

The Taming of the Shrew Act II, scene i

Enter KATHARINA

PETRUCHIO

Good morrow, Kate; for that's your name, I hear.

KATHARINA

Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing:
They call me Katharina that do talk of me.

PETRUCHIO

You lie, in faith; for you are call'd 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;
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 moved to woo thee for my wife.

KATHARINA

Moved! in good time: let him that moved you hither
Remove you hence: I knew you at the first
You were a moveable.

PETRUCHIO

Why, what's a moveable?

KATHARINA

A join'd-stool.

PETRUCHIO

Thou hast hit it: come, sit on me.

KATHARINA

Asses are made to bear, and so are you.

PETRUCHIO

Women are made to bear, and so are you.

KATHARINA

No such jade as you, if me you mean.

PETRUCHIO

Alas! good Kate, I will not burden thee;
For, knowing thee to be but young and light--

KATHARINA

Too light for such a swain as you to catch;
And yet as heavy as my weight should be.

PETRUCHIO
Should be! should--buzz!

KATHARINA
Well ta'en, and like a buzzard.

PETRUCHIO
O slow-wing'd turtle! shall a buzzard take thee?

KATHARINA
Ay, for a turtle, as he takes a buzzard.

PETRUCHIO
Come, come, you wasp; i' faith, you are too angry.

KATHARINA
If I be waspish, best beware my sting.

PETRUCHIO
My remedy is then, to pluck it out.

KATHARINA
Ay, if the fool could find it where it lies,

PETRUCHIO
Who knows not where a wasp does
wear his sting? In his tail.

KATHARINA
In his tongue.

PETRUCHIO
Whose tongue?

KATHARINA
Yours, if you talk of tails: and so farewell.

PETRUCHIO
What, with my tongue in your tail? nay, come again,
Good Kate; I am a gentleman.

KATHARINA
That I'll try.

She strikes him

PETRUCHIO
I swear I'll cuff you, if you strike again.

KATHARINA
So may you lose your arms:
If you strike me, you are no gentleman;
And if no gentleman, why then no arms.

PETRUCHIO
A herald, Kate? O, put me in thy books!

KATHARINA
What is your crest? a coxcomb?

PETRUCHIO
A combless cock, so Kate will be my hen.

KATHARINA
No cock of mine; you crow too like a craven.

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.

PETRUCHIO
Nay, hear you, Kate: in sooth you scape not so.

KATHARINA

I chafe you, if I tarry: let me go.

PETRUCHIO

No, not a whit: I find you passing gentle.
'Twas told me you were rough and coy and sullen,
And now I find report a very liar;
For thou are pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous,
But 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.
Why does the world report that Kate doth limp?
O slanderous world! Kate like the hazel-twigg
Is straight and slender and as brown in hue
As hazel nuts and sweeter than the kernels.
O, let me see thee walk: thou dost not halt.

KATHARINA

Go, fool, and whom thou keep'st command.

PETRUCHIO

Did ever Dian so become a grove
As Kate this chamber with her princely gait?
O, be thou Dian, and let her be Kate;
And then let Kate be chaste and Dian sportful!

KATHARINA

Where did you study all this goodly speech?

PETRUCHIO

It is extempore, from my mother-wit.

KATHARINA

A witty mother! witless else her son.

PETRUCHIO

Am I not wise?

KATHARINA

Yes; keep you warm.

PETRUCHIO

Marry, so I mean, sweet Katharina, in thy bed:
And therefore, setting all this chat aside,
Thus in plain terms: your father hath consented
That you shall be my wife; your dowry 'greed on;
And, Will you, nill you, I will marry you.
Now, Kate, I am a husband for your turn;
For, by this light, 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
Conformable as other household Kates.
Here comes your father: never make denial;
I must and will have Katharina to my wife.

Translation: from No Fear Shakespeare
The Taming of the Shrew Act II, scene i

KATHARINA enters

PETRUCHIO

Good morning, Kate, for I hear that's what you're called.

KATHARINA

Is that what you've heard? Then you'd better get your ears checked. I am called Katharina by those who have any business using my name.

PETRUCHIO

Liar. In fact, you're called Kate, plain Kate – and pretty Kate, and sometimes Kate the shrew. But it's definitely Kate – the prettiest Kate in the world, Katie, Kitty, Kat-woman, the Kate-ster – and so, Kate, here's my pitch: that having heard your charming disposition praised – not to mention your beauty and your virtues, though none of them as richly as you deserve – I find myself driven to propose. I want you for my wife.

KATHARINA

"Driven?" Really? Well, let whoever drove you here drive you back again. I had you figured for a piece of furniture.

PETRUCHIO

What do you mean by "furniture?"

KATHARINA

A nice stool.

PETRUCHIO

You're right, actually. Come sit on me.

KATHARINA

Asses are made for bearing, and so are you.

PETRUCHIO

Women are made for bearing, and so are you.

KATHARINA

Not by the likes of you!

PETRUCHIO

Oh heavens, Kate, I wouldn't think of burdening you. I know how light and carefree you are.

[Note: In Shakespeare's day, "light" could mean "loose" as in "a loose woman."]

KATHARINA

Too light for a lout like you to catch – though no lighter than I should be.

PETRUCHIO

Should be? Maybe you *should* be the subject of some buzz!

KATHARINA
Buzz off, buzzard.

PETRUCHIO
If I'm a buzzard, you're a turtledove.
[Note: The turtledove was a symbol of faithful love.]

KATHARINA
Only a buzzard would think so.

PETRUCHIO
Come, my little wasp – you're too angry.

KATHARINA
If I am a wasp, look out for my stinger.

PETRUCHIO
All I have to do is remove it.

KATHARINA
True, if such a fool as yourself could find it.

PETRUCHIO
Everyone knows where a wasp wears its stinger. In its tail.

KATHARINA
No, in its tongue.

PETRUCHIO
Whose tongue?

KATHARINA
Yours, if we're talking about tales. I'm leaving.

PETRUCHIO
You're leaving with my tongue in your tail? No, come back, Kate. I'm too much of a gentleman.

KATHARINA
A gentleman? We'll see about that!
She strikes him

PETRUCHIO
I swear I'll smack you if you hit me again.

KATHARINA
Not if you want to keep your arms! If you hit me, that proves you're not a gentleman. And if you're not a gentleman, you don't have any arms.
[Note: A noble family, like that of a "gentleman," would have a "coat of arms."]

PETRUCHIO
Are you a herald, Kate? Put me in your books!
[Note: A herald's books officially registered gentlemen.]

KATHARINA

What is your crest? a coxcomb?

[Note: A crest is a symbol on a nobleman's family coat of arms.]

PETRUCHIO

I'll give up my comb, if you'll be my hen.

KATHARINA

Your cock is not for me. It has no fighting spirit.

[Note: cock=rooster. The comb was the symbol of a rooster's masculinity, so Petruchio is willing to be "unmanned" for her.]

PETRUCHIO

Oh, come now, Kate. Don't look so sour.

KATHARINA

That's my way, when I see a crab-apple.

PETRUCHIO

There's no crab-apple here, so don't look so sour.

KATHARINA

There is a crab-apple here.

PETRUCHIO

Show me.

KATHARINA

I would, if I had a mirror.

PETRUCHIO

What, you mean my face looks like a crab-apple?

KATHARINA

What a clever child he is!

PETRUCHIO

You know, you're right. I probably am too young for you.

KATHARINA

Maybe, but you're wrinkled all the same.

PETRUCHIO

Oh, that's with worry.

KATHARINA

Well, that doesn't worry me.

PETRUCHIO

Listen, Kate! You won't get away like that.

KATHARINA

Let me go. I'll make you angry if I stay.

PETRUCHIO

Not a bit. I find you quite gentle. I was told that you were violent, proud, and sullen. But now I see that people have been lying about you, for you are funny, playful, and beautifully behaved, not sharp-tongued, but as sweet as flowers in springtime. You haven't got it in you to frown or look displeased or bite your lip as angry women do. You don't take pleasure in bitter conversation. No, you entertain your suitors with mild and gentle conversation, quiet and pleasant. What does the world report that Kate is lame? The world's a liar. Kate is as straight and slender as a hazel-twig, her hair as brown as hazelnut shells, and she herself sweeter than the kernels. Take a few steps – I want to see you walk. You don't limp at all!

KATHARINA

Get out of here, fool, and give orders to your servants, not me.

PETRUCHIO

Did Diana ever beautify a grove as much as Kate beautifies this room with her queenly movements? You be Diana, and let Diana be Kate. Then let Kate be the chase one, while Diana plays with me.

KATHARINA

Where did you memorize all this smart talk?

PETRUCHIO

I make it up as I go. It's born of my mother wit.

KATHARINA

A witty mother! Too bad about the son!

PETRUCHIO

Am I not wise?

KATHARINA

Enough to keep yourself warm.

PETRUCHIO

Yes, I intend to keep myself warm, sweet Katharina – in your bed. So let's cut to the chase: your father has consented for you to become my wife. Your dowry is agreed upon, and whether you like it or not, I will marry you. I tell you, I'm the man for you, Kate. I swear by this light, which shows me your beauty – the beauty that makes me love you – that you must be married to no man but me. I'm the man who was born to tame you and change you from a wildcat Kate into a Kate as gentle and domestic as other household Kates. Here comes your father. Don't even think about refusing. I must and will have Katharina for my wife.