



DISCOVERY GUIDE 2010



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Properties Design - Joel Eis

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www.marinshakespeare.org

Welcome to the Discovery Guide for *The Taming of the Shrew!*

Introduction

Welcome to the theatre!

Marin Shakespeare Company is thrilled to present one of the Bard's greatest comedies, *The Taming of the Shrew*. *Shrew* has some of Shakespeare's most hilarious, wild and witty characters. The story of Petruchio's efforts to win the hand and heart of Katherine the Curst is full of silliness and wit.

For this production, we have set Shakespeare's classic romantic romp on the high seas! Shakespeare's broad, whacky characters who populate this story are transported to a *Pirates of the Caribbean* setting. Petruchio, a fortune hunter, becomes a pirate in search of several different kinds of treasure.

We hope you enjoy the show!

Contents

PAGE 1 --	Discover: the origins of the play
PAGES 2-3 --	Discover: the characters (including actor headshots)
PAGES 4-5 --	Discover: the story of the play (or hear a recording at marinshakespeare.org)
PAGE 6 --	Discover: major themes in the play
PAGES 8-9 --	Discover: classroom connections
PAGE 10 --	Discover: discussion questions
PAGE 11 --	Discover: key quotes from the play (for discussion or writing topics)
PAGE 12 --	Discover: Shakespeare's insults
PAGE 13 --	Discover: additional resources (websites, books and video)

A word from the Director

(ON THE COVER: DARREN BRIDGETT AS PETRUCHIO AND CAT THOMPSON AS KATE. PHOTO BY STEVE UNDERWOOD.)

Since first directing our 1950's BeBop *Shrew* back in 1997, I've come to love and appreciate even more deeply the strength, durability and brilliance of this great, commedia-inspired early comedy. What an array of timeless characters! So for this cruise, how about sailing with us to the West Indies? Way down to Cocomo.

I've always been nuts for pirates. They embody the wild, free, adventurous spirit – not always with the highest morals, but ever battling the elements in search of buried treasures of all sorts. So why not make Petruchio a swashbuckler who has come to “wive it wealthily” on this isle: in search of cash and some extra fun on the side. He finds his own buried treasure in the guise of Katharina, who gives him all the adventure he can handle, and turns out to be worth her weight in gold.

And how fortunate are we to have attracted and assembled such a dynamic core of fine actors who have worked wonders on the Forest Meadows stage over the past many seasons, winning us new audiences and accolades like two Bay Area Critics Circle nominations for “Best Ensemble” last summer. Theatrically, working with colleagues like this is about as good as it gets. We are so happy to present this masterpiece to students. We hope that you'll agree with us that Shakespearean theatre is great fun!

Robert S. Currier

DISCOVER: the origins of the play...

Shakespeare's Sources

As with most of Shakespeare's plays, the Bard drew on other sources to create *Shrew*. Firstly, Shakespeare seems to have been inspired by the idea of the "shrewish wife" character, which had a long tradition in English literature. A good example of this can be found in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

Elements of Bianca's storyline in *Shrew* are drawn from Geore Gascoigne's *Supposes* (1566), which revolves around the idea of mistaken identity and confusion.

First publication and performance

William Shakespeare never published any of his plays and therefore none of the original manuscripts have survived. Eighteen unauthorized versions of his plays were, however, published during his lifetime in quarto editions by unscrupulous publishers (there were no copyright laws protecting Shakespeare and his works during the Elizabethan era). A collection of his works did not appear until 1623 (a full seven years after Shakespeare's death on April 23, 1616) when two of his fellow actors, John Hemminges and Henry Condell, posthumously recorded his work and published 36 of William's plays in the First Folio. Some dates are therefore approximate other dates are substantiated by historical events, records of performances and the dates plays appeared in print.

The Taming of the Shrew is believed to be one of Shakespeare's earlier comedies, most likely written between 1590 and 1594. It is similar to other plays written during those years, like *The Comedy of Errors* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

Earlier drafts or potentially pirated versions of *Shrew* may have been published as early as 1594. The play we know today was first published in the First Folio in 1623, but a performance was mentioned in Philip Henslowe's diary on June 13, 1594. It is not known for sure whether this performance was of the play we know today, or of another version. However, since Shakespeare was likely present at the performance, we believe it was his play as we know it.

Quarto? Folio? Huh?

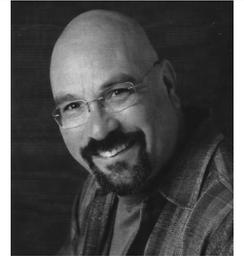
Quarto: A quarto is sheet of printing paper folded twice to form eight separate pages for printing a book. The Quarto editions of Shakespeare's plays are generally considered 'unauthorized'.

Folio: A folio is a sheet of printing paper folded once to form four separate pages for printing a book. The Folio text is notable for its quality and consistency; scholars judge it to have been set into type from a theatrical prompt-book and, therefore, more accurate.

DISCOVER: the characters...

The Narrator

SLY: Sly is a mischeivous pirate who has traveled the seven seas for decades. He introduces the story and the characters. Oh... And he likes rum. [Actor: Gary Grossman at right.]



The Visitors

PETRUCHIO: Petruchio is a wild, charismatic pirate who has come to Padua to seek his fortune. After hearing that marrying Katharina will bring him riches beyond his dreams, he sets out to woo her. [Actor: Darren Bridgett at right]



LUCENTIO: Lucentio is a young man who comes to study in Padua with his trusty servant, Tranio. He falls in love with Bianca as soon as he sees her. [Actor: William Elsman at left]



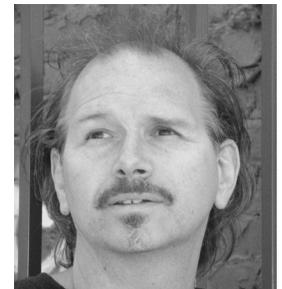
TRANIO: Lucentio's servant and friend, Tranio takes on his master's persona so that Lucentio can win Bianca. [Actor: Mark Robinson at right]



BIONDELLO: Lucentio's other servant who helps her master in his attempts to win Bianca. [Actor: Melissa Arleth at left]



GRUMIO: Petruchio's faithful servant of many years. Even though he squabbles with his master, he is incredibly loyal. [Actor: Lucas McClure at right]



CURTIS: A servant on Petruchio's ship. [Actor: Nick Dickson at left]

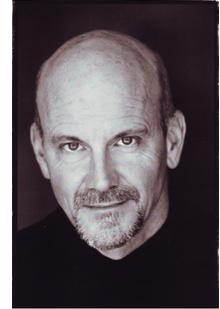


VINCENTIO: Lucentio's wealthy father. He comes looking for his son, and meets an impostor! [Actor: also Nick Dickson at left]

DISCOVER: the characters...

The Residents of Cocomo

BAPTISTA MINOLA: The wealthy father of Katharina and Bianca. At the beginning of the play, Baptista announces that his youngest daughter, Bianca, cannot marry until his eldest has found a husband. [Actor: Stephen Klum at right]



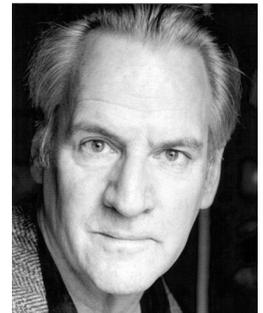
KATHARINA MINOLA: The curst, shrewish daughter of Baptista Minola. Katharina has a razor sharp tongue and she isn't afraid to use it. Only the equally unruly Petruchio is finally able to tame her. [Actor: Cat Thompson at left.]

BIANCA MINOLA: Katharina's beautiful, gentle sister. Bianca is tormented by Katharina, and adored by her father. Several suitors pursue the virtuous Bianca, but only Lucentio is able to win her heart. [Actor: Alexandra Matthew at left]



HORTENSIO: One of Bianca's suitors, and an old friend of Petruchio's. Hortensio dresses like a school teacher, and has Petruchio present him to Baptista Minola as a tutor for Bianca. It is Hortensio who first mentions Katharina to Petruchio. [Actor: Paul Stout at left.]

GREMIO: Gremio is Bianca's wealthiest and oldest suitor. He hires Lucentio (thinking that he is Tranio) to be a tutor for Bianca. [Actor: Julian Lopez-Morillas at right]



WIDOW: A wealthy widow. The widow is married to Hortensio, after he fails to woo Bianca.. [Actor: Camilla Ford at right]



DISCOVER: the story of the play...

Ahoy, mateys! Our version of William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* is set in the age of Pirates, in the islands of the West Indies.

Lucentio, a wealthy student, arrives in Cocomo, along with his trusty servant, Tranio, when they see Baptista Minola with his two daughters, the beautiful Bianca and disagreeable Katharina. Close behind are Bianca suitors, Gremio and Hortensio. Baptista announces that no one may marry Bianca until a husband has been found for Katharina, and suggests that the suitors provide school teachers for his daughters, as that will win favor. Hortensio and Gremio decide they must work together to find a husband for Katharina so they will be free to compete for Bianca's hand. Lucentio, who has been watching all of this, has fallen in love at first sight with Bianca. Tranio suggests that Lucentio disguise himself as a schoolmaster and become her tutor. Tranio will pretend to be Lucentio.

Petruchio, a young and reckless adventurer, arrives in Cocomo with his servant Grumio. A misunderstanding leads the two old friends into a squabble, which is quickly settled by Hortensio. Petruchio informs Hortensio he has come to Cocomo to "wife and thrive" and Hortensio tells Petruchio about Katharina: she is "intolerably curst" but her dowry will be enormous. Petruchio demands to see Katharina immediately, and agrees to introduce a disguised Hortensio as a tutor for the girls, so he can get closer to Bianca.

At Baptista's house, Katharina is torturing her sister, demanding to know which suitor she prefers. Baptista pries the two girls apart, just as Petruchio, Gremio and the other men arrive. After the "schoolmasters" have introduced themselves, Petruchio asks to meet Katharina and decides that no matter how shrewish she is, he will marry her. When Katharina arrives, the two engage in a war of words, following which Petruchio announces that he will marry Katharina the following Sunday. He departs to prepare for the wedding. Tranio – who is pretending to be Lucentio while the real Lucentio tutors (and woos) Bianca – and Gremio both plead for Bianca's hand in marriage. Baptista says whoever can assure Bianca the most wealth may wed her. When "Lucentio" claims riches far exceeding Gremio's, it is agreed that as soon as he can prove his father's consent, he may marry Bianca.

Hortensio (disguised as the music instructor Licio) and Lucentio (disguised as the schoolteacher Cambio) "instruct" Bianca, fighting for her attention. However, when Bianca is alone with Cambio, she lets him know he should "despair not." On Katharina's wedding day, the guests all gather, but Petruchio is nowhere to be found. The servant Biondello rushes in to announce Petruchio is on his way, wearing very strange clothes. He storms in, drags Katharina to the church and carries her off to his home, shocking the other guests.

At Petruchio's home, Grumio and other servants await. When Petruchio finally arrives with Katharina, he is violent towards the servants, starves and mistreats his wife, and muses that he will continue to tame his wife, until she is more obedient.

Back in Cocomo, Tranio and Hortensio spy on Lucentio and Bianca, who are clearly in love. Hortensio abandons his attempt to win Bianca's heart, and decides to marry a wealthy widow instead. Biondello sees an old pedant coming down the road and suggests they have him pretend to be Lucentio's father, to give assurance to Baptista of Lucentio's wealth. The pedant agrees, and Baptista is convinced. When Petruchio brings Katharina back home, she finally understands the obedience he requires of her. They meet Lucentio's real father Vincentio on the road, and continue together toward Cocomo. At Baptista's house, Vincentio meets the pedant, who has stolen his identity. Finally,

DISCOVER: the story of the play...

Lucentio and Bianca enter and inform their parents they have eloped. After everyone has left, Katharina and Petruchio share an intimate kiss in the street.

Baptista and his guests enjoy a party in honor of Lucentio and Bianca. During dinner, Hortensio's widow and Katharina get into a heated argument. After the women leave the table, their husbands make a wager over which wife will come when called. Katharina is the only woman to obey. She gives an impassioned speech about the duty women owe their husbands. All the guests are amazed: Petruchio has truly tamed his shrew.



DISCOVER: themes

A **literary theme** is an idea, message or lesson which is explored in a literary work. Often these are implied rather than blatantly stated.

MARRIAGE: This play has a lot to say about marriage and its social implications. Look at the way men are treated in comparison to the female characters: Who has more choice, men or women? How does wealth play a role in the politics of marriage? Do you think society's ideas about marriage have changed a lot in the last 400 years? Are there still cultures today which have more "Elizabethan" ideas about marriage?

DECEPTION and DISGUISE: Several characters in the play "pretend" to be someone they're not. Often, they do this in order to win someone's heart. Is this purely for comic effect? Examine these examples:

1. Lucentio and Tranio switch roles so that Lucentio can court Bianca.
2. Hortensio pretends to be a school teacher to get closer to Bianca.
3. Tranio and Biondello convince the Pedant to pretend to be Vincentio, to give Bianca's hand away in marriage.

BATTLE of the SEXES: Petruchio and Katharina engage in a war of words when they meet, and their battle continues for almost the entire play. This is a familiar - and often hilarious - theme in Shakespeare's work. Other examples of plays that include such dynamic, volatile lovers include:

1. *Much Ado About Nothing*
2. *Love's Labour's Lost*
3. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
4. Can you think of other contemporary examples from film, television or literature of battling couples who eventually find true love with each other?

CONFORMITY: Kate is an outcast, and to a certain extent, Petruchio is as well. What does the play tell us about the need to conform to society's expectations? Does Bianca conform to the expectations of her father and, later, her husband?



The pirates welcome Kate and Petruchio home.

DISCOVER: Classroom Connections...

Classroom Discussion

Compare / contrast characters and plots in *The Taming of the Shrew* to other Shakespeare plays. Some examples are listed below, but see if you can find more!

1. Petruchio/Katharina vs. Benedick/Beatrice (*Much Ado About Nothing*)
2. Petruchio vs. Berowne (*Love's Labour's Lost*)
3. Katharina vs. Juliet (*Romeo & Juliet*)

Compare / contrast Petruchio and Katharina with other 'sassy couples,' from works of literature or movies. A few ideas are listed below to get you started, but there are many more!

1. Elizabeth and Darcy (*Pride and Prejudice*)
2. Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler (*Gone With The Wind*)
3. Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger (*Harry Potter* books)

Debate: what do you think about the way women are treated in *The Taming of the Shrew*? Is Katharina a victim of a misogynistic society? Is Bianca? The widow? How would the story be different today, in 21st century America?

Creative Writing

Write a society column or Elizabethan newspaper. Pick one of the social issues from the play, come up with a snappy headline, and then write a column for a 'society paper' or tabloid (the *Cocomo Gazette*, perhaps?). This is an excellent class project.

Write a 'Dear Abby' letter from the point of view of a character in the play. Ask for help with a major dilemma that the character must overcome in the play.

FOLLOW UP: have students switch papers and write a response from "Abby."

Re-write the ending. Have students change one small plot-point in the play and re-write the ending accordingly. There are many ways this story could have ended -- encourage creativity!

Write a 'new' scene for the play (or re-write one)! Make sure your scene is supported by the play, and be creative! Some topics are below but feel free to come up with your own!

1. A scene after Katharina's last speech between her and her father. How would he react to the change in her?
2. Hortensio ends up with the widow. Lucentio ends up with Bianca. What happens to Gremio? Does he ever find love?
3. Rewrite Katharina's final monologue. What if she decided NOT to be so obedient??!!??
4. We are told about the shenanigans at Katharina and Petruchio's wedding? Write a scene where we see it!

DISCOVER: Classroom Connections...

Art // Design Projects

Make a **costume book**. Use research to put together a photo-packet (with descriptions) of Elizabethan clothing. Include works cited. Alternatively, choose another era of time to set the show in and research and design costumes from that time period, just as our costume designer did for this production.

Design and build a **quilt**. Have one panel per scene and create a caption that includes the act, scene and a quote that gave you the inspiration for the design.

Design and make several **costumes for the play to fit dolls**. Base your designs on research and make sure your dolls can stand or be displayed. Include a one-page paper to explain your choices in each costume; this paper should include works cited.

Design **scenery** for the play. Do a display on a poster or shadow box/diorama. Include a one-page explanation for your choices, including works cited.

Design a **comic book** for the show. Start by breaking the show down into scenes and then illustrating each scene. This could be an individual project or a class assignment.

Pre-Performance Questions

1. Why do you think this play has been performed for over 400 years?
2. What lessons do you think Shakespeare wanted us to learn from this play?
3. Which characters did you like in the play? Which characters did you dislike? Why?
4. If Shakespeare were in our classroom, what one question would you ask him about this play?
5. If you had the option to re-write part of the play, what would you change and why?
6. Do you see anything in the play that would be hard to perform onstage? How could you 'solve' this?

Post-Performance Questions

1. What did you think about the director's choice to place this play in a *Pirates of the Caribbean* atmosphere? Do you think it worked in that time and place? Why or why not?
2. Were the actor's performances what you expected? Did they portray the characters in the way you envisioned them when reading? Why or why not?
3. What did you notice when watching the play that you did not pick up when reading it? Why do you think that is? Does this change your opinion about anything? Why or why not?

DISCOVER: discussion topics...

1. Shakespeare sets *Shrew* as a “play within a play.” Why? What does this illuminate about the story or characters? Is the induction necessary to convey the play’s message? How do you feel about MSC omitting that scene?
2. The relationship between servants and their masters plays a huge role in *Shrew*. What do the servants have in common. Are they distinct from one another? How are they different from their masters? Discuss.
3. Why is Katharina so curst? We are never given a “reason.” What do you think? Did the actress give any clues in her performance?
4. Compare and contrast the attraction/courtship between Katharina and Petruchio vs. Lucentio and Bianca. How is it different? How is it the same?
5. *Shrew* is a comedy. Are there elements of the story that don’t seem so comedic? Explain your answer.
6. Examine the first encounter between Petruchio and Kate. Explore the language they use. What does it tell us about the characters?
7. What is the climax of the play?
8. Is Kate the only shrew in the play? What about Bianca? Could you call Petruchio as shrew as well?
9. Which character do you most admire? Is there a real villain in the play?
10. Where is Kate and Bianca’s mother? Do we ever find out? Can you think of other Shakespeare plays where the mother is inexplicably absent? What about other movies and books? (Think Disney movies and fairy tales!)
11. How does Petruchio “tame” Kate? Why is he successful?
12. Where is the moment that Kate gives in to Petruchio? Can you locate it?
13. Discuss the wedding scene. Why does Petruchio act the way that he does? Is there anything interesting about the way the others react, especially Kate?
14. Discuss the speech “Thus have I politically begun my reign...” Who is Petruchio talking to? What is his intention? What does he mean by “kill a wife with kindness”?
15. What is the moral of the story? Support your answer.
16. Is this play sexist?
17. The popular movie *Ten Things I Hate About You* is based in this play. What did the producers of that film change? What remains the same? Do you think the filmmakers honored Shakespeare’s story?
18. Do you believe Kate in her last monologue? Why or why not? Did the actress deliver the speech differently than you imagined when reading the play?

DISCOVER: quotes from the play...

For each of the following quotes from the play, respond with an answer which:

- a) states the meaning of the quote,
- b) connects the quote to the play as a whole or to other literary works,
- c) discusses personal feelings about the quote, the character or the action it causes OR
- d) connects the quote to your personal life.

(Act I, scene i) "There's small choice in rotten apples." (Hortensio)

(Act I, scene ii) "Nothing comes amiss; so money comes withal." (Grumio)

(Act II, scene ii) "Tush! tush! Fear boys with bugs." (Petruccio)

(Act II, scene i) "I must dance bare-foot on her wedding day
And for your love to her lead apes in hell." (Katharina)

(Act II, scene i) "You are called plain Kate,
And bonny Kate and sometimes Kate the curst;
But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom
Kate of Kate Hall, my super-dainty Kate,
For dainties are all Kates, and therefore, Kate,
Take this of me, Kate of my consolation." (Petruccio)

(Act II, scene i) "Kiss me Kate, we will be married o' Sunday." (Petruccio)

(Act IV, scene i) "This is the way to kill a wife with kindness." (Petruccio)

(Act V, scene ii) "A woman moved is like a fountain troubled,-
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty." (Katharina)



DISCOVER: Shakespeare's Insults with Petruchio and Katharina...

When it comes to verbal smackdowns, nobody beats Billy Shakespeare. Let's look at the first scene between Kate and Petruchio, and get down and dirty with their fast-flying insults.

(From Act II, scene i)

PETRUCHIO

Nay, come, Kate, come; you must not look so sour.

KATHARINA

It is my fashion, when I see a crab.

PETRUCHIO

Why, here's no crab; and therefore look not sour.

KATHARINA

There is, there is.

PETRUCHIO

Then show it me.

KATHARINA

Had I a glass, I would.

PETRUCHIO

What, you mean my face?

KATHARINA

Well aim'd of such a young one.

PETRUCHIO

Now, by Saint George, I am too young for you.

KATHARINA

Yet you are wither'd.

PETRUCHIO

'Tis with cares.

KATHARINA

I care not.

What are the sparring love bird's saying, exactly? Translate their bawdy mud-slinging into modern day trash talk!

Other famous Shakespearean insults:

"Boil-brained"

"Beef-witted"

"GOATISH"

"MAGGOT-PIE"

"Boar pig"

"Canker blossom"

**"Come hither,
crack-hemp."**

(Act 4, scene v)

DISCOVER: OTHER RESOURCES...

WEBSITES

<http://www-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/>

Read/print any of Shakespeare's plays scene by scene or in its entirety.

<http://absoluteshakespeare.com/>

Absolute Shakespeare, the essential resource for William Shakespeare's plays, sonnets, poems, quotes, biography, and the Globe Theatre

<http://www.folger.edu/index.cfm>

The Folger Library's internet guide to Shakespeare for Teachers and Students

<http://www.pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/index.html>

PBS's Guide to Shakespeare in the Classroom

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/>

Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet -- easy navigation for students.

<http://www.shakespearehigh.com/classroom/index.shtml>

"Shakespeare High in the Classroom" -- easy navigation for students.

BOOKS

A Shakespeare Glossary by CT Onions

ISBN: 978-0198125211

A short, easy-to-use glossary that can be very valuable for the beginner

Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary by Alexander Schmidt

Vol 1 ISBN: 978-0486227269 VOL 2 ISBN: 978-0486227276

This book provides definitions, locations, and meaning for every word in Shakespeare's plays and poems. The 2 volumes contain more than 50,000 quotations.

The Oxford English Dictionary

ISBN for Compact Edition 978-0198612582

The Age of Shakespeare by Francois Laroque

ISBN: 0-8109-2890-6

VIDEO

The Taming of the Shrew, directed by Franco Zeffirelli (1967). Unrated. Stars Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. Sony Pictures.