

THE DUBUQUE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT

at the Carnegie Stout Library, Dubuque, IA

Winter/Spring 2024

THE MAKING OF A PLAYWRIGHT

The Taming of the Shrew

Synopsis: Suitors are lining up for the lovely Bianca, but her father refuses to let her be wooed until her elder sister, Katherina, the titular shrew is wedded. The suitors draft the treasure hunter Petruchio to woo and wed Katherina, after which he successfully 'tames' her and shows off the seemingly obedient Katherina at Bianca's wedding.

Discussion Topics:

- Induction: *the process or action of bringing about or giving rise to something*. Taming is presented as a play within a play. How does the Induction change the nature of the Taming of the Shrew? Does it explicitly make it a farce, and if so, does that help tone down the misogyny?
- Societal Order: Every role in society has definite expectations. The play both defines gendered roles and the master and servant roles quite explicitly. There are only three women in the play, with the Widow only appearing at the very end. A master and servant pair open both the scenes in Act I, and there is a constant shuffling of 'high' and 'low' social positions, both in the Induction scenes and the play within the play. How does Shakespeare structure the narrative so they comment on each other?
- Katherina's speech: Katherina's speech at the end is the longest and most complex speech of the play. Has Katherina been truly tamed and herself resigned to her fate? Or has she learnt how to play the game? What are the possible interpretations of this speech and the ending?

Folger Text Link: <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/the-taming-of-the-shrew/>

CS Library also has paper copies of the play.

Kanopy Film link: <https://www.kanopy.com/en/dubuque/video/677393> (BBC series 1980)

16th Century Staging <https://www.kanopy.com/en/dubuque/video/102823> (2005)

Other resources to consider:

1967 Zeffirelli's film "The Taming of the Shrew" with Elizabeth Taylor & Richard Burton

1953 film version of the stage musical "Kiss Me Kate"

1999 teenage version "Ten Things I Hate About You" with Julia Stiles & Heath Ledger

2020 book "Shakespeare in a Divided America" by James Shapiro, chapter titled "1948: Marriage"

Apr 14, 2024 2 PM

Carnegie-Stout Public Library 360 W 11th Street, Dubuque, IA