumio, "and bring our horses unto long-lane end; there will we mount, and thither walk on foot. Then let us straight to him!

"Let's see; I think 'tis now some seven o'clock, and well we may come there by dinner-time"—before noon.

Katherina frowns. "I dare assure you, sir, 'tis almost *two*—and 'twill be *supper*-time ere you come there."

"It *shall* be seven, ere *I* go to horse!" insists Petruchio. He frowns. "Whatever I *speak*, or *do*, or *think* to do, *you* are always *crossing* it!" He halts the serving-men, "Sirs, let it alone; I will not go today! And ere I *do*, it shall be what o'clock *I say it is!*"

Thinks Hortensio, *Why, thus this gallant will command the sun!*

The servants go the pantry—where the food will not go to waste. The teacher goes into the front room to instruct his pupil further, and Katherina is left alone to ponder.

And she thinks, oddly enough, about what careful directions her husband must have given, in such detail as to create—to fit and suit *her* precisely—that perfect hat, and the most beautiful gown she has ever seen.

## *Chapter Eight*

### Meetings with Fathers

This afternoon, “Lucentio” has brought the grateful old merchant, now dressed as Signior Vincentio, the magnifico of Pisa, to the street in Padua where they are soon to meet Signior Minola.

“Sir, this is the house,” says Tranio. “Please it you that I call?”

“Aye, what else?” says the distinguished looking, silver-haired gentleman from Mantua, smoothing the front of his new doublet. He tips back his head, looks down his nose, and delivers a line in his role of prosperous patrician: ““And but I be deceived, Signior Baptista may remember me, from near twenty years ago, in Genoa—””

“—where we were lodgers at The Pegasus,” Tranio finishes, nodding. “‘Tis *well*,” he says. “And hold your own, in any case, with such austerity as belongeth to a *father*.”

The merchant nods assurance. “I warrant you. But, sir, here comes your boy. ’Twere good *he* were schooled....”

“Fear you not him.” Emerging from the house, the lad comes straight to them. “Sirrah Biondello, to do your duty thoroughly, now, I advise you to *imagine* ’twere the *right* Vincentio.”

The boy is always ready for adventure. “Fear not me!”

“But hast thou done thy errand to Baptista?”

Biondello nods. “I told him that your father has been at Venice, but that you looked for him *this day* in Padua.”

“Thou’rt a tall fellow!” says Tranio. In keeping with his role as the generous Lucentio he gives the boy a silver coin. “Hold thee that to *drink!*”—save it. He looks toward the house. “Here comes Baptista! Set your countenance, sir,” he urges the merchant—who tries to look prosperously contented.

The owner emerges from the tall building.

“Signior *Baptista*, you are happily *met!*” calls Tranio, heading toward him. “Sir,” he whispers to the merchant as they walk, “this is the gentleman I told you of. I pray you stand as a good *father* to me now!” *And give me Bianca for my patrimony!*

“Softly, son,” the older man tells him calmly. He offers a hand as they reach Signior Minola, and smiles. “Sir, by your leave.” They shake hands. “I have come to Padua to gather-in some debts.

“My son, Lucentio, made me acquainted with a weighty cause of *love* between your daughter and himself. For the good report I hear of *you*, and for the love he beareth to your *daughter*—and she to *him*....” He smiles at the young man. “To stay him not too long: I am content, in a good father’s care, to have him *matchèd!*”

“And if *you* please to like it no worse than I, upon some *agreement* in our consent you shall find me ready and willing to have her so bestowed!” He avoids saying *able*. “For suspicious I cannot be of *you*, Signior Baptista, of whom I hear so well!”

Baptista replies courteously. “Sir, pardon me in what I have to say. Your plainness and your shortness please me well!” He means *clarity* and *brevity*, and the smaller man takes no offense. “Right true it is: your son Lucentio, here, doth love my daughter, and she loveth him—or both dissemble deftly their affections!

“And therefore, if you say no more than this: that like a *father* you will deal with him, and pass my daughter a sufficient dower—the match is *made*, and all is *done!* Your son shall have my daughter with consent!”

“I thank you, sir!” cries *Lucentio*/Tranio happily. “Then, do you know where best we may be affied,”—sworn, “and such assurance ta’en as shall with either part’s agreement stand?”

“Not in my house, Lucentio,” advises Baptista, “for, you know, ‘Pitchers have ears,’ and I have many servants.” He prefers not to expose details of the family’s full wealth. “Besides, old Gremio is hearkening ever, and we might be interrupted.”

Now, having completed an afternoon of acting as a very effective tutor in the converse of love, *Cambio*/Lucentio emerges from the house and walks toward the gentlemen.

“Then at *my* lodging, an it like you,” says *Lucentio*/Tranio. “There doth my father lie, and there this night we’ll pass the business privately and well.

“Send for your daughter by your servant, here,” he urges, nodding to the tutor. “My boy shall fetch the scrivener”—who will write out the legal documents—“immediately!

“The worst is this: that, on so slender warning, you are like to have a thin and slender sustenance!”—supper this evening.

But Baptista smiles assent. “It likes me well.”

“Biondello, hie you home,” *Lucentio*/Tranio tells the lad. “And bid Bianca make her ready straight!” He adds, with a surreptitious smile and wink for the listening tutor, “And, if you will, tell her what hath happened: Lucentio’s *father* is arrived in Padua—and now she’s likely to be Lucentio’s *wife!*”

Biondello is delighted: “I pray the gods she *may*, with all my heart!”

*Lucentio*/Tranio smiles. “Dally not with the gods, but get thee *gone!*” The boy runs inside, to tell Bianca, and then to go find a scrivener.

Tranio makes an elegant gesture toward the street. “Signior Baptista, shall I lead the way?

“*Welcome!* One *simple* meal is likely to be all your cheer; but come, sir—we will *better it* in *Pisa!*”

“I’ll follow you,” says Baptista, and the three gentlemen head for Lucentio’s lodging.

Biondello returns from the house. “*Cambio!*” cries the boy dutifully.

“What sayest thou, Biondello?”

“You saw ‘my master’ wink, and laugh to you?”

Lucentio nods. “What *about* that?”

“Faith, nothing but that he has left me behind, here, to expound the *meaning* or moral of his signs and tokens.”

Lucentio laughs. “I pray thee, *moralize* them!”

Biondello recounts. “Then thus: Baptista is ‘safe’—talking with the deceiving *father* of a deceitful *son*,” he says wryly.

“And what *then?*”

“His daughter is to be brought by you to the supper.”

“And then?”

“The *old* priest at Saint Luke’s church is to be at your command at all hours.”

“And what of *all* this?” Lucentio is pleased with Tranio’s preparations, of course, but he wants to hear the boy’s version.

“I cannot tell—except they are busied about a counterfeit *assurance*.” He grins as he steps closer. “Take *you* assurance of *her*, ‘*cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum!*’”—with sole rights to reproduce, a term for books. The wag winks.

They laugh, but Biondello wants no fraudulence in that regard: “To the church take the priest, clerk, and some sufficient *honest* witnesses! If this be not what *you* look for, I have no more to say but: ‘Bid Bianca *farewell*, for ever and a day!’”

It is *exactly* what Lucentio wants. “Hearest thou, Biondello—”

But the boy turns away. “I cannot tarry. My ‘master’ hath appointed me to go to Saint Luke’s and bid the priest be ready to go when you come with your appendix!”—new addition. “I knew a wench who went to the garden ‘for parsley to stuff a rabbit,’ and *married* in an *afternoon*—and so may *you*, sir! And so, adieu, sir!” He dashes around the corner and is gone.

*I may—and will, if she be so contented!* thinks Lucentio.

She will be pleased; then wherefore should I doubt? Hap what hap may, I'll roundly go after her!

It shall go hard, if 'Cambio' go without her!

At an intersection north of Padua, Petruchio and Katherina have paused in their horseback journey, which so far has been east from Verona, with Signior Hortensio and Grumio. They are traveling to celebrate a marriage: her sister's, to Signior Lucentio, the young gentleman from Pisa.

Petruchio is eager to move south. "Come on, i' God's name; once more toward our father's! Good Lord, how bright and goodly shines the moon!"

"The moon!" she laughs. "The *sun!*—it is not moonlight now!"

"I say it is the *moon* that shines so bright!"

She places her hands on her hips. "I know it is the *sun* that shines so bright!"

"Now, by *my mother's* son," cries Petruchio, playing on *sun*, "and that's *myself*, it shall be *moon!*—or star, or what I *list*, ere I journey to your father's house!"

"Go on and fetch our horses back again," he orders Grumio. "Evermore *crossed* and *crossed*," he growls, "nothing but *crossed!*"

Hortensio, exasperated, urges Katherina "Say as *he* says, or we shall *never* go!"

"Forward, I pray, since we have come so far," she tells her husband, "and be it moon, or sun, or *what you please!* And if you please to call it a *rush-candle*, henceforth I vow it shall be so for me!"

Petruchio tests. "I say it is the moon."

"I *know* it is the moon."

"Nay, then you lie! It is the blessed *sun.*"

"Then, God be blessed, it *is* the blessed *sun!* But sun it is not, when you say it is not, and if your *mind* changes even as the *moon*. What you will have it named, even that it *is*; and so it shall be so for Katherina."

Hortensio regards the robust young man apprehensively. "Petruchio, go thy ways!—the field is won!"

Petruchio does not argue. "Well, forward, *forward!*" He pictures bowling pins toppled: *Thus the ball should run, and not unluckily, against the bias!* "But, soft! Company is coming here...."

An older gentleman—quite wealthy, his attire suggests—encounters them at the crossing, as he rides westward on the road from Venice.

Petruchio hails him: "Good morrow, gentle mistress! Where away?"

"Tell me, sweet Kate, and tell me truly, too: hast thou beheld a *fresher* gentlewoman? Such a war of white and red within her cheeks! What stars do spangle heaven with such *beauty* as those two eyes become that heavenly face?"

He greets the traveler, now dismounting to join them. "Fair lovely maid, once more *good day* to thee!"

"Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty's sake!"

Hortensio stares. *He will make the man mad, making a woman of him!*

But Katherina takes the baffled old gentleman's hand and smiles at him. "Young budding virgin, fair and fresh and sweet, whither away, or where is thy abode? Happy the parents of so fair a *child*; happier the man whom favourable stars allot thee for his lovely *bed-fellow!*"

Petruchio chides: "Why, *how now*, Kate? I hope thou art not *mad!* This is a *man!*—old, wrinkled, faded, withered—and not a maiden, as *thou* say'st he is!"

Katherina curtsies to the newcomer. "Pardon, old father, my mistaking eyes, that have been so bedazzled with the sun that everything I look on seemeth green! Now I perceive thou art a reverend father. Pardon, I pray thee, for my mad mistaking."

Petruchio tells him, laughing, "*Do*, good old grandsire, and withal make known which way thou travellest. If along with us, we shall be joyful of thy company!"

Holding the reins while his horse nibbles at some grass beside the road, the gentleman watches them warily. “Merry sir—and you, my fair mistress, who with your strange encounter much amaze me—my name is called Vincentio, my dwelling Pisa. And bound I am to Padua, there to visit a son of mine, whom long I have not seen.”

“What is his name?” asks Petruchio.

“Lucentio, gentle sir.”

Petruchio beams, delighted. “*Happily* we meet!—the happier for thy *son!*”

“And now by *law*, as well as reverend age, I may entitle thee my loving *father!*”

“The *sister* to my wife, this gentlewoman, thy son by now hath *married*,” he explains.

“Wonder not, nor be grieved; she is of *good esteem*, her dowry wealthy—and of worthy birth, beside!” He glances at Katherina. “So qualified as may *beseem* the spouse of any noble gentleman.”

Petruchio goes to him. “Let me *embrace* with old Vincentio, and wander we to see thy honest son, who will of thy arrival be full joyous!”

Frail Vincentio, squeezed within the big gentleman’s affectionate hug, is still stunned by the news. “But is this *true*? Or else is it your pleasure, like pleasant travellers, to break a *jest* upon the company you overtake?”

“I do assure thee, father, it is so,” Hortensio tells him—a bit wistfully.

“Come along and *see* the truth hereof,” urges Petruchio, “if our first merriment hath made thee suspicious.”

They all mount, and soon their horses are trotting down the road south.

Hortensio thinks fondly of his alternative amour. *Well, Petruchio, this has put me in heart to have my widow!*

*And if she be froward, then hast thou taught Hortensio to be untoward!*

**O**n a hilltop in the crowded student quarter of Padua late this afternoon, Gremio waits, watching, outside the building where Lucentio has taken lodging. The graybeard has serious doubt about the intentions of the lady’s ardent tutor, and has followed them here.

Gremio walks to a corner of the house, and, lost in thought, gazes out over the university.

Behind him, unseen, Lucentio and Bianca emerge from the house with Biondello.

“Softly and *swiftly*, sir,” the boy urges, “for the priest is ready!”

“*I fly*, Biondello!” says Lucentio. “But they may chance to need thee at home; therefore leave us.”

“*Nay*, ’faith!” pleads Biondello, “I’ll see the church at your *back*, and *then* come back to my master’s as soon as I can!”

Smiling, Lucentio nods assent, and the young people all hurry away toward Saint Luke’s Church.

Gremio turns back, and returns, annoyed, to his post. *I marvel Cambio comes not all this while!* he thinks—sourly aware of a second meaning.

And now a party of travelers, their horses stabled at a nearby inn, comes to visit the handsome and wealthy student from Pisa. Gremio moves back to observe unnoticed.

“Sir, here’s the door,” Petruchio tells Signior Vincentio. “This is Lucentio’s house. My father-in-law’s bears more toward the market-place; thither must I, and here I’ll leave you, sir.”

Signior Vincentio protests to his lively new relative: “You shall not choose but *to drink* before you go! I think *I* may command your welcome here!—and, by all likelihood, some cheer is toward!” He raps imperiously on his son’s door.

*They’re busy within*, thinks Gremio, glumly envying lusty youth. *You were best knock louder!*

At a second-story window, the merchant posing as Signior Vincentio opens the casement and looks down. “What’s he that knocks as if he would beat down the gate?”

“Is Signior *Lucentio* within, sir?” asks Vincentio.

“He’s *within*, sir, but not to be spoken withal.”

Vincenzio smiles. “What if a man brings him a *hundred pounds* or two, to make *merry* withal?”

“Keep your hundred pounds for yourself; he shall *need* none, so long as *I* live!”

Petruchio clasps Vincenzio’s shoulder. “*Aye*, I *told* you your son was well beloved in Padua!” He calls up to the merchant: “Do you *hear*, sir!—leave frivolous peripheries, I pray you, and tell Signior Lucentio that his *father* is come from Pisa, and is here at the door to speak with him!”

“Thou *liest*! His father is come from *Florence*—and is *here*, looking out at the window!”

Vincenzio is puzzled; is this the wrong house? “Art *thou* his father?”

“*Aye*, sir!—so his *mother* says, if I may believe *her*!”

Petruchio frowns at Vincenzio—someone he met along the highway. “Why, *how now*, gentleman? Why, this is flat *knavery*, to take upon you another man’s name!”

“Lay *hands* on the villain!” the merchant calls down, pointing at Vincenzio. “I believe he means to *cozen* somebody in this city using *my countenance*!”

Just then, young Biondello passes by, on his way to Signior Minola’s home. *I have seen them in the church together! God send ’em good shipping!*

He stops. *But who is here?* He gasps. *Mine old master Vincenzio! Now we are undone and brought to nothing!*

The angry Vincenzio has also spotted the boy. “Come *hither, crack-hemp!*”—nose-stretcher. Biondello balks, feigning indignation. “I hope I may *choose*, sir!”

“Come *hither*, you *rogue*! *What*—have you *forgotten* me?”

“Forgot you? *No*, sir!—I *could* not forget you, for I never saw you before in all my life!”

Vincenzio’s eyes widen. “*What*, you notorious *villain*!—didst thou never see thy master’s father, *Vincenzio*?”

“What, my master’s worshipful old master? *Yes*, marry, sir!—see where he looks out of the window....”

“Is’t so, *indeed*?” cries Vincenzio, swatting Biondello with his hat.

“*Help, help, help!* Here’s a *madman* will *murder* me!” yelps the boy.

Above, the merchant turns to call into the house: “*Help*, son! *Help*, Signior Baptista!” He leaves the window.

Biondello bolts away, hurrying back toward the church.

Petruchio is fascinated. “Prithee, Kate, let’s stand aside and see the end of this controversy!” She nods agreement, and they and Grumio move back to watch.

The door opens, and the two counterfeits, Tranio and the merchant, come down the steps into the street, followed by Signior Baptista.

“Sir, what are you that offer to *beat my servant*?” demands *Lucentio*/Tranio boldly.

Vincenzio stares at another of his menials, astonished. “What *am* I, sir?—nay, what are *you*, sir?”

“O immortal *gods*! Oh, fine *villain*! A *silken* doublet!—*velvet* hose!—a *scarlet* cloak! And a copatain *hat*! Oh, I am undone! I am *undone*! While I ply good husbandry at home, my son and my servant *spend all* at the *university*!”

Tranio pretends to be puzzled. “*How now*? What’s the *matter*?”

Baptista watches Vincenzio. “What, is the man *lunatic*?”

“Sir, by your *clothes*, you seem a sober ancient gentleman,” Tranio tells the fuming Vincenzio, “but your *words* show you a *madman*! Why, sir, what concerns it *you* if I wear pearl and gold? I thank my good father that I am able to maintain it!”

“*Thy* father! Oh, *villain*!—he is a *sailmaker* in *Bergamo*!”

“You *mistake*, sir, you *mistake*, sir,” says Baptista. “Pray, what do you *think* is his name?”

“His *name*! As if *I* knew not his name!” cries Vincenzio. “I have brought him up ever since he was *three years old*—and his name is *Tranio*!”

Attracted by the raised voices, a small crowd has gathered; Gremio must move closer to hear.

The false father scoffs: “Away, away, mad *ass!* His name is *Lucentio*, and he is mine only *son*, and heir to the lands of *me*, Signior *Vincentio!*”

Vincentio glares at Tranio. “*Lucentio?*”

“*Oh!*—he hath *murdered* his *master!* Lay hold on him, I charge you, in the duke’s name! Oh, my *son*, my *son!* Tell me, thou *villain*, where is my son *Lucentio?*”

“Call forth an officer!” cries Tranio to the onlookers, but a constable is already moving through them. “Carry this mad knave to the jail!” orders Tranio. “Father *Baptista*, I charge you see that he be forthcoming!”—held accountable.

Vincentio is astounded: “Carry *me* to the *jail!*”

They turn as Signior *Gremio* pushes forward. “*Stay*, officer!” he demands. He has shipped goods on vessels owned by Signior *Vincentio* of *Pisa*. “He shall *not* go to prison!”

“*Talk not*, Signior *Gremio*,” says *Baptista*, annoyed. “*I* say he *shall* go to prison!”

“Take *heed*, Signior *Baptista*,” warns *Gremio*, “lest you be *cony-catchèd*”—tricked—“in this business! I dare swear *this* is the *right* *Vincentio!*”

The defiant pretender confronts him. “Then *swear*—if thou *darest!*”

*Gremio* falters. “Nay, I dare not *swear* it...”

*Tranio* adds to the challenge: “Thou wert best *say*—and that *I* am not *Lucentio!*”

“Yes, I know *thee* to be Signior *Lucentio*...” *Gremio* admits.

*Baptista* points to *Vincentio*. “*Away* with the dotard! To the jail with him!”

“Thus *strangers* may be hailed and *abused!*” cries *Vincentio*, as the officer takes hold of his arm. “Oh, *monstrous villain!*” he growls at *Tranio*.

Just before *Vincentio* can be led away, *Biondello* returns—bringing *Lucentio* and *Bianca*. He points at the nobleman: “*Oh*, we are *spoiled!*—and yonder he *is!* Deny him, forswear him, or else we are all *undone!*”

Instead, *Lucentio* goes to *Vincentio* and kneels. “*Pardon*, sweet Father!”

As the young man rises, the *Vincentio* touches his hand—relieved, and tearful. “Lives my sweet son?”

The false *Vincentio* now glances at *Tranio*. Eyebrows are raised—and suddenly they dash inside, quickly followed by *Biondello*.

*Bianca* curtsies before *Vincentio*. “*Pardon*, dear Father!”—father-in-law.

*Baptista* is thoroughly confused. “How hast *thou* offended? Where is *Lucentio?*”

“*Here’s* *Lucentio*,” the tutor tells him, “*right* son to the *right* *Vincentio*—and who has by *marriage* made thy daughter mine, while counterfeit supposes bleared thine eyne!”

“*Here’s* *plotting!*—from a witness deceiving us *all!*” protests *Gremio*.

Signior *Vincentio* looks at the house. “Where is that damnèd villain *Tranio*, that faced and braved me in this matter so?”

*Baptista* looks at *Bianca* and motions toward *Lucentio*. “Why, *tell* me—is not this my *Cambio?*”

*Bianca* smiles, taking her husband’s arm. “*Cambio* is changèd into *Lucentio!*”

He beams at his wife, patting her hand. “*Love* wrought these miracles!” he tells their fathers. “*Bianca’s* love made me exchange my state with *Tranio*, while he did bear my countenance in the town.

“And happily I have arrived, at the last, unto the wishèd haven of my *bliss!*”

“What *Tranio* did, myself *enforced* him to; then *pardon* him, sweet Father, for my sake!” he pleads.

“I’ll *slit* the *villain’s* nose, who would have sent me to the *jail!*” cries *Vincentio*, still seething.

*Baptista* is struggling to understand. He asks *Lucentio*, “But, do you *hear*, sir: have you *married* my daughter—without asking for my good will?”

*Vincentio*, who is much more prosperous, intervenes: “Fear not, *Baptista!*—we will content you! Go to!

“But I will *in*, to be *revenged* for this villainy!” he vows, heading toward Lucentio’s rented residence.

“And *I*,” says Baptista, following him, “to sound the depth of this knavery!”

Lucentio takes his bride’s hand. “Look not pale, Bianca; thy father will not frown.” The lovers proceed, arm-in-arm, into the house.

*My cake is dough!* poor Gremio realizes. He shrugs. *But I’ll in among the rest, beyond hope of anything but my share of the feast!* He heads inside, resigned to join in the wedding celebration.

As the passersby disperse, Katherina smiles at Petruchio. “Husband, let’s follow, to see the end of this ado!”

“First *kiss* me, Kate, and we will!”

“What?—in the midst of the street?”

“What, art thou ashamed of me?”

“*No*, sir, *God forbid!*” she cries, blushing, “but ashamed to *kiss*.”

Petruchio shrugs. “Why, then let’s home again.” He turns to Grumio. “Come, sirrah, let’s away.”

Katherina grins and reaches up to clasp her arms behind this neck. “Nay, I *will* give thee a kiss!” She does—a good one. “Now pray thee, love, stay!”

And so he does.

“Is not this well?” he asks, tenderly, taking her hand. “Come, my sweet Kate!

“Better once than never, for *never too late!*”

## *Chapter Nine* **Talk of a Wonder**

**T**he Minolas’ grand mansion has been buzzing all day: from the dim garret, where dusty old furniture has been pushed back to make room for pieces from the two ladies’ rooms, to the dank cellar, where bottles of fine, aging wine have been pulled off racks; from the glowing hearth and oven in the hot kitchen, where earlier, on the wooden side tables, scorched pans of hot meats, black-iron pots of steaming soup and vegetables, and piles of fresh loaves had crowded the many pies and pastries, to the dining hall, still packed with celebrators and scrambling servants.

Lucentio raises a wine glass made of Venetian crystal. “At last, though *long* last, our jarring notes agree! And time it is, when raging war is done, to smile at ’scapes and perils overcome!

“My fair Bianca, bid my father welcome, while I with self-same kindness welcome thine! Brother Petruchio, sister Katherina, and thou, Hortensio, with thy loving widow, feast with the rest, and *welcome!*”

Later on this chilly fall evening in the comfortable room’s warm lamplight, family and guests finally lay down their spoons, and are ready to converse.

Against all expectation, it seems, Baptista’s daughters—both of them—are married, and they are talking merrily with their husbands.

The household servants have been amazed by Katherina: as clever as before and no less demanding, she now speaks with a pleasant charm—sometimes even laughs! The anger and acerbity are gone, replaced by a sweet wit, a tolerant benevolence. And her tall husband, hearty and brusque, hardly avoids her: in fact, he is very attentive—and their mutual affection is manifest.

Lucentio and Bianca, leaning close together, laugh and chat under the adoring gaze of his father, who is quite pleased simply to smile and nod.

Hortensio sits, contented, with the widow, a matronly lady his own age whose rosy cheeks belie her formal deportment.

Gremio, enjoying his neighbor Baptista's excellent food and drink, converses amiably in a corner with the Mantuan merchant—who is delighted to have learned that his life will not be forfeited here in Padua.

Now they all move into a smaller room at the side for fruit, nuts, and, of course, more wine.

"This banquet is to close our stomachs up, after our great good cheer!" says Lucentio. "Pray you, sit down; for now we sit to *chat*, as well as eat!"

"Nothing but sit and sit, and eat and *eat!*" protests Petruchio; in his bachelor days, sitting had been mostly on horseback, eating usually done while standing in the kitchen.

"Padua affords this kindness, son Petruchio," says Baptista, well sated after the meal.

"Padua affords nothing but what is *kind*," says Petruchio, smiling at Katherina.

"For both our sakes, I would that word were *true*," mutters his friend and pupil, Hortensio.

Petruchio teases. "Now, for my life, Hortensio *fears* his widow!"

She objects to an alternate meaning: *frightens*. "Then never trust me, if *I* be afeard!" she declares.

Petruchio smiles. "You are very sensitive, and yet you miss *my* sense; I mean Hortensio is afeared of *you!*"

Looking at the rustic gentleman, she rolls her eyes. "He who is *giddy* thinks the *world* turns round!"

Petruchio laughs. "*Roundly* replied!"

But Katherina frowns. "Mistress, how mean you *that?*"

The widow starts to comment. "Thus I conceive of him—"

"*Conceives by me!*" cries Petruchio. "How likes *Hortensio* that?"

"My widow says thus she conceives her *tale*," he replies stiffly.

Her *tail*—"Very well mended!" laughs Petruchio. "*Kiss* him for that, good widow!"

Katherina persists: "'He who is giddy thinks the world turns round.' I pray you, tell me what you meant by that!"

The widow faces her. "Your husband, being troubled with a *shrew*, measures my husband's sorrow by *his* woe!" She sips her wine. "And now you know my meaning."

"A very *mean* meaning!"—a deficient one.

"Right!—I mean *you!*"

Katherina flares: "And I *am* mean, indeed,"—expend little, "in esteeming *you!*"

"To her, Kate!" laughs Petruchio.

"To *her*, widow!" cries Hortensio.

"A hundred marks, my Kate does put her down!"

Putting her down—"That's *my* office!" protests Hortensio, beginning to smile.

"Spoke like an *officer!*" cries Petruchio, clapping him on the back. "*Hail* to thee, lad!" He drinks to his friend.

In one corner with his neighbor, Baptista listens, amused, as the drollery continues. "How likes Gremio these quick-witted folks?" he asks.

Gremio nods. "Believe me, sir, they butt heads together well!"

Bianca has overheard. "Head and *butt?*—an hasty-witted body would say, 'Your head were but head and *horn!*'"

Vincentio grins at the naughty quip. "*Ay*, mistress *bride*, hath that *awakened* you?"

"Aye—but not *frighted me!*" replies Bianca. "Therefore I'll *sleep* again."

Petruchio likes her spunk. "Nay, that you shall not! Since you have begun, I'll have at you for a better jest—or two!"

Bianca tosses her head in comical defiance. "Am I your *bird*? I mean to shift my *bush*," she says, rising; her smile joins the ribald laughter. "And then pursue me as you *draw your bow!*"—pull on the arrow. "You are welcome all!" she tells the laughing men, as she heads for the parlor with Katherina and the widow.

“She hath prevented me,” Petruchio admits. “Here, *Signior Tranio*,” he says, motioning toward Lucentio’s man, “that bird *you* aimed at, though you hit her not! Therefore a health to *all* who shot and missed!” He raises his glass, and they all drink.

Tranio smiles. “Oh, sir, Lucentio slipped *me* like his *greyhound*—which runs himself, but *catches* for his master!”

“A good, *swift* simile, but somewhat *currish*!”

“’Tis well that *you*, sir, hunted for yourself!” says Tranio. “’Tis thought your *deer* does *hold you at bay*!”

“*Oho, Petruchio!*” laughs Baptista, at the play on *deer*. “Tranio hits *you* now!”

“I *thank* thee for that gibe, good Tranio!” cries Lucentio.

Says Hortensio to Petruchio. “Confess, *confess*, hath he not hit you there?”

“He has a *little* galled me, I confess,” says Petruchio. He regards Hortensio and Gremio.

“But, as the jest glanced away from *me* ’tis ten-to-one it *maimed you two* outright!”

Those gentlemen chuckle, if uncomfortably.

Baptista still doubts Katherina’s newly agreeable nature. “Now, in all seriousness, son Petruchio, I think thou still hast the veriest shrew of all.”

“Well, I say *no!*” cries Petruchio. “And therefore, for assurance, let’s each one send unto his wife—and he whose wife is most obedient, coming at first when he doth send for her, shall *win* the wager which we will propose.”

Hortensio nods. “Content. What is the wager?”

“Twenty crowns,” suggests Lucentio.

“*Twenty* crowns!—I’d venture so much on my *hawk* or *hound!*” scoffs Petruchio, “but *twenty times* so much upon my wife!”

“A *hundred* then!”

Hortensio agrees. “Content.”

Petruchio slams a palm to the table. “A *match!* ’Tis done!”

Hortensio looks at the other husbands. “Who shall begin?”

“That will I!” says Lucentio. “Go, Biondello, bid your mistress come to me.”

Biondello bows. “I go.” He heads for the parlor.

Baptista, confident of his younger daughter, makes an offer to Lucentio: “Son, I’ll be your half that Bianca comes!”

“I’ll have no halves!” says Lucentio. “I’ll bear it all myself!” Biondello returns. “How now! What news?”

“Sir, my mistress sends you word that she is busy, and she cannot come.”

“*What?* She is *busy*, and she cannot *come!*” cries Petruchio. “Is that an answer?”

“Aye—and a *kind* one too!” notes Gremio. “Pray God, sir, your wife send you not a *worse!*”

“I hope *better!*”

Hortensio sits up straighter. “Sirrah Biondello, go and entreat my wife to *come to me forthwith.*” The boy bows, and he goes again.

“*Oho! Entreat* her!” chides Petruchio. “Nay, then she *must* needs come!”

Hortensio ignores the sarcasm. “I am afraid, sir, do what you can, *yours* will not be entreated!” The lad returns. “Now, where’s my wife?”

Biondello shrugs. “She says you have some goodly *jest* in hand. She will not come; she bids you come to *her!*”

Petruchio wags his head. “Worse and *worse!*—she *will* not come! Oh, vile, intolerable, not to be *endured!*”

He turns to his man. “Sirrah, go to your mistress; say I *command* her to come to me.”

Gremio, whose shoulders are still a little sore, rubs his forehead uncomfortably, but he goes to relate that to Katherina.

“I know *her* answer,” says Hortensio.

“What?”

“She will *not*.”

Petruchio seems unconcerned. “The fouler fortune mine, and there an end.”

Baptista gasps. “Now, by my sacred mother, *here comes Katherina!*”

The lady approaches Petruchio. “What is your will, sir, that you send for me?”

“Where is your sister—and Hortensio’s wife?”

“They sit conferring by the parlor fire.”

“Go fetch them hither,” says Petruchio. “If they deny to come, swinge them soundly forth unto their husbands! Away, I say, and bring them hither straight!” Katherina nods and goes.

Lucentio—whose wife has told him tales of her sister—stares after her. “*Here* is a wonder, if you’d talk of a *wonder!*”

Hortensio is amazed. “And so it is!” But, he adds, “I wonder what it *bodes*....”

“Marry, *peace* it bodes!” laughs Petruchio, “and *love*, and *quiet life*, and lawful rule, and right supremacy—and, to be short: what *not*, that’s sweet and happy?”

Baptista is elated. “Now fair befall thee, good Petruchio! The wager thou hast *won!*—and I will add unto their losses *twenty thousand crowns!*—another *dowry* to an *other* daughter!—for she is *changèd* as she had never been!”

“Nay, I will win my wager *better yet*,” says Petruchio, ebullient, “and show *more* sign of her new-built virtue in obedience.” He points. “See where she comes, and brings your froward wives as prisoners to her womanly persuasion!”

Bianca and the widow hurry into the room, scowling back at Kate.

Petruchio rises. “Katherina, that cap of yours becomes you not! *Off* with that bauble—throw it under foot!” She drops the hat he commissioned for her to the floor.

The widow is stunned by Kate’s compliance—and irked by his temerity. “*Lord!*—let me never have cause to *sigh* till I be brought to such a silly pass!”

Bianca frowns at Petruchio. “*Fie!* What *foolish* duty call you *this?*”

“I would *your* duty were as foolish, too!” moans Lucentio. “The *wisdom* of your duty, fair Bianca, hath cost me *an hundred crowns* since supper-time!”

“The more fool *you*, for laying on my *duty!*”

“Katherina,” says Petruchio, “I charge thee, tell these headstrong women what duty they do owe their lords and husbands.”

“Come, come, you’re *mocking!*” protests the widow. “We will have no *telling!*”

“Come on, I say—and first begin with *her*.”

Now the widow is angry. “She shall not!” She glares at Hortensio.

“I say she *shall!*” Petruchio nods to Kate. “And first begin with her!”

“*Fie, fie!*” Katherina tells the widow, laughing. “Unknit that threatening, unkind brow, and dart not scornful glances from those eyes, to wound thy lord, thy *king*, thy *governor!*”

“It blots thy beauty as frosts do bite the meads, confounds thy fame as whirlwinds shake fair buds, and in no sense is meet or amiable.

“A woman angered is like a *fountain* troubled—muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty—and while it is so, none so dry or thirsty will deign to sip or touch one drop of it.

“Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, thy head, thy sovereign!” Her eyes sparkle. “One that *cares* for thee—and for thy maintenance commits his body to painful labour, both by sea and land, to watch the night in storms, the day in cold, whilst thou liest warm at home, secure and safe—and craves no other tribute at thy hands but love, fair looks and true obedience.

“Too little payment for so great a debt!

“Such duty as the subject owes the prince, even such a woman oweth to her husband. And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour, and not obedient to his honest will, what is she but a foul, contending *rebel*, and graceless *traitor* to her loving lord?”

She turns to include Bianca.

“I am ashamed that women are so simple as to offer *war* where they should kneel for *peace*; or seek for rule, supremacy and sway, when they are bound to serve, love and obey. Why are our

bodies soft and weak and smooth, unapt to toil and trouble in the world, but that our soft conditions—and our *hearts*—should well agree with our external parts?

“*Come, come*, you froward and unable adders! To bandy word for word and frown for frown, *my* mind hath been as strong as either of yours, my heart as great, my reason perhaps *more!*”

“But now I see our lances are but straws, our strength is weak—our *weakness* beyond compare when we *seem* to be most in which we indeed *least* are!”

“Then veil your choler, for it is bootless, and place your hands below your husband’s boot!”—steady the stirrup, helping him rise.

She turns to Petruchio—and grins. “In token of which duty, if he please, *my hand* is ready; may it do him ease....”

Petruchio, beaming, takes her hand. “Why, *there’s* a wench!” he cries, ebullient. “Come on, and *kiss* me, Kate!”

She does, and their enjoyment of the tight embrace is obviously mutual.

“Well, go thy ways, old lad!” cries Lucentio, watching, “for thou shalt *have it!*”

Signior Vincentio looks at Bianca. “’Tis a good hearing when children are toward.”

His son perceives the brief, angry flash of her eyes. “But a harsh hearing when women are froward,” he mumbles.

Petruchio pauses for breath. “Come, Kate, we’ll to bed!”

“We three are *married*,” he tells Hortensio and Lucentio, “but *you* two are *sped!*”—defeated.

“’Twas I who won the wager,” he tells Lucentio, “though you hit the white”—the target, but not its center. “And, I being a winner, say: ‘God give you good *night!*’” Hand in hand, Petruchio and Katherina climb the stairs.

Hortensio calls, “Now, go thy ways!—thou hast *tamed* a curst shrew!”

But Lucentio, watching the couple, says wryly, “’Tis to wonder, by your leave, if *she* will be tamèd, too!”